



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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Cover

Front: Here's a seal who really knows how to celebrate the holidays! He is the Seal Topiary at Cypress Gardens in Florida where **Mary Bucholtz** in this issue takes us to see begonias used in a bevy of colorful displays. He is composed of plants of the pink Semperflorens *B.* 'Gin'.

Back: Southwest Regions' Best of Show and Best Species winner, *B. crassicaulis*, grown elegantly by **Don Miller**. Photo is by Mary Bucholtz.

In This Issue

Antonelli Brothers

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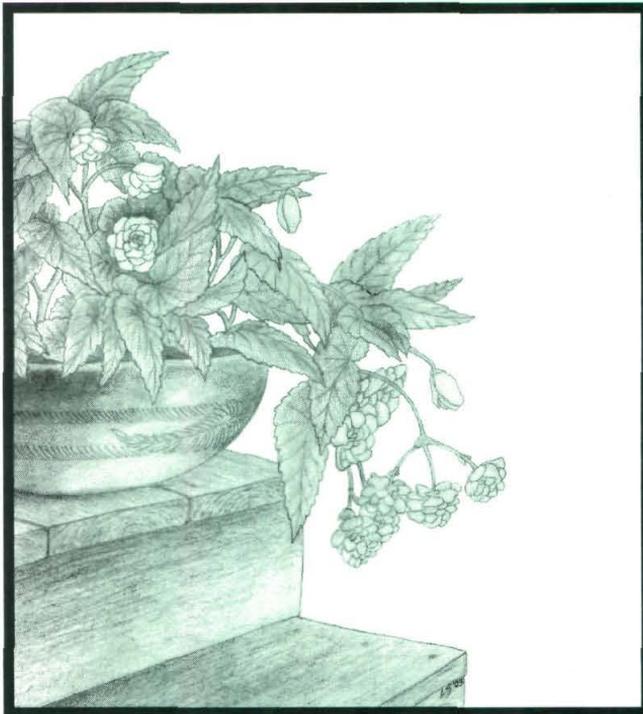
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Drawing by Lois Stoppel



President's Message...

I am honored that you have selected me as president of the American Begonia Society along with the other officers for the next two-year term. **Richard Macnair**, our long-time secretary and **Carol Notaras** our Treasurer will continue in their positions. **Janet Brown** is first vice president and **Mary Sakamoto** is our second vice president. I intend to ask Janet and Mary to assume various responsibilities over the term.

I believe we can address a number of issues over the next two years for the benefit of the Society and begonia lovers everywhere. First, how should the ABS use the internet to reach on-line users who are interested in begonias and attract them to join us as members? Second, some of our branches, like those of most other plant societies are having difficulty attracting new members, and we lost a number of branches over the last few years. How can we help those branches that are in jeopardy reinvigorate themselves? Third, how can the ABS become a catalyst to bring the begonia societies around the world along with academics, growers and others interested in begonias in closer contact and co-operation in such issues as preservation and conservation and promoting study and interest in the species? Fourth, how can we make contact with and meaningfully assist organizations in other nations that are struggling to preserve endangered begonias? India, for instance, has 14 species on their endangered list and they are trying to preserve them by providing for botanical garden facilities to grow the endangered ones before they are totally lost to us. There are many species that cannot be grown in our country and if they are to be preserved we must work with botanists and institutions locally who can be most effective in that effort. Can we act

as a clearing house for the begonias of the world by gathering information about these activities and helping find financial assistance for their efforts?

One final word (for now). Become an active participant in the ABS and its activities. I just attended a Southwest Get-together. Besides seeing a lot of old friends and meeting some interesting people I had not met before, I had the opportunity to learn more about begonias both from good growers and show exhibitors, but also from **Maxine Zinman** who held a judging course and **Bill Claybaugh** who conducted a two afternoon course on species identification. Make plans now to attend the ABS convention in San Diego in next August or the next Southwest get-together next spring. You'll be well rewarded and glad you attended.

My e-mail address that I use for ABS business is howber@optonline.net. Send me your thoughts and suggestions. My phone number and address is listed in the section showing the officers. If you aren't on the internet, call or write me. After all, you're my boss and I need to hear from you.

*To all the Very Special
and Wonderful Sponsors
on the Next Page
and the
Contributors of Articles
and Photographs for this
Issue,
a Thank You and Happy
Holidays Wish!*



This holiday issue is brought to you in large part as a gift of the branches and individuals shown below. From all of us in ABS a thank you to them and those who contributed the articles, photos, and drawing for this very special issue.

Happy Holidays!

Bronze

Dean H. Allen
Tamsin & Bruce Boardman
Jeanne & Wally Jones
Greater Atlanta Branch
Carolyn Hawkins
Mae Blanton Branch

Silver

Cheryl Lenert
Long Beach Parent Chapter
Morris Mueller
Santa Barbara Branch
Begonia Society of the Palm
Beaches

Gold

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Carol & Peter Notaras
Orange County Branch
Potomac Branch
Gene & Ann Salisbury
San Jacinto Branch
Southwest Region, ABS
Whittier Branch

Topiary Bedecked in Begonias

by Mary Bucholtz

The future of a wonderful piece of “Old Florida” may be lost forever. Cypress Gardens, one of Florida’s first theme parks, closed suddenly in April after struggling financially. Surely you remember Cypress Gardens, the 67 year old, 233 acre attraction featuring the acrobatic water ski shows, and the lush semitropical botanical gardens where you would see “Southern Belles”, in their long hooped skirts, posed in among the luxuriant landscape.

Helene and **Charles Jaros** and I rediscovered Cypress Gardens this past February along with **Johanna Zinn** from Virginia. We spent a day pouring over what seemed like every inch of their stunning 16 acre botanical gardens, and when it was time to depart, it was too soon. You see we found many begonias in their displays. There were *B. ‘Lois Burks’* and *B. ‘Dragon Wings’* swinging from gazebos and porches and planted in window boxes. Large specimen plants of *B. coccinea* hort.

You see we found many begonias in their displays.

and *B. ‘Charm’* were throughout the gift shop and restaurant areas. The Butterfly House had its share of begonias too. In addition to the above mentioned, we saw *B. albo picta*, *B. ‘Mrs. Townsend’*, *B. ‘Sophie Cecile’* and *B. ‘Torch’*. Many of these begonias as well as additional species were also planted in the grounds in the botanical gardens.

Cypress Gardens has a magnificent waterfall, which looks as if it were created

by Mother Nature herself. In amongst the rocks and the spillway which runs down to Lake Eloise (the lake on which the park

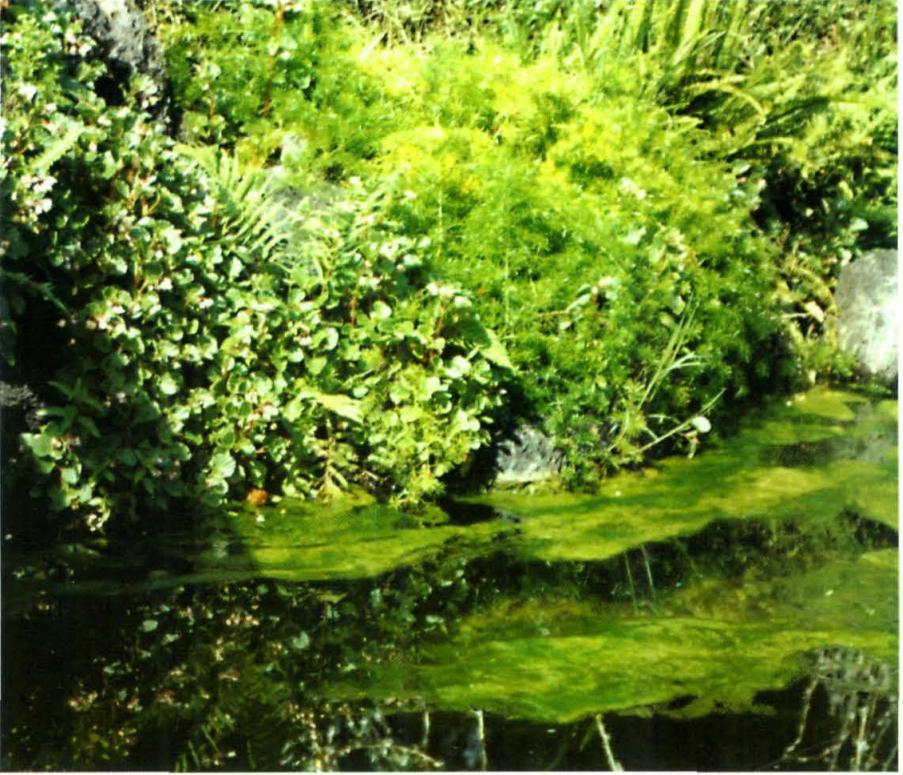
To me it was as if I were looking at those *B. fischeri* in their native habitat.

is located) were many *B. fischeri* which had naturalized in the rocks and banks. To me it was as if I were looking at those *B. fischeri* in their native habitat.

What really got our attention was their advertising announcing their annual Spring Flower Festival, which began in March. It features the world’s largest topiary display with more than two dozen enormous fantasy and real life figures, bedecked in begonia wardrobes and playfully posed among waves of 35,000 bedding plants.” Now, who of us could resist that, “bedecked in begonia wardrobes,” indeed.

Helene, Charles and I returned in late March and were not a bit disappointed. Semperflorens are used exclusively for the many topiary. The varieties used, known to me, were the Whiskey series which exhibits bronze foliage. The begonias were *B. ‘Vodka’* with red flowers, *B. ‘Gin’* with pink flowers, and *B. ‘Whiskey’* with white flowers. The Whiskey series was hybridized by Benary in the 1960’s. Also used were green foliage begonias with the red, pink, and white flowers.

Only a couple of weeks after seeing the topiaries, came the devastating news of the gardens’ closure. There are several businesses interested in purchasing the



Above you see the B. fischeri by the waterfall that so caught Mary's eye. Below is another of the wonderful topiaries. This is the Butterfly Topiary made with red B. 'Vodka', pink B. 'Gin' and two green unknowns with white and red flowers.



property. One, a real estate investor who wishes to develop the area for condominium, another a timeshare community. Yet another is an amusement park operator who has a successful venture in Georgia. He would create the amusement park atmosphere using some of the land, but has stated the 16 acre botanical gardens would remain as they are.

The State Of Florida, responding to a public outcry to save Cypress Gardens, has stated they can use state money from Florida Forever, the state's program to buy environmentally sensitive lands. If a deal

can be struck, and the prospect is positive, the 67 year-old attraction would become a state park. A final decision is still pending. Those of us who wish the gardens to be saved hope that it will become a state park.

We thank Mary who made a special effort to bring us these colorful photos for our holiday issue! She is a frequent contributor and you may write her at 1560 Lancaster Terrace #1008, Jacksonville, FL 32204

Hybridizing with Trailing-Scandent Begonias

by Freda Holley

One of the things every hybridizer seeks is uniqueness. Although there is absolutely no way to assure achieving this goal since Mother Nature always assumes ultimate control, it is likely to be more attainable when we work with groups of plants that have not been as frequently hybridized. One of these groups is the trailing-scandent and it seems rich with possibilities.

It is important to know some things about this grouping before thinking about the hybridizing possibilities. First, there is variation in the sizes ranging from the blousy stems and leaves of *B. convolvulaceae* to the slim, elegant *B. polygonoides*. They can behave in very different ways depending on their growing environment. In humid conditions they will clamber over earth and rocks to form a ground cover or up any tree with obliging bark. I have seen them in various conservatory settings spilling in profusion down damp rock walls and into the water at waterfalls. For our shows, however, they are usually grown in hanging baskets where they require frequent feedings and almost

continuous pinching to keep them shapely.

Most of the American species begonias bloom white, but fortunately we also have the red-blooming *B. radicans*. I don't know a lot about the African species since these don't seem to like me and I've never been really successful in growing them; I believe they need a cool temperature and high light. Still, I have seen blooms on many of them and they were either white or pink.

It is probably helpful to note that most of the species we commonly grow are from Brazil or Africa and that they have an interesting genetic makeup. *B. solananthera* and *B. radicans* have been placed in their own Section by **Doorenbos** et. al., *Solananthera*, and have 56 chromosomes. *B. convolvulaceae*, *fagifolia*, and *glabra* are in the *Wageneria* and have 38 chromosomes. Most of the African species including *B. cavallyensis*, *ebolowensis*, *kisuluana*, *komoensis*, *mannii*, and *polygonoides* are in the Section *Tetraphila* and are more diverse genetically ranging from 34 to as many as 76 chromosomes. We do not know the count of *B. thelmae*, but we do know it crosses easily with *B. soli-mutata* which in turn crosses easily with many thick-stemmed begonias. All this may be important to hybridizers be-



Here is the Mama Duck Topiary made with the red B. 'Vodka', pink B. 'Gin' and white B. 'Whiskey'. Below is the big Lady Bug Topiary with a Column Topiary in the foreground. They are made with B. 'Vodka' and 'Whiskey'. All photos are by Mary Bucholtz.



cause it suggests that the first group of the American species above will probably cross with cane-like begonias having 56 chromosomes and that the second group will cross with many thick-stemmed begonias having 38 chromosomes. It will also suggest that *B. thelmae* probably has 38 as well. I have, in fact, found such crosses as I have tried to make using these numbers as guidelines do work. It would also suggest that the African species may be a more difficult set to work with.

Chromosome counts are not absolutes when it comes to hybridizing, but I have found them useful starting places for easy crosses. Many experts also say that continent of origin is an important determinant, but then we know that *B. dregei* from Africa crosses easily with many American species so perhaps crosses between the many African trailing-scandents and the American may be possible. It is but one of many avenues to explore.

The Thompson's *Begonias* lists only 29 hybrids, slightly fewer than the thick-stem hybrids, the other small group. Of these, I remember having seen anywhere only *B. 'Tequesta'*, *'Dolores'*, *'Splotches'*, and *'Panasoffkee'*. Of course, there have been others later such as *B. 'Morocco'*, *'Fragrant Beauty'*, and *'Withlacoochee'*, but I think no matter how many we count they are still relatively few..

I have not found creating hybrids in this group easy because in the conditions I have it is difficult to get blooms. Many of these species and hybrids require cool conditions with high light. If they do bloom for me they are reluctant to set seed as the temperature is often too high or too low. I have, however, been able to cross *B. glabra* and *B. coccinea* getting plants that seem identical to **Ziesenhenné's** *B. 'Delores'* with pink flowers.

More recently, I have been able to get fairly generous bloom on *B. 'Fragrant*

Beauty' which I do find to cross easily with the cane-like begonias. I now have crosses with *B. corallina* that I am evaluating. But there are hundred of crosses to try. It is good to remember that crosses created with primary hybrids (created by species to species crosses) are secondary hybrids and these will have far more variation than the primary. Thus it may be necessary to look down several generations to find what we are seeking.

Crosses I would love to make are with *B. convolvulacea* in hopes of trying to capture its heat resistance and vigor in a trailing scandent.

The African species are a wide-open group for the creation of new hybrids for those who can get them to bloom. With all the new unidentifieds and species coming from China perhaps there will be yet other trailers to add to our possibilities.

Join in and let's see what we can produce!

This article came about because I had space to fill (I keep telling you readers I need MORE articles!) and ran across the article which I quote below. It inspired the thoughts above. It is from the Journal of The Queensland Begonia Society, Inc., Vol. No. 58 Autumn 2003.

Set Subject - November Trailing-Scandent Begonias

by Joan Taylor, Australia

Trailing/scandent begonias are the climbers and trailers of the begonia world. In Queensland, the majority of us grow the old species and a few hybrids. However, there are a wealth of new species from around the Asian tropical regions that have not become common here yet. Photos of some of these can be viewed on the website mentioned in the last *Begonian* (absastro.tripod.com). Some will require terrarium care but others should adjust

fairly well to Brisbane conditions.

Among the old species are: *B. radicans* (aka *procumbens*, *limmingheana*, *glaucophylla*), *fagifolia*, *polygonoides*, *convolvulacea*, *solananthera*, *mazae*, *glabra*, and *mazae forma nigricans*. In my experience, *B. fagifolia*, *convolvulacea*, and *solananthera* grow beautifully up trees. They form roots like ivy and in a humid situation soon reach about three metres.

All the above also do very well in baskets. I only water every two to three weeks in winter and almost every day in summer. I found all of them a bit slow to start but once established become lovely plants. This took two to three years. They don't like to be too hot in summer, especially *B. solananthera*. *B. fagifolia* on the other hand, grows up a tree in full sun most of the day and gets very little water. It looks best in the rainy season, of course, but is amazingly tolerant of harsh conditions.

B. mazae doesn't look quite what we expect of a trailing/scandent, but can reach 50 cm x 50 cm in a favourable position in the ground. It really is a lovely plant.

Some of the more common hybrids are *B. 'Ellen Dee'*, *'Serenata'*, *'Nocturne'*, *'Glenata'* (*B. Yorke*), *'Mercedes'*, *'Bob-o-Link'*, *'Two Face'*, *'Spotches'*, and *'Fragrant Beauty'*.

I have personally crossed *B. 'Fragrant Beauty'* with *B. 'Lenore Olivier'* and have only flowered a couple of pinks. I am awaiting a red! Many of the crosses will be thrown away if they have an unattractive form of growth or flowers I don't like. The leaves of some are bronze with extremely dark backs. They may benefit from crossing back to another plant.

Another cross of *B. solananthera* by *B. 'Christine B'* has thrown some green leaves with spots and pink flowers. I will keep only a few of the best specimens.

The most frustrating cross was a bronze leaved, very dark red flowered semp (mother plant) by *B. solananthera*. Every plant is identical to *B. solananthera* except one. It throws an occasional bronze to red leaf and has a slight tinge of pink to the flowers when grown in the sun. I am trying to put the dark red semp back into it in an attempt to get flower colour and leaf colour.

Some of the attempts to cross canes, etc. with trailing/scandent result in leggy plants with an unattractive habit and in my opinion should have been disposed of. Others just need judicious pruning to make quite lovely plants. *B. 'Bob-o-link'* is an example of this. Prune to shape and it is very nice and flowers nearly all year round. Pruning should be done after flowering in spring and continue into midsummer, but some of the species like *B. fagifolia* throw occasional flowers during winter as well. I find also that the trailing/scandents are heavy feeders. They need a good quality fertiliser regularly. If they are still only spasmodically flowering toward the end of summer, you need to do your pruning or you will end up with a leggy plant, so sacrifice the flowers in order to develop a well shaped plant that will flower all the better next year. I have to admit I didn't do this when I first began to grow trailing/scandents and had quite poor, leggy looking specimens.

As you can see I have learnt my lesson, and in about six to eight weeks I will prune back by about one third which will once again improve the shape. I don't intend to replot every year, but will give some trace elements once a year as well as extra potash to increase the number of flowers. Sometimes, the leaf colour may not be a very dark green. This may not be due to lack of nitrogen. It may be too much summer sun, so give that some thought before tipping on the fertilizer.

Conservation Comments

by: **Bill Claybaugh,**
Conservation Chairman, ABS

We've had a busy year.

Over this past year, the Conservation Program has been moving forward at a rapid pace. Among the highlights have been the fruitful interactions with several botanical gardens. Key among these has been the program with the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens (FWBG). We have been able to increase the begonia collection by more than 10 per cent, i.e. greater than 30 new species, thanks to the generosity of members such as **Johanna Zinn, Dianna Wilkerson, Gene Salisbury, Morris Mueller, Cheryl Lenert, Tom Keepin, Freda Holley, Leigh Heard, Mary Fuqua Iris Bird.** Further, there are many more species being grown today by members which will go to FWBG next year.

Another small but growing effort is to increase the species collections at both the Mounts Botanical Gardens and at University of South Florida. Approximately 20 new species have been, or will be sent to both facilities by year end. **Dale Sena** at USF, and **Johanna Kitson** and others at the Palm Beaches Branch have been instrumental in receiving these new varieties and insuring their survival.

Our program with the Ornamental Plant Germplasm Center, Ohio State University, is progressing as planned. To date 38 species have been selected and transferred to their greenhouses. The species selected to date are as follows: *Begonia acetosa, acida, albo-picta, carolineifolia, convolvulacea, coriacea, cucullata, dichotoma, dichroa, dipetala, echinosepala var. elongatifolia, fernandocostae, friburgensis, heracleifolia, holtonis, hydrocotylifolia, kellermanii, kingiana, lanceolata, leprosa, limprichtii,*

masoniana, microsperma, nelumbiifolia, plebeja, prismatocarpa, quadrialata ssp. nimbaensis, rajah, reniformis, rex, sanguinea, scapigera, subvillosa, tayabensis, thelmae, thiemei, U388, and venosa. This list includes 4 species from Africa, 10 from Asia and 24 from the Americas and covers 14 of the 63 begonia sections. The short-term goal is to supply OSU with approximately 62 additional species, 100 overall, and to broaden the collection to include examples from more of the 63 begonia sections. **Dr. David Tay** who is in charge of the program tells me that he now has two graduate students who will be using these plants in their Doctoral programs. Good things are happening!

Finally, I will mention a major step in the Conservation Program to supply educational material on species. A workshop entitled "Begonia Description and Use of the Begoniaceae Keys" was recently completed at the August 2003 South West Region meeting in Fort Worth. Over 45 enthusiastic members attended this two-day workshop. The discussions were built around a workbook specially prepared for the workshop, authored by **Jack Golding** and myself.

The first day, a four-hour session, concentrated on developing a vocabulary of botanical terms that are required when using the *Begoniaceae* Keys. This work covered characteristic terms used to describe begonia growth habit, leaves, flowers, inflorescence, and vestiture. To my pleasure, everyone renewed their artistic skills, drawing plant parts and really "Seeing Begonia". They then became botanists-for-a-day and found words to describe leaves, flowers and inflorescence. I think that overall, it was a richly rewarding experience for all participants.

The second day, a three-hour session, was an exercise in identifying spe-

Continued on page 218.

PHOTOGRAPHING BEGONIAS

Australian Convention Report by Colin Jennings

*This is the third and final article which appeared in the March 2003 **Begonia Australis** and was originally presented at the Association of Australian Begonia Societies Seventh Convention in Perth, Australia in 2002. The introduction that follows is by **Tricia Marriott**, their editor.*

Colin Jennings is a retired teacher of chemistry and science. He graduated from Adelaide University in science and received a Diploma in Education from the same university. He taught for seven years in South Australia before being seconded to teach in Papua New Guinea for two years. On returning to South Australia he was appointed Senior Master in Science at Urrbrae Agricultural High School and taught there for twenty years. He has a keen interest in a wide range of horticultural pursuits, especially in the cultivation of species plants from a wide range of genera, both native and exotic. He also has more than a passing interest in photography.

- *Many members of Begonia Societies take photographs of their plants as a record of their collection and/or for use in articles or talks.*
- *These photographs may be 'snapshots' or quality slides or prints.*
- *Most of our photographs are taken in a 'closed' environment, either at a show or in another stable environment. Seldom are we going to be in the 'wild'.*

This paper was written to give growers a brief outline of what the writer considers to be some useful tips.

Why do we take photos?

- As a record of flowering.
- To use them as an illustration of a plant in an article or slide presentation.
- To use them for judging purposes.
- To use them in an educational way.
- To use them for comparing features.

Necessary equipment

- Camera in good working order.
- Supply of appropriate film.
- Method of recording data.
- Variety of lenses to suit all contingencies (depends how "expert" you care to be and the budget.)
- Tripod/s.
- Shutter release cable.
- Flash/reflector board/grey card.
- Background cloth.
- Suitable subject to photograph.
- A simple 'repair' kit.

CAMERA

If you want to take 'snapshots' then there are a number of quality 'fixed lens' cameras on the market, ranging from a hundred dollars or so, up to almost a thousand dollars.

There are limitations with such equipment, mainly that close-up shots are difficult and you have no guarantee that you have the subject in focus. Also, you do not see exactly what the film is recording due to error of parallax.

By far the most suitable camera is a Single Lens Reflex. For many years I have used a screw mounted Pentax, with a number of interchangeable lenses, together with lens-mounted attachments (1 and 2 dioptré) which are screwed onto the front of the lens and are ideal for very close-up shots of single flowers etc. Also it is possible to achieve good close-up shots using interchangeable rings that can be placed between the lens and the camera body. My current camera is a Canon EOS 500, with a similar set of interchangeable bayonet mounted rings.

FILM

I prefer to use Kodachrome 64 for my slides. The speed of this film is ideal for outdoor shots and with the aid of flashlight very suitable for indoors. Other film brands are suitable but check out the dominance of colour in some, greens and reds are sometimes out of balance for flowers. I find that the Kodak film is well balanced for what I do - others may have different preferences. If you are not using flash, then a film with an ASA rating of 200 is about right.

LENSES

There are as many as you can number. I have a 50mm macro lens, and find that for just about everything it is ideal. This coupled with extension rings enables me to get within a few centimetres of the subject and allows for very close-up shots. They are easily attached and simple to use. Bellows are more expensive and a bit more difficult to attach. If you have time then that is fine. A 100mm macro lens is an expensive addition, but does give more versatility.

The only filter I use is a UV filter. This excludes a large percentage of the UV light and hence reduces that blue tinge often seen in outdoor shots. It also serves as a very effective, and cheap protector of the lens surface. It is a lot cheaper to replace a damaged UV filter than a lens.

TRIPOD

A good tripod is essential. It is absolutely essential if exposure time is less than 1/60th of second, or for any close-up shot. If taking photos of plants on benches then the longer legged type is essential. However, if you are planning to take shots of plants at home and can adjust the position of the plant, then I prefer to use a portable type, which extends to no more than 20cm high at full extension. It is very versatile and can also be used as a tripod support when taking pictures of night scenes by propping it against a wall or window. Without a tripod, blurring of pictures will occur, no matter how steady you think your hand is.

SHUTTER RELEASE CABLE

This is an essential when using the tripod. It avoids the heavy hand on the shutter button when you have taken so much time to set your camera on the tripod, and all of a sudden - you move it.

FLASHLIGHT

There are many types, some suited to portrait shots, others to display shots. Some are too powerful for the more delicate flower or plant shots and tend to 'burn' the subject so that it appears to be horribly overexposed. This can be overcome by choosing a suitable ring-flash. *The one I have screws on to the*

front of the lens. The advantage of the ring-flash is that it eliminates the shadow effect and gives an even distribution of light across the subject. It might, however, cause the photo to have a 'flat' look if not used properly. Flashlights which sit above or beside the camera body often give a slightly angled pulse of light, producing shadows and uneven subject lighting.

BACKGROUNDS

Generally speaking a black or mid-blue is suitable, but trial and error may be necessary to give you what you want. Best to have a matte finish, especially if flash is to be used. *In situ* photos often do not need a background sheet, since the foliage, etc. behind the subject can be a very useful, out of focus, backdrop. With backgrounds, it is important to place them far enough behind the subject so as to not have shadows cast; 500mm seems to be about right.

Many otherwise good shots are ruined by the background. How many times have you seen a clothes' line, a brick wall, or even the garden gnome in the background of a superb begonia plant? A few seconds planning is worth a lot.

SUBJECT

A little bit of grooming may be required here. Firstly select the leaves/flowers that are in good condition. Use sticky tape to get the problem leaves etc. out of the way. Remove labels from the pots, unless they are an important part of the shot. Cover the pots if they are unsuitable, a black drape is ideal. Look for those telltale signs of insects, spiders, slugs, snails etc., and remove. There is nothing worse than to find your returned slide/picture with that

ghastly 'monster' standing out. You might find that it takes several minutes to get the best aspect before you even start to think about pressing the shutter release button.

If you have the option and can move the plant, it is a good idea to put it in a bed of stones or sand and then it is possible to place the pot at an angle to allow you to get a different view of the plant or flower.

FILL THE FRAME

You have paid for the full film, use it. In order to get the best result, use the whole of the frame. To do this you need to get as close as is possible in order to fill the frame with the subject. There is nothing more frustrating than to look at a slide or a picture in which the subject takes up a wee part of the frame, when with a little more attention to framing the subject when taking the photo, you could end up with a superb result, rather than just "any old photo." A single flower with a thick border of nothing is rather unsightly. Also check to see, through the viewfinder, if a vertical rather than a horizontal aspect is better. If not sure take both!

TAKE NOTES

Keep a notebook to record details of the shots you take. This might include the exposures used, (aperture/exposure time). You might also want to record the date and the location; if your memory is like mine you might get it wrong a month later. Also record the name of the plant, its owner or any other pertinent data, which might be of use at a later date. I use a simple A6 notebook.

Others use a micro-cassette recorder, adding other useful data in the form of a

documentary. The recorder also allows for you to record information if the pictures have been taken *in situ*.

Record the data on the slides or the back of the prints as soon as you receive them back from the processors. It is best to use a permanent pen: I use a set of 'Overhead Projection' pens and they are ideal.

STORAGE

Housing photographs can present a few problems, especially as the collection grows. Remember dust and light are your two worst enemies. Wooden slide boxes (most hold up to 500 slides) are ideal and it is possible to store the slides in chronological order or in classes, or in whatever way you find easiest to manage and especially, to find them when you want them. If you have the facility, record the collection in a database, numbering each item using an expandable code system.

Plastic slide sleeves are also good, these can be stored vertically in a filing cabinet, or in 4-ring binders. I prefer to use archival quality material, the cheaper plastics do have a tendency to affect slide colour and sometimes "dissolve" the ink used in labelling.

Mark your slides so that they are placed 'correct way up' for projection. I use either a red dot in the top right hand corner or mark the edge of the slide with a red permanent pen.

REPAIR / EMERGENCY KIT

How often have you had a problem with a loose screw on a piece of equipment, or a nut that needs tightening? I always carry a small kit in my camera bag. It includes

some rather interesting bits and pieces, but each has a use in an emergency.

- Two small screwdrivers, one a Phillip's head type, the other having the conventional head. A Mini-spanner set.
- Two spring loaded clothes' wooden pegs – ideal for pegging up a cloth backdrop outdoors, and sometimes to hold back a few leaves from the flower subject.
- A scalpel, 'Blue Tack', dressmaking pins, drawing pins, super glue, rubber bands, pencil, adhesive tape etc.

I think that you get the picture.

- Don't forget a spare set of batteries for your camera and the flashlight.

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Ask Ross: Taking Cane Cuttings

by Ross Bolwell

Recently, your editor was taking cuttings of canes and I realized that despite having taken cuttings for years, there were some many questions that might be asked to which I had no answers. Since Ross Bolwell's article from the last issue on cane begonias was fresh in my mind, I knew his expertise in propagation, and I knew of his popular column in the Newsletter, I decided to ask him some of the questions that occurred to me during that session. All but one of these questions and answers appeared in the latest issue of that newsletter. He was kind enough to answer these in some detail and here with his permission I give his replies. If other readers should have experience related to any of these, I'd be interested in your responses as well....FH

To answer your questions, first some background:

Unlike many plants Cane Begonias can produce roots both at the node and also down the full length of the internode on stem cuttings. Many other plants only produce roots at the node. For this reason it really doesn't matter how many nodes each cutting has as long as it has at least one with a viable bud. So if you have limited stock and need lots of plants then single node cuttings are suitable. If you only require one or two plants that reach a good size quickly then cuttings with several nodes are fine. I prefer to use two-node cuttings, one placed about an inch below the propagating medium and the other just above. This way you usually get a plant that produces shoots from below the soil for many years. Single node cuttings with only an internode below the medium don't produce such shoots.

Now to your questions:

1) *Sometimes on a given cutting there will be a segment with long internodes and then segments with short internodes and I am wondering if these different types of segments lead to differences in the plants resulting from each.*

Answer: Such differences in internode length usually occur because of particular environmental/physiological factors when the stem is growing eg: running out of fertiliser; cold change etc. Therefore cuttings taken from the short internodes do not produce plants any different from those produced from long internodes. Many professional growers use dwarfing chemicals to achieve compact and bushy growth with more flowers but even this is temporary and grows out after one season.

2) *Are there differences in the resultant plant between starts made with mallet cuttings of cane stems (those where a branch has occurred) and a tip cutting?*

Answer: No, provided there is a node at the base of the tip cutting.

3) *If you have a cutting with more than the usually recommended 3 nodes do you cut the rest off, bury more of it, or cut it into more than one cutting even if these would have fewer than the 3?*

Answer: Three nodes are not necessary, but it is insurance for the future plant that

there is at least a bud or two for new growth. More nodes on a cutting than three is OK but probably unnecessary and you could make more cuttings from it. Single node cuttings are the least wise to take and you need to be sure that there is that one viable bud. Also with single node cuttings, I make sure that an inch of internode is below the medium and that the node is right at soil level. This way future shoots appear to be coming from soil level, not above which is less desirable. Burying cuttings deeper is not good practice as poorer aeration with higher water content can cause stem rot at the base end.

4) *When you start a new plant how many cuttings per pot do you stick? Do you only use tip cuttings for these?*

Answer: I use one, two or three cuttings per pot. This is dependant on the cultivar, with free branching begonias such as B 'Flamingo Queen' with one cutting, to those that do not branch very much getting three cuttings. I use all types of cuttings for these. Compact, low growing canes suited to hanging baskets can have up to six cuttings per basket.

5) *Do you use different approaches to cuttings if you are preparing them for sale or for your own replacement plants (i.e. type,number, etc)?*

continued from page 212.

cies using selected varieties and the Begoniaceae Keys. The work was intense, the pace was fast, and we were all weary from our outing to the FWBG. Despite these limits, we were able to cover examples of identifying species when little else was known except having the plant before us. We also reviewed techniques to confirm the identity of a newly purchased species, and to differentiate between two species when the names were

Answer: I only take cuttings from well watered and fertilised plants in full health no matter where the plants are destined. I do grow stock plants/display plants in larger sizes with more cuttings per pot for obvious reasons. The only time I take cuttings from unsuitable plants is when I'm down to one sad plant that needs rescuing! On some cultivars tip cuttings are less successful than older stem material and in such cases I do not use the tips.

6) *Do you find that cuttings at certain times will not take; i.e. winter or high summer?*

Answer: This depends on the specific conditions under which you are trying to propagate. Environment is everything. When I use intermittent mist and bottom heat (thermostat controlled) cuttings strike successfully all year around. When I use a contained atmosphere (terrarium) cuttings still strike readily most of the year (a small drop off in winter). If I attempt cuttings without adequate warmth or humidity then success is reduced significantly. The best time for good results when you do not have adequate facilities is to propagate from mid-spring to early summer and then again in early autumn. I find almost total failure in a cold glasshouse in winter (our winters are relatively mild) and a less than 50% strike rate in mid summer when temps are very high.

known, but the identities were confused. Numerous additional examples were available in the workbook, but were deferred due to time limits. Additional copies of the workbook used in this program are now available and can be purchased for \$20.00 from me (absastro@hotmail.com) or from **Cheryl Lenert** at the ABS Bookstore (Lenert@flash.net). These books will make an excellent addition to any ABS Branch library or to your individual collection.

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL
BUSINESS MEETING**
American Begonia Society
Grapevine, TX August 30, 2003

Annual reports received from branches were presented. Most branches appear to be doing fairly well. The Astro and Palm Beaches Branches appear to be among the most active. A few branches such as Chicago are struggling.

Branch Relations Director **Mary Bucholtz** reported that a Branch Relations Newsletter was mailed in May. There are three new groups working on formation of branches in Palm Coast, FL, Tampa, FL, and Austin, TX. The Rocky Mountain Branch appears to be no longer active since no response was received to an inquiry about their status.

Membership Secretary **Arlene Ingles** reported that there are currently 1395 members and that this number is up from 937 in May. She provided additional data that shows a sharp membership rise in June to 1363 followed by a fall to 1260 in July. The August figure of 1395 is made up of 90 organization, 63 life members, 1118 domestic members and 124 foreign members. Branches still bring in most new members and the internet brings in a much lesser but still significant number.

Ann Salisbury reported sales income for various funds for this fiscal year: Millie Thompson Publication Fund \$2695.00; Back Issues 15.00; *Begonian* Advertising 1695.00; *Begonian Index* 47.00; *Catalog of Registered Begonia Cultivars* 60.00.

Conservation Chair **Bill Claybaugh** reported that species lists were received since April from the New England Tropical Conservatory, Brooklyn Botanical Garden and the Botanic Gardens of Glasgow. The total number of species reported is now up to 717. Thirty-nine species have been sent

to Ohio State University this year for their Ornamental Plant Germplasm Conservation Program. A workshop on Begonia Description and Use of the Begoniaceae Keys was held. Fifteen more species have been transferred to the Fort Worth Botanical Garden in the last four months.

Ballot Counting Chair **Ingeborg Foo** provided information on the recent election of officers. The total number of votes cast was 167, a distinctly larger number than in recent years. The votes tallied as follows:

President **Howard Berg** 162
1st Vice Pres. **Janet Brown** 164
2nd Vice Pres. **Mary Sakamoto** 164
Secretary **Richard Macnair** 165
Treasurer **Carol Notaras** 165

Auditor **Paul Tsamtsis** reported that the books of the *American Begonia Society* appear to be in order as of the examination date, August 23, 2003.

Judging Chair **Maxine Zinman** reported sending cultural certificates to seven branches. Two new judges were approved and four are pending. A judging school was held in Grapevine, TX, at the Southwest Region Get-together.

Save Our Species Newsletter Editor **Rekha Morris** reported compiling a list of members who had previously adopted species. The total was 96. Her first newsletter was sent to all of these adopters. Subsequently 10 members adopted 16 species. Since then these numbers have grown to 48 members adopting 42 species. The list of adopters and species adopted is in the newsletters. Number 4 newsletter is planned to be available by the end of the year.

Entries and Classification Chair **Leora Fuentes** reported that the Southwest Region Show had 53 entries by 10 exhibitors.

Begonian Editor **Freda Holley** once

again asked for more contributions of articles.

Grant Review Committee Chair **Janet Brown** reported that the election of new officers means that Mary Sakamoto will be the new chair of the committee. Appointed member terms are about to expire so the president will likely have to appoint new members to the committee subject to board approval.

Business Manager **Gene Salisbury** reported that the ABS has had a good year.

Back Issues Chair **Donna Marchek** reported a modest number of requests for back issues. **Ann Salisbury** announced that if a branch desires a large quantity such as 50, 75 or 100 copies they should contact her.

Holiday Ad Chair **Wanda Macnair** reported that \$2063 has been collected thus far for the **Begonian**.

It was announced that **Rudy Zieshenne, Joy Logee Martin, Margaret Lee, Ramona Parker, Irene Nuss, Ruth Pease** and **Normand Dufresne** were seriously ill (Normand had angioplasty). Members and branches are urged to send cards and letters.

Respectfully Submitted

Richard Macnair, Secretary

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

American Begonia Society
Grapevine, TX, August 30, 2003

President **Morris Mueller** opened the meeting and asked **Eugenia Cooke** to read the Aims and Purposes of the Society. The minutes of the prior meeting in Oklahoma City on April 26, 2003, were approved as published. There were 28 member votes present.

Treasurer **Carol Notaras** presented

financial reports for the last four months and for the fiscal year. For the period April 1 to July 31, 2003, the general fund beginning balance was \$9490.65 and ending balance was \$16,618.84. During this period income was \$25,991.37 while expenses were \$8,863.18. The increase was due to the success of the Oklahoma City Convention which netted \$9629.77. The combined checking accounts that include the general fund, seed fund and *Begonian* mailing fund began with \$12,006.18 and ended with \$18,008.62. Savings accounts beginning balance was \$62,608.89 and ending balance was \$64,438.04. The combined checking and savings totals began with \$74,615.07 and ended with \$82,446.66. For the fiscal year August 1, 2002 to July 31, 2003 the general checking account began with \$15,143.56. With income of \$68,983.79 and disbursement of \$67,508.51 the ending balance was \$16,618.84. The combined seed fund, *Begonian* mailing fund and general fund began with \$15,318.07 and ended with \$18,008.62. Savings account totals were \$57,064.17 initial and \$64,438.04 final. Combined savings and checking accounts began with \$72,382.24 and ended with \$82,446.66 indicating a \$10K increase for the year.

Three board positions have been vacated recently. President Mueller recommended the following members to fill the vacancies, all of whom have accepted the responsibilities: **Sandy Boyd** as Member at Large Editor, **Ann Salisbury** as Awards Chair and **Jeanne Jones** as Historian. The board approved all three.

An invitation was received to hold the winter board meeting in Tampa, FL, in conjunction with the University of South Florida Botanical Garden's Annual Begonia Bash on February 27-29, 2004. The board accepted the invitation.

Respectfully Submitted

Richard Macnair, Secretary

In the Mailbox

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

Q: *I picked up a begonia while in Brazil. It has large round leaves, green, and spreads with a rhizome that grows upright. Flowers are tall, white. Any idea what it is?*

A: Well, this sounds like many begonias that are common in Brazil. Without a picture, it is impossible to tell. Even then, I need more information like how you are growing it, from what part of Brazil it was obtained, etc.. but a picture is definitely needed.

Q: *(From spring) There are white spots all over my rex begonias. It seems to spread and the leaves eventually fall off. What is it?*

A: Mildew! In late winter and spring, mildew is common on rexes grown in areas with high morning moisture and changes in day/night temperatures, such as March usually sees. To prevent mildew, keep your growing area well ventilated, remove old and spent leaves, and spray every few weeks with a general fungicide. If the plant is overall healthy, it will outgrow the mildew as afternoon temperatures rise in late spring. You should see healthy growth soon after spraying.

TIP: Please, please, try to offer me complete information when asking about a certain species or hybrid. I have written in the past regarding this: Area obtained, how it is grown, etc... and a picture is required. You can embed or send as an attachment. If I do not know, I try to send it on to several gurus who help me out! Without suffi-

cient information, it is like a needle in a haystack.

TIP: If a begonia appears to languish, and is suffering from what appears to be overpotting and too much moisture, try a trick I use. Remove the soil from the pot and lay it down on a sheet of newspaper or cloth, in the shade. Just lay it down. Allow it to dry for a few days until you pick it up, and loose soil falls off leaving a rather dry rootball. Remove old leaves, and repot in a size just barely large enough to accommodate the roots. This will allow the plant to grow new, healthy roots and recover. And.. when repotting, be cautious when watering adding just a little until new growth appears. This also works inside during winter. HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY SEASON!

If you have any questions, feel free to ask me at: Greg Sytch - gsyтч@cs.com OR snail mail 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey FL 34653. 727-841-9618.

Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

Greg Needs Questions!!
Send yours to him today!

Correction

Johanna Zinn has asked that we tell you that **Mark Tebbitt** from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden has identified the begonia which was once thought to be *B. guttata* (see the *Begonian* of May/June 2000, cover, pages 83 and 98 ff.) as *B. variabilis* Ridley.

This one is in **Section Parvibegonia** and was first described in 1929. If you have one of these, you will want to change its label.

Fort Worth Species Bank Update

by Linda Shires

The Fort Worth Begonia Species Bank is very fortunate to have supporters from so many branches of ABS. The generosity of the members of ABS and SWR is greatly appreciated [Branches and individual members made generous contributions at the Banquet during the SWR Get-Together and ABS Annual Meeting. Kenny Wilkerson first bought and then donated that huge *B. roxburghii* that won the national Best of Show in April for a double whammy donation. Ed.] Plants were also donated from the 2003 SWR Get-Together show and sale and will be used for display in the newly re-opened Exhibition Greenhouse and to enlarge the Species Bank.

A date has been set for the next cutting party at the Species Bank greenhouse; it will be Saturday, December 6 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Clippers and zip lock bags will be provided for the participants. There will be lots of food and drinks to enjoy as well as fellow ABS Members to talk to. All ABS members are invited to this event so bring your appetite for begonias and other goodies. It will be a festive event.

Seed Fund Note

Ed Bates who prepares the seed fund descriptions has moved and his computer is not up and running yet, thus the briefness of the seed fund on the next page.

Michael Ludwig tells us the Master List is being prepared for the January/February Issue. Remember that you may still order from the master list published in the January/February 2003 issue through this month.

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CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

The Margaret Lee Branch,
San Diego County, CA
Michael Ludwig, 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. The species names (in italics) reported here are correct based on the latest information from **BEGONIACEAE**, Ed. 2; Golding, and Wasshausen.

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 to be used whenever writing to the Seed Fund about the 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 listed seeds. Seeds may be ordered from the master list by name. If you have a special need ask the Seed Fund Administrator. Please pollinate your species begonias with pollen from other plants of the same species and contribute (or exchange) to the seed fund.

Most packets of species seeds are \$1.50; all packets of cultivars (including open pollinated) seeds are 50¢ per packet. Very rare seeds and newly collected seeds 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**.

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

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CONVENTION NEWS: SAN DIEGO 2004

by Michael Ludwig

Start saving your money to visit us in 2004!

Given a choice to live someplace else, San Diego came in second only to New York, NY as the place most people would like to live, so come visit us for the ABS National convention during the week of August 24 - 29, 2004.

We've started planning bus trips, garden tours, seminars, greenhouse tours and many other fun and exciting things to do and see. Our hardest part is narrowing the field of activities so there is still time for the most important part of a convention..visiting with friends and talking begonias and other shadeloving plants. Let us know if you have suggestions!

We have arranged to be at the beautiful Town and Country Hotel and Convention Center in the heart of Mission Valley. Go to www.towncountry.com for a virtual tour to see what it offers for the whole family. With 4 restaurants, numerous convention venues, 4 pools, towers or garden rooms for accommodations there's something for everyone. Over a foot bridge behind the hotel is Fashion Valley, the largest shopping mall in San Diego; plus a station where you can board the trolley and go to Old Town, where California began; on to Downtown San Diego, the Gaslamp District of shops and restaurants; or ride it all the way to the US/Mexican border and visit Tijuana.

There hasn't been a convention in San Diego since 1986 and we have lots to share. Please save the dates on your calendar and start saving your money as San Diego is a top tourist destination ALL YEAR with plenty to keep you busy even if you don't have a Begonia convention to attend.

**Remember: Every ABS Convention has
Tours, a Begonia Show, Boutique with special Begonia Artistic
Items; and most of all the Fabulous, Wonderful
Plant Sale! This year you are sure to find California Hybrids Old
and New You've Never Seen Before.**

Continued from page 237

two tour buses arrived together, Bobbitt recalled. "We were so busy that those of us behind the counter were afraid to look up for two hours. The end of the line was out of sight. It was great."

Davis of the begonia society thinks the nursery 'looks 100 percent better' than in the past. "I was there not long ago," she said, "and things were really sharp looking and there were a lot more plants to choose from."

While the plants cost more than a common begonia would at a chain store, Bobbitt has held the line on price increases. "People just aren't about to pay high prices today," she explained. "We can get by without going up."

In the early days, Antonelli Bros. also had a large wholesale business and was known for hybridizing and growing all its own begonia tubers. (A tuber is an underground structure at the base of the stem, like a plant bulb.) Nowadays the nursery is nearly all retail and largely mail-order. Because it no longer has the ground to grow its own tubers, Antonelli Bros. provides seed from its original "American hybrid" begonia strain to a wholesale grower, who grows the tubers and returns them to the nursery.

An exception are "Ant Nelli's Champions," several dozen varieties of premium-priced plants that are cutting grown. They don't have names, just numerical designations like AB44 and AB66. These plants have the very best flower form and abundance of bloom of all those ever grown at Antonelli Bros.

California's only other tuberous begonia nursery is Weidners' Gardens in Encinitas, north of San Diego. There also had been retail begonia nurseries in Carmel Valley, Big Sur and along the North Coast, but all are gone.

Antonelli Bros. is a survivor. The

nursery was founded in 1935 by Pat, Pete, John and Allie Antonelli, who had worked for Vetterle & Reinelt as young men. This was a time of begonia ascendancy in the U.S., even though small-flowered tuberous begonias had been known in Europe since 1804. In the 1930s, nearly 99 percent of the begonia tubers sold in the country were grown in Capitola and Santa Cruz by Brown Bulb Ranch, Antonelli Bros. and Vetterle & Reinelt. The Antonelli brothers were known for having developed a large-flowered strain they called 'American hybrid,' including double ruffled picotee begonias, hanging basket picotees and ruffled hanging basket plants. (A "picotee" flower has a petal edge in a contrasting color.)

Of the founders, only Bobbitt's father Pete survives in frail health at age 87 and visits the nursery occasionally. The Antonelli family was instrumental in developing Capitola's moniker as the "Begonia Capital of the World" and in starting the 51-year-old Capitola Begonia Festival, which takes place over Labor Day weekend. The other gardeners' event that happens on Labor Day weekend is Spice Night, when Antonelli Bros. stays open in the evening to feature plants that are fragrant only at night. Mellow music is provided by a local jazz band, "The Usual Suspects." In addition, the nursery hosts special days for members of ABS and the American Fuchsia Society. While it's a begonia nursery, a large selection of fuchsias now provides major sales in spring and early summer before the begonias are blooming.

The nursery also features other shade-garden plants, including a selection of rhizomatous, cane-type and rex-cultorum begonias. Current customers are in famous company. The nursery was recommended as a fuchsia source earlier this year by Martha Stewart on her television show. Hundreds of emails ensued. Other celebrities who have purchased Antonelli

plants over the years include Shirley Temple Black, Madonna, Hugh Hefner and the late Bob Hope and Alfred Hitchcock.

"We strive for quality in the plants we stock," Bobbitt pointed out, "and, if you ask, you get real advice from somebody who has been growing these plants for years."

For information or to order a catalog, log on to www.infopoint.com/sc/market/antnelli

This article appeared earlier in slightly different form in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*.

Tips from a Garden Editor

Cheryl Lenert from Houston sent on this letter of advice from her local gardening editor. She and I think it is great advice for everyone!

If your group depends on publicity for the success of your events/fundraisers, then you really should consider your Publicity Chairman as important if not more important than the President/Chairman. After all, if the Publicity Chairperson doesn't do his/her job, the event will fail - no matter what anyone else does.

Start a Publicity Notebook. In it put all notes, emails, letters sent, releases, newspaper clippings, etc. This notebook should be passed on to each incoming P.C. That way, he/she can look back over past events, see to whom notices were sent and when, see what kind of publicity resulted, etc. Notes should cover those to whom the Publicity Chairperson spoke with numbers, email addresses, and the kind of responses or information they were given.



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Corrections

Please note that **Houston Knight** should have been identified as the correct National Director for the South Bay Begonia Society Branch, Hawthorne, California in the July/August Directory of Begonia Societies. His address is 13455 Hadley, Whittier, CA 90601, Phone: 562-693-1973.

Donna Marsheck's Unidentified Rhizome should have been identified as the winner in the Novice Division in the Convention 2003 listing on page 171 of the September/October 2003 issue. Apologies to Donna!

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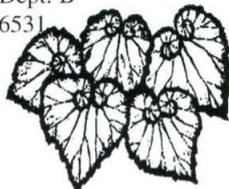
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Preparing for Trips to Veracruz and Oaxaca States to Document Species Begonias

by Rekha Morris

Bill Claybaugh, Conservation Chair, and your editor have been so impressed with the extensive preparation that Rekha undertakes before a collecting trip that we asked her to document this work for us for the last trip she took. This article then serves as an introduction to the article on the collecting trip which will follow in the next issue. The accuracy of her collection information can thus be understood better. ~FH

With each trip to Mexico to document the species begonias of Veracruz and adjacent Oaxaca states, I continue not only to be astonished at the incredibly rich flora of this country [considered by many to be the third most important region in the world after Brazil and Colombia with regard to its biodiversity] but also with the difficulty of locating sites where begonias have been documented by plant explorers of the past two centuries. No matter how detailed current road maps are of these two states or of Mexico in general, they do not mark the many smaller, often gravel or dirt roads to tiny villages and settlements along which begonias were documented by those who a century or so ago traveled on horseback or mules through the hilly terrain of the eastern branch of the Sierra Madre. Also missing from current road maps are the local names of hills and cliffs often referred to as “cerro” or “barranca” by which begonia sites were designated.

The deeper I want to penetrate into the mountainous regions where begonias thrive, the more I realize that I have to find

more detailed, topographical maps. A passing remark by **Prof. Burt-Utley** that she now uses only topographical maps during her trips to Mexico and Central America impelled me to locate these for myself. Despite the clichés which are frequently associated with Mexico and the supposedly lazy and disorganized attitudes of its inhabitants, my own experiences have demonstrated otherwise. In the matter of topographical maps and their availability, Mexico surpasses all other countries including the USA as nowhere are these made available to the traveler at the airport as they are at Mexico City’s airport.

This April, no sooner had we cleared customs and found a porter to help us with our luggage, we headed in search of the airport offices of INEGI, Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática. Its offices are smaller than most of the airport boutiques and newspaper stalls, but its staff proved to be extremely helpful and gracious, managing to find all but one of the topographical maps I was searching for. Not finding the one I wanted, a detailed map of the Orizaba and Cordoba regions, they referred us to their head office in Mexico City.

That evening I studied the maps I had picked up and realized that each state of Mexico is divided into square inch grids, and each of these little squares is then magnified 1: 50,000 and numbered appropriately. The following day we visited the head office and I picked up about half a dozen of these detailed topographical

maps relevant to the itinerary I had planned for this trip. Since Orizaba and Cordoba fall in distinct squares of the grid for the state of Veracruz, I needed two maps to cover this area, and to my disappointment only one was available, that for Orizaba. The INEGI employee realizing my disappointment found me one of their road maps of this region, which is far more detailed [magnification 1: 1 000 000] than the most detailed one I had been

Locating appropriately detailed maps of the areas I want to cover during each of these trips is only one of two major hurdles which make my efforts to document species begonias in Veracruz and Oaxaca both challenging and frustrating.

using, one by Hallwag covering all of Mexico [magnification is 1: 2, 600, 000]. Despite this I have not been able to locate some of the minor dirt roads leading to areas south of Cordoba, which I know I have to locate on my next trip to Veracruz. It is quite possible that I will not be able to locate all the relevant sites as there are a few sites which **Prof. Burt-Utley** has failed to locate despite her years of experience and the thousands of miles she has traveled through Mexico and Central America.

Locating appropriately detailed maps of the areas I want to cover during each of these trips is only one of two major hurdles which make my efforts to document species begonias in Veracruz and Oaxaca both challenging and frustrating. The second and certainly the more significant and time consuming of the two is to find the literature which enables me to locate the various begonia species to be found in these two states. The monumental catalog of the genus Begoniaceae prepared by **Smith, Wasshausen, Golding and Karegeannes** [*Smithsonian Contributions to Botany*, number 60, 1986], and the

2nd edition by Golding and Wasshausen published in 2002 list some 100 species of begonias as being native to Mexico. However, these annotated species listings do not indicate in which states or districts these begonia species are to be located except for Brazil and China. Helpful though it is to know that there are approximately a hundred species to be found in Mexico, it is a long and painstaking process to check out the bibliographical references for each to determine which of these hundred species

are to be found in Veracruz and Oaxaca. Moreover, some of these references are not available anywhere except at highly specialized libraries such as those of the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, and these are not circulated via the inter-library loan system which is such an invaluable aid to scholarship in this country.

In talking to various botanists I discovered that the field Museum of Natural History in Chicago had been involved in conducting a survey of the flora of Veracruz state in the 1970s. This made it imperative for me to consult their herbarium in order to find out how many species begonias their team of botanists had found during their field work. I was able to do this in mid-July of this year. By adding species described by Prof. Burt-Utley as being from Veracruz as well as a few I have already collected there but which are not listed in the list I compiled at the Field Museum herbarium, I now have a tentative list of some 25 species begonias to be found in Veracruz state.

Fortunately for my project the first and most crucial step is to begin with any-

thing published by Prof. Burt-Utley on the begonias of Mexico, specifically those from Veracruz and Oaxaca, make a list of these, and determine the localities where they are to be found. I had started doing this prior to my long trip in Dec. 2000 to Jan. 2003 [*The Begonian*, May / June, 2003], however, as my goals for each trip are distinct, it is necessary to go over the many articles and monograph [*A Revision of Central American Species of Begonia section Gireoudia {Begoniaceae}*, Tulane Studies in Zoology and Botany, vol. 25, no. 1, 1985] by Prof. Burt-Utley to make absolutely sure that I have not missed out on any references to the begonias I am trying to document on each of these trips in the copious footnotes to all her studies. This requires repeated consultation both with the citations listed by her and the appropriate detailed maps of the regions I plan to cover.

For this trip in April 2003 I first began by deciding which of the begonia species described by her were within a day or two of driving distance of Mexico City where my husband was participating in a conference, and of Tropical World near Fortin de las Flores between Orizaba and Cordoba where we have made our base for the past three trips to the area. There were three species on my most wanted list which I decided were within the designated parameters, *B. karwinskyana*, *B. xilitlensis*, and *B. mariti*. The first two had been documented north of Mexico City in the environs of Tamazunchale in San Luis Potosi, and the third one in northwestern Oaxaca, south of Cordoba. In planning our drive northwards, I not only jotted down where I might find *B. karwinskyana* and *B. xilitlensis* but also those begonias I am now familiar with from other locales which might also be seen along the routes we needed to take. This required further checking through footnotes of **Prof. Burt-**

Utley's writings.

Since *B. nelumbifolia* has a fairly wide distribution, I began by checking out the footnotes [equally extensive as they comprised a two columned page in fine print] for this species in Prof. Burt-Utley's monograph on begonias of section Gieroudia, and discovered that it is to be found along the route we were to take through Hidalgo state south of Tamazunchale. I followed the same process for *B. heracleifolia*, another species which has an extensive habitat, and discovered that although the footnotes for this species extended over nearly two double columned pages of fine print in her monograph, it was not mentioned as being along the route we were to take. In checking footnotes in the numerous articles by Prof. Burt-Utley I have so far accumulated, I did find it mentioned as being in the environs of Tamazunchale. I repeated the same process for as many begonia species as I knew might be found in Veracruz state, a time consuming but necessary process for documenting as accurately as possible all the begonias I encounter and photograph during each trip. Additionally, since all begonias do not bloom and set seed at the same time, it is necessary to be aware of as many species of begonias as one is likely to encounter during each trip so that seeds may be collected as and when encountered.

Since the April trip was to last only a week, I was able to complete this preparatory work in Mexico City while my husband was busy at the conference, two long days which extended well beyond midnight. Needless to say this preparatory work is best done long before leaving for Mexico, and this is precisely what I have been engaged in since July. With one exception I now have the pertinent INEGI maps I need to plan my October trip which will focus on two broad geographical ar-



Poster, above, prepared by **Rohit Namjoshi** from photos taken by **Rekha Morris** of some of the begonias collected during her last two trips to Mexico. Begonias from left to right: Top Row *B. carolineifolia*, *B. heracleifolia*, *B. heracleifolia* and *B. mariti*; Center *B. ludicra*; Bottom: *B. karwinskyana*, *B. heraceifolia*, *B. heracleifolia* and *B. thiemei*. Below is the landscape of Begonia habitat from which Rekha collected. Photos by **Rekha Morris**.



eas.

Before taking any field trips to document begonias I plan to begin by consulting the Xalapa University Herbarium to ascertain whether my list of 25 begonias for Veracruz is complete and accurate, and to add others which are to be found in Veracruz but are not on my list. This done I make Xalapa my base and begin exploring an area covering some 150 km in radius around Xalapa where I hope to find five or six species I have not yet documented in Veracruz. Since roads to these sites are unpaved, dirt and rubble roads through mountainous areas it is uncertain how long this exploration around Xalapa will take. The second area targeted for exploration during this trip is a 35 km section of low limestone hills around Acatlan on the borders of Veracruz and Oaxaca states. This is an area some 7-8 hours driving time away from Xalapa requiring an overnight stay somewhere along the way as this will allow us to commence our explorations early the following morning.

Although I have been planning to go back to the Lake Catemaco area which is southeast of the city of Veracruz, and nearly 1800 miles from the US-Mexico border, each time the primary areas of focus have taken longer to cover so that I have had to keep postponing exploration of this area. It is quite possible that as in the past it will require more time to cover the two major areas described above especially since there are numerous small and winding roads through the hilly terrain in the Xalapa area.

Time consuming though it is to travel in the less frequented areas of Mexico, this is not as frustrating as yet another hurdle in documenting begonias. Despite the detailed topographical maps from INEGI, there are a few sites which I have yet to locate, and others where begonias were documented in the past, have since been

cleared for farming and /or developed for urbanization so that no begonias are left to document. One such area is a short stretch on the Xalapa – Veracruz road between two settlements, Cerro Gordo and Plan del Rio where *B. nelumbifolia* was recorded thriving along the roadside. Although we drove up and down this short stretch several times, I failed to find any begonias. Areas adjacent to this road have been given over to orchards and sugar cane plantations, and the road itself is now a major thoroughfare between Xalapa and the coast with food stalls, kiosks, truck refueling centers and so on lining it almost all the way to its junction with highway 180 leading south to Veracruz city.

The area around Acatlan which I need to explore is not extensive, however, access to these limestone hills is through acres and acres of sugar cane plantations requiring permission to trek through privately owned property.

Although I anticipate delays I remain hopeful that we might be able to go to Lake Catemaco on this trip. In preparation I have made a list of begonias which I am likely to find around Lake Catemaco and further east around Minatitlan. Now I need to identify and locate the relevant sites on the topographical maps of this eastern section of Veracruz state just in case we find time to race off to Lake Catemaco as well this October!

August 14th, 2003

To be continued in the January/February 2004 issue.

Correction

Rekha Morris now believes the begonia she collected in Costa Rica pictured on the cover of the January/February 2001 cover, page 1, is of *B. convallariodora*.



Everyone was struck by the brilliant color of **Gordon Gudger's** *B. brevirimosa*. Photo is by **Doug Pridden** At right is a photo from the highlight of the *Get-Together*, the visit to the Fort Worth Botanic Garden. This is the newly reopend Exhibition Greenhouse. **Leora Fuentes** amazed us with her meticulous hand quilting again; the starting point was a piece of fabric from one of the *ABS Boutiques*. Seedlings were another high point of the show with a variety of interesting species; here are the unique flowers on **Gene Salisbury's** *B. oxyloba*. Last three photos are by **Mary Bucholtz**.



SWR Region Get-Together

A fall Get-Together after a summer of scorching heat and little if any rain seemed an unlikely time to see a good begonia show, but fortunately some of our growers can raise beauties no matter what the conditions.

At DFW on August 26-28, we saw a small, but lovely show. On the back cover you can see the Best of Show Winner and Best Species grown by **Don Miller**. Other Division winners included: *B. prismatocarpa* 'Variegation', *Querfelix zelanica* fern and *B.* 'Satellite Orange' grown by **Leora Fuentes**, *B.* 'Caravan' and *B. wallichiana* grown by **Valerie Morris**, *B. listada* and *B.* 'Rhinstone Jeans' grown by North Haven Gardens.

Photos in our shows just keep getting better and better; **Mary Bucholtz** won two divisions with photos of *B. crispula* and *B. platanifolia*. Mary has promised that you can see those photos in future issues.

Leora Fuentes' quilting also becomes ever more intricate and amazingly beautiful as you can see to the right. All in all an excellent show! For more complete information on winners see the next edition of the SWR *Begonia Leaflet*.

The tours were all great, but undoubtedly the highlight was the cutting party hosted for us on Saturday by the Forth Worth Botanic Gardens. After a quick tour of the lovely Conservatory where we were guided by **John Langevin** and through the newly reopened Begonia Exhibition Greenhouse, we were taken behind the scenes by **Linda Shires** to the growing greenhouse.

Here we were turned loose with clippers, labels and baggies to take cuttings to our heart's content. There were both species and hybrids. Despite our greedy

cutting behavior, Linda says there will be plenty for the next cutting part in December.

After a picnic in the Japanese Gardens we all returned to the hotel tired and satiated with begonias (Is that possible?).

In the learning department, the seminar led by **Bill Claybaugh** has to be judged extraordinary. Using a notebook of materials he and **Jack Golding** had prepared for us, our heads went swimming with new terms for leaves and stems and flower clusters. He provided examples of the terms he taught us and gave us leaves to trace and plants to study close-up so we would internalize the meanings. Finally, we tackled the vagaries of the Key in *Begoniacea* to see how to put all the terms to use in tracing down the identity of the species we grow. It was a seminar that we both enjoyed and profited from. Bill, you must repeat it soon to reinforce our learning!

There were short meetings of both SWR and ABS. Minutes of the first will appear in the *SWR Leaflet* and the ABS minutes are elsewhere in this issue. But it is good to note that new ABS officers were installed and you will find their names, addresses, and phone numbers on the inside back cover.

The banquet not only had good food, it had an exciting auction that turned into a donation spree to Linda Shire's Begonia Species Bank!

All in all, it was a wonderful meeting and thanks to **Tamsin** and **Bruce Boardman** and all their helpers who made it possible.

Already we are looking forward to next year's meeting! Rumor has it that that might be in San Antonio in the spring of 2004.

Antonelli Brothers

by Chuck Anderson

Against all odds, business at Antonelli Bros. Begonia Gardens, Northern California's only surviving tuberous begonia specialty nursery is on the upswing. The 68-year-old Santa Cruz land-

mark, a favorite haunt of begonia and fuchsia enthusiasts statewide, can leave you gaping at its massive midsummer displays of begonias. Yet circumstances had conspired in recent years to threaten its sur-

Below, Chuck's photo at Antonelli's.



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vival, even with many longtime loyal fans.

In its heyday in the 1970s and before, numerous gardeners spent a good half-day at Antonelli Bros. ABS members, garden clubs by the busload and families often brought picnic lunches to eat in the 'Flowerama' lathhouse. For many, it was a pilgrimage.

There were acres upon acres of growing grounds, a dig-your-own begonia field and a legendary showroom with its ceiling breathtakingly covered by huge hanging baskets of tuberous begonias. Traditionally, Antonelli Bros. competed each summer with the now-defunct Vetterle & Reinelt Hybridizing Gardens in Capitola to have the most dazzling ceiling display.

The advent of big-box stores with discount garden centers such as Home Depot and Wal-Mart spelled the end of many mom-and-pop nurseries, even when the new stores were in neighboring counties. Antonelli Bros. didn't succumb.

Then, skyrocketing land values in the Monterey Bay Area forced the Antonelli family to sell most of its original 16 acres for residential development. The remaining showroom, lathhouses and greenhouses now cover three acres.

When in 1999 managing co-owner **Skip Antonelli** was asked about the future, he told a local newspaper that Antonelli Bros. was here to stay. The visible evidence, however, generated considerable doubt.

Much of the remaining property had become dilapidated, with broken-down plant benches and falling-apart greenhouses visible to visitors and neighbors alike. Customers sometimes were surprised by a dearth of plants for sale and mud puddles in the aisles, according to **Jackie Davis** of Aptos, a longtime begonia collector and president of the ABS Santa Clara Valley Branch.

The 2001 death of **Pat Antonelli**, the last active brother of the original founders, and that last January of his son Skip, who had managed the nursery since 1981, combined with a financially disappointing 2002 season, left Antonelli Bros. in even worse straits. Pat and Skip Antonelli had been untiring ambassadors for the tuberous begonia, giving frequent talks to garden clubs and plant societies throughout Northern California. But **Linda Bobbitt**, daughter of co-founder Pete Antonelli and the previously unassuming co-owner with her cousin Skip, has stepped out of the shadows with a whole new idea.

"It's been kind of tough without Skip," she said, "but as much as possible we are trying to recapture the golden era what people remember from 20 or 25 years ago."

During the transition, Bobbitt says things would have been much tougher without longtime employees, including fuchsia grower **Michael Breneman**, worker **Romero Garcia** and **James Antonelli**, Skip's son. "They really stepped up to the plate when I needed them," she said.

Under Bobbitt's management, customers have noticed that the nursery is cleaner, in better repair and much more heavily stocked with plants than in past years. The selection of shade plants has been expanded and new kinds of sun-loving plants are in stock as well. Bobbitt also is advertising promotional specials to attract new customers much more frequently than in recent years.

In the past month, Bobbitt reinstalled picnic tables in a shade house and surrounded them with blooming begonias. The nursery now accepts reservations for picnic space. Groups can range as large as 25. On the far side of the main parking lot, a new shade structure is taking shape. It will house begonias planted in beds. And the buses are back. In August of this year,

Continued to page 226.

COMING EVENTS

February 27-28, 2004 Winter Board Meeting, Tampa, FL. Email Dalesena@cs.com for more information.

August 24-29, 2004 ABS Convention, San Diego, CA: See page 225 this issue! Wait to see tour schedule before making reservations!

2005 Association of Australia Begonia Societies National Convergence in Beautiful Ballarat. Proposed dates are Friday March 11th to Sunday March 13th to be sponsored by the Victorian Begonia Society, The Melbourne Begonia Society and the Ballarat Begonia Festival. It should be a dream vacation!

Note from the Membership Chair

Quick
Check your mailing label. If it reads **200401 or 200402**, your membership is about to expire.

At this time we have 63 life time members listed in the roster. Those of you who are members in this category please contact Arlene Ingles. If you do not, you will be deleted from the roster and no longer get your *Begonian* or any important notices. Thank you for your help.

Arlene Ingles, Membership Chair (see address below)

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