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The
• **Begonian**

The **Begonian**

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American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

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

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

To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

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

To issue a bulletin that will be mailed to all members of the society.

To bring into friendly contact all who love and grow begonias.

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

Membership - Subscription, dues, circulation, inquiries, and address changes: Arlene Ingles., 157 Monument, Rio Dell , CA 95562-1617; (707) 764-5407.

E-mail: ingles@cox.net

Cover

Front: Doug Pridgen's photo of Joyce Pridgen's *B.* 'White Ice', a Charles McGough hybrid.

Back: Joy Porter captures the lovely *B. limprichtii* in watercolor for us. Read about it on page 48 .

In This Issue

Articles

Indonesia	46
Members at Large News	47
<i>Begonia limprichtii</i>	48
Notes on Mexican and Central American Begonias	50
First Record of a Bee Visit	
<i>Hillebrandia sandwicensis</i>	52
<i>B. lubbersii</i>	54
Begonia Choices for Landscaping	56
Begonias after the Big Move	67
Favorite Begonias	69

Oh, No! My Begonia Froze!	70
<i>Begonia</i> U388 Gets a New Name	73
Convention 2005	76

Regular Features

President's Message	44
Letters to the Editor	45
Editor's Notes	57
In the Mailbox	58
Seed Fund	59
Conservation Comments	62
Coming Events	78

Begonia 'Little Miss Mummey'
Drawing by
Jeanne Marie Kunze



President's Message

I receive a daily news letter from the BBC. A recent letter went on at length about how the world's largest cockroach was found in Southeast Asia on a recent trip by some scientists. Way down in the article was a casual mention that they think that two new begonia species were found. Now, who in the world would think that discovering one more cockroach was more important than discovering two new begonias? I guess that's why we're here.

There are some good things to look forward to in 2005 so far as ABS is concerned. First, **Ross Bolwell** is making excellent progress in preparing a begonia checklist that can be downloaded and used in various database programs and spread sheets. Ross tells me he is up to the M's and he has over 13,000 begonias listed. We hope to have it available this year. Second, **Gene Salisbury** and **Dale Senna** of Tampa are working to arrange for ABS to use PayPal for electronic funds transfer instead of sending checks to pay for membership, convention fees, and other items from ABS. Our international members are looking forward to this since it will simplify their money conversion problems. After we make the arrangements with PayPal, our members will be able to use PayPal to renew their membership and new members will be able to join by filling out a membership form on the ABS website and pay their dues over the Internet. This way, we won't have to worry about security of credit card numbers; third, **Mark Tebbitt's** book is going to be published this year. We can all look forward to that. And coming up is the ABS convention and how in Dallas, Texas on May 18 to 22.. Our Southwest Region members are masters at putting on great shows, meetings and outstanding hospitality. Plan on being there!

Let me ask your advice on something vitally important to ABS. Our membership continues to dwindle and the average age of our members qualifies as senior citizens. Some of our branches have not attracted many new members for quite some time now. Our membership is now about 40% of what it was 20 years ago when we held our convention in New York City. I have two questions that I would hope our members could address and communicate with me or some other officer of ABS: (1.) What can we as an organization do to attract more members? Is there a national effort or a branch effort that you would suggest? And, (2.) What can you do as an individual member (subscriber or branch member) to help us gain new members? Send me an e-mail with your thoughts or call me.

If you would, would you answer a few questions for me and send me an e-mail with your answers. My e-mail address is howber@optonline.net. The more responses the better.

1. What changes would you like to see in ABS that would be useful to you as a member and a begonia grower?
2. At some point in the not too distant future, would you like to receive your *Begonian* by e-mail in a .pdf format? Many of our branches send their news letters by e-mail to their members. I receive the president's copy of some branch letters on my computer and I like less paper. Your copy of *The Begonian* could be saved on a CD or in a file on your computer for future use and printed in color if you have a color printer.
3. Would you like to be able download the *Begonian* from our website?
4. Would you use the begonia checklist if it were posted on our website?
5. Do you think the seed fund is an important part of ABS?

6. Why are you a member of ABS?
7. Whether you are a branch or a subscribing member, would you like to be more active in the national affairs of ABS? If so, how.
8. If you attend regional meetings and national conventions, what do you like best about the meetings and shows and what do you like least? What would like to see added to those meetings? What seminars would you like see added?

Please take a few minutes to answer.

Finally, Freda, (ABS's Most Valuable Player) tells me she needs more articles for the *Begonian*. I see many good articles on species, hybrids and how to grow begonias in our newsletters. Make Freda happy, submit an article for consideration.

See you in Dallas.

Howard Berg

Letters to the Editor

Things are really serious when a non letter writing ABS member like me has to write a letter. We in Australia are having withdrawal symptoms because the *Begonian* no longer has the "Spotlight On" articles.

The *Begonian* was a prime source of information for us. We have Thompsons' book and a few others. However, these don't have the nitty gritty required to grow some species well and to give talks to the less research oriented members of our Queensland Begonia Society. I often give species talks and the *Begonian* back copies are my first port of call for information. Your members obviously have a wealth of experience and knowledge and even some of the older species on which very little information is

printed could be revisited.

The things that I find most interesting are climate, weather, altitude, soils (eg. Hanging from limestone cliffs makes me think "maybe lots of water but absolutely perfect drainage"). Humidity requirements, etc. are also important. The experiences of the grower writing the article are also of great interest. I usually add my experiences and display a plant. This helps newer growers and generates lots of questions. Personally, I am more interested in giving talks on plants I can display so the very latest plants are of secondary importance though very much appreciated and discussed when they do appear.

On another topic, we grow in Australia, a plant known as 'Mt. Fan si Pan' because it was found on that mountain in Viet Nam. It was imported by **Bob Cherry**, I believe.

I saw a picture of this plant on page 136 volume 69 July/August 2002 of the *Begonian*. It was called *B. chuniana* and the article was by **J. Duruisseau**. Is there any information available on this species. How about a Spotlight on *B. chuniana*?

I enjoy the *Begonian* and have learnt a great deal from the articles written by your members.

Regards,

Joan Taylor

77 Stanley River Rd.

MALENY, 4552

Queensland, Australia

Joan, the "Spotlight" feature is actually a regular feature in the Southwest Region ABS Begonia Leaflet. It is written by Don Miller of Dallas and always includes one of his outstanding photographs. Previous editors included this from time to time in the Begonian. Because the Leaflet is subscribed to by so many ABS members (you do not have to live in the Southwest Region in order to subscribe or be a

member) and is available to all, I do not include this feature in the Begonian. Since the overall space available in all publications on begonias is so limited, I want as much new material available to our readers as possible. Since none of the "Spotlight" articles have been included for 8 years now, you have a long memory!

Seed Fund Problems

During the past year the ABS Seed Fund has been plagued by orders sent but not received. This is especially true of international orders. I have spent some time researching postal regulations. A great deal of information can be obtained on the web at www.usps.com. At the post office I was able to examine Publication 52. In Section 645, I was referred to "Prohibitions and Restriction on mailing animals, plants, and related matter of DMM CO22 and Publication 14.. There is also the statement that Quarantine regulations of the destination country also apply. Mailers can obtain information by contacting the USDA at the following address: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture USDA, 4700 River Rd., Riverdale MD 20737-1228. Prohibitions for Israel include "Live plants and seeds." The IMM that controls international mailing can be accessed and read at <http://pe.usps.gov>

I have not found any specific prohibitions other than Israel; however, I cannot avoid the idea that perhaps some of

the Homeland Security regulations are affecting us. For example, is there testing in some places for a white powder such as anthrax? There is an allegation in the society that seeds cannot be mailed out of or into California. Our local post office knows of no such restrictions! I have a query into the local Ag department advisor but I have not yet received an answer. Many orders have been shipped from California in the past year and for many years before that.

I have undertaken to provide stricter accounting for orders received and orders shipped. This process has not been fully implemented for past orders but will commence with the next *Begonian* when orders will come to me for recording, and orders filled will also be reported to me so that I will have a complete record. A thorough review of our procedures will be taken up at our branch meeting on January 22. I hope we can get a resolution of our problems before the Board meeting in Tampa next month.

Edgar Bates

Carlsbad, CA, USA

**If your Branch needs
Begonians for distribution
at 2005 Shows, please
request those from Ann
Salisbury (Address on Page
78) NOW!!**

Our Thoughts are with Indonesia

Mary Fuqua and Scott Hoover

We have been in touch with **Harry Wiriadinata** and **Deden Girmanshah** since the tsunami and can re-

port that they were not in harm's way when the wave struck. We have expressed our sympathy for their country and our hope

that their friends and families are safe.

The tsunami is a human catastrophe. Thousands of Indonesians have lost their lives. Thousands more have lost loved ones, homes and livelihood. Despite the magnitude of the devastation, it is confined to Aceh Province at the northern tip of the island of Sumatra. To the best of our knowledge, the rest of this vast country has been spared the physical damage. As a frame of reference, imagine the continental U.S. superimposed on a map of Indonesia. Both San Francisco and New York City would be within the bounds of the Indonesian archipelago.

Scott will arrive in Bogor on January 18 to spend a few days working with Harry, **Dr. Eko Baruto**, Director of the Herbarium, and other scientists to plan the 2005 expedition, which is scheduled for July, 2005. If possible, he and Deden will make a short visit to Mt. Slamet in Central Java to gather more data on a high-altitude vine forest observed during the 2004 explorations of this mountain. He will convey our compassion and concern. We have also, as individuals, made contributions to the relief effort. If members of the ABS wish to help, we encourage you to contribute through the organization of your choice.

Members at Large Newsletter

by Sandy Boyd

I hope all of you received a complementary copy of the Members-at-Large newsletter last summer. There was a tremendous response from you and as a result our MAL membership was more than doubled.

The newsletter is geared to those members who do not, or can not, attend branch meetings. It includes many growing tips and hybridizing pointers as well as other light articles. Many branches include clinics each month at their meetings where members can bring in sickly plants or discuss other begonia problems and receive answers from knowledgeable growers. Additionally, branch members will talk about the best way to grow this or that begonia. MAL newsletter is an attempt to replace that branch interaction. I must confess, I think most subscribers do already belong to branches, however, they are hungry to learn as much as they can about the care and growing of begonias and use this as an additional learning source. Some interesting articles we have had in recent

issues have been lunar planting, finding begonias in Japan, begonia sparkle, and a great article from a seminar **Freda Holley** gave on thick stems at the San Diego convention. Coming up in the next issue will be begonias in hanging baskets, the where to buy begonias lists, and **Brad Thompson's** great begonia tips.

One added bonus for MAL subscribers is the beautiful color page provided by **Paul Tsamtsis**. A picture of a begonia with care instructions is always included, along with photos related to articles in the newsletter.

If you would like to subscribe it is only \$5.00 a year for the quarterly publication. Send your check to: Arlene Ingles, 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 94147. Make the check payable to American Begonia Society (ABS). Please indicate on the check: Members-at-Large Newsletter (MAL). Note: she will include the subscription expiration date on your address label.

Begonia limprichtii

by Charles Henthorne

Begonia limprichtii is a small species and you al-ready know how your editor fares with small species. I have tried to grow it several times to no avail either in out of a terrarium. I believe my problem with this as with so many of these is that I am unable to give it the kind of cooler temperatures that it prefers. However, I have seen this begonia at the various ABS shows in very beautiful growth as the photos across the page indicate. It was always in a terrarium and I suspect it would take a very special greenhouse situation to thrive outside of one. Charles and Leora Henthorne are two terrarium growers who have spectacular success with many plants of this type. This one is no exception.

When I grow *B. limprichtii* in a terrarium, I have used two different mediums. In Oklahoma, I used a charcoal base, covered with a layer of perlite, followed with a layer of soilless potting mix composed of 1/3 sphagnum peat moss, 1/3 perlite, and 1/3 vermiculite. To this mixture, I added just enough water to lightly moisten the growing medium. *Begonia limprichtii* did quite well with no water or additional fertilizer for over a year at a time. I left the container completely covered so the humidity was quite high at all times. It was grown in a naturally light room with no additional grow lights added. It did well and covered the space avail-

able in the container. Bloom was very sparse, sometimes not even once a year.

The other method I have used came when I married Leora and moved to Plano, Texas just north of Dallas. Natural light was quite limited for the growing space there and I found that the temperature and humidity which plays such an important role for this plant were also quite different than the growing conditions in Oklahoma.

Growing under artificial light there, Leora has found it much more beneficial to grow this plant in a sphagnum peat and perlite mixture, 1/2 and 1/2 of each, over a charcoal base, keeping the medium fairly damp and fertilizing every time it is necessary to water with fertilizer at 1/4 strength. Even with the artificial light used with this method, bloom remains sparse, again often not even once a year.

Begonia limprichtii does grow well under low-medium light conditions and does not like heat. We find that growing it on the bottom level of the growing cart works best.

Charles' closeup of the leaves to the right show one of the most distinctive features of the plant - the striking, reddish hair-like projections. They contrast well with the bright, clear green of the leaves. Joy Porter evidently found the secret to higher bloom as you will note in her magnificent drawing on the back cover.

Notes about *Begonia limprichtii*

by Jack Golding

From *Begoniaceae* Ed. 2

Begonia limprichtii Irmscher, Repert. Spec. Nov. Regni Veg. Beih., 12:440, 1922. [Platycentrum], China. Fig. 26.12.

The author of this species was: Edgar Irmscher.

It was published in: Repertorium specierum novarum regni vegetabilis. Centralblatt für



Begonia limprichtii on display at a show and below a closeup to show the stiff red hairs. Plants grown by Leora and Charles and photo below by Charles Henthorne.



Sammlung und Veröffentlichung von Einzeldiagnosen neuer Pflanzen. Beihefte. [Edited by Friedrich Fedde]

Translation

From the Latin: Repertory of new species belonging to the plant kingdom.

From the German: Central Journal for Compilation and Publishing Newer Plants. Supplement.

From Irmscher's description: Foliorum ...laminae... pilis crispulis ferrugineis....

Translation: Leaves...blades...with curly rusty-brown hair...

Notes on Mexican and Central American *Begonia*

Kathleen Burt-Utley and John F. Utley

Department of Biological Sciences

University of New Orleans

New Orleans, LA 70148

Why do we study *Begonia*?? *Begonia* became a primary interest in our lives while John and I were in the Peace Corps stationed at the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica in San Jose, Costa Rica from 1973 to 1976. During those years, we worked in the Herbarium and were responsible for general herbarium maintenance and were expected to facilitate the work of visitors to the Herbarium. This Herbarium is an extraordinarily important one in Central America and was established in 1887. Types of the *Begonia* species from Costa Rica described by Casimir de Candolle are housed there, as well as the early herbarium specimens of all groups of Costa Rican plants made by early collectors including Pittier, Tonduz, Wercklé and Brenes.

As part of our field work in Costa Rica, John and I collected a variety of different species of plants from a diversity of plant families, including the Begoniaceae. John's main interest in Costa Rica plants was the Bromeliaceae and he eventually completed a revision of a group that is largely restricted to Costa Rica. Although I was always interested in bromeliads, I decided that I wanted to work primarily with another family of flowering plants for my research. We collected *Begonia* species, but I initially took them for granted, assuming that, since they were popular horticulturally, there wouldn't be many problems with the species. How wrong I was! When I began to identify the dried specimens that we had collected, I soon discovered that identifying begonias was extraordinarily difficult when I used the available treatments of the Begoniaceae by Smith and Schubert from the Floras of Panama and Guatemala. Now, over 30 years and 150,000 miles later, our research with *Begonia* from Mexico and Central America continues; this parallels John's and my interests in the Bromeliaceae.

Begonia is represented in Mexico and Central America by approximately 155 species. Diversity is greatest in Mexico where over 100 of the species occur. Over 75% of these begonias are found only in Mexico. In contrast, only 71 *Begonia* species occur in all of Central America, and, of these, almost 60% are endemic to that region. This great diversity of *Begonia* species within a single country like Mexico can be attributed in part simply to the size of the country. More importantly, however, is the diversity of

environments or habitats that we find in Mexico. Along the Pacific coast of Mexico, west of the sierras and in the foothills of the sierras from Nayarit in the north to Chiapas in the southeast, the areas are seasonally very dry. The woody vegetation typically drops its leaves during the prolonged dry season. *Begonia* species like *B. heracleifolia* Schlecht. & Cham. and *B. plebeja* Liebm. also drop their leaves at this time and can be found in these tropical deciduous forests growing on steep, exposed rocky faces and hillsides. Both species also colonize wetter environments both on the Pacific coast and eastern parts of Mexico from Veracruz to Chiapas. The dry to extremely dry environments associated with parts of western Mexico and much of northern Mexico are ideal habitats for a group of tuberous *Begonia* species that include *B. gracilis* H.B.K., *B. biserrata* Lindl. and the spectacular *B. rhodochlamys* Smith & Schubert. During the dry months, these species die back to their small, underground tubers and will initiate growth again only when sufficient moisture is available in the soil following the beginning of the next rainy season. Their behavior is similar to that of the typical cultivated tuberous begonias. With the exceptions of *B. gracilis* and *B. biserrata*, many of these species are poorly collected and were misunderstood until our research.

Over half the *Begonia* species occurring in Mexico can be found in areas with evergreen or pine forests where the dry season is not as pronounced. Species are most abundant in three contiguous states: Chiapas (41 species), Oaxaca, (42 species) and Veracruz (29 species). Twenty eight species were treated in the Begoniaceae for the Flora of Veracruz (Jiménez and Schubert, 1997). Although in Spanish, this treatment is very readable and has a good key to all the species that they cover, as well as locations and distribution maps for the species. Dr. Bernice Schubert was very knowledgeable and co-authored a number of Begoniaceae treatments with **Lyman B. Smith** before her death. As part of our own research, we have largely completed a treatment of the Begoniaceae for Mexico and have made checklists for all the states. In Veracruz, Chiapas and Oaxaca, the majority of the species are in two sections that we have collected and studied for years, sections *Gireoudia* (Kl.) A.DC. and *Weilbachia* (Kl. & Oerst.) A.DC. Both sections are basically Mexican and Central American in their distributions. Species in sect. *Gireoudia* have rhizomes or canes and include *B. heracleifolia*, *B. multinervia* Liebm., *B. nelumbiifolia* Schlecht. & Cham. and *B. sericoneura* Liebm. Section *Gireoudia* represents the largest group of *Begonia* species occurring in Mexico; almost half of the native Mexican begonias are in this section and most do not grow outside of Mexico.

Section *Weilbachia* is unique in the New World tropics in having ovaries that are bilocular; most other species have trilocular ovaries. Vegetatively, these species either have canes or slender rhizomes; *Begonia imperialis* Lem. is probably the best known species from the section because of its attractive foliage. Of the 27 species known in the section, over half occur in Mexico, primarily in moist seepage areas, along stream banks or wet roadbanks or forested areas where they may form dense mats covering large areas.

Within Central America, native begonias commonly grow in evergreen forests. While many Guatemalan and Honduran begonias occur in Mexico, the majority of the *Begonia* species from Costa Rica and Panama are known only from those countries. Most inhabit evergreen forests, but a few begonias favor the cloud forests characteristic of the region. Only in the wettest areas can we find *B. urticae* L.f., *B. oaxacana* A.DC

Continued on page 71.

First record of a pollinator visit to *Hillebrandia sandwicensis*

Mark Tebbitt, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225 and Laura Tebbitt, Battery Park City Parks Corporation, 2 South End Avenue, New York, NY 10280.

While conducting fieldwork on the Hawaiian island of Kauai during May of 2003 we observed a species of native Hawaiian bee of the genus *Hylaeus* visiting and collecting pollen from the flowers of *Hillebrandia sandwicensis*. This appears to be the first record of a potential pollinator for this plant. *Hillebrandia* contains just one species, is the closest relative to *Begonia*, and the only other genus classified within the Begoniaceae. It is native to the Hawaiian islands of Kauai, Molokai and Oahu, but is very rare and declining on all but the former.

On Kauai we were able to spend three hours observing a large, healthy, flowering population of *Hillebrandia* in Koke'e State Park and during this time noticed a single *Hylaeus* bee repeatedly and selectively visiting the male and female flowers of numerous individuals of *Hillebrandia*. Interestingly, a number of introduced European bees were also present but were not observed visiting the flowers of *Hillebrandia*. These bees instead concentrated on nearby flowers of *Plantago lanceolata* and *Tarax-*

acum officinale, neither of which is native to the Hawaiian Islands. As copious seed set was observed in nearby populations of *Hillebrandia sandwicensis* we conclude that pollination of this species, presumably by *Hylaeus* bees, is effective, at least on Kauai. Since the pollinators of several other native Hawaiian plant species are extinct, thereby endangering those plants, the potential for the continued preservation of *Hillebrandia sandwicensis* in its natural habitat looks especially positive.

Mark is well known to our ABS members from his article, seminars, and attendance at conventions. His new book on begonias which is now in print and scheduled to be published later this year is something we all await with eagerness.

Quick

Check your mailing label.

If it reads

200505 or 200506, your membership is about to expire. Please renew! We don't want to lose you.



Here is Hillebrandia sandwicensis, unfortunately without the bee. Photo is by Mark Tebbitt.

***B. lubbersii* Ed. Morren**
Written & Photo by Naoyuki Uemura
Translated by Akira Tanaka

*This article is taken with permission from the journal **Begonia**, No. 209 October/December 2004 published by the Japan Begonia Society. This is a beautifully printed journal with photos such as that shown here in beautiful full color color on each cover. Although it is in Japanese, **Akira Tanaka** who regularly attends ABS Conventions gives us a translation of each lead article. Our thanks to JBS and Akira.*

(History)

According to the Thompson's *Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide*, Binot found *B. lubbersii* in Brazil and it was published by Morren in 1883. But Charles Chevalier, the former Curator of the Botanical Garden of the University of Liege, Belgium, told us in his book *Les Begonia* published in 1938 that this Brazilian species was introduced accidentally in 1880 to the Botanical Garden of Brussels on a branch of Fougere (fern). Pinaert of Gent, Belgium grew and distributed it. This species was named *B. lubbersii* in honor of Lubbers, the Director of the Brussels Botanical Gardens.

(Style)

Cane like, 40-60 cm high. The stem is columnar and thin, swelling at a joint, green and smooth. Internodes are 3-4 cm on the average, but sometimes they lengthen with a little light.

The stipule is film-like and entire, large, growing close to the stem, then turning to brown but remaining semi-permanently on the stem.

Leaves are 12-20 cm x 4-6 cm, rhombic, sharply pointed at each apex, crenate, hollow slightly on a surface. Leaves are dark green with mustard color, darker along a vein, satin like. We first regard silver dots on a surface, but they

disappear with growth. They are smooth and dark purple red on the back. A petiole is thick, short tuber-like, hairless, pink, obliquely extending from a stem and 1/3 from the top of a leaf blade on other side.

Flowers will open at a small compound cyme, extending a short peduncle from an above axil. A male flower has four petals, the outer two petals are large and round, inner ones are dipper like. (Old literature tells us that it is long, oval, short, and small.) There are many stamens and the anther is broad, staying with short filament. A female flower has five petals that are smaller than male ones. A style is steep, a stigma is thick. A large ovary has three green wings, cream color, sometimes becoming pink under strong light. Ever blooming.

(Growing)

It grows well under weak light. It tends to be taken by powdery mildew, so you must take precautionary treatment spraying a fungicide regularly when temperatures are low, 20° C or so, and the humidity is high. As a stem lengthens diagonally, you must support a stem with a stake. Potting mixes must be light of best drainage and care taken not to retain water inside the pot when temperatures are low. It is better to give weak fertilizer when a plant fails to grow. Flowers are large. The characteristics of this large flower will easily be passed to hybrids of this species. We can see many hybrids of this species blooming large flowers. We can find 53 hybrids of this species in the *Begonia Check List of JBS 2001* and 23 of these hybrids are of Japanese origin.

平成16年11月1日発行(通巻209号)中間月1日発行

ベゴニア

Begonia

2004 10~12月号



日本ベゴニア協会 発行

No.209

ベゴニア・ルバーシイ

A scan of the cover of the Journal of the Japan Begonia Society, Begonia with B. lubbersii.

Gardener's Begonia Choices for Landscaping

Linda Shires, Curator

Begonia Species Bank

Fort Worth Botanic Garden

3220 Botanic Garden Blvd.

Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Library: 817-871-8744

Fax: 817-871-7638

In order to perpetuate the Begonia Species Bank and Hybrid Collection, it must be made an intrinsic and practical part of the public interest or it will go away. The numbers of begonia lovers must be increased exponentially to increase participation in landscape use of shade loving begonias. A market can be tapped that has not been previously addressed. That market is widespread distribution of all types of begonias for landscaping purposes. Only a few have made it into our local market for widespread distribution and those are mostly *semperflorens* varieties and Begonia 'Dragon Wing'. They are popular because of their ability to endure hot sun and because of their prolific blooming. But there are so many shade-loving varieties of begonias with interesting leaf colorations and textures that need to be introduced to the general public and commercial growers. The Fort Worth Botanic Garden is in a unique position to further this cause and show the general public how creatively these plants can be used in the landscape. This spring of 2005, we will be planting over 400 shade-loving begonias in at least 6 public areas of the Botanic Garden including the Trail Garden, Four Seasons Garden, Garden Center, Fuller Garden, Rock Springs Woods, and the Perennial Garden.

We will be trialing hybrids as well as species in these areas to check for heat and drought tolerance as well as tolerance for cold temperatures to see if many of the begonias in this area, zone 8, will be perennial. Each gardener at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden selected from our collection the begonias that would be planted in their areas. Gardener's Begonia Choices for 2005 are:

<i>B.</i> 'Joe Hayden'	<i>B.</i> 'Elizabeth Lahn'	<i>B. hispida</i>
<i>B.</i> 'Orange Rubra'	<i>B.</i> 'Sir John Fallstaff'	<i>B.</i> 'Venepi'
<i>B.</i> 'King Cobra'	<i>B.</i> 'Kissimmee'	<i>B.</i> 'Ricinifolia'
<i>B.</i> 'Cajon Valley'	<i>B.</i> 'King Cobra'	<i>B.</i> 'Reese's Orange'
<i>B.</i> John Howell's Hybrid	<i>B.</i> 'Jeopardy'	<i>B.</i> 'Frost King'
<i>B.</i> 'Boomer'	<i>B.</i> 'Raspberry Moon'	<i>B.</i> 'Dainty Spray'
<i>B. thiemei</i>	<i>B. listada</i>	<i>B.</i> 'Orange Blossom'
<i>B.</i> 'Kent Brandon'	<i>B.</i> 'Morning Mist'	<i>B.</i> 'Crazy Horse'
<i>B.</i> 'Dan Leitko'	<i>B. valida</i>	<i>B.</i> 'Concord'
<i>B.</i> 'Alpha Gere'	<i>B.</i> 'Freddie'	<i>B.</i> 'Coryden'
<i>B. fiburgensis</i>	<i>B.</i> Mexican spp.	<i>B.</i> 'White Ice'
<i>B.</i> 'Christmas Candy'	<i>B.</i> 'Audrey Brenda'	<i>B.</i> 'Dearest Mae'
<i>B.</i> 'Cracklin Rosie'	<i>B.</i> 'Joyce Leitko'	<i>B.</i> 'Down Home'
<i>B.</i> 'Jamboree'	<i>B.</i> 'Kecemew'	<i>B.</i> 'Gypsy Rose'
<i>B.</i> 'Amethyst'	<i>B.</i> 'Jumbo Jet'	<i>B.</i> 'Hot Tamale'

B. 'Peach Parfait'
B. jussiaeacarpa
B. foliosa
B. U094
B. 'Charles Jaros'
B. cubensis
B. albo-picta
B. barkeri
B. 'Bethlehem Star'
B. brevirimosa
B. 'Black Cauldron'
B. carolineifolia
B. 'Carol Mac'
B. convolvulacea
B. 'Erythrophylla'

B. 'Gunmetal'
B. heracleifolia
B. 'Ricky Minter'
B. Indian sp.
B. 'Yahoo'
B. lanceolata
B. 'Suncana'
B. obscura
B. peltata
B. 'Lady Iris'
B. 'Steve Hurd'
B. heracleifolia var.
nigricans
B. 'Jumbo Jet'
B. 'Texas Star'
B. soli-mutata

B. 'Holley's Holiday'
B. 'Texas Angel'
B. 'Burning Bush'
B. 'Count de Lesseps'
B. U205
B. 'Venona'
B. 'Dunfield'
B. 'White Spring'
B. 'Ebony'
B. 'Withlacoochee'
B. 'Edna Redenbacker'
B. sulcata
B. 'Hal Nuss'
B. 'Snow Cap'
B. U094

After the initial planting has been done, every two weeks volunteers will be tracking the viability of each begonia grown in all the different areas. The trial parameters will include bloom status, landscape appeal, bloom height, foliage width, foliage height, pests/diseases/problems. They will also comment on any other worthwhile description necessary. Planting is expected to start soon after the last frost in North Central Texas, which is usually around March 21 and we will be planting around April 15.

Editor's Notes

When January 1 arrived with time to begin this issue, I had absolutely nothing to put in it. I was afraid you would have to receive an issue with a bunch of blank pages! Desperate, I sent out an email appeal to many people. The results were enough to warm the heart of any editor!

What you see in this issue is a lot of articles by members with soft hearts and major talent! My gratitude and thanks to each of them. I hope the rest of you will be mindful that March 1 and the next issue is coming along with the **need** for more articles.

Did you notice more typos than usual in the last issue? There is a reason! Your editor is moving once again (after all it has been almost five years and it's time!). As the issue was being prepared, I was alternating between getting the house ready for the realtor and packing

things up. I really don't mind moving, but I hate selling a house - it's a dreadful process. And, of course, in the midst of all that we had plumbing problems. We haven't yet sold the house and are at that point of wondering whether we ever will.

We also are not sure where we are going to move as our son is now going to be teaching in Ruston, Louisiana, and we are alternating between the thought of there and returning to the Austin environs. The tax incentives for Texas are strong.

Since the *Begonian* is already done by Fed-Ex and mail, there shouldn't be a problem there. However, it would help a lot if you would give me articles for the May/June issue as almost all my resources are packed up.

After giving away van loads of begonias, I still have a plant room overflowing with plants I am hoping to move if that comes after the weather warms a bit.

~FH

IN THE MAILBOX

by Greg Sytch

In a year that has seen much uncertainty, destruction and disaster around the globe and here in my home state of Florida, begonias have been one haven of relief for me. They have proven resilient.

In September, the eye of two hurricanes came within 15 miles of my home. "Frances" lumbered across Florida in late summer, bringing hurricane-force winds for 24 hours and a foot of rain. It took down my prized Tabebuia tree. "Jeanne" followed three weeks later, much quicker but stronger with a peak gust of 94 mph here in New Port Richey. It took the remaining four shade trees from my back yard. Jeanne also deposited my huge live oak into my house, making it uninhabitable and leaving me with a sun-baked back yard full of begonias. It wasn't pretty.

After two weeks in a motel, I finally was able to scramble and get 70% shade cloth over my two greenhouses left standing. I lost the other two. Begonias had burned, become ripped, some were reduced to tattered messes unrecognizable to even my trained eye. Labels were gone. I started hacking back all the plants, repotting lightly where I could, and placing them under shade. I also gave away countless carloads after each storm to reduce the number I had to care for.

I was one of the lucky ones. An apartment opened up on my street, and I seized it to live in while my house is repaired. This gave me accessibility to my yard and my plants.

Now it is 2005, and I must say I am surprised how the begonias recovered. I had trays of rhizomatous leaves rooted when both hurricanes hit, and I quickly stepped those up into 4" pots to give them space to roam and grow. Canes either hacked back or judiciously pruned by

Jeanne or Frances were bursting with new growth. Larger rhizomatous have started to fill out their pots again. Cuttings rooted. It has been a long road to getting the collection back, but through it all it kept my mind off my "broken" house, as my middle school students refer to my home. The mild fall weather helped, too.

While I will not be able to move back into my home until spring, I have access to my large Florida Room, computer and phone as that area of the house was left untouched. I now have to wear sunscreen to work in my previously shaded yard. Life as I know it has changed, but my plants have been a haven to me through this most difficult time.

Begonias, and plants in general, have been my therapy. My collection is greatly reduced in variety, and my growing areas reduced in half, but taking solace in this tiny piece of heaven is a chance for a new start to re-design my home and make it better than it was before - including my begonia collection.

Q: Cuttings that I take rarely root, or root weakly and take forever to grow. I use a combination of a standard potting soil and perlite, and keep them covered and warm until rooting begins. What can I do to be more successful with cuttings of stems and leaves?

A: Use a better propagating mix! Begonias need an airy, very light mix to root in. Do not use soil. Instead, try a combination similar to this one:

1 part peat moss

2 parts perlite

1 part vermiculite

Moisten the mix well, but do not make it wet. This should allow better air circulation for new roots forming, and the mix is light enough for roots to spread. Keep the air humid, as you have done, but allow some venting. Light should

be bright but never in sunlight. As the weather warms, you can use this formula to start cuttings outside under shade. Use only a container barely large enough to accommodate the cuttings. When I take rhizomatous leaves, I almost always use a 3" pot, square. This is small enough to prevent a moisture buildup. Cane or shrub cuttings go into 4" azalea pots unless they are tall canes, when they go into 4" deeper pots.

HINT: Rhizomatous leaves do not root well as they enter their blooming sea-

son. In northern climates, try not to take leaf cuttings from October through February. In southern climates it would be October through March or April. The plant wants to bloom and not propagate itself. However, if conditions are favorable, leaves will root but sit until conditions and daylight are right for pupping.

Send your questions to Greg Sytch at 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301; Ph: 727-841-9618; GSytch@cs.com

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

March/April 2005

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

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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 cultivar (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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In order to better distribute the load of managing the seed fund amongst the branch members, order processing will be handled by Ed Bates; the maintenance of the seed inventory will continue in the capable hands of Michael Ludwig with assistance from other members of the branch to test germination, to package new seeds for storage, and to fill orders. Please send your order with payment to:

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Continued on page 74

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On the Heredity of Cane-like Begonias

I recently have been studying **Dr. J. Doorenbos** book on *The Sections of Begonia*. In this text, Doorenbos divides more than 1450 named begonia species into 63 Sections, using 63 morphological (physical) characteristics for the differentiation. In a parallel study, I have been reviewing the Astro database for information on the parents of some of our more popular cane-like cultivars. This database encompasses over 3500 cultivars, about 750 of which are cane-like, plants which have been mentioned in the *Begonian* over the past 30+ years. To my surprise, I found that many of the most prolific species used for hybridizations came from the small Section Gaerdtia, with only 11 members. Two other much larger sections, Pritzelia and Knesebeckia with their 122 and 50 species respectively, have contributed too, but Section Gaerdtia appears to have been the most influential. Here is a summary of some of my findings.

Section Gaerdtia consists of eleven species, all from Brazil. The species are *Begonia albo-picta*, *corallina*, *dichroa*, *edmundoi*, *kunthiana*, *lubbersii*, *macduffiana*, *maculata*, *pseudolubbersii*, *salicifolia* and *B. undulata*. All but *B. kunthiana* is known to be in cultivation today. This section was defined in Dr. Doorenbos in his "User friendly key to the American sections" and can be summarized as follows:

1. Female flower with 5 perianth segments (tepals); wings 3, equal or subequal in fruit; styles 3, 2-lobed or forked once, persistent in fruit; locules 3; placental branches 2 per locule, ovules only on the outside of the placenta; fruit pendulous.
2. Male flower with 4 perianth segments; androecium actinomorphic (round shaped, not flat); anthers obovoid, about as long as or shorter than the filaments; connective not extended.
3. Bracteoles spaced from the base of the ovary.

(Note: there are always exceptions such as *B. edmundoi* that may have an unbranched placenta, and *B. dichroa* that has ovules on both sides of the bifid placenta.)

The above description allows these eleven species to be differentiated from all other begonia sections including Section Pritzelia, most members of which come from Brazil, and from Section Knesebeckia with species from Central and South America.

Just as a side note, for the reader to appreciate just how close these three sections are in morphological character, the following differences [shown in Table 1] are all that separate them (again based on Doorenbos definitions of the sections).

Of these differences, the ones most frequently noted are for the female flower where Section Pritzelia has a simple placenta and the other two have bifid (forked) placenta. Similarly, Section Gaerdtia is easily differentiated from Section Knesebeckia because of the lack of ovules (seeds) between the placenta branches.

Table 1. Differences in Three Begonia Sections.

	Gaerdtia	Knesebeckia	Pritzelia
Staminate (male) flowers			
Anther shorter than filament	yes	yes	no
Anther openings lateral	yes	yes	no
Connective extended	no	no	yes
Pistillate (female) flowers			
Placental branches bifid	yes	yes	no
Ovules between placental branches	no	yes	—

Some of the cultivars of note, with at least one parent from Section Gaerdtia are as follows:

Those derived from species X species crosses.

- B. 'Argentea-guttata', Lemoine, 1881, *albo-picta* X *olbia* (Knesebeckia)
- B. 'Di-Erna', Robinson A., 1938, *dichroa* X *coccinea* (Pritzelia)
- B. 'Diclata', Ziesenhenné R., 1969, *undulata* X *dichroa*
- B. 'Lubbergei', Usemura, 1966, *lubbersii* X *dregei* (Augustia)
- B. 'President Carnot', Crozy, 1890, *corallina* X *olbia* (Knesebeckia)

Those derived from cultivar x species crosses:

- B. 'Di-Anna', Robinson AD., 1938, 'Annie Laurie' X *dichroa*
- B. 'Down Home', Stewart, — 'Guy Savard' X *dichroa*
- B. 'Elsie Manahan', Nuss I., — 'Irene Nuss' X *lubbersii*
- B. 'Kenilu', Nuss I., 1978, 'Kentwood' X *lubbersii*
- B. 'Lone Star Aussie', Miller D., 1991, 'Lenore Olivier' X *maculata*
- B. 'Orange Rubra', Woodriff, 1947, *dichroa* X 'Coral Rubra'
- B. 'Russian Sabers', Thompson B., 1990, 'Lenore Olivier' X *albo-picta*

Those derived from cultivar X cultivar crosses, cultivars mostly derived from Section Gaerdtia:

- B. 'Tom Ment', Mentelos T., 1973 'Di-Erna' X 'Orange Rubra'.

Section Knesebeckia. Of the 50 species in this section there are 16 I know to be in cultivation today: *Begonia acerifolia*, *aconitifolia*, *erythrocarpa*, *incarnata*, *kuhlmannii*, *leathermaniae*, *longimaculata*, *ludwigii*, *maynensis*, *michoacana*, *microcarpa*, *olbia*, *platanifolia*, *piurensis*, *serotina*, and *wollnyi*. There undoubtedly are more in cultivation somewhere, but I cannot confirm this. A few of the cane-like cultivars derived from these species include the following:

- 'Superba-Kenzii', Gray EK, 1926 *aconitifolia* X 'Lucerna'

‘Greg Ostaffe’, Lowe P., — *aconitifolia* X *Symbegonia sanguinea*
 ‘Kenlo’, Nuss I., — ‘Elizabeth Lockhart’ X *aconitifolia* seedling
 ‘Kentwood’, Nuss I., 1969 ‘Elizabeth Lockhart’ X *aconitifolia* seedling
 ‘Phantom’ Lee P., 1970 *pseudolubbersii* X *leathermaniae*
 ‘Spook’ Asmussen, 1988 ‘Summerset’ X *leathermaniae*

Section Pritzelia. Of the 122 species listed by Dr J. Doorenbos for this section, there are 46 (almost half) known to be in cultivation today: *Begonia acetosa*, *angularis*, *angulata*, *arborescens*, *bradei*, *coccinea*, *crispula*, *dichotoma*, *dietrichiana*, *echinosepala*, *epipsila*, *falciloba*, *fernando-costae*, *friburgensis*, *gehrtii*, *grisea*, *hispida*, *hookeriana*, *hugelii*, *juliana*, *larorum*, *listada*, *metallica*, *obscura*, *odeteiantha*, *olsoniae*, *oxyphylla*, *paleata*, *paranaensis*, *parilis*, *parvifolia*, *paulensis*, *petasitifolia*, *pulchella*, *ramentacea*, *reniformis*, *reticulata*, *rigida*, *rufa*, *sanguinea*, *scabrida*, *scharffianna*, *scharffii*, *similes*, *solimutata*, *sulcate*, *teuscheri*, and *tomentosa*. Many of the cultivars derived from this sections species are short in stature and branch easily. As a consequence our we tend to classify these as shrub-like for show purposes. A few of the more famous ones are as follows:

‘Magdalene Madsen’, Kusler B., 1973 *listida* X *echinosepala*
 ‘Ginny’, Watchom W., 1971 *echinosepala* X ‘Margaritae’
 ‘Margaritae’, — , — *echinosepala* X *metallica*
 ‘Thurstonii’, Thurston, 1887 *metallica* X *sanguinea*
 ‘Morocco’, — , — *solimutata* X *ulmifolia*
 ‘Eunice Gray’, Nuss I., 1968 *echinosepala* X *venosa*

There are many more, but these will serve as examples.

Chromosome Count. There is another point of interest regarding these three sections. From Doorenbos work we know that Sections Gaerdia and Pritzelia have many, (over 75 percent of species examined) of their members with $2n = 56$ chromosomes. Section Knesebeckia members on the other hand have a diversity of chromosome counts, ranging from 28 to 60 with only two species, *B. ignea* and *olbia* reported to equal 56. Two species of this section, *B. aconitifolia* and *leathermaniae*, have been used for hybridizing the Superba and other tall canes and are reported to have a chromosome count of 60. This small difference in chromosome count undoubtedly has allowed the hybridization to occur, but it tends to be difficult, and tends to give cultivars that are infertile.

B. ‘Sophia Cecile’. As an interesting example of all of the above information, I have traced the background of one of our favorite canes, *B. ‘Sophia Cecile’*, in hopes of gaining a better insight into its character. As we all know, this cultivar is known for its stately height, deeply lobed leaves, unusually beauty, and its resistance to blooming. I found the following information:

‘Sophie Cecile’, Kusler, 1961, *aconitifolia* X ‘Lenore Olivier’
 ‘Lenore Olivier’, Kusler, 1961, *dichroa* X ‘Elaine’

'Elaine', Grant W., 1929 'Lucerna' seedling
'Lucerna', — 1832 *teuscheri* X *coccinea*

Thus we start in 1832 with *B. 'Lucerna'* derived from two species from Section *Pritzelia*, *B. teuscheri* and *B. coccinea*, both of which are known to have a chromosome number $2n = 56$. Then almost 100 years later we have *B. 'Elaine'*, a *B. 'Lucerna'* seedling with an unknown male parent (but maybe self pollinated?). Some 32 years later, *B. 'Elaine'* was crossed with *B. dichroa*, a species from Section *Gaerdtia* also with a chromosome count of $2n = 56$ to give *B. 'Lenore Olivier'*. Thus far all of these plants were probably derived from parents of the same chromosome count so they were both vigorous and freely blooming. They also had a low growing habit, leaves that were entire to subentire (not deeply lobed), all of which is characteristic of the parents, *B. teuscheri*, *coccinea*, and *dichroa*.

The final cross by B. Kusler in 1962, gave us *B. 'Sophie Cecile'* but involved the species *B. aconitifolia*, a plant from Section *Knesebeckia* with a chromosome count of $2n = 60$. This final hybrid in the chain took on many of the characteristics of the female parent, giving deeply lobed leaves and an upright growth habit. Unfortunately, I believe it also brought along with it the strong resistance to blooming that is probably derived from the chromosome mismatch.

This has been a rather long, involved analysis, but one that seems to make sense. It seems to say that if we are dealing with species or with F1 hybrids (species x species crosses), we should be able to predict many of the major characteristics of their hybrids. This is in direct contrast to hybridizations with cultivars that are derived from numerous species. In this later case, the genes are so mixed that many combination of properties will result.

Continued from page 67.

picta var. *rosea* hort. which came out from CA. Both are doing well, but I will have to bring them in out of the brutal Florida sun in a few weeks. Also have to watch the frost warnings. Yes, we have FROST.

In the house I also have a pot which is planted with *B. 'Euphrates'*, *B. 'River Nile'* and what **Charles Jaros** says is called *B. 'Wizard'*. The first 2 came with me and are **Brad Thompson** hybrids and the last one I bought when I was at **Charles Jaros'** home.

We got through the hurricanes just fine even though we had a lot of rain and wind and no electricity in one storm for a few days. Other Florida inhabitants were not so lucky since they lost everything. Had to clear out the lanai just in case limbs

or anything else flew or blew through the screen. All the begonias and other plants had to come in. I have not planted any of the plants in the ground as it gets so very hot here in the summer. I need to experiment such as planting the mother plant and taking cuttings to see how the planted ones do in various spots.

Nancy, as someone who has moved around more than most although never so far, I find that many plants take a couple of years to adjust to such a change. Of course some never do. However, one of the rewards of a move is discovering begonias one could never grow before that will do amazingly well in the new location. It is one of the things that I look forward to in my coming move. All this while I mourn those I can no longer grow.



Here are 3 of **Doug Pridgen's** favorites for Florida that **Nancy Mirgon** may learn to love as well. Top is B. 'Phoe's Cleo', a Tim Anderson hybrid.; right is B. 'Sisquoc', and above B. 'Palm Garten', all grown by **Joyce Pridgen..** All photos are by Doug Pridgen. See next page for more.

Begonias After the Big Move

by Nancy Mirgon

Nancy moved to Florida from California where she was well known as an excellent branch newsletter editor. Her cross country move was an heroic driving effort. Then in Florida she managed while a house was being built. From all this she has now some surviving immigrant begonias and new acquisitions. You may write her at 3728 E. Arbor Lakes Drive, Hernando, FL 34442.

Most of the begonias are on the lanai to protect them from direct sun. When building the house, we had to keep the plants in mind, even choosing a lot that would let us have the lanai "just so" for the plants. Some of the plants do not like the hot weather at all and I have had to throw away a few because of the heat. The ones that made it are doing very well now that the nights are cooler. **Goldie Frosts's** *B. 'Snow Ball'* which I brought here from California and that was given to me by Goldie, was beautiful, but then went into decline and I tossed it (Goldie gave me permission to do so).

On the lanai I have *B. 'Boomer'* and *B. listada* both of which I bought here. I bought *B. 'Looking Glass'* and after pruning and the nights cooling off, it is looking really good. There are 2 unknown rhizomatous on the lanai, one of which I bought here. It is doing really well and one I brought from California which is struggling in the heat. Will see if the cooler nights help it out. I have been able to drive over to *Charles Jaros'* home and was able to buy *B. U388* and some other begonias. **Mary Bucholtz** has given me many cuttings which are also doing well now. She is in Jacksonville and I am on what they call the "Nature Coast" and the weather is quite different. Mary gave me a cutting of *B. 'Joy Porter'* which went into a hang-

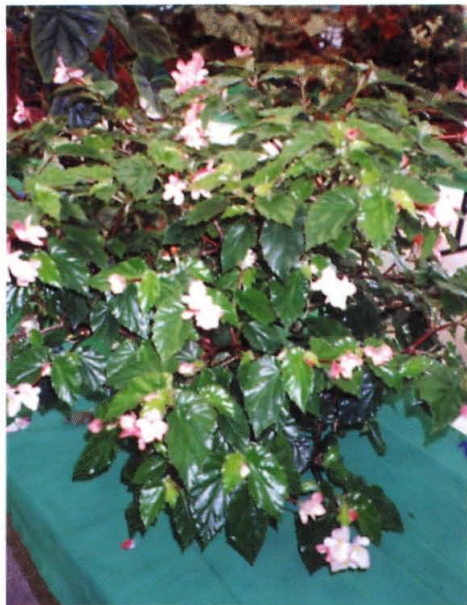
ing basket and came out with me from CA. It has always done well, but in just the last couple of weeks, it has really outperformed itself; must be those cooler nights again! *B. 'Little Miss Mummy'* also came out with me from California; it gets more sun than the others to make the spots raise. I rescued *B. 'Tom Ment'* from the Home Depot garden shop. It was in a box which said "keep warm" and it was a cold, rainy and windy day when I found it. If I do not give it direct sun light, it does well and "greens up" for me.

B. vitifolia is in a large pot on the lanai and is growing large with white blooms all over it. Somehow I rooted it and it got into the pot with *B. 'Irene Nuss'*. It is huge and beautiful. *B. egregia* came with me from CA and is growing large. It is a lovely shade of apple green; it never did very well in CA so I attribute that to a lack of humidity there. I have another 2 coming from CA that I almost parted with, but pruned back and am now so happy that I did not leave them. They are *B. 'Fleecealba'* and *B. venosa*.

I have some terrariums in the house as well. *B. 'Page 13'* which Irene Nuss gave me as a cutting a long time ago and which I brought with me. *B. incisa*, *B. '404'*, *'434'*, and *B. bartonea* were given to me by Mary Bucholtz as cuttings. I also have a *B. versicolor* in a terrarium from CA; it is a very "touchy" plant. I put it into the coolest and lowest light I could find and it thrived until I got the bright idea that it needed some water. I overdid it and almost killed it but now other plants are growing up inside the bubble so I am leaving it alone.

In front of the house, outside, I have 2 hanging baskets, one of *B. 'Dragon Wings'* rescued from Walmart and *B. albo*

Continued on page 65.



In addition to B. 'White Ice' on the cover, here are other of Doug's favorites, all grown by Joyce: top left, B. 'Bunchii', right B. 'Richmondensis', below B. 'Homosassa'. Photos by Doug Pridgen.



Favorite Begonias

by Doug Pridgen
Miami, FL

When Joyce chose to join the Mini Begonia Society, I became her supporting staff of one. We had no begonias, but had both been plant people for many years, growing various things.

I concluded that the best way to build a collection was through propagation. I thought that I could handle that task so I took on the job. Every time I saw something that caught my eye, I asked for a leaf or a cutting. Soon we had a large and ever expanding collection.

Fairly early in the game, I decided that I didn't really care about growing cane begonias. There was just not enough differentiation in foliage shapes and growth habits. Basically, other than leaf coloration, they all looked the same in my eye. I told Joyce this, and I didn't bother propagating canes. As a result, we had few, and still to this day have few. Likewise, I can recognize and name only a limited number of the cane begonias. (I have the same feelings about the Rex class, which we can't grow anyway.)

Conversely, I have always been attracted to the other classes of begonias because I see so much differentiation in leaf shapes and textures and so much difference in growth habit; especially in the stub and rhizomatous classes. As a result, you will find these classes dominate our collection.

This same eye for the begonia (or more accurately, lack thereof) has carried over into my hybridization efforts. I have grown numbers of cane seedlings into very nice plants but they all eventually end up in the garbage bin. I simply can't find them to be any different in my eye than any other cane that already exists. The same in most cases is true for my hybrid-

ization efforts of other classes. Unless it is truly distinctive (which is rare), to the trash bin it goes. I have had some very distinctive looking prospects, but in final analysis have decided they were too similar to something that already exists so they are history.

We grow a fairly large number of species. But again, the ones we keep are more unusual/distinctive. If it has the typical green leaf/white bloom/one more begonia look, it doesn't stay around long.

Bottom line: I don't know that I have "A" favorite begonia. My favorites are all those very distinctive things that are usually the "harder to grow" items. Many of these begonias simply don't like the Florida climate and/or our growing conditions. I have tried dozens of times to grow some of them anyway, all to no long-term avail. I won't name anything a favorite which we can't grow, but there would be a number of begonias on the list if I did.

Species that do well for us that we have grown for years and which I would have to call "favorites" include: *B. maculata* var. *wightii*; *sceptrum* [syn. for *B. aconitifolia*]; thick-Stemmed *B. malabarica*; rhizomatous *B. coriacea*, *tayabensis* (bronze), U-344, U-360, *raja*, *glandulosa* (dayii), *heracleifolia*, *speculata* [?]; distinctive *B. herbacea*, *attenuata* [syn. for *B. lanceolata*], *nigratarum*; semi-tuberous various *dregei* varieties; shrub *B. U-002*, *U-168*, *U-402*, *egregia*, *juliana* (U-049), *peltata*, *valida*; trailing *B. thelmae*, *polygonoides*

I adopted the *B. coriacea*, *tayabensis* (bronze), U-334 and U-360 for the save our species effort. If anyone desires a start of one of these and will let me know, I will be happy to send a leaf (if I don't receive 2000 requests at the same time).

Some of the hybrids which we have continually grown for many years as our “standbys” are: Cane *B.* ‘Lana’, ‘White Ice’ (See cover photo); thick-Stemmed *B.* ‘Boomer’; rhizomatous *B.* ‘Palomar Prince’, ‘Wild Pony’, ‘Cowardly Lion’, ‘Black Coffee’, ‘Spanish Moss’, ‘Sisquoc’, ‘Phoe’s Cleo’, ‘Mirage’, ‘Passing Storm’, ‘Bunchii’; distinctive *B.* ‘Little Bro. Montgomery’, ‘Brown Jewel’; shrub *B.* ‘Withlacoochee’, ‘Medora’, ‘Homosassa’, ‘Cubinfo’, ‘Victoria Woods’, ‘Concord’, ‘Richmondensis’; trailing *B.* ‘Morocco’, ‘Moly Poly’. Of course, we have a much larger collection than the above, but I would call all of these my “favorites”. And, I surely forgot many more!!!

Oh, No! My Begonia Froze!

**by Kathy Goetz,
Willamina, Oregon**

Oh no, you left your favorite begonia outdoors and the temperature dropped below freezing last night. It looks terrible. What should you do, throw it away or try to save it? Another possible scenario is that your greenhouse heat failed for some reason and the temperature dropped to below freezing. Your plants look like smelly mush. Is there any hope? The answer is, yes there is hope. Begonias can occasionally tolerate temperatures that fall below freezing. Survival depends on a number of factors including the variety of begonia, how low the temperature, how long the plant is exposed to the cold, and whether it was hardened off ahead of time. Let’s start with the last, hardening off, because that is the one thing that needs to happen first.

All plants, including begonias, will tolerate extreme temperatures better if they have a chance to acclimate to cooler temperatures over a period of time. If there is any chance your begonias will experience very cold or very hot temperatures, try to let them adjust ahead of time. In the fall, let them stay outdoors or in a cool greenhouse so they are comfortable at lower temperatures. I let my greenhouse gradually drop to the low 40s F at night in the fall. It saves me the cost of heating to a higher temperature and also hardens the plants to the possibility of getting even colder. If a plant has been allowed to harden off slowly, it will be less shocked by a sudden drop in temperature. The same applies to summer heat. Try to let them warm up in the spring and become accustomed to some hotter temperatures. This way, if they are exposed to even higher temperatures, they have a better chance of survival.

Assuming that the temperature has not dropped too low or stayed down too long, many begonias will survive a freeze. Last winter, the power failed in my greenhouse for 24 hours and the outdoor temperatures dropped into the mid 20s. Although I did have major damage, a surprising number of my plants survived. I found that, as I expected, most of the cane-like begonias died back to the ground and re-sprouted from their roots. The bigger the plants, the more likely they were to survive. I also had a number of shrub-like begonias that simply lost their leaves, which they re-grew in the spring. Most surprising were the number of rhizomatous and rex begonias that survived this experience. They went dormant but many put up new leaves in the spring.

If your plants experience a temperature trauma, here is what you should do. First, clean off all the obviously dead leaves and stems. Check the rhizome on rhizomatous and rex varieties. If the rhizome is solid and firm, there is a good chance the plant will recover. If it is mushy, you might as well toss the plant. Keep your damaged plants in a cool, dry place for awhile to let them recover. Remember, they are not growing tops so they don't need much water and no fertilizer. Once they start to grow again, move them back to a normal location. Then water and fertilize and wait. Given a chance, many begonias will survive a period of temperatures that are well below their desired range. The secret is to let them recover slowly, at their own pace. Don't throw away plants just because they have lost their stems and leaves but don't treat them like healthy, growing plants either. It may take time but, if you are patient, you may be surprised by the hardiness of your favorite begonia.

Continued from page 51.

and some of the species in sect. *Weilbachia* like *B. vestita* C.DC. In both countries, begonias from sect. *Gireoudia* predominate.

Most begonias in Mexico and Central America have narrow distributions and may be known from only one country, or a few provinces, departments or Mexican states. Only four species that grow in Mexico also occur in South America: *B. nelumbiifolia*, *B. sericoneura*, *B. fischeri* Schrank and *B. glabra* Aubl. The first two species are the most widely distributed species in sect. *Gireoudia*. *Begonia nelumbiifolia*, with its conspicuous, large peltate leaves is very abundant at lower elevations in Veracruz, Oaxaca and Chiapas in Mexico and in Guatemala, but has only rarely been collected in Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia. One of the more common species in Central America is *B. sericoneura*. Although unreported from Veracruz prior to our collections, we now know that *B. sericoneura* ranges down the eastern part of Mexico (Veracruz, Oaxaca, Tabasco and Chiapas), through Central America and into western South America where it was originally known only from Colombia. Some years ago, **Thelma O'Reilly** asked me if *B. sericoneura* possibly could be found in Ecuador. At that point, I'd never seen a collection from there, but, subsequently, I was sent a dried specimen for identification from Ecuador which was indeed *B. sericoneura*.

Begonia glabra and *B. fischeri* have the widest distributions of all the species occurring in Mexico and Central America; both species range as far south as Bolivia. *Begonia glabra* is a vine-like herb that grows up the bases of trees and establishes on roadbanks in wet environments. In Costa Rica and Panama, we've frequently encountered it in cloud forests. *Begonia fischeri* has short stems, attractive small leaves and not many flowers, a species probably interesting only to a taxonomist; however, it is notable for being one of the few begonias that we collected in extremely wet regions within Costa Rica—areas that regularly receive an average of 23 feet of rain a year!

At first glance the plethora of begonia encountered in Mexico and Central America might seem unusual. However, given the diverse climate, ecology and topography of the region, the abundance and variety of *Begonia* species is really not unexpected.

Jimenez, R. and B. G. Schubert. 1997. Begoniaceae. In: V. Sosa, ed., *Flora of Veracruz*, fasciculo 100: 1-70.



The Vietnamese hairy begonia, Begonia sizemoreae Kiew. Photo by Serena Lee.

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Begonia U388 Gets a New Name
Ruth Kiew
Singapore Botanic Gardens
1 Cluny Road
Singapore

When I visited **Tim Anderson's** Palm Hammock Orchid Estate, Miami, in 2002, I was bowled over by his fine collection – begonias galore all bursting with vigor and in every shape and size including many bizarre and very unusual ones. One that caught my eye was an especially elegant foliage begonia with beautifully variegated leaves. Its almost round leaves with a heart-shaped base are basically jade green with a blackish hue broken by a broad central silvery grey-green band. An additional attractive feature is the fine tracery of deep crimson veins in the band around the margin. In the same way as the eyelash begonias, its leaves are conspicuously fringed by long, white hairs.

Tim told me it was a species collected by **Mary Sizemore** from Vietnam. Having been working on Vietnamese begonia, I immediately knew it was a species new to science. A really exciting one too as, in my opinion, it rivals the Rex cultivars.

Compared with many of the wild foliage begonias from Asia, it has proved easy to grow and flowers regularly. Its flowers are a rosy pink. Indeed, it appears to prefer a cooler climate than ours in Singapore, as Mary Sizemore's plants have leaves twice the size of ours reaching about 26 cm long and 16.5 cm wide. It was collected from the Ba Vi National Park about 80 km west of Hanoi, which experiences cooler winters than we have in Singapore.

Understandably it is popular with begonia enthusiasts and **Tom Keepin** drew attention to it and how to grow it in the *Begonian* (2003, page 128). It has now reached U.K. where it was exhibited at last

year's Chelsea Flower Show under the name of the 'Vietnamese Hairy Begonia', an appropriate name as not only are the edges of the leaves hairy but there are long hairs (about 10 mm long) scattered on the upper surface of the leaf. It was illustrated in *The Garden* (2004, 129: 515), the Royal Horticulture Society magazine, as one of the interesting plants on display in the Show.

In 2004, J. Golding wrote an article in the *Begonian* (71: 154-156), in which he identified U388 as a Chinese species, *Begonia longiciliata*. However, it is obviously not this species as the Chinese plant is not variegated and differs in other ways too.

Recently, I finally described it in the *Gardens Bulletin Singapore* (2004, 56: 95-100) as *Begonia sizemoreae* Kiew in honor of its intrepid collector.

It is a significant addition to the foliage begonias already in cultivation. Its striking variegation, particularly the fine tracery of its deep crimson veins against the jade green leaf is an attractive feature not seen in Rex cultivars. Indeed, this new begonia has an elegance that makes Rex begonias look rather coarse. It certainly deserves to be more widely grown.

Welcome Ruth Kiew as a new writer for the Begonian. We hope it is only the first of many articles to come. Those in Florida, who heard her speak, loved her and we hope that she can make it to one of our conventions so that we can all meet her. We want to hear more about her work there in Singapore.

Continue from page 60.

Please continue to send comments, suggestions, or complaints to:

Edgar A. Bates

2908-C Luciernaga Street

Carlsbad CA 92009-5914

e-address: epb888@adelphia.net

Thank you **Jackie Davis** and **Thelma O'Reilly** for the following additions to the seed fund inventory:

B. friburgensis Brade – rare \$2.00

B. grandis Dryander

Descriptions For The Seed Fund List for 2005

Descriptions to accompany all the seeds in the Master List cannot be published in a single issue of *The Begonian*. Each issue will have descriptions of the new additions and selected other entries in the Master List for 2005. For descriptions of specific items contact Ed Bates at the address above.

***B. friburgensis* Brade** [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*) Rhizomatous with red stems; leaves orbicular, folded and resembling cockscombs when young, thick, leathery, dark glossy green above, red underneath; flowers white and pink in compact clusters in winter.

***B. grandis* Dryander** subsp. *evansiana* (Andrews) Irmscher [China] (Sect. *Diploclinium* II) Erect stems to 1 foot; medium green leaves with purple veins narrowing towards pointed tips; bright pink flowers in summer; bulbils that form in the leaf axils drop to the ground to grow new plants in the spring. This species is quite hardy. The tubers in the ground can withstand temperatures below freezing for an extended period if well mulched. Cultivated variety 'Alba' has white flowers..

B. albo-picta W. Bull [Brazil] (Sect. *Gaertdia*) Shrubby, branched stems. Two inch elliptic-lan-

ceolate leaves glossy green with silvery white spots, short petioled. Small greenish-white flowers in summer.

***B. boliviensis* A. DeCandolle** [Bolivia, Argentina] (Sect. *Barya*), Tuberous, stems to 2-3 ft., erect at first then drooping, branching, succulent, green, slightly hairy; leaves 3-5 in. long, lanceolate to narrow-ovate, acuminate, serrate; flowers cinabar-red, fuchsia-like, usually in pairs on short axillary peduncles in summer.

***B. cardiocarpa* Liebmann** [Nicaragua] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Thick-stemmed rhizomatous, becoming erect with age; leaves large, green, puckered, coriaceous, often marginally reddish; lower surface darker green shading to red at the margins, palmately 7-8 veined, petioles 2-8 in. long; many flowered large cymes high above the leaves, white to pink.

***B. carolineifolia* Regel** [Mexico, Guatamala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Large erect rhizome; large palmately parted leaves on long petioles; flowers large, pink, with dark pink spots; late winter to early spring.

***B. cinnabarina* W. J. Hooker** [Bolivia] (Sect. *Eupetalum*). Low growing tuberous to 18 inches; green leaves; cinnabar red single blossoms; summer, said to be fragrant.

***B. coccinea* W. J. Hooker** [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*). Stems erect, 3-4 ft, branched, succulent, glabrous; obliquely ovate to oblong leaves, 4-6 in., thick, green with wavy red margins, serrate; coral red wax-like flowers in pendulous racemes on red peduncles; summer. **NOTE:** Some of the *B. coccinea* seeds offered have been described by the grower as a basket type. Earlier descriptions of *B. coccinea* from Brazil are of a tall erect plant.

***B. crassicaulis* Lindley** [Guatamala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Erect rhizome; glossy, dark green, palmately lobed handsome leaves drop in late winter; blooms on bare rhizome; leaf out after the blooms have faded.

B. cubensis, Hasskarl [W.I., Cuba] (Sect. *Begonia*) Shrub-like; dainty small rippled green leaves; white to pink blossoms in spring and

summer.

***B. cucullata* Willdenow var. *arenosicola* Smith & Schubert** [Brazil] (Sect. *Begonia*). Succulent stems to 3 ft., green, little branched; green leaves to 4 in.; white flowers much of the year. Variety *arenosicola* is distinguished by the narrowly elliptic leaves, rounded at the tip, narrow unequally cuneate at the base; and large subentire roundly obtuse stipules.

***B. dichroa* T. A. Sprague** [Brazil] (Sect. *Gaerdtia*) Grows on an erect stem, half drooping, to 2 ft.; has short, reddish green petioles, glabrous wavy dark green leaves and fragrant orange flowers most of the year.

***B. dipetala* Graham** [India] (Sect. *Haagea*) The name means two petalled. Two feet tall. Thick stemmed, rigidly erect, brown, rarely branched. Leaves medium, ovate-pointed, double toothed, green with scattered bristly hairs, red beneath. Large, soft white to pink fragrant flowers in pendulous clusters. Collected in the Bombay area; has annual rainfall over 80 in. from July to October; sandy loam; temp. 68°F—86°F.

***B. dominicalis* A. de Candolle** [Lesser Antilles, Dominica] (Sect. *Begonia*) Erect shrub to 4 ft.; leaves bare, medium green, entire, oval with long tips, to 10 in.; inflorescence dense with hundreds of very small greenish-white flowers.

***B. dregei* Otto & Dietrich** [South Africa] (Sect. *Augustia*) Stem with enlarged caudex, sometimes referred to as semi-tuberous, 1-2 ft.; small maple-leaf-like leaves; blooms early spring to late fall; very subject to mildew.

B. dregei syn. *partita* Leaf lobes longer and narrower than typical *B. dregei*

***B. echinosepala* Regel** [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*) Two foot tall shrub with small, elongated, narrow, serrated ribbon like leaves, gracefully arching stems; fragrant white flowers with white hairs on tepal reverse. The name means prickly sepal, sometimes called "peach tree begonia"

B. echinosepala v. *elongatifolia*

***B. edmundoi* Brade** [Brazil] (Sect. *Gaerdtia*); shrubby to 2 ft., dark erect thin brittle stems; dark green upper and red under leaves, dentate margins; large flowers white with pink margins.

***B. egregia* N. E. Brown** [Brazil] (Sect. *Tetrachia*) Thick-stemmed, stem 2-4 ft.; leaves peltate, 6-11 in. long 2-3 in. wide, lanceolate, somewhat cupped, brittle, pebbled, grey-green; many white flowers in winter; ovary 4-celled, 4-winged.

***B. fischeri* Schrank** [N. & S. America] (Sect. *Begonia*) A highly variable shrub with many varieties. Var. *fischeri* has erect red stems to 2 ft.; medium, puberulent green leaves, red flushed on back; palmately veined; pink blossoms and winged carpels throughout the year. Very prolific.

***B. foliosa* HB&K** [Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela] (Sect. *Lepsia*) A shrub having many-branched floppy stems to 3 ft., slender, branched, arching; leaves to 1 in. long, many, densely 2-ranked on short, shaggy branchlets, ovate-oblong, slightly toothed, dark green to bronzy green; red stems and petioles; small pinkish-white flowers from spring to autumn.

***B. hydrocotylifolia* Otto ex W. J. Hooker** [Mexico] (Sect. *Gireouda*) Hairy, small rhizome; leaves 1-2 in. long, orbicular to cordate, glossy green above, red underneath; short petioled; pink flowers on rosy-red peduncles to 1 ft. long in late winter to summer.

***B. johnstonii* Oliver ex J. D. Hooker** [East Africa,] (Sect. *Rostrobegonia*) Thick-stemmed, branched, trailing, succulent, pale green streaked with red; leaves glossy, pale green, 2 by 4 in., crenately lobed, basal lobes overlapping, with red scalloped margins, paler underneath with soft hairs along veins; large pink flowers in few flowered clusters on arching peduncles; in spring and summer.

Note that you should
now send your
seed orders to
Ed Bates
at the address shown at the
top of page 74.

ABS Convention 2005

Dallas, Texas

The combined membership of the Texas Begonia Clubs would like to extend a warm invitation to all the members of the American Begonia Society to mark their calendars on the 18-22 May, 2005 in order to share fellowship and the love of begonias at the American Begonia Society Convention to be held in conjunction with the Southwest Region Get-together on those days.

The convention will be held in Dallas, Texas at the Embassy Suites Hotel which is only a short distance from both Love Field and the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. More information about transportation from the airport to the hotel will be included in packets.

We of the Dallas Area Branch, which is the sponsor of the 2005 Convention along with the Mae Blanton Branch membership in Fort Worth and with the other branches in Texas are working diligently to plan an interesting group of lectures, field trips, and fun activities for all participants.

We are anticipating speakers from all areas of interest in the begonia world, as well as from different areas of the United States and abroad. Plants are being gathered for the plant sale and we hope to have some of the more unique, unusual, and rare plants available for people to add to their collections.

We are looking forward to seeing old and new friends and we know that all who join us will not be disappointed. For more information please look in **packets to be distributed to members in February 2005**. And for all further questions or comments please feel free to contact Leora Henthorne, Show Committee Chairperson, at leorahenthorne7@msn.com

Look For Great Things in Dallas, Texas May 18-22, 2005!

**And Please Remember to Get Your Nominations for 6
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(See Pages 12-23 of the January/February 2005 issue.)**

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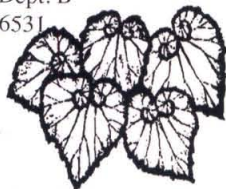
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COMING EVENTS

April 2, 2005: Barkley Branch Exhibition and Sale at Will Rogers Garden Center, Oklahoma, City, Oklahoma, 8:30 to 4:00.

April 28-May 1: Miami, FL Begonia Society Show and Sale. Note these are newly revised dates. For more information, contact Joyce Pridgen at 305 378-4570.

May 18-22, 2005 ABS Convention 2005, Dallas, Texas. See page 76 for more information and the March/April issue for full details.

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.

Due date for articles for the May/June *Begonian* is March 1, 2005; announcements due by March 15.

And the Editor *needs* articles!

The Begonian

Editor: Freda M. Holley, 2015 Elvin Dr.
Stillwater, OK 74074. Ph: 405-385-0484.
E-mail: fmholley@cox.net

Consulting Editor: Jan Brown.

Nomenclature Editor: Jack Golding.
33 Ingram Drive, Monroe Township, NJ
08831-4641, E-mail: JGBEGNOM@aol.com

Quick Tips: Dianna Wilkerson, 15356
Pheasant Run, Choctaw, OK 73020, E-mail:
begoniafiend@cox.net

Advertising Staff:

Display Ads: Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452,
Tonkawa, OK 74653, Ph: 580-628-5230.
Email: geneann@cableone.net

Plant Society Ads; Holiday Greetings:
Wanda Macnair, 59 Walker St., Cambridge,
MA, 02138, Ph: 617-876-1356, Email:
wmacnair@msn.com

Send inquiries about address changes, missing copies, dues, subscription and circulation to Arlene Ingles, 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617,
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E-mail: ingles@cox.net

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President...Howard Berg, 16 Highview Terr., New Canaan, CT 06840; Ph: 203-966-7693; email: howber@optonline.net

Past President.....Morris Mueller, 163 Hartnell Place, Sacramento, CA 95825; Ph: 916-927-4921

1st Vice-President.....Janet Brown, 7825 Kentwood Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90045-1150; Ph: 310-670-4471; JBBrown3@aol.com

2nd Vice-President...Mary Sakamoto, 9682 Featherhill Dr., Villa Park, CA 92861; Ph: 714-637-8787; m.sakamoto@worldnet.att.net

Secretary.....Richard Macnair, 59 Walker St., Cambridge, MA 02138; Ph: 617-876-1356; rmacnair@msn.com

Treasurer.....Carol Notaras, 2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123; Ph: 415-931-4912; E-mail: cnotaras@juno.com

Appointed Chairmen and Directors

Audit.....Paul Tsamtsis, 1630 F St., Sacramento, CA 95814-1611

Awards.....Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653, Ph: 580-628-5230. Email: geneann@cableone.net

Back Issues.....Donna Marsheck, 5218 Brock Dr., Bartlesville, OK 74006, Ph: 918-333-1587, dmarsheck@aol.com

Ballot Counting.....Ingeborg Foo, 1050 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92083; Ph: 760-724-4871

Book Store.....Cheryl Lenert, 13014 Chavile, Cypress, TX 77429, Ph: 281-897-0155; lenert@flash.net

Branch Relations.....Mary Bucholtz, 1560 Lancaster Terrace #1008 Jacksonville, FL 32204; Ph: 904-353-9111

Business Manager.....Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653; Ph: 580-628-5230; geneann@cableone.net

Conservation.....Bill Claybaugh, 1702 Country Club Dr., Crosby, TX 77532, Ph: 281-328-5133; absastro@hotmail.com

Convention Advisor.....Mary Sakamoto, 9682 Featherhill Dr., Villa Park, CA 92861; Ph: 714-637-8787; m.sakamoto@worldnet.att.net

Convention Chair: Michael Ludwig, 6040 Upland St., San Diego, CA, 2114-1933

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

Grants Committee: Mary Sakamoto, 9682 Featherhill Dr., Villa Park, CA 92861; Ph: 714-637-8787; m.sakamoto@worldnet.att.net

Internet Editor...Kathy Goetz, 8005 Rowell Creek Rd., Willamina, Oregon 97396, PH: 503-87905652; email kgoetz@begonias.com

HistorianJeanne Jones, 1415 Via Margarita, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274-2143; Ph: 310-378-7527

Horticultural Correspondent....Gregory Sytch, 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301; Ph: 727-841-9618; GSytch@cs.com

Judging...Maxine Zinman, 2770 Kimble Rd., Berryville, VA 22611; Ph: 540-955-4555; begonia@visuallink.com

Members-at-Large...Sandy Boyd, 5 Walnut Circle, Chico, CA 95973; Ph: 530-891-5760

Membership...Arlene Ingles, 157 Monument, Rio Dell, CA 95562-1617; Ph: 707-764-5407; ingles@humboldt1.com

Nomenclature....Michael Ludwig, 6040 Upland St., San Diego, CA 92114-1933, begoniagrowing@hotmail.com

Parliamentarian...Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK, Ph: 580-628-5230, geneann@cableone.net

Public Relations.....Virginia Jens, 3126 SW Curcuma, Port St. Lucie, FL 34953; Ph: 772-873-8270, virginiajens@hotmail.com

Research.....Bruce Boardman, P.O. Box 69, Bluff Dale, TX 76433; Ph: 254-728-3485; bcbnt@lipan.net

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

Seed Fund.....Michael Ludwig, 6040 Upland St., San Diego, CA 92114-1933, Ph: 619-262-7535; seedfund@cox.net

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