



The

Begonian

March/April 2001

The **Begonian**

ISSN 0096-8684

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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Membership (subscription) \$17 annually, \$23 first class mail, US, Mexico, and Canada. \$27 foreign surface mail except Mexico and Canada, \$37 Overseas airmail. Added member, same household, \$2. Consult Membership Chairman for sustaining, benefactor, life membership dues. U.S. currency only. Back issues (current volume) \$2.50.

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Cover

Front: Joyce Pridgen grew this *B. ‘Hastor’*, another of the unique hybrids by Patrick Worley who says it is a cross of a dark-leaved form of *B. plehja*, known as *B. brooksii* at the time he grew it, and *B. incarnata*. Joyce’s lovely plant was exhibited in the Palm Beach 2000 Convention and photographed by Doug Pridgen.

Back: Tamsin Boardman photographed this bevy of *B. imperialis* type hybrids growing under the bench at Palm Hammock Nursery in May 2000.

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B. hatacoa

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Denver
Beckons You
in
July 2001!

Quick

Check your mailing label. If it reads 200105 or 200106 , your membership is about to expire. Please renew! We don’t want to lose you.

President's Message...

Let's hope spring is right around the corner. With ice storms in Oklahoma, blizzards in the Northeast and record cold in the South, I think we are all ready for the first signs of spring.

Here in Central Florida this past winter we had two weeks where low temperatures were in the mid-twenties to low thirties and teens in many places. My begonias were certainly not happy campers. Luckily enough I had only minor damage in the shade house. Singed leaves from those that were on the perimeter of the shadehouse. Those that were unlucky enough to remain outside are toast; don't believe these will revive this spring as we had between 5 to 7 freezes. My rhizomatous delayed in blooming due to the weather and plants were mostly at a standstill. There are always those that thrive no matter what. My *B. masoniana*, *B. U010* and *B. 'Withlacoochee'* are good examples. *B. masoniana* is in a 12" pot and is completely solid with leaves, doesn't seem to mind the colder temperatures. I wonder in what conditions it was collected at in China? I also have acquired a *B. masoniana* 'Tricolor' which seems to be doing just as well. A *B. U010* and *B. 'Withlacoochee'* are both in 16" baskets that are completely covered with beautiful foliage. The coconut liner baskets are not even visible. It always amazes me as to how resilient begonias are.

Time to be thinking about the Southwest Region Get-Together, the dates are April 15-19 in Plano, Texas. An ABS Board Meeting will be scheduled during the Get-Together so plan to attend. Southwest Region Get-Togethers are always fun and I'm sure this one will be no exception.

Also be sure to place July 4-8, 2001 on your calendar, the dates of the 2001

ABS Convention in Denver, Colorado. This is sure to be a special event as the Rocky Mountain Branch is hard at work.

In closing I want to state that the ABS is committed to its Members-at-Large (MALs), in keeping them informed and part of the organization. You are a significant part of ABS and are important to us. A new MAL Director will soon be onboard.

Good Begonia Growing.

**Charles Jaros,
President**

Message from the Membership Chair

I am getting a lot of Begonians back as not deliverable. Please make sure that if you pay through your branch that they have written your address correctly. Those of you that are sending me new members also check this. Where it costs the mailer less than fifteen cents to mail your issue, it costs me ninety-nine cents. Also, please check your due date. These are some of the reasons we sometimes have to raise our membership fees in the long run. Your being late or giving me a wrong address costs every one.

Also, please make checks out to the American Begonia Society, not to John Ingles or Arlene Ingles. I am still getting mail addressed to John, and as you all know he passed away in 1999.

Thank you all for your help and consideration.

**Arlene Ingles,
Membership Chair**

Letters to the Editor

Another Mystery Begonia

In the *Begonian*, several issues ago, you wrote an article about *B. fisheri* with its picture. I am enclosing a picture of an unknown begonia that I've had with me for about thirty years. It kept me company, in the passenger seat during the four day truck ride from New York to Denver, when I moved here five years ago. Is it a version of *B. fisheri*? The leaf shape is similar, but as you can see, the stems are white, not red. I would like to tell the folks, who took cuttings, at our branch meeting, what they took cuttings of.

Peter Szilagyi

12060 West Burgundy Ave.
Littleton, CO 80127

Sure looks like B. fisheri to me, but have you selfed it and planted the seed to see if it is a species and not a hybrid? But perhaps someone out there who know more about B. fisheri than I can tell us if it could be; leaf color is not always an important part of a plant's botanical identification.

Save our Semperflorens!

I am trying to find Semps or wax begonias to make sure they do not get lost. So far I have found 12 from Logees and 2 from Kartuz, his own hybrids. Anyway I think there are others trying to find them too. There is still 34 more I need to find, and if you know of anyone else, a member collecting them, then I would like to purchase a cutting from them.

Anyway, you may want to tell the members where I found mine, and if more members would order from Logee's, maybe he would [stock them]. He had 25 at one time according to his 1996-97 catalog. I have about 50 different begonias, but I am going to collect the Semps,

just so they do not get lost.

Donna McKelvy

E-mail:

donnamc@cox-internet.com

Another *B. chlorosticta* Hybrid

To answer Charles Jaros in the *Begonian* about *B. chlorosticta* hybrids, there is also *B. 'Moon Maid'* which is a cross of *B. dregei* x *B. ex Kew Species* (that is, *B. chlorosticta*). It's a shrub-like begonia, with little leaves, lanceolate, acute, pale green with little spots, and pink flowers, but it rarely blooms in my greenhouse. Pay attention to mildew. I have grown it for five years easily and I love its silhouette, like a tree from its *B. dregei* heritage.

Dominique Permingeat

L UBAC

St. Fortunat 07360
France

David Goffi of West Haven, CT also wrote to tell us about this begonia and he tell us that an older (1979-81) Logee's Catalog illustrates the species superlatively in a more mature, flowering form on page 22. See his letter to our Begonia Lost and Found on page 59.

The Seed Fund and the Margaret Lee Branch

The Margaret Lee Branch (then San Miguel) took over the duties of the seed fund when approved at the May 1997 ABS Board meeting in Houston and had its first listing in the July-August 1997 issue. We are a small branch, less than 10 active members, dedicated to the in-depth study of begonia. Hairs, stipules, blades, capsule wings, bracts, ovary cells and stigmas are all on the discussion list at our meetings. (How many ways can you describe hair on your plants!?) We'll



Anyone recognize Peter Szilagyi's begonia above left? And we don't have a photo of *B. 'Moon Maid'*, but we do of Leora Fuentes charming wall hanging of *B. chlorosticta*, above right, as it was displayed at the SWR Get-Together in San Antonio last September. Below is Greg Sytch's *B. 'Black Cauldron'* in the photo by Doug Pridgen.



even discuss potting soils, pruning and pests. Our meetings run a full day. We love our begonias and our Society.

The first part of the meeting is a short business meeting and then to seed fund activities. We clean and package seed to be listed in the magazine. We also arrange to test sow seed to make sure the seed we send will germinate for you. Then, we also continue to grow this on to make sure it is true to identity. Seed is listed before we have adult plants, while it is fresh, and for this reason some species have turned out not to be as listed. We have yet to find a true *B. sharpeana*. A member does the research to give you more than a name when we list each species. We keep very busy. The second part of the day is the study of begonia.

The Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund is a membership privilege, but it is also an obligation. You'll find that most every listing has one or more members of our branch listed as a contributor of seed along with others. BUT we cannot supply ALL the seed. We are growing and selling all the species we have and can get our hands on. We have some generous donors; many are overseas. Continental donors are a rare breed. There are fewer donors to the seed fund than when I first joined. There is a need for fresh blood to take on the challenge of selfing and producing seed on their plants. I've heard of other begonia seed exchanges, in branches and elsewhere, and would enjoy having these people also donate to the ABS Seed Fund. We like to have 25 packages of a species to list it. We can combine seed from several sources to get enough. Even if we don't have enough to list we have a bank of seed that we can send out if some one requests a certain species. We are in serious need of fresh seed of all species. We even have requests for hybrid seed if you don't grow species and would like to do-

nate.

You saw the challenge from **Dan Haseltine** in the last issue to send in seed. We have received his FIFTY DOLLARS for the branch that sends the most species seed to the seed fund. We are working on a certificate for contributors. Please keep this important function of the ABS going. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE JUST ONE POD AT A TIME.**

If you don't know how to produce, harvest or clean seed let us help you. We would be happy to send you detailed instructions of the process.

Michael Ludwig,

President, Margaret Lee Branch
6040 Upland St.
San Diego, CA 92114-1933

One more possibility...

The plant that is apparently not *B. tenuifolia* may also not be *B. 'Suncana'*! We found this plant named as *B. 'Black Cauldron'* at Greg Sytch's. Greg told us that he got this plant in 1991 or 1992 from Paul Lowe, the hybridizer.

Doug Pridgen

7331 SW 165th St.
Miami, FL 33157-3800

Well, you have to agree that when I choose a mystery begonia, I do choose a mystery!! B. 'Black Cauldron' is Lowe's hybrid of B. 'Lone Star' x 'Green Giant'. See its photo opposite and in the ground on page 66.

Frozen Begonias

I had a bunch of potted begonias that I did not get indoors before the cold weather hit. We had an early, hard freeze and these plants were outdoors for several days in temperatures that dropped into the low 20's. They looked terrible,

all black and mushy , but many of them are recovering. I brought them indoors and many are starting to regrow. It was a varied group including rhizomatous, Rexes, Semps, and shrub-like.

I see new growth on *B. 'Benitochiba'* and some other Rexes, *B. parilis*, some of the rhizomatous and the Semps. As long as the rhizomes on these types are not mushy, there is hope.

I did keep the pots on the dry side until the new growth has started, but now I'll just give them normal treatment. I thought this might be of interest since we have had such cold this winter.

Kathy Goetz

935 W. Isabella St.

Lebanon, OR 97355

Identify this Species

The begonias that are so unique they seem to need a special classification are always fascinating. This month's mystery species falls in the category "Shrub-like, distinctive foliage, compact type" (See, the editor is getting in the Shrub-like one way or the other!).

This one has a sister plant that looks so much like it that the principal distinguisher appears to be the color of its stem - said to be red for the mystery species and green for the other. J. Doorenbos et. al. in *The sections of Begonia* assign it to section *Pritzelia*, a large and complex group.

It was described by Schott in 1859 and originated in Brazil. Elda Haring in her *Begonias for Beginners* described it as "A beautiful begonia with rounded green leaves and pebbled surface with very red stems." She also says it is easy to grow, but keep it out of the sun.

Can you guess its name?

Editor's Notes

Thoughts on Winter

On page 56 you will read Louise Muzyk's article on growing begonias in Washington State. In this issue too you see a lot about gardening in Florida which is supposed to be the ideal location for growing begonias. Yet, much of Florida must cope with freezes at times too. Winter weather is always a variable and we must endure. But winter also gives us time to think and to observe our plants.

Do you look forward as I do to the day in December each year when the sun stops its march to the south and turns back north once more. The shortest day and then again the minutes of daylight go up. I observe that the plants react to this change too; they have their own clocks that respond almost at once. The temperatures inside are no higher for my plants in January and yet I begin to see new green as tiny leaves unfurl and the blossoms emerge. It seems that I just spotted my first rhizomatous bloom on *B. plebja* and already there are 4 bloom stalks with their nodding, yet to open buds. And a *B. reneformis*, not a year old yet, has sent out a bloom. *B. U062* and *U083* have burst out in their lovely pink blooms as well. In the profusion of summer, I would hardly notice their tiny blooms, but in the winter they hold a special charm.

But *all* the blooms -- now is the time to study them up close, use a magnifying glass. They are important to the botanical identity of species and its amazing how infinitely varied they can be.

And I have just spotted the first tiny tip of a *B. grandis* ssp. *evansiana* coming up in a pot where a bulbil must have dropped. What a rare and lovely plant, that is yet so easy! What will I see next?



B. 'Alafia'

by Greg Sytch

B. 'Alafia' is a very popular hybrid of mine developed in 1994. It is a cross between *B. 'Cowardly Lion'* x *B. manicata*, the species, and is remarkable for its beautiful leaves, compact habit, and ease of growth. It was first displayed at the 1996 ABS Convention in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

B. 'Alafia', pronounced "Al-a-fy-a", is considered rhizomatous, large-leaved, spiraled, and probably distinctive as there are few like it. The waxy texture, deep ochre through cocoa, has a wonderful texture. Mature leaves average 8", and mature spread is about 24". *B. 'Alafia'* stays quite compact and is suitable for almost every growing environment. In late winter or spring, small stalks of pink flowers emerge from the rhizomes and last for weeks. They are lightly fragrant.

B. 'Alafia' responds to average rhizomatous care, which is shallow pots, light soil that dries out, and monthly feedings. Leaves propagate readily. One of the greatest assets of *B. 'Alafia'* is its ability to grow almost anywhere, and I have used it successfully in my landscape here in Central Florida.

Try it in your greenhouse, sunroom, or bright indoor window and watch it shine!

The B. 'Alafia' in the photo above was exhibited by Northhaven Gardens at the SWR Get-Together in San Antonio last September. B. 'Cowardly Lion' is that beautiful hybrid by Kit Jeans Mounger. Greg Sytch is our Horticultural Correspondent and you may reach him at the address shown on page 79. Photo by Bill Claybaugh.

Mites

by Mike Stevens

Although a lot of begonia growers do not believe it, it is a known fact that mites can destroy a begonia collection in a short time. There are a number of mites, which can affect our plants though they do so to a greater or lesser degree depending on the type.

There are various types of mite; two commonly known mites fall under the Tarsonemid Mite umbrella whereas the European Red Mite (previously known as the Red Spider Mite) and the Two Spotted Mite, are another separate family. All of these mites can affect ornamentals and other crops, plus trees and shrubs in our gardens.

Those of you who have been affected by an infestation of mites will know that generally speaking you are unaware you have a problem until it is too late. The following symptoms are a sure sign of mites. The growing tips of the plant turn dry and brown and will fall off at a touch, resulting in the plant going blind. Buds will have brown stains and will struggle to open and stems have the appearance of a pale brown, corky substance adhering to them. Leaves will have a brown scaly appearance on the underside and the plant's growth will be poor and stunted.

What then are the conditions that mites enjoy? They prefer a hot, dry environment and therefore can badly affect begonias grown in a glasshouse where the humidity can often be very low.

How to control these pests?

There are quite a number of chemical plus natural methods of treating any infestation. However, I am a strong believer that prevention is better than cure so I would suggest that you take active measures early in the growing season to

keep this wee pest at bay by means of dipping your tubers, plus an active spray programme right up until keeping the buds.

One that must be borne in mind is that insecticides are not in themselves effective against mites, even systemic types. Miticides control this pest by means of smothering it and the eggs, hence the effective use of non-toxic Pest Oils.

- In general, good hygiene is a beneficial habit as for prevention of all pests/diseases.
- Always isolate any plants that you acquire, no matter where you get them. I go further and spray these at weekly intervals for three weeks before allowing these plants to join my stock.
- Try not to grow other plants that are a known source of mites in the vicinity of your begonias, these would include Cyclamen and Strawberries.
- Having high humidity around your plants will help prevent infection as will good ventilation.
- Use of low toxicity sprays with which the efficacy may be largely due to with the mites dislike of moisture, though with the seaweed products, which can be applied as a foliar feed, I think it is maybe the smell that keeps the pests at bay! With regard to the washing soda, put one teaspoonful into 2 gallons (9L) of cold water plus a squirt of washing up liquid. Plants can either be sprayed with this solution or totally immersed if not too large. The Oil, Yates Mite Killer and Safers products listed below under "Natural methods" will have the application rates and instructions clearly recorded on the containers.
- Use of sprays specifically targeting mites. Generally the more lethal to mites the more toxic the spray, so take full precautions when using. Again,

Types of Mites and Plants They Affect

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Affected Plants</u>	<u>Comments</u>
European Red Mite	Protected ornamentals, soft fruit, tomatoes, apples, pears, & cucumbers	Visible to naked eye; often a tell tale fine web can be seen on affected plants
Two Spotted Mite	Protected ornamentals, soft fruits, tomatoes, apples, pears & cucumbers	Visible to naked eye; often a tell tale fine web can be seen on affected plants
Tarsonemid or Cyclamen Mite or Strawberry Mite	Ornamentals, esp. Cyclamen, African violets, & begonias; strawberries	Invisible to naked eye; when seen through a microscope are a dirty white colour.
Broad Mite	Ornamentals, esp. Cyclamen, African violets & begonias; strawberries	Invisible to naked eye; when seen through a microscope are a dirty white color.

application rates and instructions are recorded on the containers.

Use of predatory mites. This was tried a year or two ago at the local Botanic Gardens which had a bad infestation of mites, but had a policy of not using toxic sprays. The success rate was very poor and the use of sprays reintroduced to save the begonia collection.

With the large number of named tubers in my stock I have adopted the following specific programme to minimise risk. At the beginning of each season I dip my tubers in "Thiodan" with the addition of an antifungal spray for 15 minutes and then rinse in clean water. The tubers are then set in their boxes, pots, whatever to start. After some weeks when there is good growth I spray regularly right up to the time I decide to allow the plants to flower. A foliar feeding programme can also be incorporated in with the spray should you wish.

Do be vigilant against this pest for should they come your way they will leave behind a trail of destruction, so do not be complacent; also those of you who have received a visitation please pass on your experiences to others.

The experience of one local grower will perhaps outline the care necessary. This grower had a very bad infestation of mite last season and it got a really big hold before he actually discovered what his problem was. He then took drastic measures spraying his plants just to try to save them from total destruction. At the end of the season he lifted his tubers and soaked as mentioned above before storing them for the winter. He also sprayed his glasshouse and shade house with Pest Oil. He started his tubers this season and the growth is clean and the plants are doing well.

In addition to the infected plants he also had quite a lot of cuttings growing

last season, but mites did not affect these and consequently they were not sprayed. He left them in the glasshouse to dry off and winter over in their pots knocking them out this spring and starting them into growth. Lo and behold they are now badly affected by mite having stunted and deformed growth. It would seem therefore that the mites, in some form, either adults or eggs which have since hatched have wintered over. It goes to show you cannot be too careful!

The following is a chart of products available in New Zealand that can assist against this pest.

1. Thiodan (endosulfan, a contact & ingested organochlorine insecticide/acaricide; particularly targets the Tarsonemid mite). Available from wholesale horticultural suppliers (often only to account holders). Classified as a poison, use with great respect.
2. Kelthane (non-systemic organochlorine acaricide sold as a powder). Available from wholesale horticultural suppliers (often only to account holders). Harmful in contact with skin or if swallowed.
3. Guardall by Yates. Available at general garden centres. Toxicity is moderate to low.
4. Mavrik by Yates. Available at general garden centers. Toxicity is moderate to low.
5. Yates mite killer. Available at general garden centres. Toxicity is very low, made only of fatty acids (potassium salts).
6. Natural Methods
 - a) Summer Oil available at general garden centers. Minimal toxicity.
 - b) Seaweed in foliar spray. Available at general garden centers. Minimal toxicity.
 - c) Safers products. Available at general garden centers. Minimal toxicity.
 - d) Washing soda. Available at super-markets. Minimal toxicity.
 - e) Predatory mites. Available from selected outlets. Toxicity is nil.

Mike Stevens writes from 47 Burnside Crescent, Christchurch 8005, New Zealand. You may e-mail him at m.i.stevens@xtra.co.nz. Mike is editor of the Begonia News, the bimonthly publication of the Canterbury Begonia Circle. Recently, the publication has carried two pages of color photos in each issue; those pages in the December/January issue were particularly beautiful. It concentrates on tuberous begonias and is a must read for those interested in the tuberous and a subscription costs only \$10 US sent to Mike at the above address.

If any reader has suggestions for other products to fight mites available in the US, let the editor or Greg Sytch know.

READ ABOUT BEGONIAS!

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

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.

Cost of the last two goes to the **Millie Thompson Publication Fund**.

And you can order available Back Issues of the ***Begonian***.

Order from:

**Ann Salisbury
P.O. Box 452
Tonkawa, OK 74653
Ph: 580-618-5230**

Species Talk: *B. hatacoa* and Its Various Names

by Jane Blundell,

Queensland, Australia Begonia Society

The name *B. hatacoa* was first attributed to this begonia in 1825 in *Prodomus Flores Nepalensis (Flora of Nepal)*. In subsequent years it has been referred to by the following names:

- 1) In 1831 Nathaniel Wallich, who was the first superintendent of the Calcutta Royal Botanic Gardens from 1815 to 1846 and who organized many collecting expeditions, referred to it as *B. barbata* (nomen nudum), i.e. name naked.
- 2) In 1853 William Jackson Hooker, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, from 1841 to 1865, referred to it in his Botanical Magazine as *B. rubrovenia*.
- 3) In 1855, J. F. Klotzsch listed it as *B. rubro-nervia* and also as *Platycentrum rubro-venium*.

At the same time a second variety, *B. hatacoa* var. *meisneri*, was being referred to by the following names:

- 1) In 1832 Wallich referred to this variety as *B. meisneri* (nomen nudum).
- 2) In 1879 Clark in Joseph Dalton Hooker's *Flora of British India* showed this variety as *B. rubro-venia* var. *meisneri*.

In 1978 in the publication Smithsonian Contributions to Botany: *Begoniaceae*, both the species were corrected to: *B. hatacoa* and *B. hatacoa* var. *meisneri*. Both these species of *B. hatacoa* appear to come in four forms: green leaf, silver leaf, green leaf with silver spots/splashes, and variegated leaf green with cream spots.

B. hatacoa is one of 96 species in the section *Platycentrum*. Platy = made of plates (micro layers); Centrum = centre.

A significant characteristic of begonias in this section is that their three winged ovaries have only two locules, the placenta is axillary (along the axis); the placenta is divided (branched) with seed forming between the placental branches in the ovules.

The name rubro-venia (= *B. hatacoa*) means "red veined." This begonia was discovered by Thomas Nuttall and described by Sir. J. D. Hooker in 1853. Its rhizomes is short and thick; short stems bear only two or three leaves on long, grooved petioles. The leaves are two to six inches long, serrate, and taper to a long point. The upper surface is dark satiny green, being plain green or red beneath with brown tomentum on the nerves and petiole. The small white flowers borne on long, slender red stems are red-veined and appear in spring. The silver-leaved form is much more shrubby in growth than the others and appears, locally, to be easier grown.

B. hatacoa and its forms are described in Thompson's *Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide* in the section "Horticultural Classifications" as being "rhizome, joined at or below the soil with erect stems." Begonias in this group have rhizomes that are either below or at the surface of the soil; often they are not fully exposed. Those with rhizomes below the surface of the soil resemble elongated tubers, which at maturity, sometimes appear at soil level. The rhizomes are usually short and have erect stems that give the plant a bush-like appearance. The average height of most remains under 60 cm.

The foliage of many of these is striking and could easily be placed in the dis-

Continued on page 76.

Don't just plant your begonias, create **Pots with Pizazz!**

We all grow begonias in pots and containers, but some growers manage to show off their begonias with mixed plantings. They may do it by following the directions of horticulturists for outstanding container plantings. You know, a tall plant at the back or center surrounded by smaller plants, and then draping or railing plants on the edges. Plants are pressed in close together to make an immediate show. A mix of textures and colors, blooming and foliage, lends interest.

Some of our best begonia growers just use their artistic eye to mix and match. Some use just begonias to achieve the desired effect. Others add interesting tropicals or annuals into the mix for interest.

It is important to be sure that all plants need common care. That is, all the plants should take the same amount of sun or shade and have the same watering requirements. Some place smaller pots within the larger and conceal this base with spagnum moss. Others plant directly into the usual light potting mix within a larger pot. Surprisingly, when many begonias are crowded directly into a very large pot this way, they often seem to thrive and grow to very large sizes, much better than when they are planted alone.

Below, Joyce Pridgen uses a basket to create a begonia collage which mixes all types including even the semi-tuberous B. dregei peeking around the handle. Note the contrasting colors. Photo is by Doug Pridgen.





You know about Iris bird's artistic bent and here she has managed to create her basket of beauty containing just species seedlings and would you believe they're all from the ABS Seed Fund; can you find them all? They are: B. carolineifolia, venosa, solananthera, cardiocarpa, manicata, pearcei, cucullata, and heracleifolia. Photo is also by Iris Bird. Below is the big pot showing off the big begonia at the Atlanta Botanic Gardens. Photo from Janet Brown.



Begonia Growing in Washington State

by Louise Muzyk

Lake Washington fills a giant hollow among the hills covered with evergreen trees that rise above the horizon. Houses cling to the sharp hillside as if held there by hairpins. Patches of heavy forest still claim the land where developers shy away. When there is a break in the clouds, the sky is a deep heavenly blue. That is a word picture of where I live.

Coming here to live from a below zero climate, this was almost tropical for me. To see azaleas and rhododendrons and flowering trees in full bloom the first of May, I thought it was a dream. I ran from one clump of blossoms to another at the plant place, like a hungry bumblebee.

Spring is very slow to come at times due to the cloud cover and rain keeping the high temperature in the 50's and the lows in the mid 40's. Young plants set out early stay almost petrified until the middle of June when the soil begins to warm. Originally from a farming state, I wondered how crops could grow when the soil is so cold.

Summer arrives slowly with a few warm days and then reverts back to clouds and rain. July sees some 80 degree days and then August heats up to the 90's, but cools down at night to the 60's making it always bearable.

The beauty of my first day here was etched deep in my memory and will only be a memory because it was never repeated. The next spring brought a long cold spell that froze buds so hard that many plants died.

It is the cold, dark days that makes growing tender plants a challenge. Articles tell of how to grow begonias in greenhouses or a sun porch and I have neither. I am new to begonias and so was

crying for help as I watched the beautiful plants disintegrate until only a few wisps of plant material remained.

My home is small and the growing space is limited. A long table facing the double south window holds the collection of begonias. New plants are introduced as the older ones die as if accusing me of giving them wet feet when they preferred dry or dry feet when they wanted them wet. I finally realized they were not getting the requirements they needed.

Spring finds the table in the spare room filled with young plants waiting to go outside. There were 'Tea Rose' plants, *B. 'Charm'*, *cubensis*, and *subvillosa*. And a collection of single impatiens and a tall growing double salmon colored one I have kept for four years. Mildew hit the 'Tea Rose' plants and *B. 'Charm'* with full force, but a quick spray of baking soda solution saves some, not without injury. A small slip of *B. 'Charm'* was salvaged and a plastic bag hid it from further attack. The 'Tea Rose' plants were badly crippled to where slips were taken and also hidden in plastic bags.

With such battle scarred plants outside, I checked the big begonia table inside. *B. 'Mable Corwin'* stands like a valiant guard, afraid of nothing. The leaves are thick and covered with a soft, velvet coating. But then I had new ones like *B. 'Selover'* a precious little shrub, just getting started, has leaves so shiny and half-way dreamy-colored where the red from the underside sneaks almost to the top. Certainly, the powdery mildew could not attack that one.

The new canes are iffy, perhaps too early to tell if they will succumb to the cold, damp, and sunless days. *B. 'Danc-*

ing Girl' had the center spot on the table with those lovely leaves reaching for the light. The red veins stood out like embossing when the sun hit. Then, in such a brief time, the leaves fell off although new ones are showing in the safety of a plastic bag.

A gem among the new begonias is *B. foliosa*, a miniature fern-like begonia with tiny leaves lined up on the main stem. Little four petaled white flowers cling daintily to the branch tips. I searched the leaves for evidence of the powder, but found none. Perhaps the shine discourages the mildew. It gets sun in the morning and plenty of light (if Seattle is lucky). It likes a coarse soil that drains quickly and fertilized water with each drink. After only a few months, it is ready for a pedestal to hold the branches off the table. This one does well without a terrarium.

B. venosa curled its leaves like a loose scroll and refused to grow. Yet, *B. echinosepala* grew to overshadow other plants and no amount of trimming could hold it back. Sadly, it had to go -- there was no space to keep a giant. *B. lubbersii* had formed a statuesque plant and had sprays of large, pink flowers. In such a fleeting time, it melted away. *B. coccinea* flourished for a while with bright coral flowers and then lost its leaves and vanished like a ghost.

Our summer ration of sunshine had delightfully lasted into the first week of October, although too late to help the begonias that had already started their long rest period. This little area is free from snow quite often and the temperature stays above freezing to where some plants survive the winter. So far, I have not tested begonias although a digitalis plant is in its fourth year. Temperatures seldom get below 32 degrees F and will reach a high in the low to middle 40's

There must be many sturdy work horses in the begonia world which are al-

most indestructible such as *B. subvillosa*. It spends the summer under the evergreen and withstands the constant battering of the elements and the assault of hungry slugs.

Why some begonias refuse to grow while others thrive is a real mystery. The adversity stretches between two extremes, the cold, damp air and dark, sunless days which become the lethal touch that kills - outside of a plastic bag.

I first met Louis Muzyk through her letter saying that the Begonian failed to meet the needs of many readers outside the ideal climates of Florida and California because of a lack of applicable articles. When I explained that our journal content is subject to the articles received, she generously wrote one about her own growing conditions. I'm hoping it will spur others with less than ideal climates to tell us how they manage to keep our beloved begonias growing. When I despair about my own weather trials, I am always inspired by thoughts of Belva Kusler growing her gorgeous hybrids in the far north. If you live where begonia growing is a challenge (Though for some begonias, that's anywhere!), won't you tell us how you manage? And let us know which plants succeed for you; it's amazing how some begonias thrive in the most unlikely climates. You may write Louise Muzyk at 6905 N.E. 182nd St., #14, Kenmore, WA 98028-2748.

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Mile High Awards: 2001 American Begonia Society Awards

by Micahel Ludwig

Recognition for achievements above the ordinary, that is what the American Begonia Society tries to do with their prestigious awards. The Denver convention banquet in July will be the time and place for the presentation. These awards are presented to recognize outstanding service on a national level.

YOU, the members are responsible to make the nominations. Please give thorough consideration when submitting your nomination. I need to receive a letter of nomination from YOU, to place the name on the ballot that goes out to the committee for voting. The nomination must contain the name of the award, the recipient and the reasons that make them or is eligible for the award.

There are many worthy members that are possible winners for these awards. Some have become less active, but should be honored with one of these awards. If you have nominated someone in the past and they have not won, consider nominating them again.

The committee may only award a single recipient for each award each year. Often it is very difficult to choose a winner among the many high quality nominees. (Special Note: NEW AWARD. Please read corresponding article on the new **Rudolf Ziesenhenn** Award, p. 60.)

Deadline for your nominations is May 10, 2001. Please mail all nominations to:

**Michael Ludwig,
Award Chairman
6040 Upland St.
San Diego, CA 92114-1933**

Award Criteria:

The **Eva Kenworthy Gray Award** is given for one of two reasons:

1. Contributing something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members; and/or
2. Contributing original material toward helping the rank and file members further their study of begonias.

The **Herbert P. Dyckman Award** for Service is presented to a member who had 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 begonia cultivar that has been released for at least five years and no more than fifteen. This hybrid must be registered with the Nomenclature Department and widely distributed, and the originator of the begonia must be a member of ABS.

These awards may be received only once. The ADR Medal is presented to a cultivar and may be won more than once by a hybridizer.

Past recipients of these awards:

Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

1995	Mae Blanton
1996	Kit Jeans Mounger
1997	Joan Coulat
1998	Gene & Ann Salisbury
1999	Mary Bucholtz
2000	Freda Holley

Herbert P. Dyckman Award

1995	Ann Salisbury
1996	Carol Notaras
1998	Eleanor Calkins
1999	Gene Salisbury
2000	Mary Sakamoto

Alfred D. Robinson Award

1995	B. 'Silvermist'
1996	B. 'Sweet Diane'
2000	B. 'Mary Sakamoto'

The only way some one can win is if they are nominated. Nominate someone today. A complete list of winners may be obtained from me at the above address.

Begonia Lost and Found

As an ABS member I'd like to use the *Begonian's* "Lost and Found" service to try and locate begonias dealers do not supply. I haven't a hint if all are still in collections and which, if any, no longer exist. I'm looking for the species: *B. longimaculata* and *B. masoniana* var. *maculata*; rhizomatous: *B. 'Silver Swastika'*; Patrick Worley's *B. 'Firedance'* and '*Organza*'; Rex's: *B. 'Barbara Lepisto'*, '*Fire Opal*', '*Glory of St. Albans*', '*Lois Covey*', '*Millie Thompson*', '*Ojai*', '*Prince Charming*', '*Robert George*', '*Rubena*'; and the Australian Rexes illustrated in J. Krempin's book: *B. 'Curly Metallica'*, '*Lillian*', and '*Silverheart*'.

David Goffi

600 Shingle Hill Rd.
West Haven, CT 06516-5549
Ph: 203-934--6560

I have recently re-read Ed and Mildred Thompson's book and made a list of several plants that were pictured that I must have. I was an ABS member in the early 70's and have only recently rejoined. I must start my collection from scratch because I gave the original one away. Then, lo and behold I read the May/June 2000 issue with a new column in it called: 'Lost and Found', which solicited requests for begonias that could not be found from commercial sources. I went through the

lists of many of the mail order places and did not find them available. Well, here is my list: *B. 'Helene Jaros'*, *B. 'Huopo'*, *B. 'Palmgarten'*, *B. 'John Sousa'*, and *B. 'Tondelayo'*.

I didn't see this column in subsequent issues and am afraid that there were perhaps too many people looking for things and that was the reason that it came to an end.

I can be reached at 303-979-5717 after 6 p.m. mountain time, or PNSzilagyi@juno.com and would be happy to pay for all shipping costs for a leaf, rhizome or plant. Thank you.

Peter Szilagyi

12060 West Burgundy Avenue
Littleton, CO 80127

No, Peter, not too many.. With these two requests I catch up. David's letter came in September and yours in November, but the editor has been blessed with more material than I had space for in the last few issues and I had to leave out a number of regular features. Sorry, and I hope some readers out there can help you with your search. Unfortunately, many of our oldies are disappearing and it is one reason ABS needs more members to help us keep them going! Also, as Peter reminds you, this is a column to help readers find only those begonias that cannot be located from one of our commercial begonia sources. Send your requests to the editor at the address shown on page 78 (Remember don't use an older address as it may not get forwarded!)

New Award to be Presented at this Year's Convention

by Michael Ludwig

On September 26, 1998, the American Begonia Society created, named, and presented a new award to **Rudolf Ziesenhenn**e, to honor our Mr. Begonia. We recognized all he has done for the society, membership and study of begonias. We thanked him for his more than FIFTY years of service and nearly 5000 column inches in the *Begonian*.

Criteria for the award were worked up, with the help of Rudy, to honor some one that he believes doesn't get the recognition they deserve for all they do for the ABS, the Editor of the *Begonian*. Without the magazine there is NO American Begonia Society. On May 6, 2000 in Palm Beach, FL these criteria were approved by the Board and go into effect this year.

Rudy has suggested to phase in this award, to look at the *Begonian* through different ages. I would like you to look at the editors prior to the year 1982 change in the frequency of the *Begonian*. These editors worked at putting out the magazine EVERY MONTH. I look forward to your nominations for this exciting new award. Please remember to cite the award, name of the editor, and the reasons you believe they should receive this award, and send them to me at the address in the article calling for award nominations.

The Rudolf Ziesenhenn Award Criteria

This award is presented to the current or retired editor of the *Begonian* for the following reasons:

1. For the outstanding use of contribu-

tions of members and others in the *Begonian* to execute the Aims and Purposes of the American Begonia Society,

AND

2. For leading and strengthening the membership in their study of begonias through the excellence of editorship.

These editors have put in uncounted hours to keep the membership informed and in touch. In honor and recognition of their tireless hours of dedication, here are those individuals and I wish to say THANK YOU for all they have done to make us the American Begonia Society.

Editors of The Begonian

9/97 to Present	Freda Holley
7/96 to 8/97	Brad Thompson
9/87 to 5/96	Tamsin Boardman
9/83 to 7/87	Phyllis Bates
9/82 to 7/93	Karen Barthalomew

The *Begonian* went to bimonthly in January of 1982.

7/79 to 7/82	Karen Barthalomew & Chuck Anderson
10/74 to 6/79	Edgar & Phyllis Bates
10/73 to 9/74	Marge Kirchoff
10/72 to 9/73	Jack Bergstrom
11/71 to 9/72	N. Thrumand Peterson
11/69 to 10/71	Mabel Anderson
9/67 to 10/69	Mrs. Mae Tagg
11/65 to 8/67	N. Thrumond Peterson
11/64 to 10/65	Gordon Baker Llyod
8/59 to 10/64	N. Thrumond Peterson
9/57 to 7/59	Adelaide Brest
10/55 to 9/57	Louis Cramer
10/54 to 9/55	Gordon Baker Llyod

10/53 to 9/54	Mr. Margaret Fenn	1/41 to 12/41	Gretchen Taylor
1/50 to 9/53	Stanley Spaulding	1/40 to 12/40	Pauline Ney w/co- editor H. Linwood White
6/48 to 12/50	Mrs. Dorothy S. Behrends		
1/41 to 5/48	Maria Wilkes w/co- editors Bessie Buxton, Margaret Bruenbaum at various times.	1939 1938	M. B. Dunkle C.M. Kelly

Round Robin Notes

by Virginia Hamann

#43 Terrarium Growing... Terrariums are used most for propagation. **Peggy Payne** (MO) has small begonias started in terrariums. A leaf of *B. staudtii* is providing her with lots of plantlets. **Vera Wells** (GA) took pieces of her *B. prismatocarpa* to the conventions; the cuttings sold quickly. **Wanda Macnair** carries her plants to the convention in zip lock bags. They are easy to carry and there is seldom damage done to the plants. Wanda conducts seminars at the convention on planting landscape terrariums.

#33 Hybridizing... **Elaine Ayers** (OH) had germination from seeds of *B. 'Agnes Hodgson' x kellermanii* in 13 days with 90 percent germination. **Mildred Swyka** (DE) has seedlings of the above crosses that look like *B. kellermanii*. **Cynthia Bishop** (CA) has crossings using *B. 'Wild Orange'* pollen on *B. ex Costa Rica #1* and *B. 'Amaterasu'*. *B. rex* Putzeys pollen was used on *B. pustulata*.

#14 Semperflorens & Companions... *B. 'Dragon Wings'* is a popular Semp with brilliant red blooms. It fills baskets with robust growth and can be carried over through the winter often in full bloom. Scented geraniums are grown by members planted with Semperflorens.

#57 From Mini's to Mightys... This Robin covers all begonias as members grow the large canes as well as the small rhizomatous for terrariums. **Bruce Williams** (MN) says his method of rooting canes is fool proof. He avoids potting shock by putting his cuttings into a 4" clay pot filled with potting soil. The pot is placed into a holding container such as a cottage cheese container which is filled with water. The container is kept filled until the cuttings are well rooted then the bottom watering is slowly withheld and the plant watered when dry. Damp long fiber moss wrapped around the stem seems to hasten rooting, but Bruce found it is not necessary since he rooted canes without it. Bruce also likes to plant his gesneriads and begonias in large fish tanks. He keeps adding to his collection of fish tanks each time he goes to the pet store.

Belonging to Round Robins is a privilege of belonging to the American Begonia Society... if you like writing letters and receiving them, maybe a Robin would be fun. They take up to 4 months to make a full flight, not as fast as E-mail, but on a more personal basis. If you wish to join, send your interests to:

Virginia Hamann
1169 Lincoln Ave.
Chester, Iowa 52134-
89508

Startin' Out

by Jim Hannah

Last time, we discussed the vegetative propagation of cane-like and Rex begonias. This leaves several types yet to be covered. Let's look at two more: the shrub and rhizomatous begonias. Both types are among the easiest to propagate.

In a sense, we've already covered the shrub begonias. Just use the method we outlined last issue for the cane-like begonias. It works just as well with the shrubbies. Do remember to take stem segments having at least three and preferably four nodes. Remove any leaves from the lower two segments. Place the cutting in water so that the two lower nodes are covered. Pot up as soon as root formation begins. Be gentle. Don't injure the new root buds or rub them off the stem while potting up the cuttings.

The rhizomatous begonias give you quite a choice of methods. We've already covered one of them last time -- the leaf segment method used with Rex begonias. For this, all you need is a covered propagation box containing about an inch and a half of moistened vermiculite. You can use the Rex method and it works quite well. Each segment should include a main vein right up to the point where it meets the stem. You'll need a bit of patience, too. Some segments can take months to produce the first new leaves.

For the rhizomatous begonias, there's a second leaf method. It's not often used with the Rexes because Rex leaves are usually so large. If your rhizomatous plant has small enough leaves, cut off a leaf so that there's about an inch of stem still attached to it. Use a sharp knife or razor blade to make the cut. I really don't know if a diagonal or straight

cut is better. Perhaps you could experiment and share your findings.

Place the leaf stem down in the propagating medium with the leaf part just above the surface. We usually place the leaf at an angle to the medium surface to increase the amount of light that falls on it. This whole leaf technique is exactly the same as that used for African violets.

The choice between using the whole leaf or a leaf segment is a matter of size. If the plant's leaves are small, the whole leaf method is a good choice. If the leaves are so large that they won't easily fit into your propagation box, use the leaf segment method. Use at least three leaves or segments to improve the odds of success. In any event, choose good, healthy leaves. That will improve the odds more than which method you use.

There's yet another way to produce a new rhizomatous plant and that's to use a section of the rhizome. The 'ideal' cutting will include a growing tip and a leaf, but other sections of rhizome can also be used with success. The rhizome is placed on a growing medium (we use a seed starter mix) and barely covered with the same medium. Any leaves are left above the surface. Then, it's into the propagation box with the cutting until growth is well along. Whenever you use a propagation box method, do remember to take humidity into account. The key is to provide a slow change from high to lower humidity for new plantlets when they are removed from the box. The plant adjustment from high to lower humidity will take several weeks.

Next time, I'll chat about growing begonias under fluorescent lights.

Jim & Joan Hannah, getting our greenhouse under way at 158 Fisher Avenue, Staten Island, N.Y., NY and jrh158@aol.com.

Begonia Bytes

by Kathy Goetz

The ABS web site now has an interactive events calendar to list your Branch events. It is very easy to use and we hope many of you will give it a try.

Just go to the web page at www.begonias.org and select Events. Then select Add an Event. This will bring you to the Site Login page. If it is the first time you have used the events calendar, you will need to register. Select the button that says Register Now. Once you fill out the registration form and submit it, you will be able to continue. The Site Login page allows registered members to add, edit, and maintain event data. It is the perfect way to let everyone know about upcoming meetings, sales, and other interesting activities.

There will be a delay between the time you submit the information and when it will appear on the calendar. That is because all submissions are sent to me first for review. Event notices must be approved by me before they are actually posted to the site. This is just to protect our web page from inappropriate

postings. Events must be of plant related activities. Commercial offerings and non-plant activities are not acceptable.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help with the web page, feel free to contact us. My web address is goetzk@begonias.com; **Mary Rafferty's** address is mmr@vistagrande.com.

Post These Changes to Your Directory of Begonia Societies:

New National Director for the Palm Beaches Branch is:

Donna Bailey
5285 Hood Road
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

For the Mae Blanton Branch the new National Director is:

Joan Kessinger
14808 Meadowland Circle
Newark, TX 76071
Ph: 817-489-5055
Email: jdbk@earthlink.net

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In The Mailbox

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural
Correspondent

Spring has finally sprung, and as it gradually warms throughout the northern part of the country, spring fever will become a rampant disease. Here in the deep south of Central Florida, spring begins the last week of February as frost has passed, but be wary up north to resist the temptation to put your plants outdoors too early.

This has been some winter season, particularly December and January here in Tampa Bay. In a period of three weeks we had five nights below freezing, with a record low of 30°F just after Christmas. Highs some days barely made it into the 40's (6-7C). Since I grow 50% of my begonias outdoors, scrambling to cover plants was a major chore, and doing it over and over again was not fun. Luckily, even exposed to these frigid temperatures, begonias survived. Amazing!

What does this tell you about the begonia family? They are tougher and hardier than you every thought. My landscape came through fine, but being close to the ground helps. However, mildew has eagerly taken advantage of this adversity. U062 and its hybrids did not appreciate the cold, and dropped leaves immediately, suffering some stem damage. Mildew instantly covered exposed stems, and I spray to prevent disease. Quickly I worked to remove affected leaves, sprayed again, then raked the whole yard and greenhouses. This is an important detail to healthy plants - cleanliness. NEVER leave affected debris.

As daylight increases and afternoons warm, be forewarned. The wide swings in temperature than can occur in spring are a breeding ground for mildew, especially if your area experiences con-

sistently chilly nights. Mildew really appears to thrive under these conditions, so be cautious and watch closely. Some of the common remedies for mildew include: baking soda and water for organic control; spraying Lysol on and around the affected area; using Daconil or my favorite, Phyton 27. Phyton 27 is a systemic, organic control originally discovered as an effective control for orchids.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding begonias, always feel free to email me at gsytych@cs.com, call me at 727-841-9618, or write to me at Greg Sytch, ABS Horticultural Correspondent, 6329 Alaska Ave., New Port Richey, FL 34653. Remember, I also have an adviser for those tough tuberous problems and this Kiwi (thanks, Mike) has graciously agreed to step in and help in this area. Enjoy spring fever, I know I will.

Begonia incarnata by J.S. Williams

This begonia was discovered in Mexico by Ferdinand Deppe in 1822, and sent by him to the Berlin Botanical Garden in 1828. By 1850 it had been extensively crossed with tuberous hybrids, and with other begonias such as *B. cinnabarina*.

The plant is tall but rather "leggy," the rather narrow, thin, light green leaves not being borne in any profusion. The pale pink flowers are rather small. ... The plant has two values, first it is a winter bloomer, and second it has been the parent of several interesting hybrids...

Excerpts from the *Begonian*, Vol. 6, #4, 1939.

This note from one of the earliest Begonians is about one of the parents of our cover plant. One reason that it yields interesting hybrids is that it has 28 chromosomes as do most of the American rhizomatous species and B. incarnata crosses easily with many of them as it did for the cover hybrid.

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The Palm Beach Begonia Garden

by Greg Sytch

A unique project started out of a joint effort by The Begonia Society of Palm Beaches and the Mounts Botanical Gardens in the fall of 1999. The result is a beautifully landscaped begonia garden at The Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach, Florida - and no recount is needed!

Nancy Cohen and Johanna Kitson, both members of the Palm Beach Begonia Society, needed to put in a required number of hours for their Master Gardeners' program. What to do? Well, it so happens that I contacted Virginia Jens, also a member, around that time explaining that I had about two dozen specimens I needed to find a home for and if she knew whether the branch might be interested in coming up to get them. I live in New Port Richey, about 4 to 5 hours northwest of Palm Beach in the Tampa Bay metro

area. Virginia chuckled as she knew her branch had a wonderful home for these begonias-- The Mounts Botanical Gardens.

A week or two later, Virginia, Nancy and Johanna made the four hour drive to my place, Planet Begonia (which is really my large back yard full of all kinds of begonias), and received canes, shrubs, and large rhizomatous bowls that filled their large van and put smiles on all their faces. Then the real work began.

After gaining permission from Mounts and including it in their Master Gardeners program, they all set forth to plant the donated begonias from myself, plus generous donations from Tim Anderson at Palm Hammock in Miami and Charles Jaros, our ABS president. They purchased bags of Fafard to plant the begonias in and began the group project.



The end result is a fantastic display of mature, luscious begonias in the heart of Palm Beach County. Everyone helped out that could, including the children, and after fertilizing and mulching, the begonias have thrived! There was signage donated by Mounts so that visitors could identify each begonia, and a sprinkler system supplements what mother nature does not supply. But, being begonias, these plants thrive with minimal care.

When Palm Beach hosted the convention last spring (May 2000), I visited the garden and saw all the babies I donated, plus others. WOW! Many had grown mature, bloomed well, and spread. They were incredible and soon after returning from the convention, I planted my own begonia garden in my front landscape. It was incentive for me to continue to utilize space that previously was oc-



Opposite, left to right.: Palm Beach members Warren Resen, Nancy Cohen, Geraldine Geiger, Jean Resen and Xiomara Herrera work in the garden with B. 'Washington State' and 'Black Cauldron' growing at their feet. Above, Jerry Baird, Branch Corresponding Secretary and Newsletter editor, planting B. 'Washington State' donated by Charles Jaros. Photos are by Johanna Kitson.

cupied by common shrubs. The members of the branch take turns donating time caring, pruning, and fertilizing the plants, and the total count now numbers over 50 mature plants spread among a small area of the garden. Recently, I chatted with Virginia and she informed me that some of the better performers include B. 'Washington State', 'Fountain of Youth', and *nelumbiiifolia*, and that the large-leaved types definitely do best. Time will tell how successful this project will be, but from the photos, it is well on its way. Remember, if you are ever in the Palm Beach area, look up the Mounts Botanical Garden or contact one of the branch members, and you may see begonias growing wild - just as they were meant to be!

Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund Listing

The Margaret Lee Branch, San Diego County, CA
Eleanor L. Calkins, Seed Fund Administrator

*The seed fund is a service to members only.
It is a privilege of your membership.*

DISCLAIMER: The seeds distributed by the Seed Fund are identified as received from the donors. The Seed Fund cannot guarantee that the identification is correct. When you find that seeds received from the Seed Fund do not develop into the plant described, please notify the Seed Fund so that a warning can be published for others who may have received seeds from the same batch. Each offering is identified by a code and that code is to be used whenever writing to the Seed Fund about seeds. The descriptions published are from the literature and apply to the name used for the offerings.

The Seed Fund needs donations of seeds. Seeds may be traded for seeds offered in the Seed Fund Listings. Unlisted seeds from earlier offers may be available in small quantities. If you have a special need ask the Seed Fund Administrator.

The need for new seeds to distribute is acute. Please pollinate your species begonias with pollen from other plants of the same species and contribute (or exchange) to the seed fund. The Seed Fund needs enough seed for 25 packets.

Most packets of species seeds are \$1.50 each and all packets of hybrid (including open pollinated) seeds are 50 cents each. Very rare seeds or newly collected seed will be \$2.00 or more per packet. California residents please add 7.75% sales tax.

All orders must be accompanied by check or money order payable **in US funds ONLY** 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; 37-48 (2 cans), \$2.35; 49-60, \$2.71.

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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:

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CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND**
Eleanor L. Calkins, Coordinator
910 Fern Street
Escondido, CA 92027-1708

The CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND is a project of the Margaret Lee Branch of the ABS in San Diego County, California.

Contributors this issue are: Michael Ludwig, Jackie Davis, Evelyn Bouquet, and Thelma O'Reilly.

Seed List March-April 2001

MA01-01: *B. angulata*

MA01-02: *B. biserrata*

MA01-03: *B. cardiocarpa*

MA01-04: *B. dichroa*

MA01-05: *B. echinosepala* var.
elongatifolia

MA01-06: *B. metallica* (\$2.00)

MA02-07: *B. micranthera* var. *venturii*

MA01-08: *B. octopetala* (?) - U237

MA01-09: *B. petasitifolia*

MA01-10: *B. reniformis*

MA01-11: *B. seemanniana*

MA01-12: *B. sudjanae*

MA01-13: *B. veitchii*

MA01-14: *B. 'Bumblebee' x B. boliviensis*

DESCRIPTIONS

NOTE: The names reported here are correct and are based on the latest information from *Begoniaceae* from the Smithsonian by Smith, Wasshousen, Golding, and Karegeannes.

MA01-01: *B. angulata* Vellozo [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*)

MA01-02: *B. biserrata* Lindley [Guatemala] (Sect. *Quadriperigonina*) Tuberous; erect stems; orbicular, palmately divided, ciliate, hairy leaves to 8 in.; white flowers, serrate tepals, in axillary cymes; summer.

MA01-03: *B. cardiocarpa* Liebmann [Nicaragua] (Sect. *Gireoudia*). Brown, scurfy rhizomes, rigidly erect; broad-ovate, shallowly lobed with overlapping basal lobes, reddish at margin, toothed, bright green leaves; large pink flowers in showy clusters on red peduncles; early spring.

MA01-04: *B. dichroa* T.A. Sprague [Brazil] (Sect. *Gaerdtia*). Low spreading shrub with woody stems; obliquely ovate, pointed leaves, to 8 in., cordate basally, green with white flecks above when young; orange flowers in dense clusters, glabrous orange ovary with one large wing; winter.

MA01-05: *B. echinosepala* Regal var. *elongatifolia* [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*). Shrub with erect reddish green stems with light green lenticels; small elongated pointed green leaves, coarsely toothed; white flowers; summer.

MA01-06: *B. metallica* W.G. Smith [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*) Stems 3-4 ft. obliquely ovate leaves to 6 in., lobed, serrate, olive-green with purple veins above; blush-white flowers to 1 1/2 in. in summer.

MA1-07: *B. micranthera* Griesbach var. *venturii* Smith & Schubert [Bolivia] (Sect. *Eupetalum*). Tuberous; erect stems usually unbranched, obliquely ovate, acuminate, shallowly lobed, thin, serrate, ciliate, blackish hairy

leaves; flowers on erect axillary, 3-flowered peduncles.

MA02-08: *B. octopetala* l'Héritier (?) -- U237 [Ecuador] (Sect. *Eupetalum*) Tuberous, stemless; cordate, lobed, toothed, green leaves on stout, fleshy petioles 12-18 in. long; ivory-white flowers 2-3 in. with 6-10 tepals in 6-20 flowered corymbs on 1-2 in. peduncles; top shaped ovary with 3 unequal wings; autumn.

MA01-09: *B. petasitifolia* Brade [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*). thick-stemmed, unbranched; thick, glossy, 5" x 6" leaves, 7" high, light red petioles with a small cuff of hairs at the leaf junction; small white flowers on tall rose colored peduncles.

MA01-10: *B. reniformis* Dryander [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*). Erect, thick, green, branched stems to 3 ft. or more with short red hairs; large obliquely obovate, basally cordate, serrate leaves, glossy yellowing green above, hairy underneath, long petioled; small, white many-flowered clusters; winter.

MA01-11: *B. seemanniana* A. de Candolle [Costa Rica] (Sect. *Ruizopavonia*) Green leaves 5" x 2 1/2" and white flowers.

MA01-12: *B. sudjanae* Janssen [Sumatra] (Sect. *Reichenheimia* II). Rhizomatous, thick short stem more or less creeping; erect petioles to 4-7 in., round and densely pilose; light green, unsymmetrically peltate, ovate leaves, both surfaces with stiff hairs, concentrically wrinkled, veins extend in all directions to a tooth on the margin; small white flowers in cymes, year round.

MA01-13: *B. veitchii* J.D. Hooker [Peru] (Sect. *Eupetalum*). Tuberous, short, succulent, green stems; orbicular, lobed, toothed, ciliate leaves, sparsely pubescent, green above with main veins radiating from a bright carmine spot, glaucous and pubescent underneath; 2 1/2 in. cinnabar red flowers.

Hybrid

MA01-14: *B. 'Bumblebee' x B. boliviensis* Tuberous; dark, blackish green leaves with light veins similar to *B. pearcii* leaves; light orange flowers in late summer.

For Descriptions of January/February 2001 Seed Fund Offerings, turn to page 76.

Eva Kenworthy Gray

by Tamsin Boardman

Eva Kenworthy Gray was born in Booneville, Missouri in 1863. Of her pre-begonia-growing days we know little, except that she lived in Iowa for a while before moving to Pacific Beach, California around the turn of the century, that she was a university graduate (unusual for a woman in her day), and that she married a Mr. Gray and had two daughters, Helen and Ethel.

Sometime before 1920, Mrs. Gray met Constance Bower (for whom *B. bowerae* is named), who gave her two begonia cuttings. It is perhaps an indication of Mrs. Gray's character that, writing in 1949 after thousands of begonias had passed through her hands, she remembered that the cuttings were of *B. 'Margarite'* and *B. odorata 'Alba'*. Mrs. Gray was hooked.

By 1923 she was growing from seed and making crosses of her favorite plants. Look down the Thompsons' list of *Superba* canes, and the earliest ones you'll find are *B. 'Superba-Azella'*, *'Superba-Kenzii'*, and *'Superba Mentone'*, all 1926 creations of Eva Kenworthy Gray. Perhaps the best-known of her cultivars today is *B. 'Medora'*.

She named her begonias in an interesting manner:

"...by giving them names of whatever the begonia reminded me of, of someone that was dear to me. For instance, the little *B. 'Neely Gaddis'* with its pure white flowers and leaves that reminded me of an angel's wing. This made me think of my little twin cousin that was taken away when she was six years old.

When *B. 'Nelly Bly'* bloomed with its bright red flowers, it made me think of

my sister Nelly who loved red and used to sing the old song 'Nelly Bly shuts her eye when she goes to sleep...' She was only four years old and could not talk very well, but loved to sing, in her way."

During the 1920's, Mrs. Gray published a periodic *Flower Journal*, primarily about begonias, and started a mail-order begonia business.

Through the business and her *Flower Journal*, Mrs. Gray promoted begonias all over the country. She also made begonia friends, and with one of them, Bessie Raymond Buxton, she began the Begonia Club of Round Robin Letters with 12 members. It took those early letters 3 months to make their rounds. Bessie Buxton served as secretary for the first club, and Eva Gray was secretary for a second group, added in 1932, and a third, started in 1936. It is not recorded whether the two friends ever met in person.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Gray's begonia collection grew to fill four large lathhouses and a glass house. She was fascinated by nomenclature, and frustrated by the lack of written aids in identifying begonias; her only handbook was Liberty Hyde Bailey's *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*, which mentioned 199 varieties of begonias. In 1931, she gave up the *Journal* and turned to writing *The Begonia Book*, the first book on begonias printed in the United States.

That sounds like a difficult enough task. But Mrs. Gray also grew all the plants pictured in the book, took all the photographs (there were no instamatics then, either), set the type by hand, printed the book and cover on a hand press, collated, and stapled. After all that work,

sold her little book for 50 cents!

Today her book is available in a facsimile edition through the ABS Bookstore at the slightly higher price of \$4. Her checklist of begonias grown in California in 1931 is useful to researchers, and her advice is still timely and given with charm:

"Old plants will in time get 'woody,' and lose their blooming propensities. Young plants from cuttings taken from the old stock should be started every year to replace them and it is also a good idea to keep more than one plant of a kind lest the old one die and leave you bereaved."

In the late 1930's, Mrs. Gray moved to Encanto, California, for the dryer climate. Here she had to limit her begonia collection to one 14' x 40' lathhouse. However -- and this is an indication that she must have been a most remarkable personality -- neighborhood boys surprised her by building a second, lean-to lathhouse for her!

The older, larger lathhouse was destroyed by fire in 1945, and Mrs. Gray moved in with her daughter Helen McCabe. Here she again had a greenhouse, and continued growing and exchanging begonias. She also took up another hobby, stamp collecting; "I find these very interesting and many of the foreign stamps brings thoughts of the far-away lands that are native habitats of our beloved begonia..."

Later, she moved in with her other daughter, Ethel Calloway in La Jolla. Mrs. Calloway was, like her mother, a gardener, and her begonia collection is said to have been a fine one; she specialized in the Superba canes her mother was instrumental in starting.

La Jolla had for many years an ABS branch named for Eva Kenworthy Gray. At one of the branch meetings on September 19, 1950, Rudolf Ziesenhenné pre-

sented Mrs. Gray with a new begonia species which Thomas Macdougall had found in Mexico: *B. kenworthyae*, named in her honor.

Eva Kenworthy Gray died on July 11, 1951. In April 1955, Dorothy Behrends, then Awards Chairman, suggested setting up an Award honoring this outstanding begonia lover. The criteria, that the winner contribute original material to further our knowledge of begonias, reflected an area where the honoree had been especially successful. How appropriate that the first winner was Eva Kenworthy Gray's friend, Bessie Buxton.

References

- The Begonia Book* by Eva Kenworthy Gray.
"Personalities of the Begonia World," the *Begonian*, May 1949, p. 107.
"The Passing of a Grand Lady," the *Begonian*, August 195, p. 163.
"The Story of Eva Kenworthy Gray," by Rudolf Ziesenhenné, the *Begonian*, March-April, 1983, pp. 45-6

Tamsin Boardman served one of the longest terms as editor of the Begonian. She is currently Conservation Chair and editor of the Southwest Region's Begonia Leaflet. Tamsin is also a book lover and I've heard her admit that if it is a publication about begonias, she has to have it. You may write her at P.O. Box 69, Bluff Dale, TX 76433

Quick Tips

We have a new Quick Tips editor: **Diane Wilkerson**. She asks that you send her quick tips for begonia growing to the address given on page 78. Remember the best tips are short and fit a space about the size of this item. They are used to complete pages as this item does.



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New England Tropical Conservatory

by Johanna Zinn

In October of 2000, I had the opportunity to visit with Dr. Mary Fuqua, President of the Board of the New England Tropical Conservatory. We met at her house in Williamstown, MA, and drove from there to the NETC greenhouse in Bennington, VT.

The Bennington site is located within a few hours drive of several colleges and universities, and is within an hour's drive from Albany, N.Y. and much of Berkshire County, MA. The stated mission of the NETC is to assist in the preservation of tropical rainforest plants through education, exhibition, and research. Some of their current educational programs include college internships, classroom and camp programs for primary and secondary students, and educational displays at business and plant shows.

The NETC is conducting research on leaf anatomy using the epidermal leaf peels Scott Hoover collects during his trips. The NETC, in conjunction with the Herbarium Bogoriense, Bogor, West Java Province is sponsoring botanical expeditions to Indonesia. Researchers may also study plants growing in their greenhouse.

The NETC collection is currently housed in a 27 ft. by 96 ft. poly greenhouse. The majority of the collection consists of begonias and aroids, but there are also malva, hibiscus, bamboo, and impatiens growing in the collection. Some of the begonias that caught my attention were *B. dipetala*, *longifolia*, *dichotoma*, *malabarica*, *castaneifolia*, *glabra*, *manii*, and a large blooming specimen of *B. luxurians* (See the Begonian, March/April 2000, p. 46).

There were also tables of small plants grown from seed. All the plants were labeled and the point of origin was well documented. The greenhouse is clean, neat and well organized, but will soon be too small for their collection.

The NETC long range plans include building 15,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse growing space, a service building, and a building for classrooms, laboratories, and offices. Construction will begin with a service building and up to 6000 sq. ft. of growing space. The construction will take approximately five years. Eventually, the NETC would like to build a 62,000 sq. ft. Conservatory.

If you would like more information about the NETC or wish to become a Friend of the NETC, please write to NETC, P.O. Box 4715, Bennington, Vt.

Johanna Zinn took the photo on the opposite page during her visit to NETC. You may write to her at 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032.

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NEWS: ABS, Branch, International

The Westchester Branch (CA) had a big Valentine Party on February 14 honoring their Valentine, Rudy Ziesenhenné on his 90th birthday. Members of other Southern California Branches came to celebrate the big event with them as well. Don't we wish we could have been present?

The Palos Verdes Branch (CA) learned in January about a device that reduces discarded plants and yard trimmings to a compost material. Can the begonias of this energetic group get any more gorgeous with compost?

Houston Knight prepared new name tags for every one to wear at meetings for the Orange County Branch (CA). Name tags are always a good idea; some of us can even forget our own names! Also, Mike Kartuz did a December program on unusual (non-poinsettia) plants for holiday decorations.

From *The Shuttle*, newsletter of the Houston Satellites Branch (TX) comes the quote from King Solomon: "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done. Keep on sowing your seed, for you never know which will grow - perhaps it all will." And from Judy Gilbert this tip: "As we head into fall and winter, the light levels in your house will change. As a result, you may need to rethink the location of some of your houseplants. If you have plants that are sitting in a north-facing window, you might want to shift them to an east-facing one. And plants that are happy in those east-facing windows might appreciate a visit to your southern-facing window. Even your low-light plants, which may spend the sum-

mer away from direct sunlight, might benefit from repositioning in one of your least-bright windows, now that the sun isn't as overpowering."

From the Theodosia Burr Shepherd Branch (CA) comes this warning about Vermiculite: "Vermiculite is a sponge material formed when a mica-type rock has been heated to 1400 degrees F. It is added to potting soil to loosen it and for rooting cuttings. It has small amounts of potassium, magnesium, and calcium, but has recently been found to contain **asbestos**. Asbestos can pose a health risk if fibers become airborne and are inhaled. For safety, dampen vermiculite and use in a well-ventilated area. The EPA recommends the use of premixed potting soil. (From the *California Garden* Nov/Dec)."

From *The Shade House*, newsletter of the Doug Frost Branch (CA) comes the amendment on vermiculite that it may be only that from one source in Libby, Montana that is a problem; but precaution against dust inhalation with any material containing dust-sized particles is probably wise. And from this newsletter also a solution for earwigs: "Stuff wet newspaper inside a pot, turn upside down and place it where they've become a problem. They will crawl inside the dark, damp paper making it easy to toss into the garbage."

Buxton Branch (MA) members carpooled to Logee's Greenhouses on January 14. Wouldn't you love to see what they brought home?

Don't forget, send newsletters to the editor's new address, page 78!!!

Begonias with Familiar Names:

Don't you love to grow begonias with the names of people you know and admire? At right is Rudy Ziesenhenné with his B. 'Rudy' (*B. ludwigii* x *popenoei* Ziesenhenné CA 1946) and below is Charles Jaros with *B. 'Charles Jaros'* (*B. hatacoa* x *deliciosa* Lowe FL 1976). I'd love to run more of these - do you have a photo of someone with the plant named after them? or a photo of each? Rudy's photo is by Janet Brown, Charles' photo by Dale Sena.



Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund

Seed Offerings on Page 24 of the
January/February 2001 *Begonian*.

Descriptions

JF01-01: *B. cinnabarina* W.J. Hooker [Bolivia] (Sect. *Eupetalum*). Low growing tuberous; green leaves, light orange single blossoms; summer.

JF01-02: *B. coccinea* W.J. Hooker [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*). Stems erect, 3'-4' branched, succulent, glabrous, obliquely ovate to oblong leaves, 4-6 in., thick green with wavy red margins, serrate; coral red wax-like flowers in pendulous racemes on red peduncles; summer.

JF01-03: *B. fissistyla* Irmscher [Bolivia] (Sect. *Hydristyles*). Erect stems; leaves entire, transverse with the midnerve at a distinct angle to the petiole and less than twice as long as wide, separated by distinct internodes; inflorescence branched, male flowers with 2 tepals, stipules deciduous; largest capsule wing more than twice as high and wide as the others. No color information available.

JF01-04: *B. kenworthyae* Ziesenhenné [Mexico] (Sect. *Gireoudia*). Erect succulent green thick rhizomes to 6 in.; 12" x 8" leaves, unequally sharply lobed, basally cordate, serrate, red-ciliate, fleshy, slate grey, green veins, covered with a grey bloom; white flowers in many flowered cymes; winter.

JF01-05: *B. mollicaulis* Irmscher {South America} (Sect. *Begonia*). 2-foot shrub-like; wide soft-hairy leaves; profuse pearly white flowers; late summer to fall.

JF01-06: *B. nelumbiifolia* Schlechtendal & Chamisso [Cent. America] (Sect. *Gireoudia*). Short, thick, ascending rhizome; peltate green leaves to 18 in. long, round-ovate to nearly orbicular, serrulate, ciliate, white to pink tinged flowers in tall, erect, forking cymes, winter to spring.

JF01-07: *B. plebeja* Liebmán [Mexico] (Sect. *Gireoudia*). Thick, branched, succulent rhizomes; obliquely cordate green leaves, 3" x 6" long, acute, irregularly toothed, ciliate, pilose underneath, long petioles; white flowers in forking cymes; autumn or winter.

JF01-08: *B. ravenii* Ching-I Peng & Yung-Kuan Chen [Taiwan] (Sect. *Diploclinium* II). This unusual tuberous species is also stoloniferous. It has a red stem, medium green leaves and bright pink flowers.

Continued from page 53.

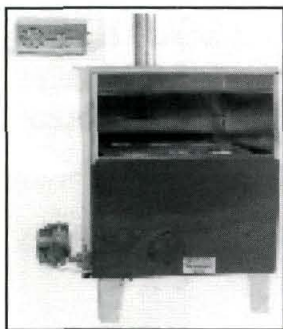
tinctive foliage grouping. Some of these species are the early ancestors of the Rex Cultorum group and indeed *B. rubro-venia*, later known as *B. hatacoa*, was one of the original outstanding Asiatic species crossed with *B. rex* Putzeys (the species *rex*) to create and improve the first Rex Cultorum and increase the diversity of colours, textures, and leaf forms. One such Rex Cultorum is *B. 'Solid Silver'* a cross between *B. rubro-venia* and *B. 'President Carnot'*. Another well known rhizomatous is *B. 'Tsunami'*, a cross between two species *B. hatacoa* and *B. deliciosa*. Pictures of both plants appear in *Know Your Begonias* by Jack Krepin.

This article first appeared in Vol. No. 49 of the Queensland Begonia Society, Inc. Journal, Summer 2000 and we thank them for allowing us to reprint this very thorough treatment of one of the editor's favorite plants. Note that B. 'Charles Jaros' on page 75 is also a cross of B. hatacoa and see the photo of a young B. hatacoa 'Spotted' on page 43. I am unsure of the cost of a subscription to the Journal, but you may write Mr. Peter Henderson, Secretary, at 79 Chuter Street, Stafford, Brisbane QLD 4053, Australia.

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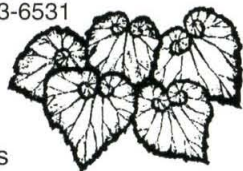
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COMING EVENTS

April 28, 2001: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Buxton Branch (MA) will participate in the Plant Societies Sale at the University of Massachusetts, Eastern Extension Center, 240 Beaver Street, Waltham, Mass. For more information call Wanda Macnair at 617-876-1356.

April 21-22, 2001: Barkley Branch (OK) Show & Sale, Will Rogers Garden Center, Oklahoma City, OK. For more information, call 405-385-0484.

April 25-29, 2001: SWR Get-Together "Begonias: Jewels of the Rain Forest." Holiday Inn in Plano, TX (972-881-1881). There will be a preconvention tour on Tuesday.

May 4-6, 2001: The Nature Discovery Volunteers and the Northcoast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society will host the 18th annual "Spring Wildflower Show at the Humboldt County Office of Education, 901 Myrtle Avenue, Eureka, CA. For information call 707-445-5883 or 707-442-8743 or e-mail: yoshells@humboldt1.com or visit northcoast.com/~cnps/wfs.htm.

July 4-8, 2001: ABS Convention 2001 in Denver, CO. There will be a preconvention tour on the day before the convention starts and a postconvention tour following the last day of the convention. For more information call Andy Conely at 303-916-5676.

September 2001: ABS Board Meeting in Orange County, CA. More information to come.

September 26-28, 2002: AABS Convention, Perth Australia. You're invited!

The Begonian

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