

*The*  
**Begonian**

September/October 2005

# The Begonian

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Publication of the American Begonia Society

## American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

### Aims and Purposes

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

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

To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

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

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

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

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## Cover

**Front:** The Conservatory at the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden was lush during our convention visit and there we saw *Begonia arborescens* Raddi var. *oxyphylla* (Syn. *B. oxyphylla*).

**Back:** This gorgeous watercolor by Wendy Gibbs shows just one reason you will want the book by Ruth Kiew described on page 191.

# In This Issue

ABS Convention/Southwest Region Get-together 2005 “Begonia Madness” brought many of us who are mad for begonias to Dallas in May for an outstanding meeting. Inside find all about the great Show, the tours, the seminars and more.

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## Quick

Check your mailing label.  
If it reads  
**200511 or 200512**, your  
membership is about to expire.

Please renew!  
We don't want to lose you.



## President's Message (Final, last, ultimate!)

The 2005 convention in Dallas was great. We thank the Southwest Region for coming to our rescue and holding the national convention along with their regional get together. The tours were interesting; the show was outstanding with an extraordinary display of terrarium grown begonias. The seminars continued the trend of recent conventions with speakers who contribute to our knowledge of begonias. Some of the informal discussions among attendees tended to be in-depth sharing of information about various species, reflecting a growing interest in begonia research among many of our members. We look forward to the 2006 convention in Miami and the continuing trend of combining how-to seminars with interesting speakers who can expand our understanding, appreciation and knowledge of begonias.

**Mark Tebbitt's** book, which will be out this fall, will further our knowledge of species and will provide a very useful and easily used guide to how to place species in the sections of begoniaceae. The prepublication numbers at Amazon and Wal-Mart indicate a good demand for the book. Wal-Mart is offering a significant discount for prepublication orders if you haven't reserved yours yet.

**Ruth Kiew's** book, "Begonias of Peninsular Malaysia" is chock full of beautiful photos of begonias of that region as well as botanical illustrations and descriptions. If you want to purchase it, it is available [see page 190] on the internet at [www.nhpborneo.com](http://www.nhpborneo.com). It is an outstanding book and it has caused a fair amount of discussion about various species and nomenclature as any such book will. The book is unique among all the begonia books I have seen. As a book collector, I know it will sell at a premium on E-bay in

the future, so buy one, read it, take care of it and make a profit someday.

**Ed Bates, Mary Sakamoto and Jan Brown** have done a great job in solving our seed fund problems. It is my belief that there are no more unsatisfied orders and disappointed buyers who have not contacted us. So, order with confidence and if you have problems e-mail Ed, but I seriously doubt that there will be problems. If you can, donate seeds to the seed fund so we can all expand our collections we are growing. The Clayton M. Kelly is one of the premier benefits of membership in the society and we apologize for letting it get off track.

This is my last president's letter and I would like to mention some items we need to continue to work on. First, and foremost, is an active program to try to attract new members. ABS has adopted a defeatist attitude toward member recruitment but if you look at our needs, 500 new members would assure our survival while 1,000 would allow us to expand our support of begonia research and conservation. I believe our website is a key element of our recruitment efforts. Big job? Sure, but from a practical point of view, assuming there are 125 million adults in the U. S. it is only .00008% of the available pool, so broad demographic characteristics such as people are too busy, every one has two jobs and the like aside, potential members are there, so let's find them. Secondly, we need to broaden our leadership core, which has become a little too dynastic and recruit some new faces and geographically diverse members for our future leadership. Finally, we need to consider some structural changes to our organization that will help us focus our efforts and operate more efficiently. As I have said in the past, our board of directors has to have better defined duties and the 72 "director" votes

*Continued on page 194..*



## 2006 AWARDS - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

ANN SALISBURY, AWARDS CHAIRMAN

They are the American Begonia Society's "Magnificent Seven". You have an opportunity to make 7 nominations for 2006

We will be joining together in Miami, FL. and will present the most prestigious and honored awards that the society hands out to its members. All of these awards recognize the outstanding service and achievements that have been done for the national organization by its members. You, the membership, are responsible for making the nominations. Please take the time now to write up your nomination. The nomination must contain the name of the award, the recipient's name and reasons that make them or the plant eligible for the award.

There are many worthy members that are possible winners for these awards. Some have become less active but should be honored with one of these awards. If you have nominated someone in the past and they have not won, please nominate them again. The committee may present only one of each of the awards each year.

I must receive these nominations by January 3, 2006. Remember the Board has approved email nominations for this year. Please mail all nominations to:

**Ann Salisbury, Awards Chairman**

**P. O. Box 452**

**Tonkawa, Ok. 74653**

**Email: [geneann@sbcglobal.net](mailto:geneann@sbcglobal.net)**

### AWARD CRITERIA:

The **Herbert P. Dyckman for Service** is presented to a member who has rendered long-term or very out-standing service for the American Begonia Society above and beyond the normal duties of a member or officer.

The **Eva Kenworthy Gray Award** is given for contributing original material toward helping the rank and file members further their study of begonias.

The **Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor** is for a begonia cultivar that has been released for at least five years and no more than fifteen. This hybrid must be registered with the Nomenclature Department and widely distributed, and the originator of the begonia must be a member of the American Begonia Society.

The **Rudolf Ziesenhenn**e Award is presented to the current or retired editor of the the Begonian for the following reasons: **1.** For the outstanding use of contributions of members and others in The Begonian to execute the Aims and Purposes of the American Begonia Society. **2.** For leading and strengthening the membership in their study of Begonias through the excellence of editorship.

The **Tim O'Reilly Award** is given to a spouse who contributes so much to our society and does not grow begonias.

The **Marge Lee Award** is given to a person who contributes something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members.

The **Gene Salisbury Award** is given to a grower who exemplifies the very best in cultural practice, but who also bring to us by their careful work the new species and

Continued on page 174.

## ABS Convention & SWR Get-Together

### *Begonia Madness*

May 18-22, 2005 - Dallas, Texas

by Charles Henthorne

*It is not often that we get a view of the convention from the Show Chairpersons - they are usually too exhausted! But with weeks to recover, Charles Henthorne here gives us a unique view of the convention which gives us new insights into the event.*

Early on the morning of Tuesday, May 17, 2005, we of the Dallas Area Branch descended on the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dallas. We were accompanied by our friends from the Mae Blanton Branch who were there to assist us. We were all bubbling with excitement, anticipation, and a certain degree of trepidation. All this to prepare for the beginning of the ABS 2005 "Begonia Madness" convention.

Plants were coming into the plant sales room at a rapid pace ready to be placed for the members' only plant sale. **Jeanie Dinsmore**, along with her group of helpers, worked diligently to prepare a plant sales room that would be tempting to all who walked through the door. We also wanted to offer the widest range of old and new varieties of begonias to the participants that were, at that very moment, heading to Dallas from all areas of the United States.

Leora and I were moving all the goodies into the hospitality room, as well as donated items for our new silent auction, which was, to be held in the hospitality room. Along with our setting up the hospitality room we were looking into the show display area, assisting in the plant sale room, assisting in setting up the registration table, and doing everything that was necessary to get the convention off to a good start. With very few, if any, of us

having been involved in running a national convention, we wanted to make sure that there were no loose ends and that everything would flow smoothly throughout the convention.

By noon, early arrivals began to show up at the registration desk and the fun began in the hospitality room. Bidders started to sign up for the silent auction and bidding started immediately on some of the fantastic items donated by the more than 20 donors. By the end of the convention over 65 people had signed up as bidders and over 40 items had been sold on the auction. All in all it was a very successful new addition to the national convention and we hope to see it happen again in the future.

On Thursday plants streamed into the show area and it rapidly became apparent that, instead of a small show, we were going to have a large display of show plants. We had participation from all areas of Texas as well as Oklahoma, California, Louisiana, and Massachusetts.

Our first concern was that the show would be small so **Leora** and I had brought many of our terrariums, as well as photographs, to make sure that we would have a good full display available for viewing. We need not have been concerned. Leora and the placement committee comprised of **Don Miller** and **Charles McGough**, assisted by **Pi Stone** worked until nearly 2:00 a.m. Friday morning. This was in order to prepare the plants for judging on Friday morning.

On Friday, bright and early, at 8:00 a.m. the judges and clerks met in the show room in order to receive their final instructions from acting judging chair **Tom**



**Keepin.** The three teams of judges pulled out their magnifying glasses, put on their walking shoes, and started to do what they do best. After many hours of slow careful deliberation the judges reached their final conclusions. All score cards were handed in to Lenora by 11:00 a.m. and the judges proceeded to eat lunch and enjoy each others company.

By this time on Friday there had been tours on Wednesday and Thursday and the judges and other members were anxious to go on the tour scheduled for Friday afternoon. All of our tours were led by our tour guide, **Jean Harris**, who did a fantastic job throughout the convention. We watched the tour bus loading with excited, laughing people, anxious for another trip and looking forward to the upcoming members' only plant sale scheduled for Friday evening. In the afternoon the awards were placed with the winning show plants.

Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. lines started to develop at the plant sale room door. Anticipation was high and lots of fun and laughter were exhibited during the waiting period before the doors were opened. When the doors were thrown open at 8:00 p.m. before the hoards of excited buyers, the first mass of people were treated to wondrous views. There were lots of new and exciting hybrids by **Brad Thompson**. Lots of terrarium plants donated by **Dick** and **Wanda Macnair** and **Charles** and **Leora Henthorne**. Species from Viet Nam were donated by **Gene** and **Ann Salisbury**. Along with these donors there were many plants donated by **Tim Anderson**, the Astro Branch in Houston, and many others. The plant sale On Friday evening was a huge success with many plants sold. People walked out of the door clutching their new additions close to their heart and with big smiles on their faces. Many then proceeded to the show

room for a sneak peak into the wonderful display and all of the winners. There were many surprises, the main one of which was the best of show award winner, *Begonia* 'Fairy Wing', exhibited by Leora and Charles Henthorne. It is always exciting to see what the judges selections are in our shows. By the end of the evening all retired to their rooms to dream of, what else, begonias.

With Saturday's arrival came anticipation and excitement for the upcoming, always new and exciting ABS and SWR board meetings. The business day started out with a somewhat crowded luncheon filled with fellowship and lots of discussion about current events in the begonia world. This was followed by the ABS board meeting where some new and innovative ideas were presented by the board. The new ABS officer nominees were introduced and business was concluded in its usual efficient style. This was followed by the SWR board meeting where new officers were presented and took their places at the head table. Again business was conducted as usual and the meeting was adjourned after some lively discussion on matters before the floor.

Saturday evening the ABS convention was well attended and at that time we also had door prizes and a small silent auction. **Rekha Morris** was one of the main targets of **Mike Flaherty's** wonderful humor. His position as master of ceremonies led to a fun and laughter filled evening. The cultural awards as well as the other major awards were presented at that time. There were approximately 21 cultural awards with the highest score going to Leora and Charles Henthorne for their *B. prismatocarpa* 'Variegation' with 99 points. The showing is sharing and sweepstakes awards also went to Charles and Leora. The people's choice award was won by *B. crassiscaullis* brought by

**Dianna Wilkerson.** The evening ended with people retiring for the night with dreams of begonias filling their heads.

On Sunday, things were winding down, people were removing their plants from the show room, in preparation for the return trip home. It was time for us to reflect upon the past few days' events and draw a few conclusions. We decided that after receiving only two to three very minor complaints and many major compliments on both the contents of the show, the tours, and the lectures that indeed it had been a very successful convention. Everyone seemed to have been kept busy and seemed to very happy at the outcome of

the convention. The hospitality room and the silent auction were a very big success this year thanks in part to **Bill and Marian Claybaugh** and **Arlene Ingles** contributing their time to keeping it open.

To all the many participants and unnamed volunteers we give our sincere thanks, appreciation, and gratitude for all their help. We could not have done it without you. To all the participants who came we enjoyed having you and we look forward to seeing you all in Miami in 2006.

Wow what a convention! We won't forget it.

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## Convention 2005 Tours and Seminars

Charles' excellent article on the convention above does not describe the seminars and tours since he and Leora were too busy for the greater pleasures the rest of us enjoyed. Although your editor did not take notes and hence can give you only a sketch of information about this, they were so great a part of the convention that they must be touched on.

First, we were privileged to have our friends from Australia, **Ken and Carmel Browne** at the convention and yet more so to have two seminars given by Carmel. First, she shared her life-long devotion to the Rex Cultorum begonias, the love of which she has inherited from her father. She gave us many helpful hints on raising these begonias and many lovely slides of those she grows. Her second seminar touched on the yellow-flowered begonias of Africa. It was amazing to see the number of those that she has grown.

Then we had **Don Miller** illustrating for us how to plant a naturalistic scene in a large terrarium using mini begonias and other mini plants. It looked easy when he did it!

We had a delightful speaker **Barney Lipscomb** from the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (Where on a later tour there was also an opportunity to view a herbarium in operation.) who made us all appreciate botanical art a lot more. **Rekha Morris, John Langevin, and Mark Tebbit** all gave us views around the world that added to Carmel's lecture made us more aware of how international is the love for and work with begonias. We all eagerly await Mark's book which will be out very soon.

Although I did not myself make all the tours, let me just say that the ones I did take gave ample evidence that Dallas treasures begonias and grows them in many settings. As usual with any trip to the area, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden's begonia cutting party was the favorite site with everyone coming away with a multitude of cuttings.

In short, we had a great time in Dallas and all of ABS owes **Charles and Leora Henthorne**, the Dallas Area Branch, the Mae Blanton Branch, and all the volunteers from everywhere a big and very special thank you for a very wonderful, well-planned, and inspiring convention. ~ FH





*Above: Best of Show B. 'Fairy Wing' grown by Leora and Charles Henthorne. Photo by Charles Henthorne. Below, Tom Keepin's new hybrid named B. 'Carmel Browne' grown by Don Miller won Best New Introduction.*



**ABS Convention & SWR Get-Together**

***Begonia Madness***

**May 18-22, 2005, Dallas, Texas**

***Show Winners***

**by Leora Fuentes**

**Best of Show: B. 'Fairy Wing'**

**exhibited by Charles and Leora Henthorne**

**Best Species: *B. sizemoreae* by Lou Dyess**

**Best Artistic: Watercolor by Charles McGough**

**Showing is Sharing: Charles and Leora Henthorne**

**Sweepstakes: Charles and Leora Henthorne**

**Most Distinguished New Hybrid: B. 'Carmel Browne', exhibited by**

**North Haven Gardens, hybridized by Tom Keepin**

**Best Southwest Region Hybrid: B. 'Holley's Beauty' exhibited by  
Jeanie Dinsmore**

<b><u>Division</u></b>	<b><u>Entry</u></b>	<b><u>Exhibited by</u></b>
Cane-like	<i>B. 'Cracklin' Rosie'</i>	Cindy Moran
Semperfloren	Unnamed Hybrid	LuLu Leonard
Rhizomatous	<i>B. 'Holley's Beauty'</i>	Jeanie Dinsmore
Rhizomatous - Unusual growth/foilage	<i>B. handelii</i> X Unnmd. Rex Hybrid	Dianna Wilkerson
Tuberous	<i>B. 'Fairy Wing'</i>	Leora & Charles Henthorne
Contained Atmosphere	<i>B. prismatocarpa</i> 'Variegation'	Leora & Charles Henthorne
Species	<i>B. sizemoreae</i>	Lou Dyess
Hanging Basket	Unidentified Begonia Hybrid	Valerie Morris
Novel Grown	<i>B. dregei</i> Unnamed Hybrid	Charles McGough
Traveling Begonia	<i>B. 'White Ice'</i>	Joan Coulat
New Intro - Hobby Grower	<i>B. 'Carmel Browne'</i>	Northaven Gardens
Photographs - Artistic	<i>B. 'Cowardly Lion'</i>	Charles Henthorne
Arts	Watercolor	Charles McGough
Contained Atmosphere - Ferns	<i>Nephrolepis exalta</i>	Leora & Charles Fuentes
Botanical Art	Special Exhibit	Jeane Marie Kunze





*Dianna Wilkerson grew this striking *B. crassicaulis*. Note the curling stem to the left. Below, Chuck McGough did his usual magic in many spots of the show; here is his unnamed hybrid of *B. dregei*.*



*One of the highlights of the sale and show were the many unidentified species that have been introduced in recent years. Here is *B. U484* grown by Gene Salisbury.*

# Culture Awards

by Tom Keepin

<u>Points</u>	<u>Begonia</u>	<u>Exhibitor</u>
99	<i>B. prismatocarva</i> 'Variegation'	Leora & Charles Henthorne
98	<i>B.</i> 'Millie Thompson'	Leora & Charles Henthorne
98	Hybrid of <i>B. dregei</i>	Charles McGough
97.7	Unknown <i>Begonia</i>	Valerie Morris
95.5	<i>B.</i> 'Holley's Beauty'	Jeanie Dinsmore
97.5	<i>B. sizemoreae</i>	Lou Dyess
96.7	<i>B.</i> 'Catalina'	Pi Stone
96.7	<i>B. handelii</i> x Unnamed Rex Hybrid	Dianna Wilkerson
96.7	<i>B. imperialis</i>	Leora & Charles Henthorne
96.6	<i>B. prismatocarpa</i>	Leora & Charles Henthorne
96.6	<i>B. U076</i>	Leora & Charles Henthorne
96.5	<i>B. U304</i>	Jeanie Dinsmore
96.3	<i>B. roxburghii</i>	Pi Stone
96	<i>B. prismatocarpa</i>	Leora & Charles Henthorne
96	<i>B. U483</i>	Gene Salisbury
96	<i>B.</i> 'Maurice Amey'	Northhaven Gardens
95.8	<i>B. crassicaulis</i>	Dianna Wilkerson
95.5	<i>B. bogneri</i>	Leora & Charles Henthorne
95.3	<i>B.</i> 'Withlacoochee'	Dianna Wilkerson
95.1	<i>B.</i> 'Pollux'	Leora & Charles Henthorne
95	<i>B.</i> 'Ginny'	Pi Stone
95	<i>B. soli-mutata</i>	Gordon Gudger
95	Unnamed Semperfloren Hybrid	Lulu Leonard
95	<i>B. hatacoa</i> 'Silver'	Jeanie Dinsmore
95	<i>B.</i> 'Mrs. Miller'	Don Miller
95	<i>B. soli -mutata</i>	Dianna Wilkerson

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## Tribute to A.D. Robinson

Mr. Robinson [creator of Rosecroft Garden] may have seemed to specialize in begonias, but what he really did was to prove that a concentrated intensity of whole-hearted devotion to a special subject or a given situation brings its own reward not only to the doer, but to others who cross his path. He rated a person by his interest, not who he was nor what he had done. We have inherited that goodwill. Some day there may be a plant genius among us, but, however brilliant his achievements, it is equally valuable to appreciate what those of us who happen to be plodders can and are doing. It is the trials and errors that give us that priceless ingredient called experience. Whether we are beginners or "old hands", the horizon is always far beyond us. ...

*This lovely tribute to one of our ABS founders was by Alice M. Clark in an address on the first anniversary of the A.D. Robinson branch in 1943 and was sent to Thelma O'Reilly by Alice as a get well note back in 1973. She provided this for us with the thought that A.D. Robinson's actions and Alice Clark's words remain relevant today.*



**Installation of Officers and Summer Board Meeting  
in  
San Francisco, September 15-18, 2005**

Hotel: Embassy Suites, 1-800-Embassy and [www.embassysf.com](http://www.embassysf.com), Rates \$89.00, code for us is ABS/ (What a great rate for San Francisco! and Remember a fully cooked breakfast and cocktail hour is included in the rate!) Hotel address is 250 Gateway Blvd., South San Francisco, CA 94080, phone 650-589-3400.

Featured activity on Thursday evening will be a Greek Buffet Dinner with the opportunity to see Carol and Peter Notaras' home (caution: 72 steps to the front door, but worth every step).

Friday will be a bus trip to Golden Gate Park's Strybing Arboretum and Conservation in the morning and then Filoli Estate in the Afternoon. Lunch will be included. Price \$50.

After a Saturday morning on your own; the Board meeting will start at 1:30 P.M. with the installation dinner Saturday Night. Price for dinner is \$42. with choice of Prime Rib, Salmon Fillet or Breast of Chicken.

Send check for bus Trip & Banquet to Carol Notaras. Let Carol know if you will be going to her home for the Greek Dinner and what your choice for the Banquet is.

Send to: Carol Notaras  
2567 Green St.  
San Francisco, CA 94123

**Get Hotel reservations in immediately. Due date is actually  
August 31, 2005!**

*This article is being repeated from the previous issue because Mary's email was incorrect..*

## Changes in the Seed Fund

When you mail an order to the seed fund please include your e-mail address so that Ed Bates can get back to you and let you know he received it and if you don't have an e-mail address he will send you a post card. If you don't hear from Ed in a couple of weeks then either e-mail him or send him a note about your order. When you receive your seeds please e-mail Ed Bates or send him a note saying you received them. The Seed Fund has no way of

knowing if the seeds have been received unless you tell them. We are trying to correct the problems in the Seed Fund so if there is any complaints PLEASE e-mail or write Ed Bates and Mary Sakamoto. You may also send a copy to the other officers but they will only send it on the Ed Bates.

**Ed Bates,**  
**2908 Luciernaga Street, Apt C**  
**Carlsbad, CA 92009-**  
**Email: epb888@adelphia.net**

**Mary Sakamoto**  
**9682 Featherhill Dr.**  
**Villa Park, CA 92861;**  
**Ph: 714-637-8787; Email:**  
**m.sakamoto@sbcglobal.net**

Continued from page 165.  
hybrids. These are growers who contribute to our society simply through their excellence in growing begonias.

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

Recent past recipients of these awards:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dyckman Award</u>	<u>Gray Award</u>	<u>ADR Medal</u>	<u>O'Reilly Award</u>
1995	A. Salisbury	M. Blanton	B. 'Silvermist'	
1996	C. Notaras	K. Mounger	B. 'Sweet Diane'	
1997	J. Coulat	none	none	
1998	E. Calkins	G.& A. Salisbury	none	
1999	G. Salisbury	M. Bucholtz	none	
2000	M.Sakamoto	F. Holley	B. 'M.Sakamoto'	
2001	R.& W Macnair	B. Thompson	B. 'Little Miss Mummy'	
2002	R & L Fuentes	H. Jaros	B. 'Flamingo Queen'	
2003	J. Brown	C. Lenert	B. 'Cowardly Lion'	
2004	M. Zinman	C. Jaros	B. 'Black Gold'	
2005	Michael Kartuz	Don Miller	B. 'Holley Moon'	Tim O'Reilly

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ziesenhenné Award</u>	<u>Salisbury Award</u>	<u>Marge Lee Award</u>
2001	Ed and Phyllis Bates		
2002	Tamsin Boardman		
2003	Freda Holley		
2004	Karen Bartholomew and Chuck Anderson		
2005	Brad Thompson	Gene Salisbury	Tom Keepin



# THE SPECIES SEMPERFLORENS

by Peter Sharp (NSW Australia) 2005

*The Australia Association of Begonia Societies also had their 2005 Convention this spring. We are privileged here to be able to bring you the papers given by our friend Peter Sharp.*

(I would like to thank **Jack Golding** for the interest he took and the assistance he gave during my preparation of this article.)

200 years ago the first semperflorens species was discovered in Brazil and was described by Willdenow as *Begonia cucullata*. This same begonia was described by Link and Otto in 1828 as *Begonia semperflorens*, a name that was, at a later date, necessarily dropped in favour of that originally used by Willdenow, but varied to now be *B. cucullata* var *cucullata*. Thus we see the first use of the name *sempperflorens*, later (in 1945) adopted to describe all the semperflorens hybrids, as *Begonia semperflorens cultorum*.

In the following years this particular begonia was 'discovered' and subsequently described a further 12 times, with names such as *dispar*, *setaria*, *sellovii* and *paludicola* to mention but a few!

Jack Golding, nomenclature editor for the American Begonia Society, a member of the Begonia Technical Work Group for the Ornamental Plant Germplasm Center at the Ohio University and a tireless researcher into Begonias (invited to carry out this work at the Smithsonian Institution in fact!), studied in detail *Begonia cucullata*, and his findings were published in a monograph in the April 1982 edition of *Phytologia*. He concluded that a great many of the *cucullata* synonyms - 22 in all - should be considered as being one of three species (see Annex A for details):

*B. cucullata* Willdenow var *cucullata*,  
Sp. Pl. 1805, Brazil,  
*B. cucullata* Willdenow var *arenosiccol*,  
(C. DC.) L.B. Smith & B.G. Schubert,  
Darwinia, 1941, Argentina, or  
*B. cucullata* Willdenow var *spatulata*  
(Loddiges) J. Golding, 1982, Brazil.

Using, and updating, the list of semperflorens species in Thompsons' 'Begonias' I found that the following complete the species considered to belong to this group:

*B. hirtella* Link var *hirtella* 1822, West  
Indies, Brazil,  
*B. hirtella* Link var *nana* A.DC. in Mar-  
tius, 1861, Brazil,  
*B. schmidtiana* Regel, gartenfl, 1879,  
Brazil,  
*B. subvillosa* Klotzsch var *subvillosa*  
Abh. Konigl. Akad. Wiss. 1854,  
Brazil,  
*B. subvillosa* Klotzsch var *leptotricia*  
(C.DC.) L.B. Smith & D.C. Was-  
shausen  
1983, Paraguay,  
*B. wallichiana* Lehmann, 1850, Mexico.

Two begonias listed as species by the Thompsons are no longer valid:

B U008 - now recognised as *B. subvil-  
losa*,  
B. 'Mandas Woolly Bear' - is in fact *B.  
subvillosa* var *leptotricia*.

I consider that the following should also be recognised as semperflorens species:

*B. fischeri* - certainly closer to the semperflorens than the shrub-like.

*B. U315* - currently listed as 'semperflorens like'.

Perhaps the American Begonia Society could consider this, together with other anomalies in the grouping of begonias, and correct any which it finds now wrongly listed, eg: *B. luxurians* is surely a cane-like more so than a shrub?

I have listed all the presently recognised semperflorens species at Annex B. This information is as up-to-date as I can reasonably make it. There is one error in the Smithsonian publication *Begoniaceae*, Edition 2 and that is the listing of *B. wallichiana* as a synonym for *B. minicarpa*, a species begonia from Nepal where semperflorens do not occur!

**W. Scott Hoover**, Director of the New England Tropical Conservatory in Bennington, Vermont, together with **Dr Harry Wirindinata** and **Deden Girmansyah** of the Herbarium Bogorise in Bogor, West Java, discovered a semperflorens-like begonia growing in three locations in tea plantations in West Java. Scott surmises that this plant is perhaps a seedling from an escaped *semperflorens cultorum* which has naturalised in the tea plantations, and he suggests that it may have speciated in the process. It is a tall growing begonia with characteristics resembling in some aspects *B. cucullata* var. *cucullata*. Time will tell whether this is, in fact, a new species semperflorens.

At annex C I have listed for comparison the semperflorens species from Thompsons' '*Begonia*' and the updated list resulting from my enquiries.

## ANNEX A to THE SPECIES SEMPERFLORENS.

### *BEGONIA CUCULLATA*

Jack Golding's 1982 study of *Begonia cucullata* resulted in re-classification as follows:

#### *B. cucullata* Willdenow var. *cucullata*

Sp. Pl., 4:414, 1805 - J. Golding, Phytologia, 50:330. 1982. Brazil

*semperflorens* Link & Otto, 1828  
*dispar* Reichenbach, 1829  
*setaria* hort ex Graham, 1829  
*sellowii* hort ex W.J. Hooker, 1829  
*hookeri* Sweet, 1830  
*sellowii* Klotzsch, 1855  
*cucullifolia* Hasskari, 1858  
*sellowii* hort. anglicis ex A. de Candolle, 1861  
*semperflorens* Link & Otto var.  
*hookeri* A. de Candolle, 1861  
*semperflorens* Link & Otto var.  
*sellowii* A. de Candolle, 1861  
*semperflorens* Link & Otto f.  
*flavescens* C. de Candolle, 1903  
*paludicola* C. de Candolle, 1914  
*cucullata* Willdenow var. *hookeri*  
(A. de Candolle) L.B. Smith & B.G. Schubert, 1941

#### *B. cucullata* Willdenow var.

*arenosicola* (C. de Candolle), L.B. Smith & B.G. Schubert, Darwiniana, 5:106, 1941 - J. Golding, Phytologia, 50:350, 1982. Argentina, Paraguay  
*subcucullata* C. de Candolle var.  
*arenosicola* C. de Candolle, 1903  
*subcucullata* C. de Candolle var.  
*subcucullata*, 1903  
*cucullata* auct. non Willdenow: Bettfreund, 1900



**B. cucullata** Willdenow var. *spatulata*  
(Loddiges) J. Golding, Phytologia,  
50:350, 1982. Brazil  
*spatulata* Loddiges, 1818  
*spathulata* Hornemann, 1819  
*spathulata* Willdenow ex Sprengel,  
1825  
*cuneata* Walpers, 1843  
*nervosa* Desfontaines ex Klotzsch,  
1854  
*agrial* Rojas, 1913

## ANNEX B to THE SPECIES SEMPERFLORENS

### SEMPERFLORENS - THE SPECIES LIST

Those begonias which may be considered to be included in the species of the *semperflorens* group include:

**B. cucullata** var *cucullata* ) see Annex

**B. cucullata** var *spatulata* ) A for full

**B. cucullata** var *arenosicola*) nomen-  
cla ture

**B. hirtella** Link var *hirtella* Enum.

Hort. Berol. 2:396, 1822. Brazil. Peru  
*ciliata* Kunth in Humboldt & Kunth  
1825

*villosa* Linddley, 1829

*brasila* A. de Candolle, 1836

*brasiliana* Schrank ex Steudel, 1840.

nomen nudum

*albido-setulosa* Hasskarl, 1858

*dasyopoda* Meisner ex A. de Candolle,  
1861

*humilis* auct. non Dryander: Duss,  
1897

**B. hirtella** Link var *nana* A. de Can-  
dolle in Martius, Fl. Bras. 4(1):345,  
1861. Brazil

*diversifolia* Graham var. *nana*

Walpers, 1843

*ciliata* Kunth in Humboldt,  
Bonpland & Kunth, var. *nana* Klotzch

ex A. de Candolle, 1861

*villosa* Lindley var *nana* Klotzsch ex  
A. de Candolle, 1861

**B. schmidtiana** Regel, Gartenfl.,  
28:321, 1879, Brazil  
*schmidtii* Regel ex N., 1880

**B. subvillosa** Klotzsch var *subvillosa*,  
Abh. Königl. Akad. Wiss. Berlin  
1854. Brazil  
*heineri* Brade, 1952  
*serafinensis* Brade, 1958  
*serafinensis* Brade var *crqueirae*  
Brade, 1958

**B. subvillosa** Klotzsch var *leptotricia*  
C. De Candolle, L.B. Smith & D.CX.  
Wassshaussen, Phytologia, 52:446,  
1983. Paraguay  
*leptotricia* C. de Candolle, 1914

**B. wallichiana** Lehmann, Neue Allg.  
Deutsche Garden-Blumenzeitung,  
6:455, 1850, non Steudel, 1840 - J.  
Doorenbos, Begonian, 42:213, 1975.  
Mexico  
*parvifolia* Liebmman 1847non Poep-  
pig & Endlicher, 1835  
*franconis* Liebmman, 1853  
*modesta* Liebmman, 1853  
*Diplocinium walliachianum* Miquel,  
1856

With the possible future addition of:

**B. U315**, and

**B. fischeri**

ANNEX C to THE SPECIES C SEMPERFLORENS  
COMPARISON - SPECIES LISTED BY  
THOMPSONS WITH UPDATED LISTING.

**THE THOMPSON'S LIST**

*B. semperflorens*  
*B. cucullata*  
*B. cucullata* var. *hookeri*  
*B. hirtella*  
*B. hirtella* var. *nana*  
*B. leptotricia* )  
*B. 'Mandas Woolly Bear'* )  
*B. subvillosa* )  
*B. U008* )  
*B. schmidtiana*  
*B. wallichiana* )  
*B. franconis* )

**UPDATED LIST**

*B. cucullata* var. *cucullata*  
*B. cucullata* var. *spatulata*  
*B. cucullata* var. *arenosicola*  
*B. hirtella* var. *hirtella*  
*B. hirtella* var. *nana*  
*B. subvillosa* var. *leptotricia*  
  
*B. subvillosa* var. *subvillosa*  
  
*B. schmidtiana*  
*B. wallichiana*

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## BEGONIA SEMPERFLORENS CULTORUM OR

### How to get the best from your bedding begonias. Peter Sharp, Australia

The first begonia in the *semperflorens cultorum* group was not produced until 1878, despite the discovery of the first species, now named *Begonia cucullata* var *cucullata*, in 1805. To-day's range of hybrids includes such widely grown plants as *B. 'Charm'*, *'Christmas Candy'*, *'Red Devil'*, *Luck Lockett* and so on - the list is extensive. However, I would like to write about the best known and most frequently grown of these, the ubiquitous bedding begonias (often called wax flowers or thousand wonders). What an appropriate name is *semperflorens* for these pot and garden beauties, for it means in translation from the Latin 'ever flowering'. These versatile begonias are happy almost anywhere, be it in garden bed, pot, window box or tub, in private garden or public park or on the

busiest street corner, in part shade or full sun or anywhere in between, being prey to mildew and frost but not much else.

They are prolific producers and scatterers of seed and seem to be able to germinate in all sorts of places - is there anyone who has grown them and not found for years afterwards seedlings appearing in the most unlikely places? Seedlings which in many cases look quite different to the parents, with stronger growth habits, thicker stems and an upright habit. I call these 'feral begonias' for they certainly run wild!

I have found that growing these begonias to perfection requires some special effort and expertise, and so many gardeners do not get the best from them. My experience has convinced me that these floral beauties must be planted *en masse* in



order to achieve the best effect. I shudder whenever I see a garden with a border of semps planted in a single row and a foot or more apart - that's 30 centimetres to the modern generation! They will not do well for they are gregarious beings and must have close company in order to thrive and achieve their best. So, that's lesson number one - plant close and plant many; if a border is required then make it at least 3 plants deep and no more than six inches (15 cms) apart. Better still, if space allows and you have enough plants, plant them in a mass. What fun you can have with the colours! I have seen them in a solid colour to each bed, I have seen them planted in a variety of patterns, and I have seen them planted willy-nilly without regard to colour, and all those plantings looked superb. I have even seen them as a low hedge, intermingled with impatiens and trimmed to shape! Although we say that they will grow in full shade, they will only look their best in that position for a relatively short time before they become leggy in their search for more light, so try to plant them where they will receive at least a couple of hours of sunshine each day.

So much for planting and position, but I haven't mentioned the other important factor - the growing medium in which you actually plant them. They, along with all of the begonia family, need an open growing medium rich in food. For garden planting this means plenty of humus and animal manures dug into the bed, and for pot growing a liberal inclusion of controlled release fertiliser in the mix, and once planted fertilise regularly, at least once per fortnight in the growing season, which with semps is year round in all but the coldest areas.

Don't just plant them, feed them and forget them! They need ongoing care in the early stages of growth. I have always advocated tip pruning to encourage bushiness

and fuller flowering, but Jack Golding is much more specific, and I will quote what he wrote in an article on *semperflorens* which appeared in the May/June 1988 issue of *The Begonian*:

'Everyone is anxious to enjoy the first flowers, but they are a mere illusion of the splendour to follow. It is difficult the first time, but pinch off every flower and bud. Water thoroughly and feed with a fertilizer for flowering plants.....Two weeks later, again pinch off all the flowers and buds. Also fertilize but be careful: follow the instructions on the container and do not use excessive amounts. Repeat in another two weeks and remove all the flowers and buds.

'Water regularly, fertilize as specified and you will soon see the results of the pinching to the full; many branched plants which will reward you with multitudes of beautiful flowers blending together in continuous colour.'

Many gardeners regard the bedding begonias as annuals and when they get a bit too tall and spindly, out they go! What a waste! Try pruning when they reach that stage, and by pruning I mean a really hard prune about two inches (5 centimetres) from the ground. Then fertilise and water and watch them grow. New growth will come from the base of the plants and very soon, in a few short weeks, you will have a new display of fresh plants, really full and sturdy ones just bursting with life. Start that pinching process all over again. You should get at least two seasons growth from every plant, and maybe more if you really look after them.

Bedding begonia plants are readily available through all good nurseries, and planting time in much of Australia is year round, whilst in cold and frosty areas it is after the frosts have gone. However, plants in the quantities you will need for mass plantings can run into quite a lot of money,

so growing from seed is the way to go. This is readily available from major seed merchants. The other way of propagation is from cuttings but I have never had good success with them because, as Jack Golding has pointed out, I have been doing it the wrong way! He advises that you should select only stems that have branches. They will grow into good compact plants by frequent pinching of the growing tips. Stems without branches just continue to grow straight up even after pinching.

What a great pity it is that they are so susceptible to attack by powdery mildew. There have been, over recent years, a spate of mildew treatments given prominence in journals and newsletters, and I offer here a selection of these:

1. Chemical sprays (in Australia I advocate the use of Baycor from Bayer. It is a semi-systemic, preventative spray, comes in an easy-to-use pressure pack and is very effective). Use when mildew attack is imminent for best results.
2. Baking soda dissolved in water and used as a spray. Most commonly cited dilution rate seems to be a teaspoon per litre with an added dash of wetting agent such as *Wettasoil*, but NOT dishwashing detergent!
3. Sulphur, either as a dusting powder or in soluble form as a spray. Effective, but makes the plants look terrible!
4. Overhead watering of susceptible plants at 12 hourly intervals is claimed to be effective as research in America has shown that heavy applications of water kill the mildew spores.

The trick in combating powdery mildew is to recognise when it is likely to strike and to take appropriate measures at that time. The 'mildew season' as it is

termed can be any time of the year when days are warm and humid followed by cooler nights, allowing the finest film of moisture to condense on the leaves, thus producing the ideal medium on which mildew spores will germinate. Prevention again, as always, is the best form of defence against any predatory attack and ensuring a free circulation of air around the plants is a good way to start inhibiting mildew. This will help to keep the leaf blades dry.

The *semperflorens* group has been much neglected by our hybridisers. I guess they prefer the glamour of the tuberous, the beautiful leaves of the *rexes*, the thrill of a new cane-like or rhizomatous to the everyday plainness of the *semps*. However, I would like to mention my humble efforts to date in working with this most fascinating group of *begonias*.

Growing to almost a metre in the open garden, I have produced a *semperflorens*-like which requires a full sun position. I have tentatively named it 'Titan'. It is very full flowering, white when grown in shade but heavily pink tinged in the sun, and mildew resistant. We have test grown it in full sun in the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens for three years now, pruning the same plants to the roots each autumn, and each year the plants have grown back fuller than before. Like so many new plants, 'Titan' was the result of a natural cross in my small courtyard in Sydney, where the only *begonias* in bloom at the time were *B. U315* and *B. fischeri*. I grew these first five chance seedlings into tall, sprawling, white flowered *begonias* and selfed them by hand pollinating, but lost the originals when I pruned them heavily. However, I have proved this original cross since by repeating it, *B. U315* X *B. fischeri*.

The seeds from this selfing produced a wide range of *begonias* from bronze leafed pink and white flowered ones,



through green leafed types to the tall ones I selected and named 'Titan'. I have since grown two of these latter plants in the open Nursery area of the Sydney Gardens and collected many seeds.

I am of course continuing my experiments with the range of plants which I have retained from the original crosses,

hoping to produce smaller growing mildew free bedding plants with both green and bronze leaves and in a range of colours.

**How hybridisers do dream!**

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**What's Old is Still Good**  
**by Jeanie Dinsmore**

I was reading some old Begonians and the tips and growing methods took me back in time. To my grandmother's garden.

It was large and full of plants she had grown from cuttings and seeds given to her by friends and family. I think all of her fingers were green.

There were no weeds (thanks to her hoe), no bugs (thanks to her chickens), and no chemicals. She used compost tea for fertilizer and Willow tea as rooting hormone. She over wintered her tender plants, begonias, geraniums, coleus and such on a closed-in back porch with no heat (in south Oklahoma).

Her kitchen was a great place for remedies for all things. Of course we all knew that buttermilk, vinegar, castor oil and sugar can cure almost anything. I wonder have I made the quest for perfect plants so complicated that I have lost sight of something better?

Just a thought. Maybe I'll go back to some of her ways!

Here's the recipe for Willow tea: Soak fresh cut young Willow stems in water for a few days. A natural hormone is released. Water cuttings with willow tea. Promotes good strong roots quickly.

*I don't know what Jeanie is using on her begoniass, but whatever it is it makes them outstanding. She had blue ribbons, cultural award winners and also won 'Best Southwest Region Hybrid' at the Dallas Convention with a begonia close to the heart of the editor - B. 'Holley's Beauty'. The Fort Worth Botanic Garden is indeed lucky to have Jeanie as a volunteer. She is a member of the Mae Blanton Branch.*

.....

**Make your plans now!**  
**The 2006 ABS Convention**  
**will be held in Miami, Florida on March 2-6, 2006.**  
**Details next issue.**

.....

## MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

### American Begonia Society

#### Dallas, TX, May 21, 2005

**President Berg** opened the meeting and thanked the Dallas Area Branch for hosting the Convention with the help of the Mae Blanton Branch and members of the Southwest Region. First Vice President **Janet Brown** read the Aims and Purposes of the Society.

President Berg announced that the 2006 Convention is going to be held in Florida. **Tim Anderson** invited everyone to Miami. The date will be announced later.

The minutes of the prior meeting in Tampa, FL, were accepted as sent to the Board.

Treasurer **Carol Notaras** presented the financial report for the period February 1 to April 30, 2005. In the general fund the beginning balance was \$6218.96 and the ending balance was \$3857.10 with income of \$10997.85 and disbursement of \$13359.71. The combined *Begonian* mailing, seed fund and general fund accounts had a beginning balance of \$9896.76 and ending balance of \$5595.27. Savings account totals were \$66796.96 beginning and \$67036.42 ending. Combined savings and checking account totals were \$76693.72 beginning and \$72631.69 ending. The report was accepted.

President Berg reported that **Mary Sakamoto** and **Janet Brown** had visited the Seed Fund operation and worked out a solution to recent problems. Mary reported that all seed orders should be placed with **Ed Bates** and that follow up communications should be made. She asked that this information be passed on to those who order seeds. Details of the ordering procedure will be published in the *Begonian* and other places and instructions

should be followed exactly to help make the new system work. If anyone has not heard from their order they should reorder to **Ed Bates** and tell Mary.

Branch Relations Director **Mary Bucholtz** sent a written report saying that the Greater Chicago Branch is still functioning and that their funds were mistakenly sent to the ABS Treasurer. *The funds have been returned.* **Esther Detlefsen** is acting President. A group in Riverside, CA, is working on forming a new Branch.

Membership Secretary **Arlene Ingles** presented the membership statistics for March through May 14, 2005. Total membership at the end of the period was 1062 consisting of 83 free, 61 life, 841 domestic and 77 foreign members. Eighty-three new members joined or rejoined during the period. Branches accounted for 50% of these new members with Palm Beach topping the list with 12 and Delaware Valley signing up 7.

Business Manager **Gene Salisbury** reported that Pay Pal will be initiated for members to pay obligations to ABS by credit card shortly after the ABS website is updated and ready to handle it.

President Berg introduced **Sandy Boyd** as the new Internet Editor. Sandy is upgrading the website and will be including the Pay Pal option. She will be putting the MAL and SOS newsletters on it as well.

Bookstore Chair **Cheryl Lenert** reported that the Bookstore is still open. It was noted that the hybrid checklist could be made available through the Bookstore.

Conservation Chair **Bill Claybaugh** reported that Ohio State University is organizing a collecting trip to Costa Rica in March of 2006 to find Begonias. They have invited ABS to send someone on the 28-day trip. **Cheryl Lenert** will go for the second two weeks and **Darrin Dul-**



ing from the New York Botanical Garden will go for the first two weeks. Cheryl is paying her expenses and Darrin's expenses are being funded by donation.

Convention Chair **Leora Henthorne** reported 25 exhibitors and 207 entries including photographs at this Convention and about 106 attendees.

**Ann Salisbury** reminded all ABS members that back issues of the *Begonian* should be ordered from **Donna Marsheck**. After June 18, Donna will also be handling bulk mailings for shows.

Grant Committee Chair **Mary Sakamoto** reported that three grant requests were received and reviewed. They are for **Scott Hoover** to collect in Indonesia in July, **Rekha Morris** to collect in Mexico in October and **Darrin Duling** to collect in Costa Rica next March. The committee recommended granting \$1500 to **Scott Hoover**, \$1000 to **Rekha Morris** and \$500 to **Darrin Duling** to supplement funding from other sources. The total amount available in the research and conservation funds where the grants are drawn is approximately \$4500.

Research Director **Bruce Boardman** has resigned and the board will be looking for a replacement.

Historian **Jeanne Jones** stated that some branches send her their newsletters but requested that all Branches do so.

Member at Large Editor **Sandy Boyd** reported that the last print issue of the MAL Newsletter will be mailed in a couple of weeks and will have Convention news. Thereafter, it will appear on the website and in the *Begonian*.

**Wanda Macnair** announced the 2005 Holiday Ad Campaign for the *Begonian* and began collecting donations. For the record, the categories are Bronze up to \$25, Silver \$26-50, Gold \$51-100 and Platinum over \$100. The deadline for receipt of donations is September 1, 2005

**President Berg** reminded everyone that the election of officers is coming up and to vote the ballot in the *Begonian*. He reviewed the slate of officers listed in the *Begonian*.

National Directors are reminded to have all members return their membership reminder cards with their dues payment.

President Berg and Business Manager **Gene Salisbury** announced that a decision has been made to convert the staggered membership renewal system to a single renewal date for all members. No date was set but a best guess is January 1, 2006. We were not informed who made the decision. Implementation procedure was not clear. Publicity was not addressed. (Secretary's Note: This does not conform to the motion and vote of the Board at the February meeting. At that time the Board voted to have the Business Manager review the matter and make a recommendation about changing the dues due date at this meeting.)

**Carol Notaras** invited everyone to San Francisco for the Annual Business Meeting, September 15-18, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

**Richard Macnair, Secretary**

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## IN THE MAILBOX

### BY GREG SYTCH

**Q:** I have been growing begonia with large red flowers, and the flowers that open keep getting black edges to them. They are unsightly. Is there something that I can do to stop this?

**A:** Since I assume these are tuberous begonias, it sounds like a cultural problem. Tuberous enjoy a well drained soil that is not too heavy. Adding perlite and using a soilless mix helps. Spread a large pinch of bone meal early in the season to encourage healthy blossoms. Excess moisture can cause flowers to distort. Check to see if you have any aphids. Aphids can also cause flower problems. Aphids are easily controlled with any number of remedies.

**Q:** Recently I had a visitor to my shade-houses, and she commented on how light my soil was. She asked what did I use as my mix, and what is the difference in using it?

**A:** Mixes change depending on where you live and your climate. Florida's hu-

mid climate makes it essential to use a light, well drained soil - but all begonias prefer this anyway. I use Pro-Mix straight from the bag now that Fafard changed its mix. For smaller pots (4"/6" for cuttings) I add perlite and/or aerolite, which is tiny styrofoam balls. This really makes the mix drain well, and getting a plant off to a good start at a young age makes a better plant when mature - and quicker!

**TIP FOR FALL:** Fall is a great time to take your last minute cuttings. The weather is usually still nice and warm around the country, so taking cuttings outdoors in the shade is easy. Just allow them to root if you live in a colder climate and move indoors. Remember to keep them off the ground but not too high up - usually just 6 inches or so is fine. This prevents drying winds from going to work. Spraying with a mister hose once a day, in the morning, will help hasten the rooting.

If you have a question about growing your begonias, call or write Greg Sytch at 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301; Ph: 727-841-9618; GSytch@cs.com.

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## A memoir: How I fell in love with Begonia...

### by Lois Stoppel

In 1997, while studying medical herbalism, the idea of plant 'spirits', or 'devas' was talked about as an experience, in relation to how certain plants are used for healing, and how information on their uses has been passed down orally for centuries. We learned that for those who are willing to take the time to tune in to them, each genus has its own unique spirit or personality, as do humans and other living creatures. This made sense

to me, as having read "The Secret Life of Plants" by Peter Tompkins in 1973, I'd learned of the many scientific studies done proving that plants sense and respond to other beings, sounds, and energies around them. Luther Burbank also believed this. Of course, plants do seem to each have a style, a personality... And attitude! An obvious example is Cactus, who is a lot less friendly, and considerably more defensive than Fern, who, when touched,



would gently tickle and caress rather than poke or stab. And of course (whether we are willing to admit it or not), many people do listen and talk to their plants!!

I began to ponder all this, and during May of that year, took a vacation to visit the gardens of Lotusland, an old 35-acre garden estate in the hills above Santa Barbara, which had been brought to life by the eccentric Polish opera singer, Ganna Waleska, in the 1950's. The love and playfulness of the garden spirits that had been brought in there, into each of Ganna's outdoor garden 'rooms' really struck me, especially the Begonia garden, where a marvelous, vividly colorful collection of all manner of cane, rhizomatous and trailing Begonias thrived in breathtaking harmony.

I let the tour group walk on ahead as I remained behind, captivated, drawn into the begonias' presence, as they stood proud and gentle in the dappled light of their shaded outdoor room. I half expected to see little elves romping amongst the

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That first sensation in the garden that day, of those hand-like leaves reaching out to me, has led me into a long and delightful relationship with the ethereal and beautiful Begonia spirit. She has enticed me to paint pictures of her, to make special flower pots for her and to go to great lengths to provide a suitable home for her family. But in return, when I gaze upon her, she graces me with countless offerings of serenity and healing comfort that emanate

*Some of you will recall that **Lois Stopples** advertised her lovely begonia greeting cards some issues ago. She is a great artist and I regret I do not have room in this issue for her color photos of the high-fire glaze pottery flower pots which she has made for begonias. You may write to her at P.O. 985, Middletown, CA 95448, call her at 707-994-3339 or email her at: [lolostar@earthlink.net](mailto:lolostar@earthlink.net).*

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# DEET - LESS DEFENCES

by Rekha Morris

Each summer as the heat and rain increase mosquitoes and other insects become the bane of gardeners and all those who enjoy outdoor living. Now that mosquito borne diseases are resurfacing in various parts of the USA we are also bombarded with dire warnings about using insect repellents which include Deet as these are the only ones to safeguard against the virulence of some of these insect borne diseases. As most of us are aware, Deet is not only toxic to insects but also to humans. In all the years that I have gardened in Pendleton, SC, and in my travels over the past dozen years where malaria and dengue fever exist, I have never used any insect repellent containing Deet. Being a firm believer in organic gardening and organic food I have used insect repellent without Deet with great success.

In my experience the most successful of all these organic repellents is Neem-Aura, which is a Neem herbal outdoor spray. I buy this at Whole Foods Stores, and have found it extremely effective. So much so that on my recent trip to NE India where the monsoon was just starting up in the Himalayas, it even kept leeches off my body. I found quite a number on my shoes and some even inside on my socks, but none ever attached themselves to the body as they were repelled by this neem spray. One was even on my torso, but squirming horribly to get off, so I was able to flick it off.

I had to be very careful on this trip to Cambodia and India as I have had dengue fever in west Africa many years ago, and have been told that if I ever get the eastern form I should try and die as comfortably as possible as nothing currently known to medicine would save me. Since dengue

fever is rampant in some of these Asian countries I never went anywhere without spraying the exposed areas of my body with this spray.

To avoid the leeches I would spray my entire body with this neem spray, and then once again after I was dressed. I would make sure that my shoes, legs, arms and head including hair were totally sprayed as this kept a lot of other creepy crawlies off as I negotiated gorges and stream banks in my search for begonias, often in rain! Since I am highly allergic to wasp, hornet, bee and yellow jacket stings, I have been delighted to discover that this same spray repels these stinging insects as well as mosquitoes. During one of my trips to Mexico to document begonias, we encountered a 20' stretch of fire ants along a narrow, cliff hugging path. There was no way we could avoid them if we wanted to continue up the hill, and we did. So I sprayed our shoes and trousers up to the knees heavily with this neem spray, making sure that I also sprayed the ankles and legs as far up as we could raise our trousers. Then as rapidly as we could we hopped our way across this swarm of ants, and to my relief discovered that although they instantly started up our shoes, not a single one made it above about 8" of our legs, and both Michael and I crossed this Rubicon of ants without a single bite.

Neem Aura spray does not stain the clothes, and since it also includes various other herbal extracts its aroma is quite pleasant unlike that of neem extract by itself. I buy the spray at Whole Foods Stores, and for those who encounter difficulties obtaining this spray, their e-mail address is: [neemauranaturals@lotuspress.com](mailto:neemauranaturals@lotuspress.com)



Before I discovered this neem spray I used to make my own with the following ingredients:

- 1 part citronella
- 2 parts eucalyptus oil
- 2 parts cedar wood extract.

Be careful to avoid getting this on your mucous membranes such as lips and eyes. Although this combination is effective for several hours, just to be sure I would reapply this mixture every 2 hours.

In India Neem has been used as an insect repellent and for medicinal purposes for centuries. Dried neem leaves are used in trunks where clothing is stored as it is such a powerful insect repellent. One of my relatives discovered a trunk full of 18th century miniature paintings forgotten in the hay loft of their stables for some 60 years when their house was rapidly emptied of all valuables during a fire when his grandfather was a young man. Not a single painting was damaged due to insect and moth infestation. Neem is also an important ingredient in Indian toothpaste and soap. Growing up in a traditional home in India my morning ritual consisted of chewing on fresh cut neem twigs to allow the antibacterial sap to disinfect my teeth and mouth, and once the twig had been finely chewed, its bristles were used to lightly brush the teeth and gums. My grandmother was repelled by the western habit of using and reusing the same tooth brush daily, and insisted on our following this Indian form of oral hygiene whenever we were home from our boarding school in the Himalayas!

I have also found neem solution effective on plants which have been infected with mites, etc. I do not have this problem

but the university greenhouse is constantly plagued by them, and the begonias from my collecting trips which are housed there are regularly infected several times a year. For plants which are as sensitive as begonias I use the following for spraying for mites and whiteflies as well as for washing all the roots and rhizomes I collect in Mexico and India before their final packing to pass inspection by the USDA.

I buy finely powdered dry neem leaves at an Indian grocery store in Atlanta, and keep some in one of these empty photo film cartridges to take on my trips. After I have washed all the soil and debris off the begonias I collect [i.e., after washing and rewashing them several times over!] I dissolve some of this powder in

water till it begins to get slightly green in color, and then soak the roots and rhizomes in this the day before I am scheduled to fly home.

I do the same when I mix some in a spray bottle to use on the foliage of my plants. The neem oil which is available at Home Depot and other garden centers is far too strong for begonia foliage even when diluted. However, this spray I make by using the dried neem leaves does not harm them.

For mealy bugs I use rubbing alcohol in a spray bottle.

Despite the myriad messages broadcast on the media by manufacturers of Deet with their powerful lobbying interests, I have managed to garden and travel extensively in areas infested by mosquitoes and other noxious insects by recourse to such Deetless defences as described above.

***Dried neem leaves  
are used in trunks  
where clothing is  
stored as it is such  
a powerful insect  
repellent.***



# *BEGONIAS* *of Peninsular Malaysia*

Ruth Kiew

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## New Book Review:

# *Begonias of Peninsular Malaysia*

by Ruth Kiew

The begonia loving world is lucky indeed because we have a new book in publication. Even more lucky were a number of us attending the 2005 ABS Convention in Dallas. **Tan Jiew-Hoe**, our friend from Singapore who is well known to convention attendees because he has often attended, was kind enough to provide a number of copies of this book for ABS to auction off in support of the convention and those of us won bids consider ourselves fortunate indeed. The book is a must have because of its visual beauty as well as unique content.

Ruth Kiew has written for the *Begonian* in the past and is wellknown to us because of her work in Malaysia. Here she has lovingly written of the begonias she studies in great detail. Each part of the plants from leaves to fruit is covered in a section of the first chapter. Their history follows; then identification with a key to the begonias is provided. Finally comes the list of species. Her writing makes for interesting reading.

It was amazing to me to see the number of begonias I had never heard of before! I think that a number of our unknowns might be resolved through careful comparisons with begonias in this book. I was also fascinated to see a number of interesting common names for begonias such as "The Cabbage-leaved Begonia" (*Begonia venusta*), "The Woolly-stalked Begonia" (*Begonia eiromischa*), "The Tortoise-Shell Begonia" (*Begonia kingiana*), "The Tiger Begonia" (*Begonia tigrina* - this one named by R. Kiew), "The Sparkling Begonia" (*Begonia sinuata*), and many others. Of course you will also find complete details on many begonias with which we are familiar such as *Begonia*

*decora*, *pavonina*, *rajah*, or *nurii*.

Enough cannot be said about the gorgeous photography of the book which is credited to principal photographer **Yap Kok-Sun** working with **Ali Ibrahim** and **Tan Jiew-Hoe**. The photos are taken in the natural settings in which the begonias are found. This lends greatly to our understanding of the environment in which the plants will grow best. Also they reveal many surprises such as seeing on page 16, the tiny seedlings germinating on the old fruit of *Begonia pauperula*.

To assist us in identification there are botanical illustrations provided by **Zainal Mustafa**. These are line drawings, meticulously done in black and white, that lead us to understand the uniqueness of all the plant parts including those of the flower parts and ovaries. Many of the seeds are even drawn in microscopic perfection. This is the best collection of begonia botanical illustrations I have ever seen in one place.

Even more beautiful are the watercolor paintings provided for the book by **Wendy Gibbs**. I cannot imagine any begonia art lover who will not want this book for these paintings alone.

The book is not inexpensive, but I believe that you will still consider the book a bargain because of all it offers. In short whether you have a scientific interest or just love begonias, you will find this book totally rewarding.

You may order it by going to **www.nhpborneo.com** or get info at email: **info@nhpborneo.com**. If anyone knows of a U.S. source let the *Begonian* editor know so that it may be shared. ~ FH



Note the curling stems above on Bill Clabaugh's *B. lindleyana*. Photo by Bill Claybaugh.

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## Conservation Comments

Bill Claybaugh  
Conservation Chairman, ABS

### *Begonia lindleyana*

This unique begonia species from Section **Gireoudia** was discovered in Guatemala and named by Walpers in 1843. Being in section Gireoudia, both male and female flowers have two tepals, the androecium is zygomorphic, and the capsule has three locules. (These were the characters that **Dr. J. Doorenbos** used to differentiate this section in his “user friendly key to the American sections” (1)). This plant also has a few other morphological characteristics that make it different from those we usually encounter.

For me, the most interesting feature is the very strong upright rhizome. Those who grow species begonias are familiar with the upright rhizomes of such favorite plants as *B. manicata*, *friburgensis*, and *plebeja*, and this is very similar. For *B. lindleyana*, however, the rhizome has unusually long internodes, most over one inch long, and a diameter of approximately one inch. Further, the stipules are persistent for over a year, then drop off. Overall the rhizome appears large, long and slick. With time, the rising rhizome cannot support itself, and falls to reroot, then rises again. This gives it a very interesting undulating structure.

The second, and probable the most widely recognized unique character of this

plant is the lobate-dentate leaves that are also peltate and pseudo-cordate. We are all familiar with peltate leaves in which the umbo (the junction of the leaf stem and the leaf blade) is located in the interior of the blade and not at the margin. Some very common examples are *B. nelumbiifolia*, *peltata*, *goegoensis*, *microsperma*, and *tayabensis*. These leaves are uniformly rounded at the base and have a recognizable apex. We are also aware of plants with

cordate leaves. These leaves have two large lobes at the base, often about equal in size, and these lobes may or may not overlap. Examples of these we commonly encounter are *B. cordata*, *pope-noei*, *strigillosa*, *manicata*, etc. Where *B. lindleyana* is unique is that it has both a peltate stem attachment and has a leaf base that is not rounded, but instead is somewhat or pseudo (false) cordate. According

to **Dr. K. Burt Utley** (2), “this character combination has been observed in only one other Middle American taxon, *B. fonsecae*, ... (and)...is no more frequent in South America.” She goes on to note that a careful examination of immature pistillate flowers of *B. lindleyana* (dried specimen) indicates it has four stigmas. The presence of four stigmas led her to exclude this species from her Section Gireoudia work. Later, however, Dr. J. Doorenbos included *B. lindleyana* in his section Gireoudia compilation. I will stay out of the argument, but note that my plant with mature pistillate flowers has only three stigmas.

**For me, the most interesting feature is the very strong upright rhizome...With time, the rising rhizome cannot support itself, and falls to reroot then rise again. This gives it a very interesting structure.**

A third fairly unique aspect of my plant so far is that it has single sex inflorescence. This year, my plant bloomed from early February through March with two very large inflorescence containing 50+ flowers on each. The peduncles were over 30 cm in length, followed by inflorescence with uneven length arms at each of five divisions, i.e. it would be classified as compound, but not dichotomous. I think I saw two male flowers total, but they fell off the inflorescence so rapidly, that I cannot be certain. It is unclear at the present time if more inflorescence will follow containing male flowers, or if mixed sex inflorescence will follow. I seriously doubt if this plant is like *B. roxburghii* and truly has either male or female flowers only. We shall see.

In the September 1980 edition of the *Begonian*, Dr. Doorenbos wrote a comprehensive article on *B. lindleyana*. In it he noted this is an extremely variable species, to the point that it has been "discovered" and given unique names no less than eight times. This article was preceded by an extensive article by **R. Ziesenhenné**, the *Begonian* February 1972, in which he concludes as follows: "...one should not be confused about it (*B. lindleyana*) as it is so distinctive. The entire plant is covered with felt-like reddish-brown hairs. The leaves are usually peltate with the distinctively-lobed-toothed margin."

I obtained my plant from **Linda Shires** at the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens in 2002. Since then, I have found it to grow with very little to no effort on

my part, except for repotting when it outgrew its container. The plant requires average humidity, average temperatures, and average light. Nothing special in any regard, which obviously means it will grow almost anywhere. The plant is so care free that I only recently realized that I had never tried to propagate it. I ordinarily propagate all my species in order to always have a backup plant in case the original one dies. In this instance, the parent plant was never in danger, so I just overlooked that aspect for the past three years. I now will begin propagating this plant and distributing it in the Houston area. There are several local growers who are moving rhizomatous begonias into their yard and this should certainly be one that

**The plant is so carefree that I only recently realized that I had never tried to propagate it. I ordinarily propagate all my species in order to always have a backup plant in case the original one dies.**

is included.

- (1) Doorenbos, J. *The Sections of Begonia*, 1998.
- (2) Burt-Utley, K. *A Revision of Central American Species of Begonia Section Gireoudia (Begoniaceae)* 1985, p. 121.

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*Continued from page 164..*

should be rethought and possible be made into a branch advisory committee.

Thank you for allowing me to be president for the past two years. Jan, Mary and Cheryl will serve you well in the coming years.

*Howard Berg*



## CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING

### September/October 2005

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.

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We thank **Janet Brown, Shirley Brown, and Thelma O'Reilly** for the following additions to the seed fund inventory:

***B. admirabilis*** Brade [Brazil] (Sect. *Begonia*)

***B. carolineifolia*** Regel [Mexico, Guatemala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*)

***B. lindleyana*** Walpers [Guatemala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*)

***B. roezlii*** Regel [Peru] (Sect. *Cyathocnemis*)

***B. U083***

***B. U257***

***B. U492***

No descriptions are provided for cultivar seeds. The appearance of the plant grown from hybrid seeds cannot be predicted.

For a description of B.U492 see Jul/Aug *Begonian* article by **Maureen O'Reilly** and a picture.

### 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. admirabilis*** Brade [Brazil] (Sect. *Begonia*) Stem thick-stemmed; lvs. quite succulent; fls. white; somewhat resembles *B. vitifolia* in height. The seed contributor says it looks just like #U083. (See below)

***B. carolineifolia*** Regel [Mexico, Guatemala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Stem rhizomatous, thick, succulent; lvs. Orbicular, palmately compound, 6-8 lflets., stalked, lanceolate to obovate, coarsely toothed; fls. Small, pink, in cymes on long peduncles, ovary with 3 unequal wings; spring.

***B. lindleyana*** Walpers, [Guatemala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Rhizomatous, usually erect to 12 inches, covered with red felt when young; lvs 3-8 inches long, obliquely broad ovate, cordate base, toothed; fls. white in broad cymes on hairy peduncles above foliage in spring to summer.

***B. ludwigii*** Irmscher [Ecuador] (Sect. *Knesebeckia*) Trunk like, non-ramified with creamy white flowers in spring and summer, striking deeply lobed leaves tipped with white.

***B. luxurians*** Scheidweiler [Brazil] (Sect. *Scheidweileria*) Stems tall, unbranched; lvs palmately compound, 7-17 leaflets 3-6" long, lanceolate, serrate, hairy, reddish above, green underneath; small cream colored flrs in cymes on long peduncles; summer.

***B. malabarica*** Lamarck [India] (Sect. ??) A thick stemmed begonia from west India grows to 2-3 feet; hairy leaves; large pinkish white pendant flowers. This name sometimes applied in error to *B. dipetala*.

***B. multinervia*** Liebmann, [Central America: Costa Rica, Panama] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Thick, erect, sparsely branched rhizome; large wavy-margined leaves, glossy green

leaves with reddish-brown veins; white to pink flowers in winter.

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

***B. obscura*** Brade [Brazil] (Sect. *Pritzelia*) Shrub, erect with red stems; leaves smooth, waxy, olive-green, with red petioles; flowers white.

***B. pedata*** Liebmann [Mexico] (Sect. *Quadriperigonina*) {Syn. U333} Tuberous, multiple slender stems, to 2 1/2 ft., from a tuber, each stem makes its own tuber at the end of the season; lvs. three lobed, white-hairy beneath, flrs. Pink.

***B. peltata*** Otto & Dietrich [Mexico, Guatemala] (Sect. *Gireoudia*) Stems 1-3 feet, succulent, hairy; leaves peltate, ovate, acuminate, green with white felting above; flowers white on long erect peduncles in winter.

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

***B. schmidtiana*** Regel [Brazil] (Sect. *Begonia*) Stems short, branching, herbaceous, hairy, red tinged; leaves obliquely ovate, shallowly lobed, toothed, green above, red beneath; many small axial blooms tinged pink with short peduncles. Good for hanging basket.

***B. U083***—Thick-stem, tall, corky, jointed with small, bright green splotches; leaves plain green, 5 in. X 6 in. Glabrous, entire-subentire, widen at the edge exactly opposite the umbo; red veins, red eye at the umbo

***B. U257*** [El Valle, Panama] A semper-florens with round green leaves and pink flowers.



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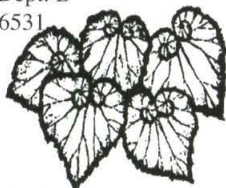
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# COMING EVENTS

**September 15-18, 2005 ABS Board Meeting and Installation of Officers. See all the information on page 173.**

**March 2-6, 2006 ABS Convention in Miami, Florida. More information next issue.**

**SWR Get-Together: Information coming.**

**March 22-24, 2008, Association of Australian Begonia Societies Convention in Brisbane, Australia. Begin your plans! More information to come.**

**Note below that all the new information on the Editor's new address is in; hopefully that is it with no more changes for awhile! Use the addresses and send me material!! I now have dial-up; if you send photos please send them 1 photo per email.**

**Due date for November/December issue is  
September 15.**

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The Spotted Begonia, *Begonia integrifolia*. (Painting by Wendy Gibbs)