

*The*

# Begonian

September/October 2004



# *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:** We haven't heard from **Roberto Brin** in some time, but he has been busy hybridizing in Panama. Here is his new cultivar *B.* 'Agnes Brin'. See Page 185 for more information.

**Back:** Here's the winner's circle at the Southwest Region 2004 Get-Together with **Tom Keepin's** Best of Show taking center stage - its identity may be in question; its beauty is not!

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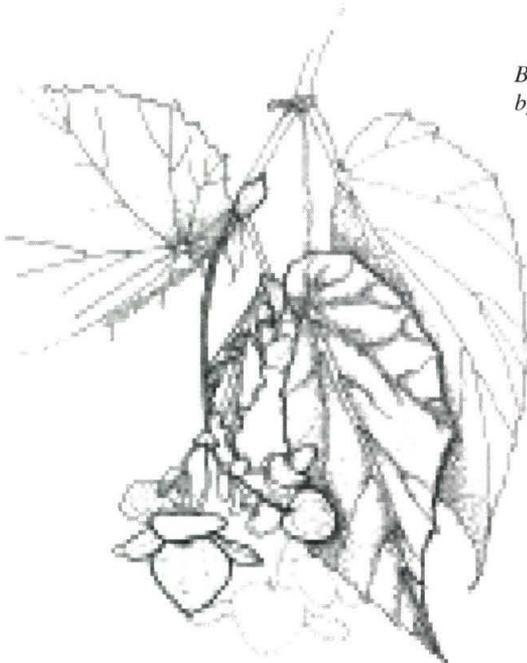
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*B. acutifolia*  
by Jeanne Marie Kunze

## Quick

Check your mailing label. If it reads **200411** or **200412**, your membership is about to *expire*. Please renew! We don't want to lose you.

## President's Message

We live in a connected, digital world that operates in nano seconds rather than hours, days, weeks and months. One of the most prominent victims of not having adapted to the internet and rapid communications is the U. S. Post Office.

Since I've been president of ABS I have received fewer than a dozen letters not including branch news letters and of those, most are copies of the minutes of board meetings. The branch newsletters are very interesting and Barbara and I read them all. Some of the news letters are sent via the internet and I suspect more of them will be delivered that way in the future. However, I have two very large notebooks of e-mails as well as many e-mails that have not been printed out. The e-mails number in the hundreds from ABS members and begonia growers from all over the world. Where am I going with this? I notice in the last *Begonian* that we only have the mailing addresses for most of our branch presidents and branch representatives.

If we had e-mail addresses for all of these branch officers we could quickly and effectively communicate with them about items up for discussion at quarterly or annual board meetings, solicit their opinions on matters to be decided, and hear from them about how ABS was serving its members and branches. As some of you know, a number of members were having trouble with their seed fund orders. Their problems came through loud and clear by e-mail. I think I only got one postal letter on the matter, but a good number of strong e-mails.

Additionally, branches could exchange ideas and information and get ideas for interesting programs and possible locate and exchange plants between

branches. I recently had to go to Tampa for business and I had a free evening so I e-mailed Tampa Branch President that if any members were interested we could have dinner. I had a great evening talking about begonias and ABS with five branch members. We are going to hold our mid-winter board meeting in Tampa again in February, 2005. My e-mail address is listed in the back of *The Begonian*. Let me know your thoughts.

*Howard Berg*

---

## Letters to the Editor

### Reluctant Writers

Referring to June McBryde's article "Fresh Ideas" in the July/August 2004, page 125, in your article, March/April 204, Freda, you were pleading for items to be sent for publication in the *Begonian*. However, we do appreciate your articles "just to fill the pages," even when they appeared "not by choice." Thanks.

As I read June's contribution to the *Begonian*, I agreed with her that most editors have the same problem...empty page syndrome. She also states that new contributors would add extra ZING to the magazine as each one has his/her style of writing, and, make for much more interesting reading.

As I do not wish to be known as a "reluctant writer," I am offering my addition to one of the future *Begonians*. June's idea of using some kind of persuasion is a good one. My thinking is, most members do not consider their articles or composition of value to others and so do not feel like taking the time to contribute. This is not true. I for one, try to do my part, and surely do not have any literary talents. So

members, please write something. I know most of you are growing begonias. We want to hear about them: Your beautiful favorite growing well, or, not growing so well.

Thanks, and I do hope some members will gain some new information from my article on *Begonia petasitifolia*.

*Iris Bird*  
Palos Verdes Branch

*Thanks for the kind words, Iris, and I think readers will enjoy your article on page 189 as much as the editor did..*

## Cross-stitch begonia patterns

**To: ydoz@aol.com**

Dear Donna,

I have found two begonia cross stitch patterns. The publisher is The Lilac Studio. One pattern is titled "Begonias" and is a picture of tuberous begonias. The other is titled "Pink begonias" and appears to be a cane. I located these at a shop near my home:

3 Stitches  
7822 Louetta Rd  
Spring, Texas 77379  
(281) 320-0133.  
email:3stitches@3stitches.com

They have a rather extensive website (**3stitches.com**) that you may find interesting. A picture of each of these patterns is located in the Books section of their website (under L). They will ship orders to you. I hope this is helpful.

*Leigh Heard*  
Astro Branch  
Houston, Texas

*Thanks for sharing with Donna Zody and with us, Leigh.*

**Remember Get your holiday greetings to Wanda McNair, Ph: 617-876-1356; rmacnair@msn.com**

## *Begonian U304*

by Jackie Davis

Enclosed are two pictures of *B. U304*. I call it my ugly begonia, but I love it. It wasn't hard to grown, but hard to wait until it was mature to set seed for the Seed Fund.

I got the original seed from the Seed Fund in 2001 and held my breath and got 3 plants up to maturity.

As the picture shows (See the photos on page 190.), it has white flowers on long flower stems. It is a rhizome with hairy legs. The dark green leaves are 6 inches across - round with yellow centers with yellow veins radiating from the center. The underneath is red.

The leaves are shiny in lower light and dull in brighter light. Lower is best, I think.

The one in the picture needs to be transplanted to a new pot. I will start a rhizome in the spring and see how it goes.

*I thought Jackie's photos were excellent to illustrate this newer unidentified species so they are shown with the official listings on page 191. Jackie is one of our best seed growers and we especially appreciate it when she propagates new species through seed and other means so that their chance of survival in cultivation is increased. Gene Salisbury grows this one and propagates it as well. He has entered it in several shows and people are usually awed by it - and no one calls it ugly, Jackie! Thanks for sharing it with us!*

---

## Corrections

Please remove Western Reserve Branch, Ohio from your July/August Directory. This branch is no longer active.

# Propagation of Plant Material by Rooting Stem Cuttings

by P. Victor Sencindiver, M.D.

**Beverly Nichols**, a well-known English gardening writer, while enjoying a brisk walk on a late fall day, saw a rose geranium by the side of the road. The forlorn plant looked as though it would succumb to frost. He decided that it deserved a better fate and decided to try taking a cutting from the stem. It was his first experiment in plant propagation and was indeed exciting for him. He said it is exactly as though you were to cut off your wife's leg, stick it in the lawn, and be greeted on the following day by an entirely new woman, sprung from the leg." This is not too farfetched an idea today considering the progress in modern day cloning science!

Using stem cuttings is but one of the several approaches to vegetative propagation. Plants can also be re-created from roots, runner, bulblets and leaves as well as from seeds. The propagation of begonia material is best done by using the stem or rhizomatous cutting technique. A superior plant is inevitably reproduced with no variation whatsoever from the parent, namely a clone.

There are those who want their plants ready-made and are satisfied with merely keeping alive mature plants. To others, however, the thrill and satisfaction of growing new plants and watching them develop gives a wonderful sense of achievement. As a hobby, propagating and growing your own plants can be soul satisfying and add immeasurably to the pleasure of everyday living.

Members of the plant world are endowed with a remarkable ability to reproduce themselves. This ability depends largely on several factors. Most parts of a

plant contain a natural rooting hormone. This is most concentrated at leaf nodes. Secondly the activity of the cambium, which is a very thin layer of tissue composed of young embryonic cells filled with protoplasm (the physical basis of life) from which the new plant tissues are formed. The cambium heals wounds by developing over them a protective callus tissue. Plants have the capacity to send out roots from the injured surface once a callus has formed over the severed base. Cuttings exemplify this fact.

I have been most successful with the following methods of handling and rooting begonia stem and rhizomatous cuttings.

The best time to propagate is in the early spring when plants are responding to increasing sunlight. However, begonias can easily be rooted at any time.

What is the best rooting medium? Vermiculite, perlite, sand, sphagnum moss, water and soilless mixes all work well. My favorite is commercial soilless mixes amended with horticultural charcoal and coarse perlite. This allows for good drainage and eliminates the step of transplanting the rooted cutting into its permanent growing mix, thus not disturbing the rooted cutting. I prefer using 3 inch clay pots that have been sterilized in a weak Clorox solution. One also is less apt to overwater in clay pots because they "breathe" unlike plastic pots.

The ideal environmental temperature for rooting is about 70 degrees although this is not critical.

To take a stem cutting, select a healthy new green shoot 3 to 6 inches long. Make a fresh sharp clean cut just below a

node, the point where two leaves are attached. Growth hormones are concentrated at the nodes, thus cuttings will root most readily here. If the cutting has traveled from afar, soak it in the sink in tepid water containing 4 tablespoons of sugar for 3 hours. This freshens it up and aids in photosynthesis.

For small leafed plants, remove enough leaves to provide a stem of sufficient length to pot. For large leaf species, just cover the node and leaf petiole with potting mix. Dip the bottom of the cutting and the lower most node in rooting hormone (Rootone) powder prior to potting. You need only a thin coating of this material. Some feel that the cuttings should be inserted into the potting medium at an angle rather than vertically. I find that this makes no difference whatsoever in rooting. Firm the soil around the cutting with your fingers (not do not hard pack) and *bottom water* the specimen. As water percolates up through the soil, all air spaces around the cutting are abolished.

I then *totally* enclose the potted cutting in a clear plastic bag. It is then placed on the bench in moderate light and *not disturbed* for four weeks at which time good root and growth will have formed. The plastic bag is then loosened and gradually removed over a period of 3 to 4 days to allow for acclimatization to reduce humidity.

A new life has sprung from her rooted leg!

And so, in many mysterious ways, nature safeguards the reproduction of its own kind. It is one of the wonderful process with which he has endowed all plant life.

*Victor is new to the Begonian, but not to writing. This article first appeared in the journal Fraterna from which he obtained permission for use in the Begonian after rewriting to be specific to begonias. You may contact him at 908 South Beach Avenue, Beach Haven, New Jersey 08008*

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# Begonia exotica and Begonia brevirimosa — Different Species

by Jack Golding

The epithet "Exotica" was first used to identify a Begonia photograph by Alfred B. Graf in his Pictorial Cyclopaedia of Exotic Plants, **Exotica 3**, published in January 1963. He had a color photo of it on page 295, a Black & White on page 342, and one other on page 343. These same pictures were printed in color in his book **Tropica** in 1978 on pages 161 and page 166.

In 1979, I asked Dr. Graf about the origin of the plants in his pictures and of the epithet "Exotica." He advised "Yes, I have given this plant the name while I was in Australia in 1960, on the way back from New Guinea, where my friend York Meridith took it into cultivation. When I photographed the two plants there, [the photo on page 161 of Tropica] I thought I noticed slight differences between them, one with leaves somewhat more serrate than the other, but they were both collected as species and not hybrids." He also advised "When I gave this plant the specific epithet 'Exotica', I did not copy it from the literature, and it was definitely intended to be a temporary name, but as so often happens, such names tend to become permanent in usage."

J.S. Womersley wrote in his article Begonia 'Exotica', *Begonian* 39:270-1, 1972, that he with A.G. Floyd originally collected this species on November 26, 1954. Their field note reads "An erect herb up to 4 feet in a creek. Leaves dark green with purplish pink patches. Flowers pink. Altitude 3000 feet above sea level." Duplicate copies of the original collection numbered NGF 6846 were sent to the herbaria at Leiden, Brisbane, and Harvard University. The Edinburgh Botanical Garden in the 1960s tentatively identified Be-

gonia 'Exotica' hort. as **Begonia brevirimosa**. Womersley wrote that "Comparisons of the specimen NGF 6846 with Irmscher's descriptions of **Begonia brevirimosa** reveal, in addition to the inflorescence differences, a number of other points of difference which indicate the tentative identification from Edinburgh cannot be substantiated." He also noted that "further collections of either the same species with differently coloured leaves or a closely related species from several places on the coastal areas of New Britain." Those plants were probably **Begonia brevirimosa**.

The epithet Exotica had not been described and published in accordance with the requirements of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature. Therefore it had been treated like a cultivar and written as Begonia 'Exotica'. The abbreviation "hort." was sometimes added to indicate that it is a name used by the gardeners. After these many years of research, I am pleased to write the following diagnosis and description to establish this correct name.

**Begonia exotica** Graf ex Golding, [**Begoniaceae**, Section *Petermannia*] species nova; **Begonia brevirimosa** Irmscher affinis, a qua imprimis differt foliis supra plerumque impolitis, dispersis brevibus strigis, rugatis porcatis interveniis, cum maculis rubellus, interdum separatis vel combinatis in irregularis vittis; marginibus magis manifeste dentatis.

The new species **Begonia exotica** Graf ex Golding is akin to **Begonia brevirimosa** Irmscher from which it differs particularly by the upper surfaces of the leaves, fre-

quently unpolished, with scattered short stiff bristles, rugose ridges between the veins with reddish blotches, sometimes separated or united into an irregular stripe; with margins more prominently dentate.

**Begonia exotica** compact shrub, erect herbaceous stems with brown-red hairs and glabrescent. Leaves; non-peltate, stipules elliptic with a bristle tip, petioles oblique, with dense red curly or straight hairs, blades obliquely ovate, palmate-pinnate venation, apex acute or shortly acuminate, base asymmetrically cordate, outer lobe large deeply rounded, inner lobe shallowly rounded, margins prominently dentate to double dentate or serrate to serrulate, sparsely ciliate, upper surfaces usually matted, with scattered short stiff bristles, rugose ridges between the veins marked with reddish blotches, sometimes separated or united into an interrupted irregular stripe. Inflorescences with auxiliary dichasial pistillate flowers opening first, and later the staminate flowers in a terminal monochasial alternate panicle. Staminate flowers; tepals 2 broadly elliptic, androecium actinomorphic, stamens about 34, filaments free, anthers oblong-ovate, connective narrow, emarginate. Pistillate flowers; tepals 5, subequal, one a little smaller, oval or elliptic with acute tips, pistil with 3 forked styles, spiral stigma on arms, ovary ellipsoid, wings 3 subequal, locules 3, placenta axile, bifid.

**Papua New Guinea:** Western Highland Province, north of Mt Hagen in Baiyer River Area, 1000m (3000ft), J.S. Womersley & A.G. Floyd November 26, 1954. Specimens No. NGF 6846 were sent to the herbaria at Leiden, Brisbane, and Harvard University, Michael Ferrero at 1500 m (5000 ft) in area of Wahgi River system ca 1993. This highland area has warm days with temperatures in the mid-

high 20° [80° F] and experiences cool/cold nights down to about 3° C [37° F]. It experiences a monsoon season from about November/December to April.

The specimens collected in 1954, by J. S. Womersley and A. G. Floyd No. NGF 6846 that were sent to various herbaria cannot be found. Therefore I designate as the lectotype the photograph of the taxon from Baiyer River by Alfred B. Graf on page 161 of his **Tropica** 1978 [Fig. No. 1]. {See page 171.}

The original description of **Begonia brevirimosa** was published by E. Irmscher, in *Bot. Jahrb. Syst.*, 50:358, 1913. He based his description on the herbarium specimen No. 16240 collected by Schlechter on July 11, 1907, [Fig. No. 2]. This specimen, is the Type for this species. These are a few excerpts from the description by Irmscher: "Erect herb; Stem glabrous below, above covered with rusty-brown, somewhat curly, more or less sparse hairs; Petiole somewhat irregularly and sparsely covered with rusty, curly hairs; Leaf blade entirely glabrous above, underneath on the veins and marginal part sparsely and irregularly rusty-hairy, circumference ovate or nearly oval, tip short-acuminate; margins very shallowly dentate and somewhat densely ciliate."

The most distinguishing characters of **Begonia brevirimosa** are its lax herbaceous glabrescent stems, the leaf blades with glossy, glabrous upper surface, smooth continuous crimson stripes between the veins and its subentire margins. At first, I had wondered why Irmscher did not mention these prominent stripes, but an examination of the Type, Schlechter Specimen No. 16240, shows that the stripes are not visible in the dried herbarium specimen. I also checked the de-

scription by Irmscher of **Begonia serratifetala** in Bot. Jahrb. Syst., 50:339, 1913, another specimen collected in New Guinea by Schlechter, and also there Irmscher did not mention the very prominent red spots that are typical of that species.

Its native habitats are the northern areas of Papua New Guinea throughout swamps, plains, flood-plains lowlands at no more than 20 meters [66 ft] above sea level, in West Sepik and East Sepik Provinces in the Torricelli mountain ranges at the lower altitudes from 100-200 meters [330-660 ft.], the Madang Province, on the northern fringes of the Central Range and on the island of New Britain. The Sepik catchment area and islands experience a full monsoonal 'hot wet', while the valleys and lower slopes have a 'warm wet' with no marked dry season.

## Identity of Illustrations

In the literature the identity and illustrations of **Begonia exotica** and **Begonia brevirimosa** have been confused. I suspect that many of the plants that are labeled B. 'Exotica' may be clones of the plant Rudy Ziesenhenné obtained [labeled **B. brevirimosa**] from the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, Scotland, in November 1969. I have separated the photos that I have acquired from various publication and my own records by their correct name.

### **Begonia exotica** Graf ex Golding

Alfred B. Graf, *Exotica* 3: 295, 342, 343, 1963. — *Tropica* : 161, 1978, [Fig. 1]

*Begonian*, 39, Cover photo, 119, 1972.

Isamu Misono, *Begonias*:52, pl.67, 1974.

Jan Doorenbos photo of plant from Frankfurt, Germany, July 26, 1979. [Fig. 3]

Japan Begonia Society, *Begonias*: 11, 1980, [labeled **B. brevirimosa**].

Yuji Murotani & Hideaki Tatsumi, *Begonias in Color*, :44, 1983, [labeled **B. brevirimosa**].

Jack Krempin, *Know Your Begonias*, :52, 1993, [labeled **B. brevirimosa**].

Wally Wagner 2001 List, [labeled **B. brevirimosa** exx]

absastro.tripod.com/spic/ [labeled **B. brevirimosa**. jpg, 2002].

Jack Golding photos:

New York Botanical Garden, March 1981, with pistillate flowers. — with staminate flowers. [Fig. 4]

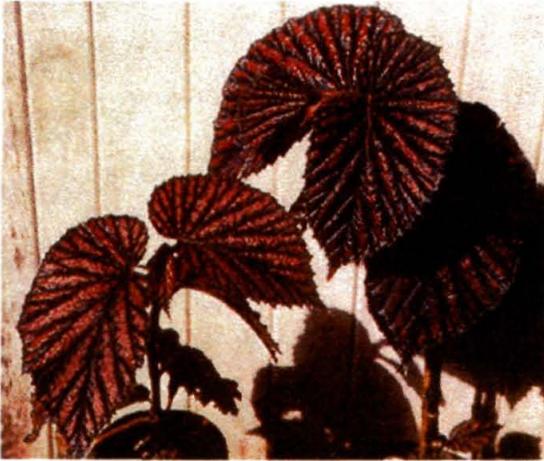
from Mike Kartuz, October 12, 2002: [labeled **B. brevirimosa**];

November 25, 2002. — April 8, 2003, [Fig. 5] — May 28, 2003, — June 6, 2002, — June 10, 2004, — July 15, 2004.

### **Begonia brevirimosa** Irmscher

Mus. Bot. Berol. Film No. 3370, R. Schlechter No. 16240, [Fig. 2], photo of the TYPE for **B. brevirimosa** Irmscher.

Jack Krempin, *Know Your Begonias*, :42, inner jacket, 1993, [labeled B. 'Exotica' hort.]



**Fig. 1 — LECTOTYPE**  
***Begonia exotica* Graf ex Golding**



**Fig. 5, ex Mike Kartuz**  
**J. Golding photo, April 8, 2003**



**Fig 3, ex Frankfurt via J. Doorenbos July 26, 1979**



**Fig. 4 at New York Botanical Garden**



**Jack Golding photo March 1981**

***Begonia exotica* Graf ex Golding**

Wally Wagner 2001 List, [labeled B. 'Exotica' hort],

absastro.tripod.com/spic/ [labeled exotica. jpg, 2002]

Mike Flaherty photo of plant grown by Gordon Gurder, at Show of ABS South-west Region Get-together, August 2003, [Fig. 6]. Another photo of it is in the *Begonian*, 70:234, 2003.

Ross Bolwell photo in Email of December 19, 2003

Jack Golding Photos:

February 1977, [Fig. 7].

at Mabel Corwin's, August 1992, [Fig. 8].

**Begonia brevirimosa** 'Edinburgh' via Mark Tebbitt, May 28, 2003, [Fig. 9].

from Mike Kartuz on October 12, 2002, [labeled B. 'Exotica']:

November 25, 2002, — May 28, 2003, [Fig. 10], — June 10,

2003. — July 15, 2003, — September 23, 2003.

A set of these photos are in the **Begonia exotica** file at U.S. National Herbarium, Washington, D.C.

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## Cane-Like Begonias (All types)

by Jane Blundell

*Here is a different approach to the subject of hybridizing cane begonias. It originally appeared in the Winter 2004 issue of The Queensland Begonia Journal.*

Because we have covered this subject so many times in the past, I have decided to approach it today from a new angle -- the hybridising of cane-like, the best type to start with, when growing begonias from seed.

### A Designer Plant by Your Average Joe

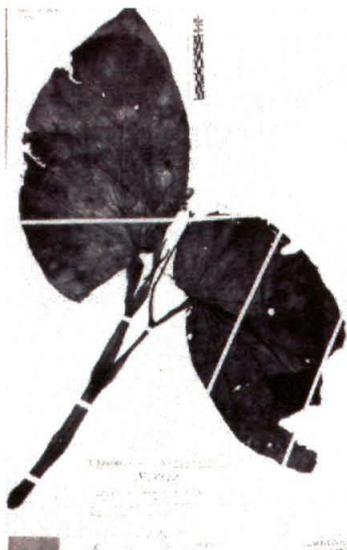
Now, this is a subject close to my heart. In 2001 (that seems a long time ago), I set out to create a Designer Plant (but I didn't know it at the time). Now this is something any Average Joe can accomplish. Right! But first, he must have the right attitude. And what attitude is that exactly?

Heredity (tendency of like to beget like; property of organize beings by which

offspring have nature and characteristics of parents or ancestors) is at the root of the issue for Average Joe.

This Average Joe, has learnt from experience (your best teacher) that she can go out and select two very ordinary plants to be parents, which I did, to teach myself to grow seed. What did I get? **150 very ordinary plants** which I potted on, and potted up and up and up until, what did I have? **150 very ordinary mature adult plants**, all of which went in the bin. Oh tiresome journey!

So this time, armed with experience, I selected four outstanding parent plants which would transmit from their generation to the next, several selected outstanding features. I surveyed the canes in my collection and considered what I desired in my Designer Plant. Vigour, disease resistance, beauty, **large dark leaves with large splashes or spots of silver**, because after all I am a spotty dotty girl when it comes to canes.



**Fig. 2 — TYPE**

***Begonia brevirimosa* Irmscher**



**Fig. 6, Grown by Gordon Gruder, at SWR Meeting, Aug. 2003, Mike Flaherty photo**



**Fig. 7, Jack Golding photo Feb. 1977**



**Fig. 9, ex Edinburgh via Mark Tebbitt Jack Golding photo May 28, 2003**



**Fig. 8, Grown by Mabel Corwin Jack Golding photo August 1992**



**Fig. 10, ex Mike Kartuz J. Golding photo May 28, 2003**

On this premise I decided on what I considered to be four pretty well indestructible canes of considerable beauty. To be my parents in the first instance I chose *B.* 'Silvermist' which is a tall-growing *superba* type with large undulating (rippled edge) green leaves displaying many silver splashes, and in summer, producing inflorescences with numerous large pink flowers. I also chose *B.* 'John Tonkin', a dark leafed, medium height plant with large slightly more rounded leaves and incredibly large attractive pink flowers. These I would cross and reverse cross.

For the second pair of plants, my choices were *B.* 'Snowcapped' as pod (mother) parent. This is a medium-sized cane-like with smaller sized green leaves, liberally covered with many multi-sized silver spots (on looking across the surface of the leaf the spots appear and also feel raised). The margin and apex of the leaf are silver, the new leaves are pink and silver, the flowers are bright pink. The masculine qualities were contributed by a plant which goes by the name of *B.* 'White Wish'. This begonia has several of the attributes of *B.* 'Flamingo Queen'. It displays the large pointed green leaves with medium to large silver spots, however, without the silver margin and in this instance, white flowers.

In the first case (*B.* 'Silvermist' x *B.* 'John Tonkin', reverse cross *B.* 'John Tonkin' x *B.* 'Silvermist'), my desire was to create large dark leafed silver spotted or splashed, tall or medium plants. The aim of the other cross was to achieve heavily silver spotted or splashed green leaved plants with white flowers.

I pollinated and waited, I planted the seed and waited, and up came the tiny plants which in due course I planted out. I started with 87 seedling plants from the three crosses. Then I potted on, and up and up and up and Eureka! You little

beauty - several outstanding Designer Plants by your Average Joe! Now I didn't say 87 outstanding Designer Plants, because I tossed out lots. No, what I ended up with were a mixed bunch of eye catching beauties. These proved heredity to be true. The characteristics of the parents had indeed been transmitted from one generation to the next, just in a multitude of combinations and recombinations. Well, almost, because I didn't end up with any white flowers. After all, one would expect the white gene to be overshadowed by the stronger bright pink flowers of the mother plant. This is often true because just as with us humans, some genes are very, very strong. More often it seems to be the big nose, or the flapping ears or the thin wispy hair. I must say, I did get a number of duds, some mediocre, a few look-a-likes, several plain Janes, but in the end, there were some **real lookers, several beauts.**

Time? It took time, lots of time, to weed out the rubbish from the outstanding, potting on and up all the while and being ruthless, going through several very hot summers and moderately cold winters. In the back of my mind were always the overriding issues. Were they strong, robust growers? Did they propagate easily, producing a good true to type replica of the parent from a cutting? Were they overly prone to mildew? Were they different enough to warrant keeping and propagating to pass around? Yes, from seed to the Designer Plant took three years - three years well spent assessing, and still there are a few issues to consider. Are they sufficiently different from others to keep? Time will tell.

*A few of these were:* *B.* 'Lantern Light', 'Imperial Princess', 'Prince Charming', 'Evening Star', 'Red Magic', 'Black Magic', 'Magic Moments', 'Loti Dots',

## Southwest Region Get-Together: !Begonias Caliente! Division Winners

**Best of Show:** *B. oxanthera* (Syn. *B. jussiaeicarpa*)\*, Exhibited by Tom Keepin

**Best Species:** *B. oxanthera* (Syn. *B. jussiaeicarpa*), Exhibited by Tom Keepin

**People's Choice Award:** *B. dregei* Seedlings, Exhibited by Charles McGough

**Best Southwest Region Hybrid:** *B. 'Holley's Beauty'*, Exhibited by Jeannie  
Dinsmore

**Best Artistic Exhibit:** *B. wollnyi*, exhibited by Dora Lee Kimbrough

**Sweepstakes:** Phillipi Stone

**Showing is Sharing:** Phillipi Stone

**Mae Blanton Award:** Normand Dufresne

**Marguerite Vernon Award:** Joan Kessinger

### Division Awards

<u>Division</u>	<u>Plant</u>	<u>Exhibited by</u>
Cane-like	<i>B. 'Vivian Hill'</i>	Phillipi Stone
Shrub-like	<i>B. 'Ginny'</i>	Phillipi Stone
Thick-stem	<i>B. 'San Miguel'</i>	Phillip Stone
Rhizomatous	<i>B. 'Autumn Frost'</i>	Lou Dyess
Rhizomatous, Distinctive Foliage	<i>B. masoniana</i>	Lou Dyess
Rex Cultorum	<i>B. 'Deco Delight'</i>	Bill Claybaugh
Contained Atmosphere	<i>B. variabilis</i>	Charles and Leora Henthorne
Species	<i>B. oxanthera</i> (Syn. <i>B. jussiaeicarpa</i> )*	Tom Keepin
Semperflorens	<i>B. 'Cherry Blossom'</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
Classic Begonia	<i>B. 'Ginny'</i>	Bill Claybaugh
Novel Grown	Begonia Wreath	Jackie Ellison
Collection	Collection of Five Begonias	Bill Claybaugh
Recycled Container	<i>B. 'Manaus'</i>	Tim Anderson
Special Exhibit	<i>B. dregei</i> Seedlings	Charles McGough
Companion Plants	Fern: <i>whitmanii</i>	Lou Dyess
Contained Atmosphere: Ferns	<i>Pyrosia nummularifolia</i>	Charles and Leora Henthorne
Photographs Judged Artistically	<i>B. U347</i>	Gene Salisbury

[\*Tom Keepin obtained this plant as *B. jussiaeicarpa* which is a synonym of *B. oxanthera*, but there remains some doubt about this identification. Jack Golding stated in response to an inquiry and photo on the on-line Begonia List that he believes it might be *B. polygonoides*.]

# Begonian: *Helen Spiers*

by Donna Zody

**Begonian:** *Helen Spiers.* This invitingly vigorous Begonian thrives in an atmosphere of like cultivators, even prefers crowding. Has an upright growth pattern with easy rooting; requires modest feedings but generous hydration. This member has a crown of coppery brown hairs, and blooms in sun kissed blush tones, providing unparalleled beauty and grace, giving everyone something to talk about. .

Meet Helen Spiers who demurs being credited with organizing three Houston area Begonia Branches, preferring to think only that she was an instrument in the process, yet candidly admitting that her philosophy has been to “organize and spread the word about Begonias”. The Southwest Region, American Begonia Society, however, chose to trumpet Helen’s contributions, with the Marguerite Vernon Award and the Begonia Ambassador Award, both in 1993, for diligent service and for outstanding work in promoting begonias.

So, what makes a person like Begonian Helen Spiers tick? What makes all Begonia lovers tick? Helen is a “people person” first, last and always, and the rest of her story is a refreshing journey ... a love story, if you like, full of obstacles, challenges and triumphs.

Helen was born in Helena, Arkansas, and no, she wasn’t named for the town, but rather for the obstetrician’s wife Helen. She was one of the Harden girls, growing up with sister **Evelyn** who would remain Helen’s best friend and idol for life. Their home was a typical ante-bellum house complete with Victorian trappings including all of the ferns and begonias her mother could manage to find. Helen was gradu-

ated from Ouachita Baptist University (in Arkadelphia, AR) in May 1946 along with her next “best friend” and roommate, Jan.

It seemed only natural that **Jan** and her fiancé **Houston Knight** would introduce Helen to Mr. Knight’s best friend, **Buddy Spiers**. This foursome remained fondest friends although miles separated them, the Spiers in Texas and the Knights in California. Jan’s death was a low point for Helen, but the passing of her beloved Buddy Spiers just six months short of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was crushing.

Helen and Buddy enjoyed the pursuit of their dreams while raising their only son, Bill. Helen devoted thirty-seven years to education as Director of Elementary Education, and in the interim developed a small business called “Crocheted Treasures”, combining her childhood gift of elaborate needlework designing and her eternal love of Victoriana. Through the years, she kept houseplants as diligently as her mother had, always mindful of the health benefits they imparted as well as their decorative beauty. Buddy knew that his wife was fond of unusual plants and often surprised her with a special plant. One day he whisked her away to a unique “find”, a nursery filled with the most beautiful begonias Helen had ever thought imaginable. It was the beginning of a quest to learn more about this magical, versatile culture.

Buddy and Helen were supportive of each other’s hobbies, but sometimes got playfully competitive in their separate collections. “I would come home with a new tray of Begonias, then Buddy would go out and buy yet another antique book for his Civil War library. We called a truce and I started propagating my own



*Oh, what visions you will see when you visit Helen Spiers' yard: Begonias and ferns and exotics galore!*



Begonias”, says Helen, recalling how very much she needed human answers to her Begonia questions. “I needed to share growing experiences with people, not just authors in a book”, she added. She was unable to find an association, a branch or club in Houston. In 1987, Buddy gifted her with a trip to California to attend an American Begonia Society Convention. There, she was encouraged by many of the attendees to go back to Houston and form a branch of ABS.

The rest is history. One, after another, Helen met Begonians and more Begonians, each as enthusiastic as the last. There was **Sidney Anne (Kirksy) Wilkinson** who became Helen’s mentor and immediately put Helen to work as “Decorating Chairman” for the Southwest Region Annual Get-Together. Helen readily admits that her hand-made crocheted; six-inch pot covers were charming centerpieces for the tables, especially when filled with luxuriant begonias. So charming, in fact, that one guest at each table won the plant while another won the lacey pot cover.

Helen is not a name dropper, but she is quick to credit men as well as women for being true Begonians and help-mates, always...”**John Ingles, Tom Keepin, George Macias, Houston Knight, Buddy....**”. With rigorous effort and devotion to organizing, the Astro Branch (1989) took on a new inception, and then the Satellite Branch (1992) was formed, followed by the San Jacinto Branch (1995). Helen’s calendar has been full and her life enriched by her work with Begonians, usually as a presiding officer, program chair and head cheerleader for all members locally, in the Southwest, and nationally.

In 1998, wishing to honor Helen Spiers for her dedication to the growth of members in ABS, the San Jacinto Branch,

ABS, established an on-going gift bearing her name, The Helen Spiers Organizational Gift, a one-hundred dollar check to each newly chartered branch for their start-up expenses. To date, only three new branches have been chartered. When asked if she was concerned about the slow growth of ABS, Helen responded that “the current administration has a wonderful, renewed focus and a commitment to return to grass-roots issues, including membership.”

A final glimpse of Helen would be this little vignette. She is standing at the checkout counter of her favorite nursery, holding a tray of assorted plants she has selected. She reaches out for one more little beauty and softly remarks to herself, “I just have to have to get this one, too. Buddy would want me to have it.”

Two questions every Begonia grower would like to ask an esteemed Begonian, like Helen: One: “What is your favorite Begonia?” Her answer: “The one I’m holding in my hands right now.” Two: “If you could give one tip on growing begonias, what would it be?” Helen’s reply was prompt and direct: “Know their needs and provide for them.” That sounds like the code of ethics which has guided Helen Spiers’s life, whether it’s dealing with people, or plants.

*One of my great pleasures is sometimes getting to visit Helen and the Houston branches. Her house and her hospitality are both incredible; I always have a marvelous time! The branches are all active and members are good friends - exemplifying how begonias bring you into a very special fellowship. And Donna Zody is one of my favorite writers - don't you agree she should be a regular contributor? Here she sets an example for others who are in branches with members we should know more about; if you know someone we should all know better, write them up! You may contact her at Ydoz@aol.com. Email her and tell her how much you enjoyed her article!*

# CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

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

*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. The descriptions published are from the literature and apply to the name submitted 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**.

**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.

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

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

Please send your order with payment to:  
**AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY  
CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND**

Michael Ludwig  
6040 Upland St.  
San Diego, CA 92114-1933  
Tel. (619) 262-7535

Please send comments, suggestions, or complaints to:

Edgar A. Bates  
2908-C Luciernaga Street  
Carlsbad CA 92009-5914  
e-address: [epb888@adelphia.net](mailto:epb888@adelphia.net)

The seed fund has these new seeds to offer this month:

*B. heracleifolia* Schlecht. & Cham. [Section **Gireoudia**] a new form submitted by Thelma O'Reilly with deeply parted leaves.

*B. multinervia* Liebm. [Section **Gireoudia**] contributed by Roberto Brin of Panama.

Orders from the Master List for 2004, published below, will be processed as usual. On your orders please indicate alternate choices in the event that the seeds you selected have been sold out. If no alternate choices are requested substitute packets will be sent.

**The seed fund desperately needs to have new seeds contributed. The seed fund has not offered new seeds in the last two**

issues. The present stock will be depleted quite soon. If you have contacts with botanical gardens or nurseries that grow begonias, please try to acquire some seeds to contribute. Self-pollinated species seeds are most desirable. Provide as much identification and descriptive information as possible.

#### MASTER BEGONIA SEED LIST 2004

The following seed offerings have been tested and shown to have good germination.

- B. acetosa* Vellozo—rhizomatous.
- B. albo-picta* W. Bull—shrub-like
- B. boliviensis* A. de Candolle—tall tuberous
- B. cinnabarina* W. J. Hooker—short tuberous
- B. coccinea* W. J. Hooker—erect stems
- B. crassicaulis* Lindley—large, erect rhizome
- B. cubensis* Hasskarl—small shrub-like
- B. cucullata* Willdenow—large, green, semp.,  
var. *arenosicola* C. de Candolle  
var. *cucullata*
- B. dichroa* T. A. Sprague—short, erect stems
- B. dipetala* Graham—thick-stemmed
- B. dregei* Otto & Dietrich—large caudex, shrubby
- B. dregei* syn *partita* Irmscher
- B. dregei* syn *suffruticosa* Meisner
- B. dregei*-Glasgow
- B. echinosepala* Regel—erect shrub
- B. echinosepala* var *elongatifolia* Irmsch
- B. edmundoi* Brade—shrub, dark leaves.
- B. egregia* N.E. Brown—erect, distinctive leaves
- B. glabra* Aublet—vining
- B. gracilis* HBK—tall tuberous  
var *martiana* A. de Candolle
- B. grandis* var *evansiana*—shrub with bulbils
- B. heracleifolia* Cham&Schlecht—rhizomatous
- B. heracleifolia* 'Pyramidillo'
- B. heracleifolia* 'Sunderbunchii'
- B. hirtella* Link—hairly shrub, annual

- B. humilis* Dry.—annual shrub, white flrs.
- B. hydrocotylifolia* Otto—
- B. imperialis* v. *smaragdina*
- B. johnstonii*
- B. kellermanii*
- B. kenworthyae*
- B. leathermaniae*
- B. lindleyana*
- B. ludwigii*
- B. malabarica*
- B. metallica*
- B. mollicaulis*
- B. nelumbifolia* var *rubra*
- B. nelumbiifolia*
- B. odorata* 'Alba'
- B. paleata*
- B. pearcei*
- B. peltata*
- B. popenoi*
- B. reneformis* syn *vitifolia*
- B. sanguinea*
- B. schmidtiana*
- B. sericoneura*
- B. sericoneura* syn *hypolipara*
- B. sericoneura* syn *pilifera*
- B. solananthera*
- B. subvillosa*
- B. sutherlandii*
- B. thiemei* syn *macdougallii*,
- B. ulmifolia*
- B. valida*
- B. venosa*

#### UNIDENTIFIED-U NUMBERS

- B. U* #103
- B. U* #315
- B. U* #412
- B. U* #414
- B. U* #444

#### CULTIVARS and OPEN POLLINATED

- B. cane* hybrids, mixed
- B. cane* hybrids, tall
- B. 'Costello'*
- B. cucullata* var *arenosicola* hybrid
- B. dregei* types mx
- B. dregei* x *partita*
- B. egregia* op
- B. FL* mixed seed
- B. hirtella* op
- B. 'Kentwood'*

*B.* 'Orange Rubra'  
*B.* 'Rory'  
*B.* semp- Pink  
*B.* semp-Glamour Rose Picottee  
*B.* *sericoneura* op  
*B.* Skagumtuberous- non-stop mixed

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## In Memory: Daniel Haseltine

Dear Friends of Dan:

We are sorry to tell you that our father, Daniel Haseltine, passed away June 30th. He was 89 years old, and enjoyed raising plants since he was just a small boy. He greatly enjoyed his association with several plant organizations and the many nice people he met through growing plants. He was able to stay in his house right until this last week, and was working in his garden last Sunday.

The wake will be held on Monday, July 5th, from 3:00 until 9:00. The funeral is Tuesday, June 6th, at 11:00 a.m. He is being laid out at the Belmont Funeral Home, 7120 W. Belmont, Chicago IL, 60034. In lieu of flowers we are asking that donations be made to the American Begonia Society (see [www.begonias.org](http://www.begonias.org)). Since Dad had many plants in his house and greenhouse that we are unable to care for, we will have tables at the funeral home with his plants on them. If you are able to attend, please adopt one of his plants and take it home with you. We know Dad would like to know that his plants have found good homes.

Since many of the members of the plant societies to which Dad belonged do not have email addresses (or we were unable to locate them) we would appreciate it if you would let others know of his passing. We like to think that Dad has gone to

a far better garden, where there is plenty of sunshine and rain, and there are no weeds!

Sincerely,  
**Dan's Children – Rodger,  
Rollin, Claudia, Nannette,  
Ralph and Jenny**

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## Editor's Notes

It has been a peculiar year weather wise (But aren't they all!), I suspect not only in Oklahoma, but in many places. It was as though May and June changed places - May was hot and dry, June wet and cool. I know that Texas had more rain than usual too.

The consequence is that begonias had a glorious few months. At last, however, the heat has arrived here and we will hit the low 100s this week. And, of course, that is in the shade - in the sun, it will be 10 to 20 degrees higher. To get begonias through this outside, begonias have to go into heavy shade and the ground needs to be wet down thoroughly as many times a day as we can manage.

It is all too easy to overwater plants during this time. They may droop as through dry, but usually it is higher humidity that is needed, not more water in the pot. By wetting the ground and not the pot, I raise humidity.

I usually lose a number of begonias at this time, especially those such as *B. dregei* that doesn't like to be have continuously wet roots. Mealy bugs plague them at this time too. I try to be careful, but I find that some will just die despite my best efforts so I will take them inside if they begin to look too stressed. I also try to take cuttings of any that I really want to keep as I seem to be able to take those through better than the older plant. To-

*Continued on page 186.*

## Beginas Caliente!

### Southwest Region Get-Together 2004 in San Antonio

by Janet Brown

*No one describes a meeting better than Janet Brown! Here is her write-up on the Get-Together taken from the Westchester Branch Newsletter, June 2004.*

Director and Show Chairman **Valerie Morris** put on one of the best Get-Togethers ever in beautiful San Antonio with its friendly people and great sights to see. Our first day was a tour of a very special and delightful nursery in San Antonio called Shades of Green and included a talk by one of the owners on shade plants in Texas. Some were very familiar but others new to us. Between the rare and unusual plants and the lovely gift shop we could have filled up a plane right then. Then on to lunch at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio and a tour following of this very interesting place. We had excellent docents to guide us through and we learned the derivation of the terms "chuck wagon" and "spinner".

On Friday while the show was being judged we played hookey and spent the day in San Antonio being tourists at the lovely River Walk, the boat ride and the Alamo with shopping in between. Later as the day warmed up a bit we tried to find the San Antonio Botanic Garden which is on the grounds of Fort Sam Houston. After a cell phone call for directions we found that a key road had been closed after September 11. The garden was well worth the trouble in finding it. There were two beautiful conservatories with palms and aroids and even a few begonias. Another building housed the fern collection, beautifully displayed. Then it was back to the hotel (very nice, by the way) for dinner

and the plant sale. It was an amazing array of begonias that greeted us, beautiful big plants and most interesting. The boutique was superb with all kinds of begonia art, cards, aprons, T shirts-even begonia bird feeders. Very nice and most tempting.

The Show was just superb. Best in Show was won by **Tom Keepin** for a species that I had never seen before. It was entered as *B. jussiaeicarpa* but **Normand Dufresne** said it's new and correct name was *B. oxyanthera* [Ed.Note: See \* on Winners Page]. It was magnificent, small narrow leaves and tiny dear flowers cascading down. In the Smithsonian Begoniaceae, Edition 2 it is listed as *jussiaeicarpa* Warburg and "*=oxyanthera* Warburg 1895". It is African from the Cameroon, 1895. Hope to have a photo coming soon. **Pi Stone** won the Sweepstakes and the Showing is Sharing with a bunch of great begonias. My favorite was *B. aconitifolia*. The display that won the People's Choice award was *B. dregei* seedlings arranged in 20 different containers. Really spectacular and original and of course the exhibitor was **Charles McGough** a well known begonia artist. It was a beautiful show with many interesting hybrids and species, a real treat for the begoniac. Saturday was seminars day. We started with **Jackie Ellison**'s beautiful "Living Wreaths". She showed us how she does it using all kinds of plant material but especially begonias. Then **Rekha Morris** entertained us with her great description of plant hunting "Mexico Expedition". She had a wonderful slide show to go along with her descriptions of the perils of begonia hunting in

Mexico. You will have a chance to hear one of her very special talks at the convention in San Diego this summer. Don't miss it. The last speaker was **Malcolm Beck** an expert and professional compost maker. He showed us slides of his operation and his continual quest for new ideas in this field. Some of the most interesting showed 8 foot high piles of compost being "watered" with Coco Cola sludge. He also used molasses and says both materials heat up the pile so hot that you can (and he did) bake the Thanksgiving turkey in the pile. It took 16 hours and, yes, it was wrapped. He uses the molasses and coke in a spray 1 tbl/gallon, along with fish

emulsion, seaweed and Brewer's yeast. If you are interested he has written several books and has a web site malcolmbek.com. The banquet on Saturday night was excellent with **Cheryl Lenert** doing a great job as M.C. The Mae Blanton Service Award went to a very surprised and very deserving **Normand Dufresne**. Another award went to a very nice and very hard working lady who was in charge of the Boutique, **Joan Kessinger**. We left on Sunday so did not get to go on any tours unfortunately. It was a most interesting and delightful Get-Together and congratulations to **Valerie Morris** and all those who helped her.

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## ABS Southwest Region Get-Together Cultural Awards by Maxine Zinman

<u>Pts.</u>	<u>Plant</u>	<u>Exhibited By</u>
98.3	<i>B. variabilis</i>	Charles & Leora Henthorne
97.5	<i>B. oxanthera</i> *	Tom Keepin
97.3	<i>B. 'San Miguel'</i>	Phillipi Stone
97	<i>B. chlorosticta</i>	Charles & Leora Henthorne
96	<i>B. lanceolata</i> (Syn. <i>B. attenuata</i> )	Dianna Wilkerson
95.3	<i>B. 'Deco Delight'</i>	Bill Claybaugh
95	<i>B. 'Cherry Blossom'</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
95	<i>B. fernando costae</i>	Dianna Wilkerson

\*See note on page 175.

**Want to Read More About The Get-Together?  
Join the Southwest Region and get the *Begonia Leaflet*,  
bimonthly, edited by Tamsin Boardman and full of  
information about begonia species and hybrids.**

You do not have to live in the Southwest Region to join although you must be a Member of ABS and Branch memberships are welcome.

Send only \$10 for an individual or Branch subscription to:

**Leora Fuentes, Treasurer, 2200 Glen Forest Lane, Plano, Texas 75023**



*Above is Registration #988, Begonia 'Machiko', Below is registration #990, Begonia 'Maria Alejandra Brin'. On the cover of this issue is Registration #989 Begonia 'Agnes Brin'.*



# New Cultivars

## Official International Registrations 988-900

Gene Salisbury, Nomenclature Director

Applications to Register Begonia cultivars may be obtained from Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box 52, Tonkawa, OK 74653. Forms must be typed or printed in ink and accompanied by a \$2 check payable to the American Begonia Society. Clear photos for publication in the *Begonian*, drawing and dried specimens are requested. ABS is the International registration Authority for Begonia cultivar names. In the listing of the cultivar parents below, the female (seed) parent is given first.

### *Begonia* ‘Machiko’

No. 988 *Begonia* (*B. ludicra* x *B. tayabensis*) ‘Machiko’

This Erect Rhizomatous hybrid is of medium size. Leaves are pinkish, an irregular mosaic sprinkled on bronze green, are single and peltate, 5 cm x 7 cm with an entire margin. There are 8 main veins. Petioles are 15 cm in length. Stipules are 3-4 cm. Hairs are a brownish red.

Flowers are pink with single, rounded tepals, 4 on males and 2 large, 2 small on female. Flowers are few on 9 to 10 cm peduncles.

This plant somewhat resembles *B. ‘Zip’*, but its speckled leaves resemble those on *B. tayabensis*. The characteristic of pinky mosaic speckled on bronze green leaves makes it easy to recognize.

This plant was developed in 2001 by **Michiko Nakamura**, 25-5 Tsukushino 3-chrom, Machidashi, Tokyo 194-0001. It was tested by **Norika Sena**, 19-8 Tamanawa 5 chrome, Kamakurashi Kanagawaken 247-0071, Japan.

It was presented for registration by **Akira Tanaka** and was first published in 2-01-03 in *Begonias*, the official publication of the Japan Begonia Society.

It was registered on June 3, 2004

### *Begonia* ‘Agnes Brin’

No. 989 *Begonia* (*B. masoniana* x *B. plebeja*) ‘Agnes Brin’

This Erect Rhizomatous begonia is of medium size with blotched green and red leaves 4” x 5”. Margin is ciliate with pustulate surfaces. There are 8 main veins. Light green petioles are 7”. Tepals are pale green. Flowers are few. Female and male flowers are 10 mm in diameter. It blooms in summer.

It is very different from either parent and is distinctive in its beautiful leaves and dense foliage. It was developed in 1999 and first bloomed in 2003. It has not yet been distributed.

This plant was developed by **Roberto Brin**, Apartado JJ-1997, Paitilla, Panama Republic of Panama. It was registered on July 11, 2004.

### *Begonia* ‘Maria Alejandra Brin’

No. 990 *Begonia* (*B. plebeja* x *B. heracleifolia*) ‘Maria Alejandra Brin’

This Creeping Rhizomatous hybrid is of medium size. It has green, deep red blotched peltate leaves which are 8’ x 10 1/2”. Margin is dentate with a smooth,

sparingly hairy surface. There are 9 main veins with 8" petioles which are light green with some hairs. Tepals are white and both male and female flowers are 10 mm. There are many flower clusters in summer. The

blotched leaves with a real mix of the parent traits make an attractive plant.

The plant was developed by Roberto Brin, Apartado 55-1997, Paitilla, Panama Republic of Panama. It was registered on July 11, 2004.

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## **Announcement of another trip to document begonias of Veracruz in December 2004**

**by Rekha Morris**

I would like to take this opportunity to inform members of the ABS that I am planning another trip to document the begonias of Veracruz in December 2004. During the April 2004 trip we had to abort three attempts to reach the remote sites of *B. imperialis* and *B. lynceorum* in the extreme southeast corner of the Istmus of Tehuantepec in Veracruz state. No matter which direction we began our journey we would have to turn back by about 10:00 P.M. or so without ever reaching these sites. This December we plan on spending the night camping in the car at some midway point and thereby hope to reach the known sites for both these species. Of the 28 begonia species currently documented for the state of Veracruz, I have yet to locate *B. plebja* which goes dormant during the dry seasons. Hopefully it will be seeding profusely this December.

I have greatly appreciated the generosity and support of the ABS' Grants Committee, its many chapters and enthusiastic members, who by their donations have enabled me to carry out these explorations since 2002. These trips have enabled me to extend the documented list of begonia species for Veracruz to 31, and to document known species in areas where they have not been documented previously. In the hope of continuing to add to our

knowledge of species begonias of Mexico and their habitat during the December 2004 trip I once again submit my request for grants and donations to the ABS and its chapters. For those who may not be aware, all donations towards this trip are to be sent to Carol Notaras, the Treasurer for the ABS.

*Rekha has written about her previous trips and two articles are pending room in the Begonian. You may contact her at 318 Woodland Circle, Pendleton, SC 29670-9433, shivavana@juno.com*

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*Continued from page 181*

day, I noticed a *B. solonanthera*, which I find difficult under any circumstance, had suddenly gone dormant and was dying from the tips. I took the plant, cut it way back, washed the roots and replanted it. I have the cuttings that still looked like they had life in water in hopes of rooting them. It is odd that *B. 'Splotches'* doesn't seem to be as susceptible to the heat. One trailing scandent species that I find loves the heat (but humidity as well) is *B. fagifolia* although sometimes I suspect that what I have is a hybrid of that species because of its size and vigor - but it is a seedling and often seedlings raised in our own environment will prove to be hardier for us. This is the only trailing scandent that I have trouble getting through the winter and trouble getting it to bloom as well because not only does it like heat, but seems to need very high light to bloom well. And sufficient light in winter is difficult to come by here. (Every day seems hot and dry in

*Continued on page 193.*

## Minutes of Board Meeting American Begonia Society San Antonio, TX, May 29, 2004

President **Howard Berg** opened the meeting. Here were 32 member votes present. **1.** Treasurer **Carol Notaras** presented the financial statement for February 1 to April 30. The combined savings and checking totals were \$75,974.70 beginning and \$66,712.16 ending. **2.** The membership at the beginning of February was shown as 1396 and at the end of May it had dropped to 1198. The breakdown for May was 90 free memberships, 61 life memberships, 919 domestic and 128 foreign. **3.** **Mary Bucholtz** reported working on a new branch in Austin, TX and, regretfully, the dissolution of the Brooklyn-Queens-Nassau Branch. **4.** Holiday Ad Chair **Wanda Macnair** described the donation categories and reported that she will accept donations at the time of the convention in San Diego. **5.** Conservation Chair **Bill Claybaugh** reported working with **Scott Hoover** to obtain pictures of Scott's begonia collecting in Indonesia and has entered 50 pictures on the Astro web site. He has sent a total of 54 begonia species for conservation to the Ohio State University for their germplasm preservation studies. **6.** Judging Chair **Maxine Zinman** reported sending 45 cultural certificates to the Miami Branch for plants entered in their show that had a total of 220 entries. **7.** **Janet Brown** reported unofficially that the San Diego Convention hotel was lovely and there would be 8 or 9 seminars... **9.** Internet Editor **Kathy Goetz** has asked to be relieved of her responsibility as soon as an appropriate transition can be arranged. **10.** **Freda Holley** would like an apprentice or associate to become familiar with the editorship so that a smooth transition could take place when she eventually steps down. ...**12.** The motion submitted by Freda Holley at the Tampa meeting for three new national awards were discussed at length. The motion proposed that: The Eva Kenworthy Gray Award return to a single purpose award for writing - that being 'contributing original material toward helping the rank and file members further their study of begonias'; a new award to subsume the second purpose now to subsume the second purpose now

recognized in the Gray Award - that being 'contributing something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members'; and two new awards - those being the Tim O'Reilly Award 'to recognize a spouse who contributes so much to the Society in support of his/her counterpart without being a grower of Begonias' and the Gene Salisbury Award to be given 'to a member who exemplifies the very best in horticultural practice, but who also bring to us by careful propagation work the new species and hybrids. The motion included the following statement: 'In creating these awards, it is recognized that these as all other awards would be given in a year only if outstanding recipients were nominated.'" The board voted 19 to 9 in favor of the motion. The changes and new awards will be initiated in 2005. **13.** President Berg discussed progress on Begonia books. **Mark Tebbitt's** book on species will be available in the fall of 2005. **Jack Golding's** book on nomenclature is currently available. **Chuck Anderson** is working on a book on how to grow begonias for the inexperienced grower. **Peter Sharp** has another book in progress. **Ross Bollwell** has been working on the *Buxton Checklist* and already has 9000 entries. This will be available on the web when completed. **14.** President Berg commented that the working committee he appointed at the February board meeting met during the Southwest Region Get-Together in San Antonio and is making progress. **15.** **Ann Salisbury** reported that mailing costs have gone up for the *Begonian* from 32 to 98 cents per copy due to a prior error in determining the 32 cent postage rate. This explains why more funds are needed for the mailing fund. **16.** Past President **Morris Mueller** reported that **Sandy Boyd** has completed the next issue of the *Members at Large Newsletter* and requested permission to mail this issue only to all ABS Members. A motion to that effect carried. There will be a notice on this issue informing all members whom to contact for a San Diego convention packet if they have not already received one.

Respectfully submitted,

*Richard McNair, Secretary*

*[These minutes have been abbreviated because of space. A complete copy is available upon request from Richard McNair, address on page 199.]*



Above is the top of Iris' *Begonia petasitifolia* and below its base and a leaf closeup. In the May/June 1986 *Begonian* on page 73, **Rudy Ziesenhenn**e identified U001 as *Begonia grisea* and also noted the similarities and differences between that plant and *B. petasitifolia*. Both are unique.



# *Begonia petasitifolia* Brade

## by Iris Bird

My species *B. petasitifolia* is a thick stem and beautiful. I love it. I committed a sin, in my mind, when I forgot to add to the plant label where and when I purchased this plant. Or, if someone gave me a small one. I remember it was very small when I first was its keeper and owner. I guess it is my age; that is my excuse for not keeping this vital information. Maybe it will come back to me one of these days?

My plant is now almost two feet tall and lovely. It has just finished blooming. The blooms are very white. I cut the last ones off last week, June 24th. The flower stems had grown to almost three feet tall above the plant with about 200 tiny blooms on the tip of each stem. There were six stems all at once. They lasted in good condition for about a month. I tried to pollinate them, but they were too tiny for me to keep my constant eye upon so many blooms. They were all together in a bunch. Next time.

The leaves are gray in color, and felted, as in *B. venosa*, *B. 'Fleece Alba'*, *B. peltata* (syn. *B. incana*), and *B. kellermanii*. The grey felting has some small white hairs. I am sure there is a botanical word for felting, but it escapes me at the moment. If in some sunlight the felting is very soft and beautiful. If not given enough light, the surface of the leaves become somewhat shiny. I usually water the whole plant, leaves and all. When the water dries the felt returns.

*B. petasitifolia* is now in a tall 6 inch pot and stakes. The leaf stem, petioles, are 8 inches to 20 inches in height. They are very succulent, and fleshy with colors of beige, brownish and have slight spotting. Care must be taken when watering or transporting not to touch the leaves. Any other plant nearby will cause a blemish on the

leaf when coming in close contact. Once the felt is marred, it stays as is.

The leaves are cordate and opaque. There are pure white veins running up through the leaf, from the main axis, where the leaf blade forms with a very white center at this point.

The trunk of this thick stem is very unique. It is green with some marks or spots of pink/yellow. And it is about three inches in diameter. The stipules are red.

My plant is growing in the greenhouse as I do not wish it to dry completely even though at times it has been quite dry. It needs the humidity of the greenhouse, I am sure, because of the succulent nature of the plant.

I haven't been able to find much literature regarding his species except the article by **Rudy Ziesenhenn** on *Begonia grisea* in which he talks about *B. petasitifolia* (May/June 1986, p. 83). If anyone has more knowledge of this plant, I would like very much to learn more about it. I am enjoying watching it grow and very happy it is in great health. A plus. Another plus is the ease of growing into a beautiful plant.

*Careful, Iris! You may be catching the "Thick Stem Disease" where you think plants are beautiful while others only think them odd....or even worse, ugly! I have had some tell me that about some of my favorite thick stems! I love this plant too, but when it was about the height of yours, it decided just to lay down. Not wanting to trim it, I planted it in a 7" x 15" rectangular pot at which point it turned up and is now again about 3' tall again! It is at last sending up a new plant from the base. I have been totally unable to get a new plant to root from this one - have you had better luck? FH*



To the right below is *Thelma O'Reilly's* photo of B. U308. And to the left is *Jackie Davis' photo* of her B. U304 above and its amazing petiole below.



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# Unidentified Begonia Species Listing

Thelma O'Reilly, Project Director

## **B. U302**

Ecuador. Collected by **Scott Hoover**. Assigned to **Joy Porter** 12/15/92. No additional information available.

## **B. U303**

Western Malaysia, Selanger Province. Cuttings collected by Scott Hoover on route 55 to Frazer Hill, February, 1990. Habitat: Embankment above stream. Elevation: 3500 ft. Rhizomatous: Triangular shaped leaf blades 5" x 1 1/2", green with bronze cast, dark red below with prominent nerves. Petiole channeled with white felt-like hairs. Flowers pink, 4 male tepals, 5-6 female tepals. Note: Cutting sent to **Don Miller**. He shared a cutting with Joy Porter. Her lovely painting of this species was featured in the *Begonian* Vol. 69, page 43.

## **B. U304**

Thailand. Plant introduced by **Eleanor Fischer Bender**, Florida, 1991. She obtained this distinctive species when visiting a botanical garden in Thailand and was informed that the plant was obtained while attending an orchid show in Columbia, S. America. Rhizomatous: leaf blades dark green with pristine white eye at petiole and leaf junction, upper surface scabrous, lower surface dark red, glabrous, 4" x 3". Margin ciliolate, crenulate. Petiole red with white scale-like hairs pointing in a downward position cover the petiole. Note: Additional information about *Begonia U304* occurred when the Margaret Lee Branch members were testing seed for the CMK Seed Fund. Thelma O'Reilly noticed a green seedling among the darker ones in **Inga Foo's** container. She was

advised to give it TLC. A year later we met at her home and saw a lime green plant in a large terrarium with a dark green plant. Inga shared a leaf with Thelma. A few months later the leaf had rooted and produced several new plants with lime green blades on both surfaces. Please advise Thelma O'Reilly if this occurred on your [B. U304](#). This plant has also been distributed under the incorrect name of *B. 'Birdsey'*. Several grower's questions the habitat of this species, suggesting Brazil or Asian species.

## **B. U305**

Western Malaysia, Perak Province. Tubers collected by Scott Hoover and Don Miller along Route 4 to Kota Baharu, February, 1980. Habitat: Steep slope above Hwy. at base of small cliff. Elevation: 1500'. Tuberos: Leaf blades green with silver spots. Tentatively identified as *Begonia guttata* by collectors. Later identified as *Begonia variabilis* by Thelma O'Reilly and verified by **Jack Golding**. Note: *Begonia variabilis* is featured on the *Begonian* cover, Vol. 67. An excellent article, including a comprehensive description by **Johanna Zinn** appears on page 98 of that same issue.

## **B. U306**

Papua, New Guinea. Seed sent to **Carrie Karegeannes** by **Jan Goodwin**, Australia, 1992. Testors reported germination followed by damp-off.

## **B. U307**

Papua, New Guinea. Seed sent to **Carrie Karegeannes** by **Jan Goodwin**, Australia, 1992. Collected halfway between

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coast and highlands. Habitat: Limestone, rain annually. Flowers: Large, pink/red.

### **B. U308**

Costa Rica. Plant obtained from **Harry E. Luther**, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 1992. Rhizomatous: Semi-erect to 10", if staked rhizome can reach 20", branching with age, lenticellate. Leaf blades oblique, assymetrical, 9" x 7", deeply cordate with lobes rarely overlapping, species shortly acuminate, upper surface green with pale red nerves, scabrous, lower surface green with 9 red villous nerves. Petioles green flushed red, lenticellate, villous. Stipules persistent, pale green turning tan when dry, villous, keeled with villous extension at apices. Inflorescence extends high above foliage, profuse flowering. Male flowers white, 2 tepals, female flowers white, 2 tepals, capsules trilocular. Tentatively identified as *B. urophylla* by Thelma O'Reilly.

### **B. U309**

Penang, Malaysia. Collected by **Don Miller**, 1990. Rhizomatous: Leaves 13" x 9", silver with dark green nerves outlined with silver splashes making a beautiful pattern over the silver surface. Tentatively identified as a *Begonia rex* hybrid.

### **B. U310**

Papua, New Guinea. Seed sent to Thelma O'Reilly by Jan Goodwin, 1992. Seed

germination was followed by damp-off.

### **B. U311**

Papua, New Guinea. Seed sent to **Thelma O'Reilly** by Jan Goodwin, 1992. Poor germination followed by damp-off.

### **B. U312**

Papua, New Guinea. Seed sent to Thelma O'Reilly by Jan Goodwin, 1992. Habitat: Western end of Lake Kutuba. Open country, small amount of limestone: Poor germination followed by damp-off.

### **B. U313**

Singapore Botanical Garden. Seed sent to Thelma O'Reilly by Jan Goodwin, 1992. Poor germination followed by damp-off. Note: Seed generously donated by Jan Goodwin was shared with four excellent begonia growers. All reported poor germination and damp-off of seedlings.

*Thelma O'Reilly maintains records for the Unidentified Species program. Numbers for new unidentified acquisitions from natural sources can be obtained from her. And Thelma always welcomes information and photos of existing U numbers. You may write her at 10942 Sunray Place, La Mesa, CA 91941.*

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*Continued from page 186.*

summer and wet and cloudy in winter here in Stillwater!). At any rate, I have added this one to my "hardy in heat" list.

What are your growing conditions? Why not describe them and tell us what you do to cope. No doubt many other readers will share those and benefit from your experience. Begonias are all about shar-

ing - sharing not only begonias, but what we learn about growing them. Your experience is valuable -- and remember because photo space is now more limited, I need articles that do not depend on color., but black and white illustrations are always welcome.

See everyone in San Diego!

~FH

## In Memory

King William (Bill) O'Geary

King William (Bill) O'Geary, a major, early force in the now disbanded Florida West Coast Begonia Society, died May 2, 2004. He was 76.

A Native Virginian and a long time executive with Boy Scouts of America, O'Geary became interested in begonias after he retired. The family had moved to Florida in 1971 as a result of O'Geary's career.

Once the Begonia bug got him, Bill became super-active in all phases of the Florida West Coast Group, serving in virtually every capacity from show chairman and newsletter editor to ABS national representative and branch librarian. Bill attended many national conventions and frequently made videos of the seminars, which were provided for FWCB use. He was also certified begonia judge.

Bill became interested in hybridizing begonias and created a number of plants that are now enjoying much popularity. One of O'Geary's best known efforts is *B. 'Black Coffee'*, a small rhizomatous that is being sold by **Tim Anderson** in Miami, among other sources. *B. 'Emerald King'* is also a favored item spreading among begonia lovers.

**Robert Koehler**, who inherited all of O'Geary's begonia seed from Bill's wife, Mary, is very excited about what he has been germinating. "From the looks of what I've grown so far, the best is yet to come," he reported to the author.

Other O'Geary hybrids include *B. 'Romance'*, *'Mary Jay'*, and *'Rip's Winkle'*.

*H. Alton Lee*  
*Gulfport, Florida*

## IN THE MAILBOX

by Greg Sytch

Since there is a link on the ABS website straight to my email mailbox, I receive questions about begonias from all over the world. While many of these questions are standard, sometimes there are pictures involved and it is difficult to identify the begonia because of many reasons.

One of the most difficult ID's that I have are the pictures from Europe. Europeans generally grow in conditions so vastly different than my Tampa Bay yard, it can easily fool me. Grown under consistently cooler, moist conditions, begonia species and hybrids can vary in leaf color and shape.

As an example, our Florida summer begins in May with intense sunshine and little rain, but by June the humidity hits and the rainfall a plenty. This lasts through September. Nights rarely get much below 80F, dewpoints never below 70F. Compare begonias grown under these conditions with European conditions, and you can see the difference. Areas of the United States, such as Seattle, Buffalo, Minnesota and northern California coast probably grow similar to European conditions, so it is important to reveal the conditions you are growing under including temperature and light levels, fans, humidity, etc with any inquiries. I also try to forward emails to other growers who may be more familiar with the topic or variety.

**Q:** Snails have been eating my begonias, and other than picking off these nasty creatures every night, is there anything I can do to prevent them?

**A:** Snails thrive in moist, cooler conditions in the shade. Periodically check the growing areas for hidden areas where they

can thrive, such as in trays, under benches, and look for that familiar trail that occurs. Diatomaceous earth is known to prevent snails from invading and will desiccate them if exposed to it. It is easily available in most garden centers.

Above all, if snails are severely eating your leaves, they are out of control. It is worth going through all growing areas in one fell swoop removing anything you see. This should help reduce the infestation.

If you have any questions, remember you can email me at: gsytych@cs.com. Snail mail at: Gregory Sytych, 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653 727-841-9618.

Hope summer is a great growing season for all.

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## Conservation Comments

**Bill Claybaugh**  
**Conservation Chairman, ABS**

### **Growing B. 404**

Since the summer of 2002 I have been struggling to grow the unnamed species *Begonia U404*. This plant is from Asia and has all the beauty one can imagine. It is one of the few begonias with palmately compound leaves, and has a "rhizome at or below the surface, with upright stems". It also is a very difficult plant to grow, at least on the gulf coast of Texas. Over the past two years I have had several *U404* plants, all originating from Florida growers. This article is a recount of my many failures and of my recent success in both growing and in propagating this beauty.

First, I obtained two plants in 4-inch pots at the ABS National Convention in Houston in May 2002. The plants were

brought home and kept in my small shade house where temperatures ranged from 70 degrees at night to 95 degrees in mid summer. Humidity was kept about 50 to 80 percent, the natural gulf coast humidity being supplemented with large areas of wet rocks in the shade house floor. The plants seemed to do OK, but slowly lost leaf after leaf. This was not thought to be too uncommon because many cultivars, those with similar growth habit, also lose leaves in hot weather. I tried several propagation methods that usually prove successful. I planted stem cuttings, leaf cuttings, and even leaflet cuttings in all manners of soils, etc. but to no avail. I finally moved the faltering *B. U404* plants out under one of my large oak trees in the company of similar plants such as *B. 'Little Brother Montgomery'*, *'Charles Jaros'*, *'Caribbean Clown'*, *'Cynthia Bishop'*, etc. This growing area receives mottled sun throughout the day, and overhead watering every other day. All begonia do very well in this environment throughout the summer, except for *U404*, which just continued to slowly deteriorate, finally to only one plant with one stem and one leaf.

In desperation, I took the final leaf and bet everything on being able to get new plants by leaf propagation. I cut its leaf into its eight leaflets and put them in a terrarium environment, i.e. in perlite, under florescence lights, and mild conditions. To my pleasure, each leaflet rooted and within two months I had eight small plants. These plants grew to about three inches high over the next few months, so I moved them into 2-inch pots. Now, flush with success, I started giving some of these new "hatchling" to Astro Branch members. Suddenly, to my shock, all of the small plants melted away, both mine and those that I had sent to foster homes.

This might have been the end to a dreary tale, except in the fall of 2003; I

was able to get two new plants from **Tim Anderson**, Palm Hammock Orchid Estates. By the time I got the plants home, it was getting cool, so I moved them into large terrariums along with other delicate varieties. These terrariums are 15 X 24 inches in size and are 18 inches high. They have a layer of wet perlite in the bottom and are exposed to 50 percent sun for about 6 hours of the day. This shade house is maintained at a 40-degree minimum and usually stays below 70 degrees in the day. To my shock and pleasure, the two new plants started growing at such a rate, that I had to trim the stems every week or two, just to keep them below the critical 18-inch height. The cut stems and excess leaves were put into the same terrarium environment but seemed to rot before rooting. After numerous tries, I finally got one stem to root and about five

leaflets to put on plantlets.

Somewhat later, while doing some routine maintenance, I realized that one of the plants was putting on small aerial roots at almost all nodes along its stems. This was a new development, something I had not seen before. After some thought, I recognized that with time and at the correct temperature (cool) and humidity (very wet), the plants responded with an abundance of aerial roots and rapid growth. Many begonia are epiphytic in nature, lying on the surface of rocks or vegetative matter, with their roots above ground and exposed. I obviously had supplied an environment similar to its natural growing conditions. As before, I was forced to repeatedly cut the top-most portion of the stems from the plants, but this time I always had a well-rooted node along with at least one good leaf in each cutting. These cuttings were placed in a mix of 75/25 percent mix of perlite/peat moss and returned to the terrarium. To my pleasure, every cutting continued to grow, without rotting, and I suddenly had numerous new plants of *U404*.

Several months have now passed and I have moved the larger plants out of the terrarium and into a more normal shade house atmosphere with only 50 to 80 percent humidity. So far, everything is going great, the plants are growing normally and require frequent top trimming, but I no longer have aerial roots at the nodes. If you purchased a *U404* at the Houston Convention, and still have it alive, I would like to hear your story on culture. Some of these precious jewels need special care, and this is certainly one of them.

*You may contact Bill at the address shown on page 199.*

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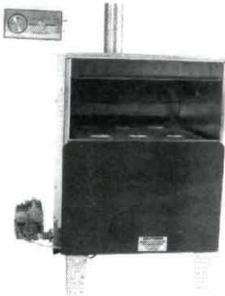
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# COMING EVENTS

**August 24-29, 2004, ABS Convention: Back to the Future, San Diego, CA.** Town and County Convention Center. Packets were mailed out in April. For information, email: [2004absconvention@cox.net](mailto:2004absconvention@cox.net).

**2005 Association of Australian Begonia Societies National Conference in Beautiful Ballarat.** Friday March 11 through Sunday March 13, 2005. Registrations are being taken by the Treasurer, 9 Kelley Grove, Preston, 3072, Victoria, Australia. Accommodations are limited so register early. Convention Chair is **Diana Lawrey** who may be contacted at (03) 9898 8863.

**2005: Southwest Region Get-Together, Dallas.** Details to follow.

**Due date for articles for November/December *Begonian* is September 1, 2004; Announcements due by September 15.**

**Remember Editor's New Email address is: [fmholley@cox.net](mailto:fmholley@cox.net).**

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