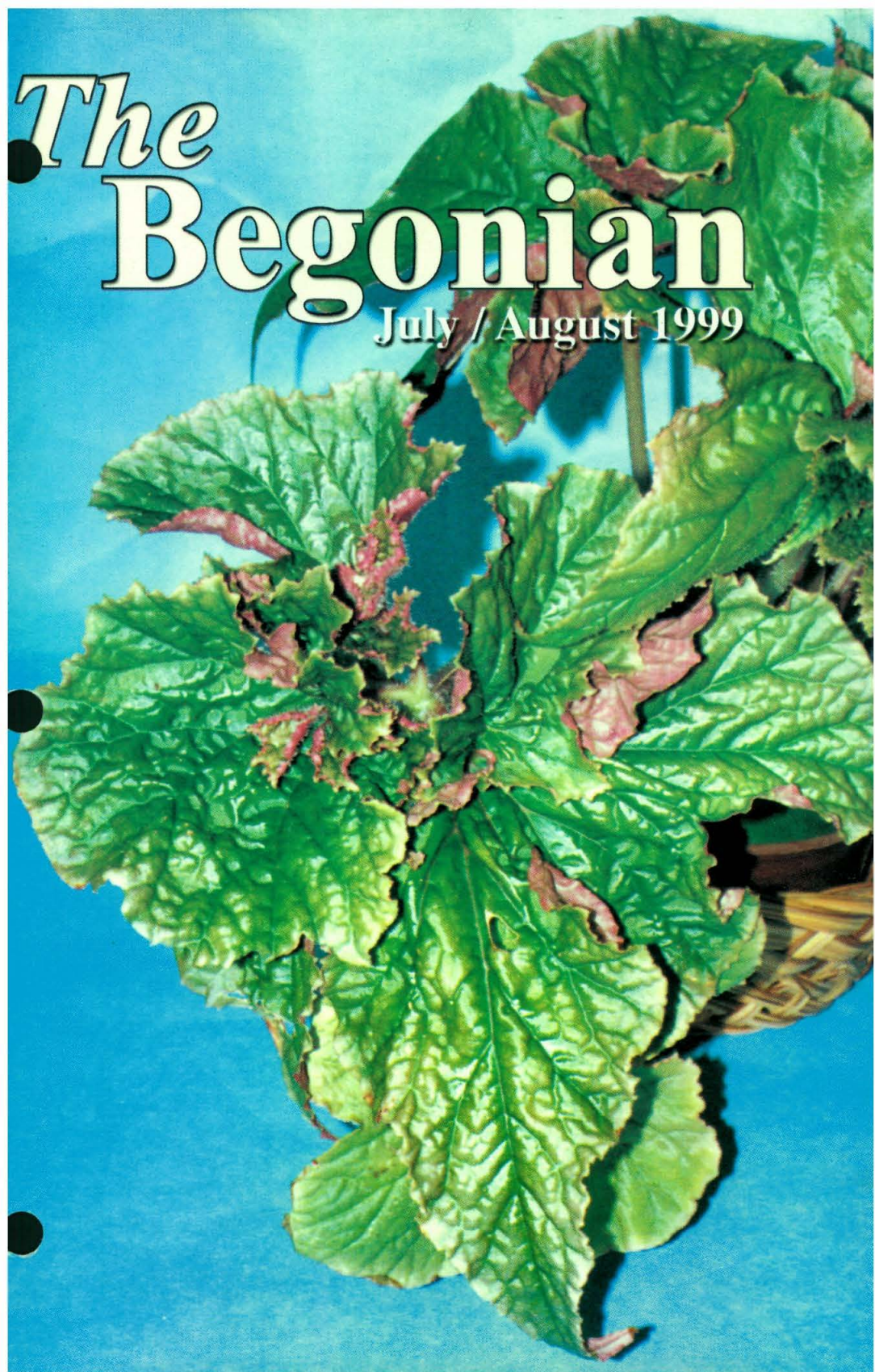


The **Begonian**

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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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American Begonia Society - P.O. Box 471651, San Francisco CA 94147-1651

Membership - Subscription, dues, circulation, inquiries, and address changes: John Ingles, Jr., 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617; (707) 764-5407. E-mail: ingles@humboldt1.com

Cover

Front: The leaves on B. 'Paul's Pride' tell us this is a **Bob Koehler** hybrid! See the article beginning on page 125. Photo by **Mary Bucholtz**.

Back: We met species *B. ravenii* in the *Begonian*, January/February 1998, pages 14 & 15, but here we see it achieve its show potential as a Best Commercial Division winning entry by **John Langevin** of the Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens at the June Southwest Region Get-Together.

In This Issue

Begonia Hybridizing Today in the U.S.

Exciting things are happening with begonia hybridizing in the U.S. today. In this issue are articles about or by some of the best. We learn about some of their goals, the hybrids they are proud of, and also we read about a debate on the proliferation of not-so-great hybrids.

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Quick

Check your mailing label. If
it reads

199909 or 199910,
your membership is about to
expire. Please renew! We
don't want to lose you.

President's Notes...

It is time for a little housekeeping, some cleaning up of the debris from my two-year tenure as your president.

I'm receiving newsletters from most branches and am pleased that the quality of many of them has improved. This has been more of a response of editors getting more comfortable in the job than my chiding to upgrade the contents. Our editors are adults and don't need someone hovering over their shoulders. So no kudos to me for being pushy.

Too many fingers pointed at me when ABS successfully recognized the six decades of Rudy Ziesenhenné in our midst. Such recognition had been discussed often; it was my prerogative to name the place for a Board meeting and Santa Barbara was a great place to have one. I got to be cheerleader for the folks who actually pulled it off. We all need to give a rousing cheer to our presenters of memories and the designers of the scrapbook that Rudy is still enjoying. And another cheer for Rudy, too!

Few of our committees have expanded to include two or more members and I don't feel like cheerleading, yet. When the chair is exhausted, burnt-out or disabled, there's no one to step in to lead without a hitch and our members get discouraged from slow to no response. Not much inspired leadership nor silver-tongued oration on my part here, drat it.

New members have been coming to us from the internet and response time has been reduced for questions of membership, growing hazards, cuttings/seed availability and other items hard to categorize. With a Website and many officers and members so active with computers ABS is ready to enter the next century. Not my doing, either.

Something good has come from each of our Board meetings. But I do hear from my live-in begoniad that I let some discussions go on a little too long. Guilty - but I do get good feedback and some things have happened after those too-long discussions. So, I'll pat my own back with some contortions.

Through no effort on my part, the *Begonian* is flourishing; the Seed Fund is working well and has many committed workers; our treasurer has kept on top of the numerous forms that California wishes to have her complete, and all our bills are current and no wolves are baying at our doors. Our business manager has offered many ways to economize and not lessen our services and he and his spouse have undertaken many thankless tasks on their own.

And our great conventions, shows, sales, board meetings and informative and fun tours: Wow! I can take little credit here, either, but I've forwarded my registration and signed-up early for each great place that's volunteered to show off their community. That's a way of cheerleading, too. (I'm feeling better.)

My thanks to all the officers and committee chairs that have mentored me and helped me grow and perform some necessary duty. A great bunch; you know who you are and I hope I've not kept my appreciation a secret from you.

This isn't "adios" nor "good-bye." This is just a "farewell until the next meeting," because the past president stays on the board and surely the new officers can figure something for me to cheerlead!

~ Bruce Boardman

Don't forget: Vote!

**Ballots from May/June issue
due to Ingeborg Foo by July 21.**

Hybridizing: A Conversation with Kit Jeans Mounger and Bob Koehler

by H. Alton Lee

Recently, Kit Jeans Munger was on a flying trip through Florida and she and Bob Koehler and I got together for lunch. Of course, after we tucked into the gourmet cuisine at the Red Lobster, our conversation turned to begonias and more specifically hybridizing.

Since Kit and Bob are just about two of the best begonia hybridizers at work today, I steered the conversation to some questions for these two which other begonia growers and would-be hybridizers might like to ask: Who knows? Perhaps, someone reading this is the future creator of some great new begonias that many collectors will soon be seeking. We will live in hope.

Here is some of our edited conversation.

HAL: How and why did you get into begonia hybridizing?

KIT: Because it was there. You know back in those days when I started hybridizing, you got a package of seed when you joined the American Begonia Society. This would have been in 1972. I got this package and it was just dust.

HAL: Irresistible dust!

KIT: (Laughing) I thought what in the world?! I was buying cuttings at the time from Maxine Wilson about 40 miles up the road. Anyway, it's like anything else. You want to try it because someone says it's easy. First, you plant seed, then they come up and grow. And it IS easy and I went from there.

BOB: It was the same for me. Someone told me that (the process) was easy...and I didn't believe them. So I had to try it

myself. And it WAS easy.

HAL: And what were your very first hybrids?

BOB: B. "Sweet Thing."

KIT: Mine was a rex. I named it for Maxine Wilson and for the longest time Logee's carried it. I remember we went out to Wichita Falls, Texas at the instigation of Bob Hamm for what was really the first Begonia Get-Together. Chuck Richardson came from California and Thelma O'Reilly. Bob Hamm had said, "We're going to have hybrids now. If you've got a hybrid of your own, bring it." I took my rex which was a cross of B. 'Venetian Red' x B. *listada* (1979).

HAL: But after you got into hybridizing and saw the fun and possibilities, what were your goals?

KIT: From the earliest, I was corresponding with Bernard York (Australia) and he sent me seed, good tough begonias that you couldn't kill. I was trying to run a greenhouse at the time and a mail order business, and the only way you can get a leg up is to have hybrids that no one else has and which people will order. There were all these prima donnas around that people would order and they would croak or they had to pamper them. My goal became easy plants--mostly with rhizomatous--though I did do rexes. B. 'Thesus' was one. (B. 'Snow queen' x unnamed Rex cultivar, 1980). They had that at Selby in the display house for years, but I haven't seen it in a long time. I didn't know at first that they were the toughest, so I grew Rexes. But my goal, really was that I wanted something that anybody could grow, that was short in the petiole,

so it was a fairly compact grower and would be a pretty thing, but tough.

HAL: How many hybrids have you done?

KIT: (Hesitating.) Oh, gosh...

BOB: I have a two page list of her hybrids at home, so at least 50 or 60.

HAL: and you?

BOB: About 20 so far.

KIT: I used to keep all the old catalogs with my things, but I've lost them. However I keep a journal and I listed them there.

HAL: And what would you say is the best hybrid you've created?

KIT: Oh, we all know what that is hands down.

BOB, KIT, & HAL: B. 'Cowardly Lion'.

KIT: That and B. 'Blue Jeans' are probably the two most popular ones. 'Blue Jeans' isn't around so much anymore.

BOB: And your Dragon series was real well thought of, but I agree 'Cowardly

Lion' is the best, and I've tried about all of them.

HAL: And your best, Bob?

BOB and KIT: B. 'String of Pearls'!

HAL: And your worst?

KIT (Laughing.): Oh, I'd have to think about that.

BOB (Nodding.): Me, too!

Later, Kit chooses B. 'Nancy Cummings'.

KIT: It has beautiful leaves, but it just never looks well and is so slow and hard to grow. It's one I wish I could have done more with.

KIT: What's someone else's hybrid that you wish was yours?

BOB: (Laughing.) 'Cowardly Lion'.

KIT: (Also laughing.): I kind of like the one Bob named for me, to tell the truth, because it's so different, but I'd include many in that cross, B. 'Risa's Reward',

Below, Bob Koehler and Kit Jeans Munger examine plants in a Florida greenhouse.



'Gilligan's Island', 'Gunsmoke'. The only problem is that these plants get huge. You have got to have some room.

HAL: Let's assume you've made 60 hybrids or so over the years, Kit. How many do you think still exist and are being grown.

KIT: (Sighing.) Maybe 10.

BOB: Oh, I think more than that because I've got at least 10 of them.

KIT: Well, I know that several of the 'Jean's' are out there.

HAL: B. 'Streaky Jeans' was in the Atlanta show, and I bought a small one called B. 'Velvet Jeans', but I'm not doing well with it.

KIT: B. 'Scruffy' is till around and my favorites B. 'Blue Jeans' and 'Rhinstone Jeans'.

HAL: What can be done to keep hybrids like this from--just evaporating over time? We sort of have an adopt-a-species approach with people taking care of things. Should we be doing that with hybrids, too?

KIT: I think there ought to be, but who has the time? One of the reasons plant societies have gone down so badly is that most everyone works.

HAL: Okay, let's end with you two finishing this sentence for me: The best thing that could happen with or for the ABS is...?

KIT: Advertisement and going back to putting seed packets in a member's welcome packet. They have done that again, haven't they? But you just have to advertise.

BOB: ABS needs to work harder with commercial interests to get stuff around. That inspires people when they see the plants and want to have them.

HAL: Down the road, where is the ABS begonia growing and collecting going to be?

BOB & KIT: Or where are we going to be (Laughing.)? That's the real question.

BOB: (Thinking for a moment.) Well, hybridizing is getting better all the time, but so much is being done with canes now because they are easy to take care of and getting so much more colorful! Of course, I think there's a lot more to be done with rhizomatous.

KIT: Well, I think along those lines tissue culture is going to be more important. If begonias are saved commercially, that's where it's going to be.

HAL: I think I read recently somewhere that B. *masoniana* is being tissue cultured.

KIT: Well, it is slow...

BOB: And everybody wants it. HEY! I thought about a hybrid I wish I'd made, B. 'Sophie Cecille'.

KIT: And B. 'Esther Albertine' for me. They're sister seedlings, aren't they?

BOB: I think so.

KIT: I can get 'Esther' to bloom, but NEVER 'Sophie'.

HAL: So the bottom line is, there are a lot of good hybrids out there, and they need to be grown and saved.

BOB: Oh, yes.

KIT: Right. When are you getting started?

HAL: Check, please!

Kit Jeans Mounger was visiting Florida from her home at 485 Cottontail Lane, Afton, TN 37616 when this interview occurred. Bob Koehler lives at 5300 48th Terrace N., St. Petersburg, FL 33709-3836 and H. Alton Lee resides at 5813 19th Avenue S., Gulfport, FL 33707-4023.



B. 'Kit Jeans Mounger' does indeed make a big plant with the giant, curled leaves for which Bob Koehler is noted. Photo by Midori Nobusawa, Atlanta 1998. Kit doesn't mention B. 'Fern Richardson', but this lovely thick-stem is sometimes available at ABS plant sales; it is an unusual cross of B. U029 (syn. B. 'Mystique') and B. reneformis. Photo is by Kit Jeans Mounger.

ABOUT HYBRIDIZING

Hybridizing is discussed below from a number of different viewpoints.

Hybridizing with a Purpose

by Greg Sytch, ABS Horticultural Correspondent

Part One

For all those would-be hybridizers who feel that this is an area best left to the more experienced, delight in knowing that hybridizing is just an easy way of playing bee or Genetics 101. It allows creativity, expression, and upon your first successful selection, elation.

I have found the most difficult part of hybridizing is the selection process. A successful cross can yield hundred of seedlings, most look-alikes. How is it possible to grow them all? It is not, even for myself with greenhouses and a mild climate. Then, how do you choose? You make your best guess!

Upon transferring male pollen to a female blossom, you should have a purpose in mind. List your priorities of a good hybrid and select accordingly.

In 1997, I crossed B. 'Flutterby' with B. 'Di-Anna'. My goal was to achieve the unusual and beautiful foliage of B. 'Flutterby' on a sturdier grower that would be easier to grow. I find B. 'Flutterby' a bit temperamental and its leaves curl and frill to such an extent that debris is often harbored near the petiole. This creates opportunity for disease. It can disfigure the specimen, and lastly, I do not have time to constantly preen the plant. I also find that B. 'Flutterby' blooms at an annoying pace--almost ever-

blooming--so cuttings can be difficult to come by (never snip a cutting from a bloom node). Do not get me wrong, I love B. 'Flutterby', but if I had a perfect world...

Everyone should know B. 'Di-Anna'. Fast, beautiful, lushly spotted leaves, everblooming, but not from every node. Rather compact, it is a survivor. In my perfect world, I would want B. 'Di-Anna' to transfer all of these positive traits, but retain the beauty of B. 'Flutterby'. Just tweak 'Flutterby' a little. So how does one select?

Part Two

The selection process begins. In this case, my cross of B. 'Flutterby' x B. 'Di-Anna' produced the usual hundred or more seedlings. I utilize the pastry clamshells from the supermarket for starting seeds, just sprinkling on the surface any seed that will release from the pod. In 7 to 21 days, green specks of growth appear (Hopefully not algae).

In 3 to 4 months, the seedlings are at the top of the container properly cared for--misted with a pinch of fertilizer and checked for water weekly. The top lid should be left slightly ajar for the last week to acclimate the seedlings. A riot of color is a feast for sore eyes as looking from above, selection seems impossible. They all look so beautiful.

One key thought to keep in mind when selecting cane seedlings is that at this age, most are very colorful, displaying much silver that should fade with maturity. Look for leaves with heavy spotting, curls, furls, frills, reds and roses. Not just the eye-catching silver streaks. I chose three dozen seedlings to pot into 3" pots, and they went straight into my propagation greenhouse. Here, it is warm, not too bright, and humid. In two months, they are ready for 4 1/2" pots. In two more months, they are ready for 6" pots. This is when the true selection begins.

As mature leaves unfurl, you will have a feel for the color, shape, and style each seedling will possess. Trash those

seedlings that do not meet criteria. In my case, by the time I repotted into two gallon pots, I had selected seven seedlings. Currently I have named three, all beautiful plants in three gallon pots. A few are "still being evaluated." But my biggest surprise came from the flowering. One is orange, another is orange-red, and still another is orange-salmon. Was it worth the effort? Yes! Is it easy? Yes! Just wait until you see B. 'Tequila Sunrise' or B. 'Tangerine Twist'. You'll know it was definitely worth it.

Greg who grows in Florida is another noted hybridizer with such beauties as B. 'Aripeka' and B. 'Kissammee' to his credit.

Hybridizing 101

by Patrick Worley

Part One

Hybridizing is more than just putting pollen to the stigma and planting the resulting seeds. Hybridizing can create new beauty and offers a challenge to even the most experienced grower. Anyone with the room to grow seedlings and time to watch them to maturity can become a hybridizer. The challenge comes with the selection of the parents and the eye and wisdom to determine what is worthy of further work. What is left must be relegated to the compost heap.

Everyone has a favorite technique for applying the pollen. I tap the pollen onto my fingernail and apply the pollen carefully and heavily to each of the three parts of the stigma. Others favor brushes to transfer the pollen. Care must be taken to insure that the pollen is cleaned from the brush between crosses. Alcohol is used to sterilize the brush and kill any unwanted pollen. The pollen can be taken

up from the small porcelain or glass dish. A baby food jar, painted black was a favorite tool in Leslie Woodriffs' hybridizing work.

Pollen can also be deposited directly from the male flower, but unless the pollen is shedding and is viable after direct contact this method is less reliable.

I maintain a collection of dried pollen. I collect the pollen during the bloom season and place it on small folded sheets of clean white paper. When the pollen is thoroughly dry I fold up the paper, label it with the date and species or hybrid name and place it in a plastic box.

I use alphabetical file separators to organize the collection. I place the whole box in a large zip-locking bag and place it on the bottom shelf of my refrigerator until I am ready to use some of the pollen. Pollen saved this way can last up to a year or more.

The physical process of hybridizing couldn't be easier: place the pollen from a male flower on the stigma of the female

flower. The flowers of both must be ready, the stigma receptive, and the male shedding pollen.

Planning a cross in advance allows us to be prepared to collect male flowers at maturity, hold them in a clean dry place and apply the pollen when the female parent is receptive.

The female is receptive when the flower has fully opened and the stigma fully expanded, usually in the day after the flower first opens. There is often a glistening appearance to the stigma. The stigma remains receptive for up to a week, depending on the species, humidity, temperature, and light.

The male flower is ready when the pollen starts dropping from the stamen and is shed onto the surrounding area. In cases where we want to cross two different plants, we are often presented with a problem. Often the male flowers from one plant have all fallen and the females are receptive. In most new world Begonias, the males bloom first, drop away, then the females open. If the male flower is not present simply use the reserved dried pollen. In this way any cross that one has planned can be done when the female flower is ready.

I use tape to label the cross listing the female parent first and the date. I purchase a pink hair curl tape that is easy to write on, water tolerant and easy to see. I stick the tape to the peduncle so that if the ripe pod should fall I can find it and identify it.

If the cross is successful, the petals will fall within a few days and the ovary will swell. The process of ripening can take from weeks to months depending

upon the plant. The pod is fully ripe when the peduncle dries and the pod is dried and has started to develop lesions or cracks. Care must be taken not to lose the seed. I place a small piece of paper, folded in half and then folded on one side, under the seed pod and strip it off with a small scissors so that I don't lose the seed. I then fold the paper on all sides so the seed will not spill out and label it as to parentage.

New hybridizers often start by cross pollinating two open flowers. I call this proximity hybridizing; easy to do and unless planned a bit, it can result in thousands of nice, but not very interesting offspring.

The method that I use and recommend to would-be hybridizers is to study first the literature. Find out the parentage of your favorite Begonia hybrids. Start looking at Begonias in books, in your own collection and see what features are avail-

able. Start a hybridizing program.

One must take small steps first to achieve an overall goal. An example of a modest plan would be to create a sturdy, compact, large flowered, deep red cane for windowsill growing. A long bloom cycle would be desirable. Set reasonable goals and select plants with features that fit into your plan. An everblooming plant with nice foliage and a compact plant with good habits could be crossed first.

Find two or three plants with desirable flowers and bloom season that fits your goals. By creating your own "stud plants" you can use the selected characteristics to create further crosses that advance your goal. Some name their plants that are appealing at each stage of hybrid-

The process of ripening can take from weeks to months depending upon the plant.

izing. As long as you select seedlings well this is one way to go about it. I tend to concentrate the features that I am seeking in a series of plants. Each, in its own way, contributes a known character to the offspring. By themselves, the "stud plants" or my stock plants may not be noteworthy, but when used in a cross they can give their unique traits, otherwise hidden, to the offspring.

By crossing two species one can create an F-1 generation that is more or less uniform. In the next generation, the characters of the parents are combined in a very regular way with one half resembling the first generation and the rest a mixture of traits. This generation is where we select our first stud parents.

When we cross two hybrids, unless we know the parentage, the results are often like tossing dice. Some hidden, or recessive characteristics can come to the fore and we may get many surprises. We can select a desirable plant from the progeny and self-pollinate it, then select again the seedlings that have the habit we are seeking. Two very similar seedlings, crossed together, enhance and stabilize the trait we are seeking. For example, if two of the seedlings have compact habit and we throw in red flowers, some of the offspring will have compact habit and red flowers. Since it takes some study to find out if this trait is passed on, we can use this new selection as a check plant to give a compact habit, red color, and pleasing size.

In the next step we want to enlarge the flower size. We select a plant with known large flowers, red if possible, but pink or a red-based coloring if necessary. We perform the cross with our compact red, grow on the seedlings, which all may be tall with large and small red flowers. We back cross our largest flowered offspring to another large flowered seedling from the same cross to give us a next generation from which we can select our com-

pact, red flowered, large flowered offspring.

Keeping some sort of written record is very helpful. One can also jot down what appear to be dominant and recessive characteristics for future work with these parents.

Part Two

The most important part of hybridizing is the selecting. Rather than naming every seedling it is necessary to test the seedlings. Next, make the selection. Time then to grit your teeth and throw away the leftovers.

What the world does not need is another look alike Begonia. The world does not need another Begonia name that will stay in the literature when the plant has been discarded as unworthy. The world does not need a plant that is beautiful to look at but impossible to grow under normal conditions. A six foot tall cane-like Begonia that requires a terrarium is unlikely to survive in cultivation.

The plant should be tested under different conditions, in a number of different areas of the county if possible. This gives the true measure of the plant.

I recall a story told to me by a great grower and friend, of a hybridizer who invited people over for a picnic. He had a table full of Begonia hybrids. Rex Begonias, I believe. The people at the party were told to go pick out a plant that they liked. My friend got "dregs", one that was not very attractive, because she was there late. The plants were given the name of the person that picked the plant.

What is wrong with this scenario? The plants were not selected for beauty, strength, or distinctiveness. This was more of an ego satisfying show. My friend's name was used on a Begonia, but one that she did not care for. Her name can never be used to honor a plant that is

worthy. Many plant groups list hundreds, even thousands of hybrids. The reason for selecting and using your good taste to select from among hundreds or even thousands is the love of Begonia.

If it is worth the effort to grow on the seedlings, it is worth the trouble to select, grow, bloom, and test. If you just want some fill your garden, great. This may be a way to test a large number of plants. If you live where it is cold, you can simply bring in the plants that performed well and let the others die a natural death.

Semperflorens and Tuberous Begonias are grown by the millions. They are, however, still selected and named when a perfect color or specimen does show up. The plants are vegetatively propagated thereafter and a clonal name is maintained.

The key to making a good decision is to develop what I like to call "The EYE." Here is a short list of things one can do to develop or improve the eye: 1. Examine your favorite plants, species as well as hybrids. Ask yourself what it is about the plant that appeals to you. What makes it special? What makes it distinctive? 2. Check your begonias especially those that are more commonly grown. Why are the older hybrids still being grown? Are they sturdier? Are they disease resistant? 3. Are the plants easy to propagate and maintain? Are they being grown in many different areas? Are they often listed as care-free? 4. Even though they may not be the most beautiful Begonias, do they have characteristics that when combined make them special or distinctive? 5. When compared to others of the group do they stand out in some way? Do they have features that make them instantly recognizable? 6. When you look at a group of your seedlings is there one that catches your eye every time? I have often done crosses that were new combinations, interesting and beautiful. They were weak, or over the

long run turned out to be difficult to grow. I have done some amazing combinations that gave me stunning plants that just couldn't make the cut. Some examples. I crossed *B. versicolor* with *B. cinnabarina*. The offspring showed both parents with gorgeous leaves and amazing orange flowers. The plant required terrarium care and after blooming it went dormant like a tuberous. It never again sprouted. I crossed *B. gehrtii* with *B. venosa*. The leaves were beautiful, but also so brittle. Just brushing against them would damage the leaves. Why give the world another heart-breaker of a plant that would just leave one with a handful of tattered chlorophyll?

If you manage to be strong and get rid of the extra plants, plants that don't make the cut or are too similar, but inferior to your selection, you can move on to testing. I use people in different parts of the country. They grow and don't tell. They test the plants under lights, in gardens, in bubble bowls or on window sills. I select people that can grow a good plant. This means they don't have to baby a plant.

One thing that I like about Begonias is ease of care. Your testers need to be honest, know many plants and be willing to toss out a plant. I mean really throw it away if you decide not to pursue it for any reason.

Don't let anyone talk you into naming or releasing a plant that you have decided is inferior. If they make a good case you might think it over, but always ask the questions.

When you decide that you have a worthwhile plant, take it or send it with permission to someone who would like to grow it and distribute it. The reward comes when people grow the plants, love the plants, and they are passed around as something worth growing.

Every cross is not gold. Remember that you are on a journey. Not every stop is going to yield a nugget, but every stop

will give you an experience. I have thrown out thousands of plants and hundreds of crosses. I have some crosses that still thrill me. I am not after numbers of named plants. I am after plants and hybrids that make me happy and delight my eyes.

If two plants from a cross look good, but not extremely different one could name both. Although some of the plants you don't choose might be discarded, consider if there are features about sister seedlings that might contribute to future hybrids. This give one an excuse to save a plant you just couldn't throw out.

If you do decide to register the plant that you have found distinctive, remember to list the female parent first, male second. Make sure that your cross is a cross and not a self-pollination. Recognizing this can only come with experience. I have heard of crosses that I have also done that proved sterile and in fact are sterile. They are listed as parents of certain hybrids. Probably the female was accidentally self-pollinated.

Giving a plant a good and distinctive name is probably the difficult part for me. I try on different names and see how they fit. When in doubt, and I can't seem to find a descriptive name, I will name it after a place, person or object that appeals to me.

Grow as many Begonias as you can. If you pick a group, such as rhizomatous,

familiarize yourself with the range of species and hybrids that are grown today.

I also suggest that you have fun. If you come up with something good and different, I will want it too! This may come off as too serious, that is not my intent. My intent is to encourage you to spend your time on something planned that can teach you about the plants. Learning about your plants makes them even more interesting to you. *Growing is sharing!* I love the surprises and I enjoy the thrill that I get when I look at beautiful Begonia. I have gained an appreciation of good hybridizing work and deepened my understanding of the species.

I decide what to cross based on what I would like to see. I won't describe any of my ideas to anyone. I don't talk about what I want to do. I do what I want to do. I fantasize then try to find ways to make it happen. I fail more often than I succeed, but when I do release a plant...I am proud of it.

Go forth and, selectively, multiply...

Patrick who hybridizes in Watsonville, CA has every right to be proud of such beauties as the distinctive B. 'Looking Glass', B. 'Paul Hernandez', and his many other great hybrids. This article first appeared in the newsletter of the Cascade Branch (OR) whom the editor thanks for permission to reprint it here.

Hybridizing Goals

by Brad Thompson

Do I have a goal in mind when I make a cross between two begonias? The answer is yes. Is that goal always the same? The answer is no. There are, however, two basic goals I have in mind in all crosses I do. One is to create something different and the second is to improve on something already done.

What hasn't been done? There are many traits in begonias that are still waiting to be developed or developed more, such as a yellow color in a semperflorens, a palmate leaf in a cane, a double flower in a cane or a rhizomatous, an orange color in a superba, etc. Those traits are drastic changes and may take years to develop.



Small-leaved rhizomatous hybrids are much sought after and Patrick Worley's B. 'Small Change', above, is one of them. Photo by Mary Bucholtz. But rhizomatous leaves with a double curl such as Brad Thompson's B. 'Euphrates', below, are equally popular. Photo by Iris Bird.



Although I work towards creating such drastically new types of begonias, usually my goals are more subtle, such as more silver spots, compact growth, or mildew resistance. An example is my cross of *B. 'Jumbo Jet'* with *B. dregei 'Glasgow'*. *B. 'Jumbo Jet'* has many good qualities: ease of culture, mildew resistance, very large flowers, and nicely cut leaves. "Faults" that it has are typical of many superba canes: winter leaf drop, bare bottom growth, sparser growth, and a tendency to grow tall. My reasoning was that if I crossed such a cane with *B. dregei* I could solve the faults in both parents and create a hybrid with the best of both. I chose a cane that isn't mildew prone to overcome the mildew prone problem of *B. dregei*. The rests of that cross were exactly as expected (this doesn't always happen, of course). The canes that resulted such as *B. 'Black Gold'*, were compact growing, full growing, didn't drop leaves in winter, but still retained the large flowers, ease of culture and mildew resistance of *B. 'Jumbo Jet'*. A side note: I chose to use *B. dregei 'Glasgow'* because it is the only *dregei* variety that doesn't lose its silver spotting on its leaves. As a general rule, crosses to make improvements are much more successful than crosses to create something highly unusual.

My second goal of creating something drastically new and different is more challenging. One obstacle to this goal is the fact that even if the cross is successful, I still have to be able to grow the resulting begonias to maturity. Unusual crosses are usually harder to grow than more "normal" crosses. I can't tell you how many times I have crossed a cane with *B. 'Charles Jaros'* and not been able to keep the results alive more than a season or two. The seedlings were exactly what I was trying for, canes with *B. 'Charles Jaros'* type leaves, but difficult to grow

outside a terrarium. The same goes for that elusive yellow superba cane. There are only a handful of yellow begonias to work with and all are terrarium plants, except for *B. pearcei*, which is tuberous. *B. pearcei* is the most likely choice to use since it is the easiest to grow and the best yellow. Canes cross easily with *B. pearcei* and the seed sprouts easily, but growing the seedlings has eluded me so far. They just refuse to grow, though I haven't given up. My new attack is to first try for a yellow shrub and then use that to create the yellow cane. I'll let you know; the seed is planted. As you can see, creating something highly unusual isn't always easy or it would have been done already, but don't give up.

The goal in hybridizing should always be to create something better, either easier to grow and maintain or something so unusual everyone will have to grow it no matter how difficult it is to grow.

Brad Thompson, former Begonian editor and prolific hybridizer, grows in Lomita, CA. Anyone who has seen his B. 'Little Miss Mummy' or B. 'Josephine' (see the March/April Begonian) knows that Brad does achieve both his goals. The editor hears that many plants of his hybrids will be available for us at the 1999 ABS Convention.

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More Worley and Thompson Hybrids.

Brad Thompson is noted for his cane hybrids as well as the rhizomatous. Here, above, we see B. 'Maria Holmes' (B. 'Hanna Serr' x 'Orange Rubra') in a photo of her plant of this hybrid by Iris Bird taken in July of 1998/ It is, she says, the same every year, full of flowers all year long.

Patrick Worley has developed some very unusual, as well as gorgeous hybrids such as B. 'Paul Hernandez' (B. luxurians x B. gehrtii) to the right. Photo is by Mary Bucholtz.



Too many hybrids...or are there?

There are way too many hybrids out there. How many are going to be grown a hundred years from now? Ten years? And really, how many are “distinctive”? Our downfall is that begonias are so easy to cross and (relatively) cheap to grow. I sometimes feel that the way “to make a name for yourself” as a hybridizer is to sow and raise every seed in a pod (begonias are just too damn fertile) and release them with a clever name. Saw the same problems at a daylily show. Wouldn’t it be grand if we had the same rules as the American Kennel Club? And that it took twenty generations and fifty years to hybridize a new breed (cultivar)? And we had to pay a ten-grand stud fee before we could cross begonias?

Hybridizers should be allowed to cross all the begonias they want. Why not? It is, as conventional wisdom goes, still a free country. But should they be “allowed” to be shown? Why should they? Can’t we set our own standards? For example: No cultivars may be entered in a national show (and hopefully even regional or branch shows), classified, judged or considered for an award that has not been officially registered as a cultivar with the ABS Nomenclature Committee.

I will allow, from my position of wisdom, power and authority here on Mount Olympus, to allow such mutts and mongrels to be displayed in a dusty, poorly-lighted corner of the banquet hall next to the kitchen.

If the hybridizer thinks a cultivar is worth releasing in the first place, he/she should make the effort to see that it is properly evaluated by several geographically

diverse growers, fill out the proper paperwork, pay the fee, and do all the follow-up needed. And I certainly don’t mean filling out fifty forms for fifty seedlings from the same pod, sending out a hundred dollar check and expecting the Nomenclature or Judging Committee to do all the research and work.

Consider, those of you out there who hybridize, that you will name and register no more than five cultivars a year. That’s fifty cultivars in the next decade if you’re under eighty years old. Do you honestly think you can’t build a reputation as a hybridizer on fifty truly distinctive, tested and proven, and registered cultivars?

These little Pearls of Wisdom are not directed at any one individual; they are just my rantings. I suggest if you are an “organic” grower, you can dissolve my opinions in large amounts of water, sprinkle them on your begonias, and stand back and watch them grow!

~Doug Hahn, Ohio

I have heard this complaint about too many varieties of plants. Almost anything that is in cultivation is being heavily hybridized, including orchids that are really a pain to grow from seeds. At first thought, it does make sense to say we have too many hybrids and perhaps should limit them. Then I realize the real answer is “Why?” It does not cause any harm to have lots of hybrids. There is no finite number of different varieties we can raise. We can have as many as we want. Oh yes, we each have individual limitations on our space; *that is where individual*

choice comes in. It is not that having a particular hybrid is pushing out some other plant and causing it to die. The excess of hybrids is not weakening the gene pool or causing a loss of valuable species. It may be cluttering up some of our greenhouses, but that is curable.

Why not have as many hybrids as we want and let the market sort them out? Those plants that are weak, not attractive, or otherwise unworthy will soon disappear. I don't mean every hybrid should be named and distributed. Any hybridizer who consistently distributes inferior hybrids will ultimately pay the penalty in loss of reputation. Obviously, the hybridizer should use some discretion, but it is not a serious offense if a variety gets named and grown for a few years and then is deemed to be unworthy. The gene pool will survive and so will the growers. Maybe that inferior plant will, at some point, be used as a parent and produce a superior offspring.

As my mind wandered through this discussion I realized that begonia hybrids were a lot like books. There are millions of books written every year. Many of them are not very good and will not be read by very many people. A hundred years from now most will not be in print and the majority will be totally forgotten. Even

though they will not stand the test of time, none of us advocate limiting the writing of books to just those that are good. The obvious first question is "Who is to decide whether a book (or begonia) is good?" Ultimately it is the author and the public who make that decision. In the case of begonias, or any other plants, it is the hybridizer and the growers who decide what is worthy of growing and what should be consigned to the compost heap. So my vote is for variety and choice.

~Kathy Goetz, Oregon

Doug really knows how to stir up a debate while Kathy demonstrates that our members have strong opinions on this topic. Perhaps other readers would like to join in the debate with a letter to the editor on the topic of hybridizing?

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Growing Organic, or, with a little help from our friends ...

Sometimes the words of songs infect the brain, driving out weightier matters. Several play through for me now. There's one that goes "ah, the lazy, hazy, dazy days of summer..." - or something like that. But what's so lazy about battling weeds and insects in the heat of late summer?

In the last issue we wrote about mulch, that great time saver, back-saver, plant saver that's attractive, too. It surely does help with the weeding problem. As for the insects, you can call on other resources for help. Some of them fly. Some hop. Some swim.

Yes, animals belong in your organic garden. Not all animals, of course - an elephant would undoubtedly be a disaster, and goats aren't much better. I'm talking smaller beasts here, from the enchanting little ladybugs and fierce praying mantis, or the aerial acrobats like purple martins and swallows, so well-known as pest eaters, to more homely folk. Specifically, let's talk toads and frogs.

Toads and frogs are amphibians. Worldwide, they're dying off. Like begonia species, they are "survival-chal-

lenged." But you don't have to encourage these little animals just out of your beneficence; they'll repay your interest by consuming pests ranging from mosquito larva to white flies. Unlike beneficial insects and birds, they swim and consume underwater threats, too.

To attract and hold these amphibious friends you don't need fancy houses or feeders; there's no grooming involved, either. All it takes is water, and not very much of it at that. Frogs need a pond, true, but it needn't be elaborate or big, and they'll share it happily with aquatic plants. Toads are even more modest in their needs: just supply them with a damp spot and some sort of shelter; a low place in your garden and a broken flower pot that simulates a cave will do nicely. If you're lucky, a toad will take up residence and stay for years.

Put away the sprays - your garden will be healthier for you as well as your animal friends, and smell better as well. Stop with the swatting! Enjoy the spring peepers' song and the occasional croak, see if you can catch the swift dart of your insect-eating friends' long tongue. Enjoy your garden-dwelling buddies. Maybe the lazy days of summer can become just that.



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Read about the Miami Branch annual show on page 154 of this issue, but see two winners here. Charles Jaros won Best In Show and Best Rex Cultorum with B. 'Whistle Stop'. Joyce Pridgen won Best Shrub-Like and People's Choice Award with B. 'Homosassa' (B. *ulmifolia* X 'Winter Jewel' by Michelson, FL, 1976). Photos by Charles Jaros.



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B. dichotoma, left, is fast growing, but does not like cold weather. Below, *B. bufoderma* has slightly ruffled leaves as well as ruffled tepals on its female blooms.



The Seed Fund would appreciate receiving donations of any fresh seed. Members have requested the following seed: *B. acetosa*, *ampla*, *brevicaulis*, *cathayana*, *circumlobata*, *angularis* 'Compta', , *decora*, *diadema*, *floccifera*, *hemsleyana*, *hydrocotylifolia*, *leathermaniae* (syn. *platanifolia* var. *accuminatissima*), *leprosa*, *lindleyana*, *listada*, *manii*, *nepalensis*, *olsoniae*, *paranaensis*, *philodendroides*, *platanifolia*, *polygonoides*, *pseudolubbersii*, *roezlii*, *sharffii*, *sharpiana*, *solimutata*, *stigmosa*, *strigillosa* (syn. *daedalea*), *subnummularifolia*, *tacanana*, *tayabenses*, *thomsonii*, and *wollnyi*. There are also requests for seeds from the hybrids: *B.* 'Erythrophylla', 'Madame Queen', 'Oliver Twist', 'Scrooge', and 'Bunchii'. **The need for new seeds to distribute is becoming acute.** Please help us by selfing species and collect seeds to be contributed (or exchanged) to enlarge and enhance your Society Seed Bank. Please be careful to identify open pollinated seeds and keep them separated from known self-pollinated seed. Thank you!

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JA99-2: *B. carrieae*
JA99-3: *B. cubensis* (Syn. *B. cubincola*)
JA99-4: *B. dichotoma*
JA99-5: *B. fimbriata* (\$2.00)
JA99-6: *B. sericoneura* (syn. *hypolipara*)
JA99-7: *B. lyman-smithii*
JA99-8: *B. petasitifolia* (lmted. supply - \$2.00)

DESCRIPTIONS

JA99-1: *B. bufoderma* (Smith & Wasshausen). A beautiful shrub-like species with medium to large leaf blades and interesting white flowers. Rare in cultivation.

JA99-2: *B. carrieae* (Ziesn.) Mexico. Branching rhizomes, large, lime green, rugose, lobed leaves, white blossoms in late winter to early spring.

JA99-3: *B. cubensis* (Hasskarl) (Syn. *B. cubincola*) W. I., Cuba. Shrub-like, dainty small rippled green leaves, white to pink blossoms in spring and summer.

JA99-4: *B. dichotoma* (Jacquin) Columbia. Venezuela. Thick-stemmed to 3 foot or taller, orbicular to ovate green leaves to 12 in. long, shallowly lobed; small white flowers in winter.

JA99-5: *B. fimbriata* (Liebmann) Mexico. Rhizomatous; leaves lobliquely ovate, toothed, ciliate, reddish-hairy; red blossoms, ovary pilose. This description from the literature may not describe the plants from these seeds! Another possibility is a variety of *B. micranthera*, a tuberous species.

JA99-6: *By sericoneura* (Sandwith) (Syn. *B. hypolipara*) Honduras. Rhizomatous, trunk-like non-ramified; basifixed cordate green leaves with prominent veins and reddish hairs; profuse white flowers in spring.

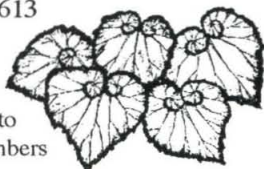
JA99-7: *B. lyman-smithii* (Burt-Utley) Mexico. Creeping rhizomes; leaves are oblique, asymmetric, cordate base, rounded tip, lower surface deep red, upper surface dark green with reddish margin; pink flowers in spring. See photo *Begonian* 65, January/February 1998, cover, pg. 1.

JA99-8: *B. petasitifolia* (Brade) Brazil. Rhizomatous; round green leaves with long petioles; white blossoms. See photo *Begonian*: 61, July/August 1994; pg. 133.

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The Catalogue of Registered Cultivars by Ivy McFarlane and Debbie Weber, \$28 including postage.

The Begonian Index by Pat Williams. \$12 including postage.

Growing Begonias by Peter Sharp (see review next page). \$25. including postage.

From the Millie Thompson Publication Fund (Cost of publications goes to fund.) :

Tuberous Begonias and How to Grow Them by Howard Siebold. \$5. plus \$1.75 postage.

Raising Cane by Freda Holley. \$5. plus \$1.75 postage.

And Back Issues of the Begonian: \$5/year or \$1/issue. Remember, Branches may request back issues as handouts for special occasions at the cost of postage.

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Book Review

Tamsin Boardman reviews:

Growing Begonias

by Peter G. Sharp

72 pages, softcover, 92 color plates. Kangaroo Press, Australia, 1998

Growing Begonias is the latest begonia book published in Australia and features helpful information in an attractive and easy to use format.

Peter Sharp is the longtime newsletter editor for the New South Wales Begonia Society. He has written for *Begonia Australis* (journal of AABS, Association of Australia Begonia Societies) and contributed several articles to the *Begonian*. His work is intelligent, literate, entertaining, so it comes as no surprise that his book is well-written, well-edited.

Still, there are some surprises in store. The style is crisp, businesslike in tone, with none of the philosophy and humor we've come to associate with Peter's work; this is not a complaint. Clear, concise writing is ease to understand and all too rare. Perhaps the serious tone is an indication of his extreme dedication to the topic, or a clue that growing begonias is serious work. Certainly the project was a serious one for the author, written to fulfill a need. It's almost entirely a one-man job: Peter took the photos (and grew many of the plants therein), did the line drawings, compiled the index, steered it through the publishing process -- all within the last year, when he was also volunteering (with the begonias, of course) at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney and serving as chair for the 1998

convention of the AABS. Let's hope he is resting a bit now.

Content is covered by the title. The emphasis here is on growing begonias. After Part I, a brief overview of the history of the family and its different types, Peter gets right down to the basics in Part II: where to grow begonias, in what kind of media, fertilizers, and maintenance (watering, pests, diseases, pots). Then it is on to culture of the different groups in Part III. Each chapter in this part ends with a list of recommended plants; most of the names will be familiar to AABS members, but some are Australian hybrids. One helpful chapter concerns growing the elatior/rieger types, a begonia group readily available from florists almost year-round, but often ignored in begonia literature.

Part IV is entitled "Other Ways with Begonias" and mentions--very briefly!--terrariums, miniatures, companion plantings, and hybridizing before getting into propagation in Part V. Part VI is a short bit on handy hints and problem solving, all based on personal experience. Here's an interesting one: "Don't repot in late autumn or winter. As growth virtually ceases in the cold months, the plant does not have a chance of settling into its new pot; also, being slightly pot-bound during winter reduces the risk of over-watering."

The color plates appear in two sections of 8 pages each. Most are good clear shots of individual begonias on the recommended lists, labeled, and will be of help in identification; some give a tantalizing glimpse of Australian hybrids. There are also lovely shots of begonias outdoors at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Australia; and shots from Vienna and Holland as well as one of the author's courtyard. Four of the photos illustrate leaf propagation.

Begonia Bytes

by Kathy Goetz,
Internet Editor

I hope many of you have checked out the new web page at:

<http://www.begonias.org>

We are getting a lot of traffic and the feedback has been very helpful. We have also gotten a number of new members who found us through the web page. This is a great way to reach out to people worldwide, introduce them to growing begonias, and encourage them to join the ABS.

Our latest addition is a listing of the current seeds that are available from the seed fund. Buying seeds from the seed fund is, of course, a members only privilege and that is clearly stated on the page.

Building a Stronger American Begonia Society

by Andy Conely,
ABS Public Relations Director

As your Public Relations Director I wish to thank everyone that responded to my cry for "Help" in the May/June issue of the *Begonian*. Now let us attack another problem at the local level.

Thirty years ago ABS was a stronger society, with perhaps a membership of 6,000. Today we have 1200 members.

The ABS is not the only society where membership is down. Most plant societies are losing ground. There are two

Hopefully, nonmembers who want to buy seeds will see the advantage of joining the ABS. This is the only way they can have access to the begonia seeds that are offered. We would like to add pictures of plants grown from seed fund seeds as well as some articles about growing begonias from seed. If you have pictures of plants that you have grown from seed fund seeds, please send them to me so I can scan them and post them on the web page. I will return your pictures as soon as they are scanned. Send them to Kathy Goetz, 935 W. Isabell St., Lebanon, Oregon 97355. If you have a scanner, we can probably work out some way to transfer the pictures electronically.

We also need to increase our information about the branches. If your branch has a web page, let us know so we can link to it. Also, send us any branch news or interesting articles from your branch newsletter. It is a great way to get some publicity for your branch at no cost.

prominent exceptions: The Herb Society; The Cactus and Succulent Society. Why are these two societies an exception to the rule? One reason: Every nursery and home center has a great selection of herbs, at least seasonally. the same goes for cactus and succulents.

There are many reasons why ABS, and other societies, have been losing members over the last three decades. Two reasons that are obvious to this begonia "nut" are the lack of available plants for the public to buy and the demise of the old fashioned nurserymen.

One way to gain members is by making our named species and hybrids available to the retail nursery trade. How would the action gain members? The average "informed" gardener and nursery worker knows very little about the genus

Begonia. They don't even recognize many of our plants as begonias! Once they know about our plants, the ABS is the natural source of more information. The *Begonian* is a great salesman.

Let's give our society greater exposure with the modern nursery. Extra copies of the *Begonian* could be mailed at very low cost to ABS (it currently costs about 16 cents to mail one copy using our bulk rate permit). We need to create the desire in others that we have within ourselves to know and grow begonias.

Please send the names, addresses and phone numbers (contact names would

be great) of your favorite nurseries and garden centers. Please mail or e-mail your list to:

Andrew Conely
4575 Elm Court
Denver, CO 80211-1442

Or E-mail me at:

sierra_vista_gardens@juno.com

If you or your branch would like to contribute towards the expense of mailing and printing, please do. Mail your contribution to Membership Chairman, John Ingles, Jr. with a note to use the funds for "public relations."

Editor's Notes

Well, dear readers, your nomad editor has landed once again. Her new address will be found on page 158 of this issue. Don't you love the name of our street, Gardenbrook? Do you really believe as my husband does that it influenced the choice of the house? And it has azaleas, camellias, gardenias, and lots of shade for begonias which is fortunate because the heat is already high. After the cool of the Ozarks, I will be learning all over again how to grow begonias and which ones like this climate (about 150 miles north of Houston and with similar temperatures and humidity).

I hope you enjoy the articles about hybridizing in this issue as well as I did. I had the opportunity to once again visit my store of photos; it is so great to have photos of the plants discussed. Remember if I haven't yet used a photo you've sent, I continue to go through all of them for each issue. I especially need vertical photos that I can use for the front cover. It is usually impossible to properly frame a horizontal photo for that purpose and

unfortunately most begonias seem to lend themselves best to horizontal photos, but next time you see or have a great plant try to get both a vertical and horizontal shot. When you have it, please do share. My special thanks to all the writers and photographers who made this issue a pleasure to do.

And on the subject of writing, I could use more articles slanted toward the beginner. We add new members each month and they are eager to read about the basics. Although we rely on the branches and the Members at Large newsletters to supply much of the information that beginners need, there is still a place for this in the *Begonian*. If any of you could write a short monthly column for the beginner, I'd love to have it, or even just an article about some basic technique you've learned or problem you've solved. There is also a continuing request for information on tuberous begonia growing. I can always use articles about your favorite begonia complete with growing information. Remember, an editor can only present the articles she receives and they are not always in abundant supply! Write one today!

~Freda Holley

Conservation News

by **Tamsin Boardman,**
Conservation Chair

At the Southwest Region Get-Together this year, members donated \$216 to the ABS Conservation Department. Then John Howell (who had entered 62 plants in the show, garnering several division trophies and winning both "Showing is Sharing" and Sweepstakes) continued his tradition of donating some of his show entries for a silent auction, with proceeds to benefit the Conservation Department. This year John's plants brought in \$365. Thank you SWR and John!

Up in Massachusetts, Wanda Macnair is in demand as a speaker. Her speaker fees find their way into the ABS treasury, earmarked for conservation. Thank you, Wanda!

What do we do with your donations? The occasional "big ticket" item is a collecting trip. Gone are the days when plant explorers took off for several years (sometimes decades) and accompanied other explorers (soldiers bent on conquest, expeditions searching for gold, surveyors mapping conquered lands) living off the land while drawing, describing, and trying to keep collected specimens alive for the months-long journey back to a Europe crazy for new introductions. Today collectors travel by air (whether it's more comfortable is now debatable) and all-terrain vehicles, tramping the forests only towards the end of their journey. They carry all sorts of high-tech cameras, computers, and other equipment as well as drawing materials and plant presses. They're still likely to be gone for months. It's expensive.

You might think there are no unexplored areas left; and that all the begonias have already been found. Not so. New

species are described every few years - even with all our modern aids, the process of describing and naming a new find is long and involved.

So the big, dramatic thing we do with your donations is help to sponsor plant exploration. I want to mention here that the Association of Australian Begonia Societies is also heavily involved in this, and contributed generously to our last project, Scott Hoover's Malaysia trip.

On a lesser scale, but continuing basis we have other projects. The Species Listing Project, headed by John Howell, let's us know which begonia species are currently in cultivation, which are rare, which are common, so that we can direct our efforts to keep them alive, at least in cultivation. The Adopt-A-Species program has members who pledge to nurture, study, and distribute one or more begonia species. There's a hand-out on recycling tips, and we've introduced a "recycled container" division in begonia shows - its designed to be fun, but also encourage creative use of discarded materials. These don't take as much money as the collecting trips, but they aren't expense-free either.

The Conservation Department doesn't receive a set sum monthly from ABS. It operates entirely on donations. Again, thank you, John, Wanda, and so many more of you who help preserve begonia species. We can't save all the begonia habitat that's being bulldozed and burned worldwide; but we can help keep begonia species alive in cultivation. There's always the hope that someday these jewels of the rainforest can be returned and reintroduced in their homelands.

BEGONIA KALEIDOSCOPES

ABS CONVENTION 1999

September 1-5, 1999

We hope you have received your Convention Packets and have already signed up for the tours, banquets and luncheons and your hotel accommodations. If you haven't received your Packet please call Janet Brown at 310-670-4471 or Email **JBBROWN3@aol.com** as we want everyone to be with us in September to enjoy a wonderful celebration of begonias.

If you have never been to an ABS Convention now is the time to make your debut. You may feel shy or hesitant as I did when I was a new member. My first out of town adventure was to Oklahoma city in 1997. The friendliness and warmth and love of begonias was overwhelming and I was hooked. I have never missed one since and each year have met more new friends and learned more about begonias. We will make you feel very welcome and surround you with beautiful begonias to look at, both in the Show and at various gardens around the Southland, and to take home with you at the truly magnificent sale. We'll try to make it easy for you to get those plants home with packing instructions and solutions.

The Plant Sale is going to be incredible. Elves all over Southern California and elsewhere are at work propagating just what you will be looking for, knowing as if by

Some lucky person will take home this beautiful Kaleidoscopic Terrarium designed and made by Marty Korobkin.



magic your desires. Rudy Ziesenhennel will have species you can't find anywhere else. Mike Kartuz will have rhizomatous and Rex begonias that are unique and many other exotic plants as well. Evelyn Weidner has gorgeous new introductions from Europe. The final plant buying coup will be at Elda Regimbal's Garden on Sunday. But your Garden of Begonia Delights will be at the Plant Sale, Embassy Suites-LAX South. Be sure to be first in line on opening night. We'll take care of everything else.

See you in September. You'll Love L.A. and L. A. will love you.

*~Janet Brown, Convention Chairman,
Katsuko Nakagawa, Co-Chairman,
Irene Nuss, Honorary Chairman, and
The 1999 ABS Convention Committee.*

News: ABS, Branch, and International

The **Southwest Region** Get-Together in Ft. Worth was well attended and enjoyed by all. Here is a report by **Barbara Nuñez** excerpted from the Potomac Branch Newsletter: "Just returned from the Southwest Roundup in Fort Worth, Texas. What a city! We stayed just outside the downtown area which was rebuilt in recent years by the Bass brothers. The Fort Worth Botanical Gardens with its wonderful begonia collection is close to the Cultural Center of the City and a lovely facility. The show and sale were held there along with seminars and meetings. ..We arrived in time to check in and go on the garden tour of the Botanical Gardens Thursday afternoon. It is a large and beautiful place--large grounds with grass areas--with a separate Japanese Garden and restaurant. Also it is a favorite place for weddings. The hotel provided a buffet breakfast so we started our mornings there. The morning was the judging and...after lunch there were workshops--one on making terrariums by **Chuck McGough**; the other on wall pockets using old screens rolled up and stuffed with unmilled sphagnum moss with plant plugs inserved given by **Tom Keepin**. The plant sale opened Friday night and we found *B. carolineifolia* and a few other plants to take back with us. Saturday morning we attended seminars..." The Best of Show and Best Rex Cultorum awards went to **Virginia Kettler** of Houston for her very lovely B. 'Benitochiba'. **John Howell** took the Showing is Sharing Award and Sweepstakes with 16 blue ribbons as well as division awards for Best Shrub-like (B. 'Madeline Madsen'), Best Rhomatous, Distinctive Foliage (B. 'Cathedral'), and Best SW Region Hybrid (B. 'Peach Melba'). Other division awards went to

George Macias, Lisa Holmes, Don Miller, Leora Fuentes, Elaine Gordon, Bobbie McFadden, Charles McGough, John Langevin, and Lucille Dyess. Cultural Awards went to **John Howell, Virginia Kettler, Don Miller, George Macias, John Langevin, and Lucille Dyess**. Unfortunately, photos were not available by the closing date for this issue.

The **Miami Branch** (FL) held its annual show "Begonia Stars", May 1 and 2, 1999 at Fairchild Tropical Garden. 107 beautiful entries greeted visitors as they entered the show. Branch Member **Joyce Pridgen** was the grand prize winner, entering 31 exhibits and winning 26 blue ribbons. Joyce also won 20 division awards with her fantastic plants. Best in Show and Best Rex Cultorum was won by **Charles Jaros** with B. 'Whistle Stop'. Other division winners included **Alma Crawford, Charles Sibley, Armando Nodal and Dale Sena**. 19 cultural certificates were awarded at the show. The People's Choice Award went to B. 'Homosassa' which also won Best Shrub-like and was exhibited by **Joyce Pridgen**.

The **Doug Frost Branch** (CA) will be participating in the ABS 1999 Convention in September, but they will follow that with a potluck dinner meeting at **Ed Vogel's** home on September 15th giving them a good chance to discuss their convention experiences.

Whittier Branch (CA) had a tour of the Monrovia Nursery in May to learn about the new landscaping plants this wholesaler is making available at retail nurseries this year.

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Pronunciation of Begonia Ephithets for the Begonian, 66: July/August, 1999

by Jack Golding

acetosa	ay-se-TOH-suh
ampla	AMP-luh
angularis	ang-yew-LAY-ris
'Compta' hort.	KOMP-tuh
brevicaulis	brev-i-KAW-lis
bufoderma	byew-FOH-der-muh
carrieae	kar-REE-ee
cathayana	kath-ay-AY-nuh
cavallyensis	ka-val-li-EN-sis
chlorosticta	klo-ro-STIK-tuh
cinnabarina	sin-na-bar-EYE-nuh
circumlobata	sir-kum-lo-BAY-tuh
cubensis	kyew-BEN-sis
syn. <i>cubicola</i>	kew-bin-KOH-luh
diadema	deye-a-DEE-muh
dichotoma	deye-KOHT-o-muh
dichroa	DEYE-kroh-uh
dregei	DREG-e-eye
fimbriata	fim-bri-AY-tuh
floccifera	flok-si-FEE-ruh
gehrtii	GEHRT-i-eye
hemsleyana	hem-slee-AY-nuh
leathermaniae	leth-er-MAN-i-ee
syn. <i>platanifolia</i>	plat-an-i-FOH-li-uh
var. <i>acuminatissima</i>	uh-kyew-min-a-tis-SEYE-muh
leprosa	lep-ROH-suh
lindleyana	lind-ley-AY-nuh
listada	lis-TAH-duh
luxurians	lux-YEWR-i-ans
lyman-smithii	lyman-SMITH-i-eye
mannii	MANN-i-eye
masoniana	MAY-son-i-ay-nuh
nepalensis	ne-pal-EN-sis
olsoniae	ohl-SOHN-i-ee
paranaensis	pa-ra-na-EN-sis
pearcei	PEARCE-eye
petasitifolia	pet-uh-si-ti-FOH-li-uh

philodendroides	fil-oh-den-dro-EYE-dee
platanifolia	plat-an-i-FOH-li-uh
polygonoides	pol-i-gon-o-EYE-deez
pseudolubbersii	syew-doh-LEWY-ber-si-eye
ravenii	RAY-ven-i-eye
reneformis	ren-i-FORM-s
roezlii	REEZ-li-eye
scharffii	SCHARFF-i-eye
sericoneura	ser-i-kon-OO-ruh
syn. <i>hypolipara</i>	heye-pol-i-PAY-ruh
sharpiana	shar-pe-AY-nuh
solimutata	sol-i-myew-TAY-tuh
stigmosa	stig-MOH-suh
strigillosa	stri-gil-LOH-suh
syn. <i>daedalea</i>	dee-DAY-le-uh
subnummularifolia	sub-num-mul-ar-i-FOH-li-uh
tacanana	ta-kan-AY-nuh
tayabensis	tay-a-BEN-sis
thomsonii	thom-SOHN-i-aye
ulmifolia	ulm-i-FOH-li-uh
venosa	ven-OH-suh
versicolor	ver-si-KOH-lor
wollnyi	WOHLL-ni-eye

Quick Tips for Terrariums

When putting a relatively small begonia in a large terrarium, try putting your plant in the center third of the terrarium instead of filling the entire area with it. This helps keep from having too much moisture in the terrarium. Then as the plant grows and its roots spread out, add more planting mix to the terrarium.

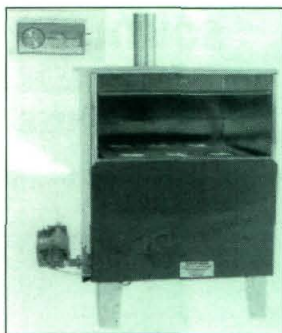
Check your terrariums moisture level ever month or two by putting your finger or moisture meter deep into the soil to make certain it's not just the surface soil that's moist.

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Harbor City, CA

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COMING EVENTS

September 1-5, 1999: Begonia Kaleidoscopes, ABS Convention, hosted by Westchester Branch, Los Angeles, CA. Come on August 31 to be there for the first tour on Wednesday morning, September 1. The show will close at 4 PM on September 5. Hotel is Embassy Suites, Los Angeles Airport - South, 1440 East Imperial Avenue, El Segundo, CA 90145, Ph: 310-640-3600. Free Shuttle. See page 153 this issue for the latest information.

August 21-22, 1999: San Francisco Branch (CA) Show and Sale. Contact Carl Laipple at 650-873-4890 for more information.

October 2-3, 1999: Palomar Branch (CA) Show of Begonias at Casa del Prado in Balboa Park. Contact Eleanor Calkins at 760-746-4743 for more information.

March 25-26, 2000: Begonia Convention 2000 will be held at the Haven Motel, Glenelg, Adelaide, Australia. The South Australian Begonia Society invites all to attend. For information write to the Convention Secretary, Mrs. Myrnie Jennings, 4 Kinnaird Crescent, Highbury, South Australia, 5089.

**Closing date for the September/October *Begonian* is
July 20!**

The Begonian

Editor: Freda M. Holley, 1716
Gardenbrook Dr., Nacogdoches, TX 75961-
2107, Ph: 409-462-8898, E-mail:
fholley@dotcom.net

**Consulting Editors: Tamsin Boardman
and Jan Brown.**

Nomenclature Editor: Jack Golding,
33 Ingram Drive, Cranbury, NJ 08512- 4641,
E-mail: JGBEGNOM@aol.com

Quick Tips: Maria Holmes, #144, 760
W. Lomita Bl., Harbor City, CA
90710-2517. E-mail:
mariaholmes@worldnet.att.net

Advertising Staff:

Display Ads: Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box
452, Tonkawa, OK 74653, Ph: 580- 628-
5230

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

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circulation to John Ingles, Jr., 157
Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617,
Ph: (707) 764-5407;
Email: ingles@humboldt1.com**

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254-728-3485

Past President.....Ann Salisbury,
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2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123;
Ph: 415-931-4912, E-mail:
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Branch Relations.....Mary Bucholtz,
1560 Lancaster Terrace #1008
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Ph: 707-764-5407; Email:
ingles@humboldt1.com

Conservation.....Tamsin Boardman,
P.O. Box 69, Bluff Dale, TX 76433; Ph:
254-728-3485

Convention Advisor.....Mary Elizabeth
Moultrie, 3710 Cochise Dr., Atlanta, GA
30339

Convention ChairmanJanet Brown,
7825 Kentwood, Los Angeles, CA 90045;
Ph: 310-670-4471

Entries/Classification....Leora Fuentes,
2200 Glen Forest Ln., Plano, TX 75023; Ph:
972-964-6417

Internet Editor...Kathy Goetz, 935 W. Isabella
Street, Lebanon, Oregon 97355; Ph: 541-258-
7517. E-Mail: goetzk@dnc.net

Historian.....Norma Pfrunder, 1958 Sycamore
Ct., McKinleyville, CA 95519-3900

Horticultural Correspondent...Gregory R.
Sytych, 6319 Alaska, Avenue, New Port Richey,
FL 34653-4301; Ph: 813-841-9618

Judging...Maxine Zinman, R.1, Box 73,
Boyce, VA 22620; Ph: 540-837-2011

Members-at-Large....Elaine Ayers,
3939 Lee Heights Bld., Cleveland, OH
44128; E-mail: elainea400@aol.com

Membership....John Ingles, Jr.,
157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617;
Ph: 707-764-5407

Nomenclature.....Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box
451, Tonkawa, OK 74653; Ph: 580-628-
5230

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

Public Relations....Andrew Conley, 4575
Elm Court, Denver, CO 80211-1442; E-mail:
sierra_vista_gardens@juno.com

Research.....Kelton Parker, 4525 N. Hiway
171, Cleburne, TX 76031; E-mail:
begspbk1@airmail.net

Round Robin.....Virginia Hamann
1169 Lincoln Ave., Chester IA 52134-8508; Ph:
319-565-4208

Seed Fund.....Eleanor Calkins, 910 Fern
St., Escondido, CA 92027; Ph: 760-746-
4743

Slide Library.....Charles Jaros
200 Maureen Dr., Sanford, FL 32771;
Ph: 407-328-0618.



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