

The

Begonian

January/February 2006

The **Begonian**

ISSN 0096-8684

Publication of the American Begonia Society

American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

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

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

To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

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

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

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

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Membership (subscription) \$25., US, Mexico, and Canada. \$45. Overseas airmail except Mexico and Canada.. Added member, same household, no charge. Consult Membership Chairman for sustaining, benefactor, life membership dues. U.S. currency only. Back issues (current volume) \$2.50.

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Cover

Front: *Jackie Davis*' hybrid of *B. sutherlandii*. Photo by *Mary Bucholtz*. See page 33 for more.

Back: *Beatrice Huckriede - Van der Laan* of the Netherlands sent us this photo taken by her sister while on a trip to Indonesia in Brastagi, south of Medan, Sumatra.

In This Issue

As most of you know by now, we have lost Mr. Begonia, **Rudy Ziesenhenne**. The editor wishes to dedicate this year's Volume 73 to this great man in our history. You will find tributes written by Janet Brown and the editor in this issue, but you are invited to write us about any memories or special photos you might have to include in other issues this year. We have lost a great friend of begonias and, in particular, of the *Begonian*.

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*Rudy Ziesenhenne in 1984.
Photo from Julie Vanderwilt*

Quick

Check your mailing label. If it reads **200603** or **200604**, your membership is about to expire. Please renew! We don't want to lose you.

President's Message

We begin the New Begonia Year with many bright prospects. First and foremost is the convention *BEGONIAS*.... *I NEVER KNEW IT COULD BE LIKE THIS!* just two months away in Miami. We hope we will have a record turnout for this great event. Please come to Miami!

The service for **Rudolf Ziesenne** on October 27 was a beautiful memorial to our beloved Mr. Begonia. Rudy's nephew **William Selover** summed up his life in all its phases in an eloquent tribute. Mr. Selover quoted **Mary Elizabeth Moultrie's** write up of her visit to Rudy's at the 1999 convention. And the begonia people in the audience discovered how important Rudy was to his family and to the community of Santa Barbara, how treasured he was by all who knew him. Many spoke of his influence on their lives and the goodness of this great man. After the service we gathered in "The Glen" at the Santa Barbara Bowl just up the hill from the Nursery on Milpas. **Julie Vanderwilt** and **Diane Dunhill** collected a table of Rudy's hybrids under the trees and several pictures of Rudy and his friends were placed around the glen. Somehow it was not such a sad occasion as a celebration of a truly good man whom we will never forget.

I would like to encourage you to visit begonias.org the official web site of the American Begonia Society. Recently I met with our Webmaster **Mary Margaret Rafferty** and we discussed advances and improvements to the site so it will better serve our members. Mary Margaret has done a great job with the site as you will see when you visit it and we owe her our thanks for her work. **Sandy Boyd** has taken over the job of Internet Editor in addition to her chairmanship of the MAL. One of the things you will be able to see

is her first internet edition of the MAL newsletter. In the coming months we will keep you up to date on new additions and changes to the site but please check it out, register and become an active participant. The web site will keep you up to date on all events and ABS news.

Congratulations to **Mark Tebbitt** on the publication by Timber Press of his amazing first book *BEGONIAS Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*. It is a pleasure to read whether you are interested in taxonomy, growing conditions, habitat, or hybridizing. Mark will be a speaker at the Miami convention—another good reason to attend. He speaks as well as he writes. We hope this book will be the first of many in the years to come. Thank you, Mark.

The deadline for submitting nominations for the 2006 Awards is January 3, 2006. There is still time to send in your nominations to **Ann Salisbury**, Awards Chairman and you can now send them by e-mail at geneann@sbcglobal.net. Check page 165 of the Sept/Oct. *Begonian* for details and please try to send in nominations for these awards. They are one way you can show your appreciation to those who do so much for the American Begonia Society.

There are some new appointments that you should be aware of. After many years of devoted service as Membership Chairman, **Arlene Ingles** has retired from that post. Arlene received a special award at the Annual Board Meeting in San Francisco in October to note her many years in a very difficult and demanding job. **Donna Marsheck** has been appointed the new Membership Chairman and we are very grateful to have her. In addition to this job Donna handles Back Issues and is the Editor of the Southwest Region newsletter, *The Begonia Leaflet*. She is a busy lady!

Past President Howard Berg has agreed to take on the job of Research Chairman. He replaces Past President **Bruce Boardman** who has held the job for many years. Thank you Bruce for your long and great service and thank you Howard for taking his place.

The big change over takes place on December 31, 2005 when we go to once a year ABS dues, due on that date. There is an excellent explanation on page 225 of the Nov/Dec. *Begonian*. It will be a much

more efficient and orderly system. Most branches have already switched to the first of the year date for their dues. We hope it will be an easy transition for all of us.

Remember to send me your newsletters.

We look forward to a great new year growing our beloved begonias and we'll see you all in Miami in March.

In friendly contact,

Janet Brown

Letters to the Editor

Better Photographs Needed

The picture on the cover of the Sept/Oct *Begonian* is what I was talking about at our meeting on July 30th! They could not get a **better shot for the cover** of our the national magazine! They couldn't take a better picture or crop the picture so that you wouldn't see the radiator. The picture should have been taken in such a way so that you could tell which plant in the shot is the **begonia!** The pictures of the Phila. Cactus and Succulent Society meeting are better! Spend less money on the paper used for the book and spend the money on good pictures! Great paper is good only if you have great artwork. If it is just text you can go with a cheaper paper. Cheaper paper will hide the quality of the artwork.

Leomar Cooper

*This letter was forwarded to me by **Bernie***

***Wiener** of the Delaware Valley Branch, but used here with the author's permission. I wanted to share it with you because it gives me a chance to say how much this shows that I need your photos for the *Begonian*. I must admit that because I received no photos from the 2005 Convention in time, I was forced to use one of my own taken*

*with my digital camera and so I can readily admit its flaws. I must also say I was so taken with seeing the great and rare to me blooms on this species that I didn't see much else and I wanted you to see it just as I did at the conservatory! But most of you take far better photos than I and they are always needed. Leo has since emailed to say that the photo by **David Menzies** on the November/December cover is great and I agree! Keep those stories and photos coming! And how about a few more letters to the editor; if you don't like or do like something, share your views.*

Newsletters Wanted

I would like to receive the newsletters from the different ABS branches. I will probably be the editor of our newsletter again next year for the Palm Beach Branch and it is always helpful to read about what other branches are doing. If the other editors want to exchange newsletter with me, they can email me and I can send our newsletters as a Word attachment to them. They can email information or mail them to me at:

Johanna Kitson

14206 Greentree Drive
Wellington, Florida 33414
email: oetkbtytc@aol.com

I hope everyone will share with Johanna.

Imperialis: **The Imperial Begonia** by Charles Henthorne

As the New Year rolls in, it is time for me to review last year's resolutions, and make new resolutions for the upcoming year. One of my 2005 resolutions was to try to present to Freda at least three articles for possible inclusion in the *Begonian*. I realized that I had only given her two, and to fulfill my resolution, I have decided to present a short essay on *B. imperialis*.

During the 2005 ABS National Convention "Begonia Madness", I had the privilege of obtaining a small start of a variety of *B. imperialis* from **Rehka Morris**. She had just completed an expedition to Mexico, and had discovered this variety of *B. imperialis* in the entrance to a cave. Her journey was well documented and reported in the May/June issue of the *Begonian*, in which she also described in some detail the approximate location where this variety of *imperialis* was found.

Leora and I have grown the more common *B. imperialis*, both separately and as a married couple, and we have always liked the more subdued form of this begonia. However, we were never really enamored of the plant. It was only after we placed the begonia obtained from Dr. Morris in a terrarium, followed by a five month growing period that we realized this indeed would be a plant that would give us visual pleasure for years to come.

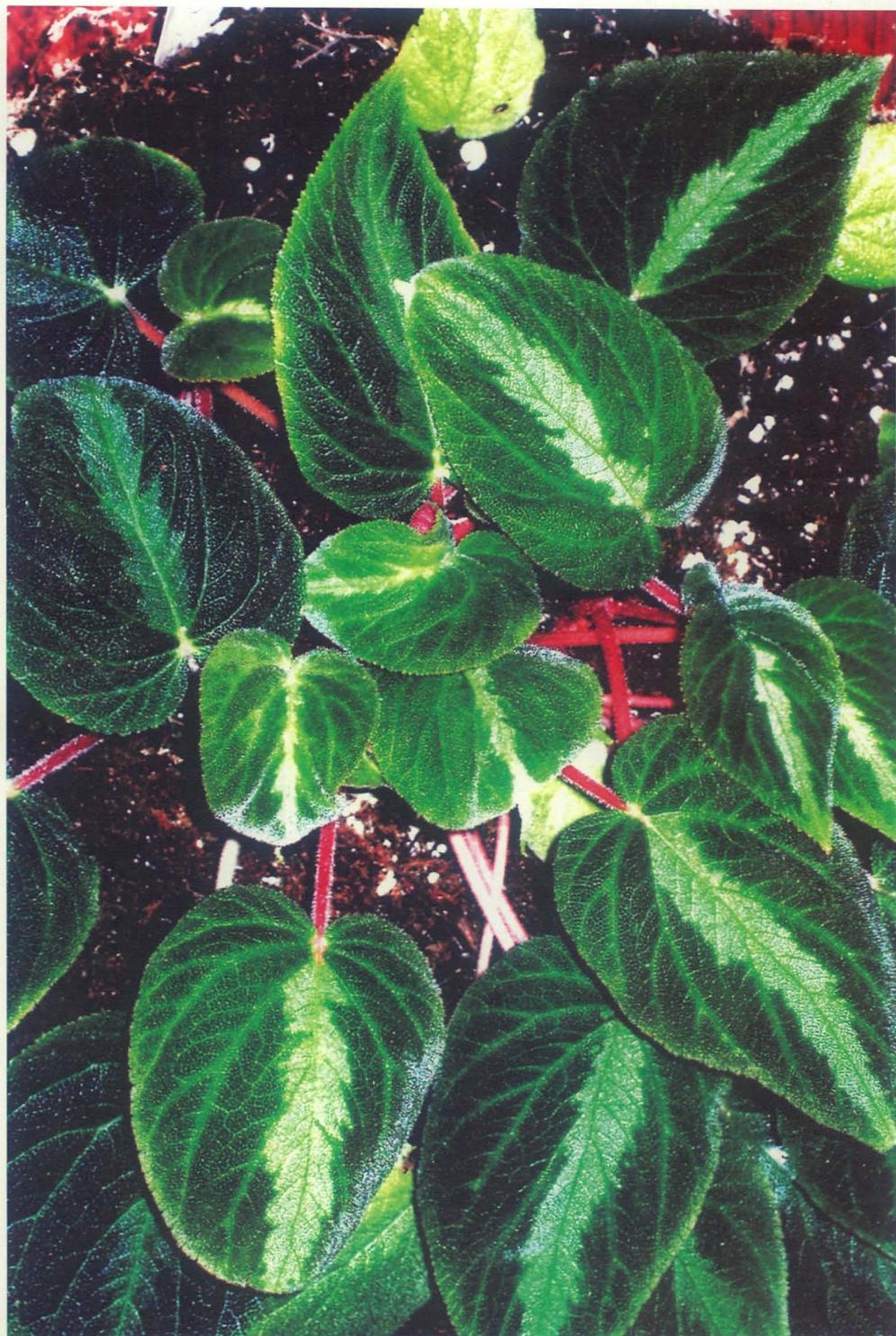
Two of the definitions for the word imperial, from which the name *imperialis* comes, are regal and majestic. As I looked recently at our new variety of *B. imperialis*, received from Dr. Morris, those two words came to mind. From a small plant of 3-4 leaves which was our introduction to this plant in early June, we

now have a nice sized mature plant getting ready to bloom for the first time. Of all our begonias in terrariums, this one is my favorite. When I look at it, I see many dark velvet green leaves which have a pustular surface, giving a white sheen to the entire leaf surface. Along with this beautiful presentation comes a very prominent silver mid vein all the way down the middle of the leaf. This along with the lanceolate shape of the leaf lends a visual effect that gives us immeasurable pleasure each time we look at the plant.

I have found that this plant is easily propagated via leaf cuttings. From one leaf with a stem of approximately 2 inches I have obtained 4 very nice plant starts, and another one, still attached to the leaf, is on its way to being able to sustain itself. We are going to be able to obtain at least 2-3 more plantlets before this leaf gives out. We root the new cuttings in a mixture that is the same as that in which the mature plant is growing. The terrarium is a closed environment, and when it is necessary to water we use Schultz fertilizer, 20-30-20, which the plant seems to like. Humidity of 80-90% seems to be the amount that this plant likes, as we have had no leaf loss and the plant continues to thrive in that high humidity environment.

This variety is a more compact and low growing plant than the *B. imperialis* that we have grown before. It also seems to like growing under 6-8 hours of artificial light, and on the lowest shelf of our plant stand. This leads me to believe that the

AT right, B. imperialis. Photo by Charles Henthorne



lower temperature found there encourages more growth on this form of *B. imperialis*. If anyone is able to obtain a start of this plant it would be well worth their time, and with a minimal amount of effort, they will have a plant that will give them pleasure and joy for years to come.

POSTSCRIPT

With this article I have fulfilled my 2005 resolution to give Freda Holley three articles to consider for publication in the Begonian. Now I have decided to make a new resolution for the year 2006. That resolution is to continue my efforts to send

articles in to the editor for her consideration. At the same time I would like to encourage others to do the same. If I can do it anyone can.

I would like to thank Charles for his articles and photos. He demonstrates the kind of participation in ABS and the Begonian that is needed. Won't you each make a resolution also to make our journal more of a shared effort? FH

What is the true *Begonia imperialis* Lemaire Patrick D. McMillan

I've seen many a *Begonia pustulata* labeled as *Begonia imperialis*, so what is *Begonia imperialis*? Does it have mottled leaves? Does *Begonia pustulata*? The type illustration (see Smith, Wasshausen, Golding and Karegeannes 1986) is frustratingly stylized and either exaggerates or misrepresents the vegetative and capsule features of this species, and has helped to confuse many Begonia enthusiasts.

I have provided the following key, taken from McMillan, Wyatt and Morris (2006) to aid in the separation of the two pustulate-leaved *Begonia* found in southern Mexico.

Staminate flowers with 4 tepals (2 sepals, 2 petals); pistillate flowers with 2 sepals and usually one reduced petal; leaves predominantly unmottled or rarely mottled with white, ovate to broadly ovate, obliquely asymmetrical at the base, with short acuminate tip
Begonia pustulata

Staminate and pistillate flowers with 2 tepals (sepals); leaves deep, dark green above with a broad area of lighter green or whitish variegation along the midrib, dark and often purplish

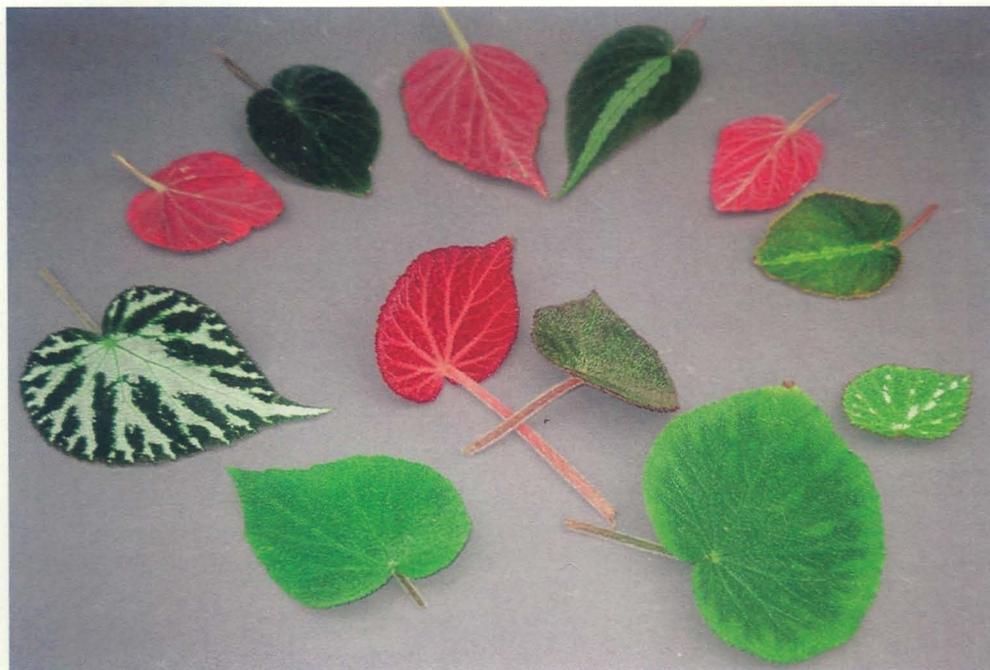
below, ovate, slightly asymmetrical to nearly symmetrical at base, with elongate acuminate tip.....*Begonia imperialis*

Begonia imperialis forms colonies by thin, creeping, surficial rhizomes. Leaves are ovate to narrowly ovate with long acuminate tips and nearly symmetric to moderately assymetric, cordate (heart-shaped) leaf bases. The upper leaf surface is pustulate and pubescent. The upper leaf surface is dark green to purplish-green, typically with a pronounced lighter colored mottling centrally along the midrib. The lower leaf surface varies from green to deep purple. The flowers are small, with sepals light pink to greenish-white, each sepal approximately 4 mm long and 3.5-4.0 mm wide, stamens typically number around 20. The outer surface of the sepal is covered with long shaggy trichomes ("hairs"), the pale bracts subtending the branches in the inflorescence are persistent, light brown with acuminate tips. Capsules are 2-locular and 3-winged, the upper wing is much longer (4-5 mm long) than the two lower wings (<1.5

Continued on page 16.



Above: 2 forms of *B. pustulata* showing the spacing of internodes, and *B. imperialis* with its close cluster of leaves. Below: On the top are paired set of leaves of 3 forms of *B. imperialis* collected by Rekha Morris in the Uxpanapa Region of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Veracruz in 2004. 6 leaves of *B. pustualata* are on the lower half of the photo. Photos by **Rekha Morris**.



In Memory: Rudy Ziesensenne

Our wonderful Rudy is gone but he has not left us alone. The incredible body of work he did on begonias will be our guide and inspiration for years to come. We can feel proud that we honored him many times over before his passing and thus he knew how much we loved and respected him. Perhaps we never told him how very much we would miss him.

1911 - Born in Chicago, Illinois

1923 - Moved to California

1933 - Married **Margaret Selover**

1934 - Doors opened on the Ziesensenne Begonia Nursery on Milpas Street, Santa Barbara.

1935 - Became the 127th member of the newly formed American Begonia Society.

(Rudy was a member of the Board of Directors at the signing of the incorporation papers for ABS. He was the only member left of the Charter Committee.)

1935 - First article in the May issue of the *Begonian* - a translation of *Die Begonien* by Karl Albert Fotsch.

1953-78 - Nomenclature Director ABS

1942 - Research Director

1952 - Reorganized the judging of begonia shows by training judges from within the society.

1953 - First judging class.

1967 - Organized the Classification Committee chaired by **Ruth Pease** to arrange begonias by their stem growth habit. This was a monumental work and resulted in the handbook *A Suggested Guide to Classification of Begonias for Show Purposes*.

Rudy devised the "point scoring" method we all use today. In his words

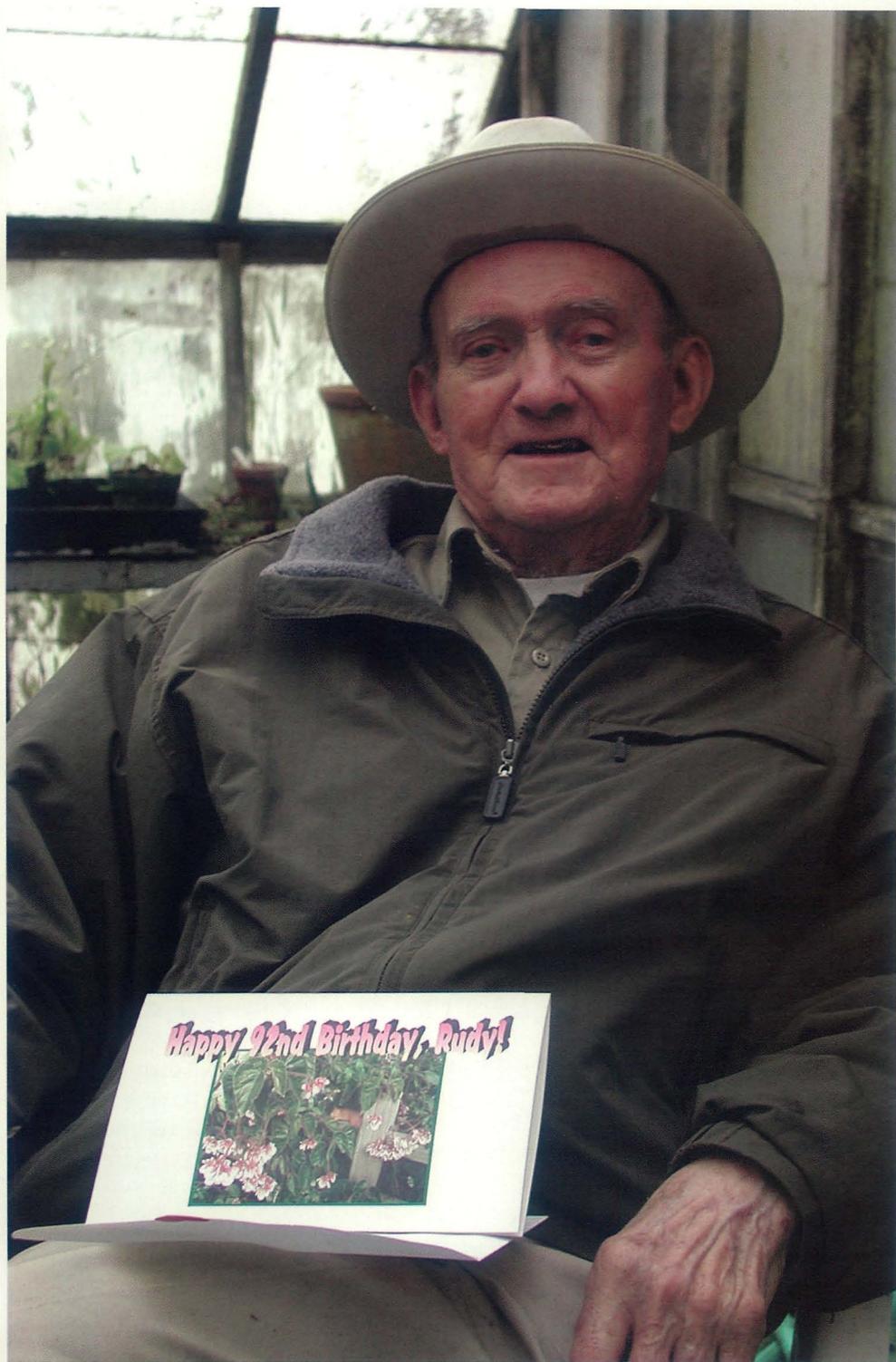
"Every plant you look at has 100 points, now deduct the faults."

Rudy won every major award of the American Begonia Society, the Alfred D. Robinson, Eva Kenworthy Gray and Herbert P. Dyckman.

His hybrids spanned the years and are with us and beloved by us still. To name just a very few: *B.* 'Dyclata', *B.* 'Gene Daniels', *B.* 'Freddie', *B.* 'Joe Hayden', *B.* 'Ramirez', *B.* 'Rudy's Luxurians', *B.* 'Delores' and *B.* 'Rudy'. He also inspired others to great heights of hybridizing including **Irene Nuss**, **Brad Thompson** and **Ruth Pease**.

The Margaret Lee Branch is working on a reissue of Rudy's famous "Notes" under the direction of **Thelma O'Reilly**. These are wonderful sources of information about the structure of begonias and will be available to all sometime next year. He has not really left us, after all. And in almost every issue of the *Begonian* in the 40's and after there is one of his wonderful botanical descriptions of a new species with perfect and complete drawings of the plant parts and the Latin description. These will continue to be reference works for all studying *Begoniaceae*.

I close with the last paragraph from the article I wrote about Rudy in the September/October, 1998 *Begonian*. "Rudy has always had time to help others, giving unselfishly of his time and knowledge. He has given over 210 begonia talks to various groups and branches over the years. If there is a question of identification, culture, growth patterns, or hybridizing Rudy is there to answer it. His begonia research work has placed him with the great ones of botany and horticulture and his name will always be synonymous with bego-



nias. What greater praise and honor can be given this man, Rudolf Ziesenhenné, than the title bestowed on him by those who love him - Mr. Begonia.

Janet Brown,
President ABS

Riches vanish, the mightiest states and most flourishing kingdoms may be overthrown, but the whole of nature must be obliterated before the genera of plants disappear. Plants remain and renew their flowers and, with gratitude enduring through the years, they shall always exhale the sweet memory of your name and make them more lasting than marble so that they will outlive those of kings and heroes.
Linnaeus

A tribute to Rudy Ziesenhenné from the Editor

I suspect that many of you hold small treasured memories of Rudy as do I.

I first communicated with Rudy when I still lived in Arkansas and I ordered seed from him of Rex begonia cultivars. He continued to sell these seed long after he had discontinued the mail order of plants. He was always generous with the seed he sent and I had so many lovely cultivars that I grew and passed on at plant sales. He was just as generous with growing advice and encouragement, not only to me but to all who contacted him. I will always think of him whenever I see a Rex.

Then at my first national convention in Oklahoma City in 1994, Rudy was a featured speaker. I felt as though I were in the presence of begonia kingdom royalty as I listened that day. Yet, he was always approachable and kind to those of us who

were learners.

My next memories are of visiting him in his nursery in Santa Barbara and seeing him converse with such members as **Gene Salisbury** and **Scott Hoover** pointing out the features of this or that species. This was always a favorite tour at any convention. I see him still moving among his begonias to identify this one or that one for us. I also still treasure *Begonia corallina* which I found there after a long search. I have tried to grow, set seed, and pass this one on since we have lost so many of our once familiar species. Many begonias that could no longer be found elsewhere grew in Rudy's greenhouse.

Rudy always had a special place in his heart for the *Begonian* and when he had the opportunity to be recognized in some way by the society, he chose to have the Rudy Ziesenhenné Award for Editorial Excellence given in his honor. It is for me truly one of life's greatest honors to hold one of those awards as I know it is for other editors who have received it. He of course will live on in that award and in the countless pages of the *Begonian* that he contributed.

To say that he is admired by ABS members is surely inadequate; revered is a better description of our feelings. There is little that we can do to add to the luster of his memory, but as a small taken, we would like to dedicate this the 73rd Volume of the *Begonian* that begins with this issue to Rudy Ziesenhenné.

Rudy has asked that any remembrances in his honor be made in the form of donations to the American Begonia Society.

We have lost a great one and we will miss him.

FH

Begonias in the Land of Eucalyptus Trees!

by Rekha Morris

As a teenager I spent endless hours looking at maps and praying that one day I would be able to travel extensively. Since then I have been lucky enough to visit all the places which haunted my imagination and more. However, Australia remained 'terra incognita', the dark continent, much as Africa was to Europeans of centuries past. Having read about kangaroos, koalas and platypus, all creatures far removed from the world I grew up in, the land they inhabited seemed equally remote and unreal. So it was with utter disbelief that last year I read an e-mail from **Tricia Marriott** inviting me to participate in the 8th Australian Begonia Convention in Ballarat, Victoria, March 12-15th, 2005. This sense of disbelief, much like that of Alice on seeing the white rabbit consulting his watch and hurrying by, continued to linger even as **Michael** drove me to Atlanta early this March to fly to Melbourne. I looked at my watch many times [occasionally even muttering "Oh my fur and whiskers"] during the long hours it took to fly from Atlanta to Detroit to Tokyo to Bangkok, and finally to Melbourne! And then I was there at midnight several days later being greeted and driven to their home by Tricia and **Peter Marriott**, who did not like the cat vanish slowly leaving but a grin behind to deepen my sense of living in a waking dream.

Both out of childhood curiosity and to anchor myself securely on this island continent, what I wanted most to see were kangaroos in the wild. So a day later on the way to Ballarat Peter detoured to indulge my fancy. Luckily within minutes of our arrival at a site where Peter had frequently seen kangaroos, we spotted several resting in the shade of an eucalyptus grove,

so finally I knew that I was indeed in Australia.

The 2005 convention sponsored and skillfully organized by the Melbourne Begonia Society and the Victorian Begonia Society was as educative and fun filled as I had been led to believe by those who had been fortunate enough to attend Australian begonia conventions in years past.

On the opening day, Saturday the 12th, there were 3 presentations [besides mine on the Begonias of Oaxaca state], each equally absorbing and equally well illustrated. As an opening salvo we were given an overview of *Begonias in Victoria*, followed by **Ross Bolwell's** *The Power of Information*. Ross is in the process of creating an encyclopaedic data base of species and hybrid begonias, and his short overview of the material was indicative of the Herculean task that he has undertaken single handedly. I was reminded of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson undertaking the preparation of a dictionary of the English Language single handedly, while the French language dictionary had involved multiple members of the French Academy and had taken years to be completed.

Ralph Willmore's presentation, *Understanding the Tuberous Begonia*, opened by a presentation of *B. veitchii* shown growing in the crevices of rocks at the Inca site of Macchu Pichu in Peru. This clearly and in no uncertain terms underscored the one essential point regarding tuberous begonias: "that watering is the key to success or failure" with tuberous begonias. I was riveted by the detailed information on starting tuberous begonias from cuttings, as I cannot remember the number of times I have failed in such attempts. This was followed by my own

presentation of the *Begonias of Oaxaca State, Mexico*, and then by **Peter Sharp**'s lively and informative account of semper-florens begonias appropriately titled, *Semper-florens Begonias - The Handmaiden Comes of Age*. Those of you who have read his article in the Sep./Oct. 2005 issue of *the Begonian* will feel as impressed by Peter's scholarly presentation as I was with the added charm of his humorous oral presentation at the convention.

There were 5 sessions besides mine on the *Begonias of Veracruz State, Mexico* on the following day, Sunday the 14th, covering a range of topics from tissue culture by **Chris Hack** to hybridizing begonias by **Ivy McFarlane**. Ivy is a well known Australian hybridizer and for those wishing to create new begonias her talk, *The Ongoing Quest-Hybridizing with Intent*, was a masterly synopsis of what is clearly a painstaking process requiring years of expertise, experimentation, and heroic self discipline to be able to cull and discard dozens of seedlings any of which I would be pleased to include in my collection. **Marion Kerr**'s *Propagating Begonias in Northern Victoria* completed what I consider to be a masterly triad of talks on how to grow begonias. Marion's account of growing cane-like and rhizomatous begonias from cuttings and leaf wedges respectively covered all that remained to be covered about growing begonias [which had not been touched on by Willsmore and McFarlane]. Or so I thought until **Marilyn Watson**'s witty presentation of one more twist to growing begonias, *Standards and Twists*, an account of how to grow and maintain standards and variations by plaiting several stems to create an intricate woody pattern for displaying splendid orbs of begonia flowers and foliage. **Maurice D'Arcy**'s *Flower Power* not only provided information on the growing mix he uses for cut-

tings but added a specific and useful tip: soak cuttings 24 hours in diluted growth hormone for greater success.

The convention had been planned to coincide with the Ballarat Begonia Festival at the Ballarat Botanic Garden where the breathtaking displays of tuberous begonias in the Botanic Garden's collection and those on display elsewhere left me with an even more acute sense of longing, envy and despair than **Mike Flaherty**'s slides a few years ago of the sumptuous, intoxicating, and for me the unattainable Eden of tuberous begonias.

Visits to gardens such as those of **Marilyn Watson**, **Russ Pursell**, **Ray Trickett**, **Rob Searle** and **Jenny Foster** not only added to my ever increasing sense of wonder and excitement at seeing such a wealth of begonias grown to such perfection but were also delectable culinary experiences. At each garden we were served a range of pastries, confections and treats to almost rival the visual display of begonias. At the final garden I visited, that of Rob Searle, his wife Joy's repast of pastries was a fitting finale to an experience of delights such as I have hardly ever encountered to date.

Ballarat itself is a charming, and as I was to learn through the Sound and Light show, an historic town. I left Melbourne reluctantly. Not only had I been introduced and immersed in a kaleidoscope of indelible visual experiences, but I had been lavished with incomparable warmth and hospitality by all the begonia enthusiasts I met at the convention. While I shall ever remain indebted to all these remarkable begonians and to the generosity of the Melbourne and Victoria Begonia Societies who made this trip possible and extremely pleasurable for me, I am at the proverbial loss of words to express what I feel for my hosts, **Tricia** and **Peter Marriott**. Perhaps a little of what their friendship

Continued from page 8.

mm long). Capsules are typically redish in coloration and sparsely covered with shaggy trichomes. Rekha Morris has observed flowering in wild populations in October-November though Jimenez & Schubert (1997) state that it flowers in August, and collections examined from the Uxpanapa region of Veracruz confirm that the flowering period in the wild lasts from August through November. In cultivation, I have found that the species flowers most profusely in the fall but these plants in the university greenhouse collected by Rekha Morris appear to always have a bloom or two throughout the year.

Much confusion has surrounded the interpretation of what is and what is not *Begonia imperialis* in the horticultural trade. In my experience much, if not all, of what is currently offered as *B. imperialis* are actually mottled variants of the much more abundant *Begonia pustulata*. The key provided above is applicable to wild material but cultivated forms of *Begonia pustulata* may not always show the typical, elongate, thin, repent rhizomes of the wild forms of *B. pustulata*. Variegated forms have been encountered in Chiapas, Mexico (plants cultivated at La Posada Loma and Tropical World, both in Fortin de las Flores, Veracruz and also at Clemson University) and a reddish form with lightly mottled leaves has been collected in the environs of Zongolica, Veracruz by Dr. Rekha Morris (plants cultivated at Clemson University). A particularly nice mottled form of *B. pustulata* with shorter than typical rhizomes is cultivated by my dear friend **Anne St. Jean-Baptiste** in her extensive collection at Papillote Gardens in the Commonwealth of Dominica. The typical form of *B. pustulata* is represented by lime green postulate leaves which clamber on and around seepages and running water over limestone or other calcareous

rock such as abounds near Valle Nacional along highway 175 just south of the Veracruz border in Oaxaca where it has been documented at several locations by Rekha Morris.

The diagnostic characteristic listed in most taxonomic treatments (ie., Jimenez and Schubert 1997) has been the staminate flowers of *B. pustulata* containing 4 tepals. This character appears to be valid, but a more readily available distinction is provided by the morphological features of the rhizomes and leaf shapes. The leaf shape of *Begonia imperialis* differs dramatically from that of *B. pustulata*, being much more elongate in outline and more elongate-acuminate at the tip. The leaves of *B. pustulata* are more stocky, and broadly ovate in outline with at least moderately asymmetrical bases. A range of leaf shapes for both species are represented in fig. 1. The rhizomes in *B. imperialis* are more slender (give measurements) and display much more congested internodes than *B. pustulata*. Internodes in *B. imperialis* range from 1 to 2 cm while those of wild types of *B. pustulata* range from 3 to 4 cm. *B. imperialis* as interpreted here has been in cultivation, as evidenced by photographs in EXOTICA.

In the wild, *Begonia imperialis* is apparently restricted in its native environs to evergreen tropical forests (selva alta perennifolia and selva mediana subperennifolia) below 200 m in elevation of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in the southern portion of Est. Veracruz. The Isthmus has been devastated by extensive logging and conversion to cattle ranches and agriculture and only a very tiny fraction of the once extensive forests of this region remain. This region is a center of endemism for *Begonia* and also harbors the highly endangered *Begonia lynceorum* which may be found growing with *B. imperialis*

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U083	<i>undulta</i>	154*-5		
U168	<i>vaginins</i>	63		
U257	<i>valida</i>	102		
U304	<i>vanderwateri</i>	69		
U315	<i>venosa</i>	67, 216		
U344	<i>venusta</i>	102		
U360	<i>versicolor</i>	152, 191		
U388	<i>vincentina</i>	67		
U401	<i>vitifolia</i>	92		

Editor's Notes

To those whose letters I have not answered, please know that it is because we are still overwhelmed with our move and its related problems. I have written several columns telling everyone about our new environment and what is going on here, but these had to be deleted because of last minute items that came in and needed the space. Still I keep feeling that I have communicated these!

I'd like to use this column to tell you about hurricane messages. As most of you know we were far from the coast and had no problems other than high winds as it came inland west of us. Houston as well mostly escaped damage. I have heard from **Cindy Moran** in Baton Rouge whom many of you know; she fared well, but she sent me articles about the sad state of the New Orleans Botanical Garden. Its main problem now is just having enough income to survive (Pretty much the scene with all of Louisiana, I'm afraid.) You can find more info at www.nola.com. Baton Rouge and Shreveport were the only major Louisiana cities without major damage, but Baton Rouge is coping with its huge increase in population as a result of the ruin below in the state.



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I have heard from **Charles Jaros** that the convention is on as planned although a number of people had damage from the last hurricane - **Tim Anderson** lost several greenhouses and **Johanna Kitson** lost all her begonias, but the single one she brought inside. What a weather year. **Joyce** and **Doug Pridgen** fortunately escaped major damage. Florida knows how to get up and recover though and we'll have a great convention!

What a weather year. Let's all pray for a better and happier 2006!

FH

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Mike Ludwig maintains the seed bank and reports the status at each meeting. Ed Bates prepares the Seed Fund message for each issue of the *Begonian*. Each year, in the Jan/Feb issue, a complete inventory of available seeds is prepared and printed in the *Begonian*. In each issue new additions to the inventory are listed along with deletions of "sold out" items. There is insufficient room for descriptions of the entire list in a single magazine. All new additions to the seed fund and selections from the inventory list are described in each issue of the magazine.

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The following have made this listing possible: **Howard and Barbara Berg, Beatrice Huckriede, Bill O'Geary, Dominique Senchal, Eleanor Calkins, Iris Bird, Ingeborg Foo, Jackie Davis, Jacky Duruisseau, Janet Brown, Thelma O'Reilly, Shirley Brown, Scott Hoover, Gene and Anne Salisbury, Rehka Morris, Normand Dufresne, Morris Mueller, Michael Ludwig, Johanna Kitson, New England Tropical Conservatory, Roberto Brin.** Along with many others that have contributed over the years.

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Begonia albo picta (Limited)
B. albo-picta rosea barkeri?
B. boliviensis (Limited)
B. 'Cachuma'
B. carolineifolia
B. crassicaulis
B. cucullata var *arenosicola*
B. cucullata var *arenosicola* hybrid
B. cucullata var *cucullata*
B. dipetala (Limited)
B. dregei
B. echinosepala (Limited)
B. fischeri
B. glabra
B. gracilis var *martiana*
B. grandis var. *alba*?

B. griesea
B. heracleifolia
B. heracleifolia var *sunderbruckii*
B. johnstonii
B. kellermanii
B. leathermaniae
B. lindleyana
B. ludwigii
B. luxurians
B. malabarica (Limited)
B. mariti
B. multangula
B. nelumbiifolia
B. paleata (Limited)
B. peltata
B. pinetorum (white flowered)
B. pustulata
B. robusta
B. roezlii
B. sericoneura
B. solananthera
B. stigmosa
B. 'Sword Fighter'
B. ulmifolia
B. venosa
B. vitifolia
B. wallichiana
 U # 014
 U # 083
 U # 388
 U #412
 U #415
 U #443
 U #444

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B. heracleifolia #2
B. heracleifolia #3 white flowers
B. heracleifolia #5
B. hirtella
B. incarnata
 FL mixed seed
 Mexican species seed, mixed
 Mixed Canes
B. Xsemperflorens—Large red fl
B. Xsemperflorens—Large wh/pk fl
B. Xsemperflorens—Large Pink fl
B. Xsemperflorens—Picottee fl

Conservation Comments

Bill Claybaugh

Conservation Chairman

Begonias as yard plants

Over the past two summers I've been experimenting with various begonias to test their suitability as yard plants. Before starting the work, I established several judging criteria, for obviously if one is careful, you can usually find some spot in the yard for about any begonia. No, I wanted to go one step farther and find plants that met some tough requirements; those varieties that would thrive in the ground as perennials in a typical flowerbed, and with little special care. The specific criteria were:

1. Resistant to freezing: able to withstand 25 degrees Fahrenheit for several hours without cover, or longer with light cover.
2. Quick growing: the plant must rapidly recover once spring arrives.
3. Large in size: attain a height of at least two feet in one growing season, three to four feet preferred.
4. Sun resistant: able to withstand 2 to 4 hours of direct sun during some part of the day.
5. Attractive: I like them all, but the reds, silvers and pure greens are especially nice.

In addition, I wanted some ground covers with all these requirements, except height, to fill in around these plants to enhance the overall appearance.

I started this work by planting six-inch pots of over 70 different varieties in various spots in eight large flowerbeds all around the yard. Sun intensity varied widely from full shade to full sun. It

quickly became apparent that high levels of sunlight would burn almost all plants when they are first exposed. Even the best, most sun-resistant plant takes some time to build up its immunity. As an example, I put an especially fine specimen of *B. nelumbiifolia* into a location with four hours of direct afternoon sun. It immediately sun burned, losing all of its leaves. I then moved the plant (a bare rhizome) to a shaded area and over a two-month period, slowly exposed it to more and more direct sunlight. Finally, the plant was able to withstand the same four hours of direct sun that had previously burned it.

The ability to withstand low temperatures, and recover is a must for me. I want these plants to be perennials, not annuals. The first spring I was surprised that many of my favorites just couldn't recover fast enough to be attractive. Among these attractive but slow or low growing varieties are *B. heracleifolia*, *manicata*, *paleata*, 'Cajon Valley', 'Rip Van Winkle', and 'Sir John Falstaff'. Before long, I realized that I needed to concentrate on large growing varieties. That conclusion seems obvious now, but at the time, I was enchanted by some low growing rhizomatous plants that just can't make it in the flowerbed.

Let me now share my results after these two years of experimentation. For canes, most will meet all the above requirements except direct sun exposure. Among those that I tested that were especially nice were *B.* 'Di-Erna', 'Hazels Front Porch', 'Superba Kenzii', 'Emerald King', 'Esther Albertine', and 'Sophie Cecile'. Several others show promise but need more time in the ground to get the size desired. I find that canes need something special to really make it in the sun. One such special ingredient is *B. U062*. There are currently five very attractive and popular canes that have *B. U062* in their background, namely *B.* 'Burning Bush', 'Serenity', 'Sinbad',



In the ground in Bill Claybaugh's garden: *B. nelumbifolia*, above left, and *B. 'Holley Moon'*, above right. Below, *B. 'Washington State'* and *B. 'Plum Gorgeous'*, plus *B. thiemei* and *ke llermanii* at the bottom right. Photos by **Bill Claybaugh**



'Don Miller', and 'Maurice Amey'. These plants with their red and silver coloration will take a high level of direct sun without burning. Of course *B. U062* is the most sun resistant, but it will not tolerate cold and dies somewhere around 40 degrees. The variety *B. 'Looking Glass'* also appears to be sun resistant to some degree.

Many of the red tinted rhizomatous variety are good under the conditions tested, the best being *B. 'Selph's Mahogany'*, 'Lucky Stars', 'Bashful Bandit', 'Plum Gorgeous', 'Risas Reward', and 'Kit Jeans Mounger'. These plants will take the elements, cold or sun, and just keep coming back for more. Some of the black rhizomatous plants, *B. 'Black Coffee'*, 'Black Velvet', 'Black Beauty', and 'Joe Hayden', are almost as good but are smaller, don't recover as fast, and may not be as sun resistant.

When we go to dark green/red/silver colored plants we find several winners,

most of which are quite large. I especially like *B. 'Big Mac'*, 'Mary Bucholtz', 'Mirage', 'Shadow Box', and 'Caribbean King'. Each of these will exceed three feet in height, quickly, and have large luxurious leaves. For the light green colored plants, my favorites are *B. nelumbiifolia*, *pope-noei*, *sericoneura*, *fribergensis*, 'Holley Moon', and 'Washington State'. Anyone of these makes a great accent plant to enhance any flowerbed.

Finally, for ground cover I found that *B. convolvulacea*, 'Withlacoochee', and 'Panasoffkee' will rapidly return the next spring and get more lush and vigorous throughout the summer.

In closing I'll note one last thing: if I only grew seven begonias as yard plants they would be *B. nelumbiifolia*, *scabrida*, 'Caribbean King', 'Washington State', 'Plum Gorgeous', 'Risa's Reward' and 'Di-Erna'; the best of the best.

Continued from page 16.

at its single documented location. Though it has been attributed to adjacent regions in Chiapas state I have seen no specimens to corroborate this range extension and it may indeed be endemic to the state of Veracruz.

Literature Cited:

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- McMillan, P.D., G. Wyatt and R. Morris. 2006. The *Begonia* of Veracruz: Additions and Revisions. Acta Botanica Mexicana, in press
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Key, Part II: Annotated Species List. Smithsonian Contributions to Botany. 60:584 pp.

Figure 1: Variation in leaf shape and mottling in *Begonia imperialis* and *Begonia pustulata*.

Begonia Leaflet

The *Begonia Leaflet* is the quarterly newsletter of the Southwest Region/American Begonia Society. It has a new editor, **Donna Marsheck** and she's looking for new material on begonias - write her an article about growing in the warmer climates. The newsletter is also looking for new readers; you can enjoy it by joining the Southwest Region for just \$10. Contact **Leora Fuentes** at 2200 Glen Forest Ln., Plano, TX 75023; Ph: 972-964-6417.



Above left, *B. boliviensis* growing in Jackie Davis' garden. Photo by Mary Bucholtz.
Above right: Jackie with one of her unnamed Rex hybrids. Below, the begonia lined walk in Jackie's garden. Last two photos by Johanna Zinn.



A Visit to Jackie Davis' Garden by Johanna Zinn

On September 15, 2005, several of us who attended the fall ABS Board Meeting in San Francisco were fortunate to meet **Jackie** and **Harry Davis** and see their lovely garden in Aptos, CA. **Mary Bucholtz, Charles Jaros, Janet and Lou Welsh, Maxine Zinman** and I went to Santa Cruz to visit the University of California Santa Cruz Arboretum. **Charles Jaros** had heard that Vietnamese begonias were being grown at the UCSC Arboretum. After touring their gardens and snapping many photos of several Vietnamese begonia seedlings, one of our tour guides suggested that we contact another begonia lover who lived in the area. Jackie and **Harry Davis** graciously agreed to show six self-invited guests around their garden.

Jackie has been growing begonias since the early 1970s. She saw an article in the Sunnyvale newspaper featuring **Peggy Lynn**, an ABS member who wanted to start a local branch. The article featured several beautiful begonias and Jackie says she "was hooked". Jackie doesn't remember her first begonia.

She said that Peggy was so generous with her cuttings, she didn't start with one plant, she started with ten. After moving to Aptos in 1976, Jackie and Harry attended the Capitola Flower Festival and admired the beautiful tuberous begonias on the floats.

Jackie also visited Antonelli Brothers Begonia Gardens to see their tuberous begonias and decided that she would like to grow more tuberous begonias.

Jackie also loves cane begonias, but the cool, foggy climate of Aptos is more suited to tuberous begonias. To protect her canes from wind, fog, and rain, she grows

them against her house. She feels that she can't compete with the cane growers in Santa Clara, but enjoys growing happier tuberous begonias than she grew in Santa Clara. Jackie and Harry still attend begonia meetings in Santa Clara and also belong to the Monterey Branch

After deciding that she would focus on growing tuberous begonias, Jackie said that she "talked her husband" into building her a greenhouse and covering her entire growing area with lattice. This paragon of virtue waters every third day for four hours. What a guy!

She also hung shop lights and converted what had been a wine cellar in her basement into an area where she starts seeds and grows species. When her species bloom, she tries to self-pollinate them and sends the resulting seeds to the ABS Seed Fund. Many of her species she grows in the garden-and they look wonderful.

Jackie had beautiful plants [plural] of *B. boliviensis* growing in pots in the ground, several pots of *B. gracilis* on a table, a lovely *B. fuchsoides* in bloom hanging at eye level, and *B. macrocarpa*, *B. domingensis*, *B. luxurians* and others spread around the garden. Jackie said that she is always amazed when a plant from Brazil grows well in her yard.

To grow her beautiful tuberous begonias, Jackie and Harry start removing the tubers from their resting place in the loft of their garage in late February or March. They pot 20 to 30 tubers a day for 4 weeks. She grows all her tuberous in pots to foil the gophers. She said that she has seen her flowerpots move, and when she lifts up the pots, she will find a large hole under the pots.



*Is this the lost and legendary **B. daedelea**? Read about it in Rekha Morris's next account
her trip to Mexico, Oct. 2005 which will appear in our next issue.*

Her potting soil is Miracle Grow potting soil, OSH potting soil, perlite and last year's soil. She fertilizes on the 1st and the 15th of the month until October. By then, most of her plants have finished blooming, although a few bloom into December. After all the leaves have fallen off her tuberous plants, Jackie trims off the stalks and lays the pots on their sides until the rest of the stems have fallen off. She then puts the tubers in smaller pots, sets the pots in trays and returns them to the loft over the garage.

Jackie also enjoys hybridizing. She has been focusing on tuberous crosses for the last five years, but has some lovely rex crosses growing in her greenhouse. She has more success setting seed in the fall when the weather is warmer. She puts bread tags on her crosses and said that

she relies on "luck". She has crossed *B. pearcei*, *B. boliviensis*, and *B. cinnabarina* with each other and other tuberous many times and has several plants from those crosses. She limits the crosses she makes since her seed growing space is limited.

When I asked Jackie to name her favorite begonia, she said that although she is very fond of rexes, her favorite begonia is the one she is "looking at or holding".

When I asked her what she liked best about begonias, she replied that she enjoyed having so many begonias species to try, that she has a great deal of fun watching them grow, and that she enjoys sharing them. We thank her for sharing time with us in her garden.

ABS MEMBERSHIP

I realize the job is a big responsibility to be "Custodian" of your membership and I will work diligently to continue the work that Arlene has done for ABS over the years. It will continue to be challenging for a few more months to get everyone on the same dues pay schedule, but together we will get this all figured out and it will become so much easier to keep everyone receiving their treasure, the *Begonian*.

Since Arlene sent me her information, I have entered fifteen new members to ABS as of October 28: from CA - 8, CT - 1, FL - 1, IA - 1, LA - 1, MD - 1, NJ - 1, and NY - 1. New member packets have

been mailed and everyone should have received their first copy of the *Begonian*.

This is absolutely wonderful. Let's watch those numbers grow by the next publication. This is going to be great fun.

Donna Marshek,
Membership Chair

We all welcome Donna Marshek as Membership Chair. She has promised to provide us with a regular update on how our membership changes. FH

Make a resolution!
Recruit one new member for ABS in 2006.

Unidentified Species Update

Thelma O'Reilly, Project Director

Mark C. Tebbitt, associated with Brooklyn Botanic Garden, is a botanist and taxonomist who has a dedicated interest in the *Begoniaceae*. He is the author of a new outstanding publication, *Begonias*.

The American Begonia Society is fortunate to have this talented young man as an active member with a keen interest in begonia species.

I am thrilled to announce that Mark has agreed to assist with the identification of begonia species. He has examined and identified all of the U numbers in the following list. Only a few had been previously identified.

U045	a hybrid
U049	<i>B. juliana</i>
U073	<i>B. oxysperma</i>
U078	<i>B. maculata</i> var. <i>maculata</i>
U089	<i>B. quadrialata</i> ssp. <i>nimbaensis</i>
U116	section <i>Petermania</i>
U166	<i>B. hernandioides</i>
U292	<i>B. obovoidea</i>
U304	section <i>Pritzelia</i>
U337	<i>B. multangula</i>
U340	<i>B. multangula</i>
U352	<i>B. muricata</i>
U353	<i>B. longifolia</i>
U415	<i>B. alveolata</i>
U416	<i>B. alveolata</i>
U417	<i>B. multangula</i>
U423	<i>B. multangula</i>
U427	<i>B. muricata</i>
U429	<i>B. longifolia</i>

U432
U480

B. breedlovei
B. handelii var.
handelii

Welcome to the Riverside Branch

We have a new Branch, The Riverside Branch, Riverside, CA., It was my pleasure at our fall board meeting, September 17, 2005, to present their ABS Charter to Riverside Branch President, Ruth Wilson. They begin their venture with 16 active members.

Other elected officers of the Branch are:

Vice -President, **Joanna Grosso**
Secretary, **Margie Wayne**
Treasurer, **Sharon Nelson**
National Director, **James Johnson**

We welcome our new friends to ABS and Wish them many happy years of begonia growing.

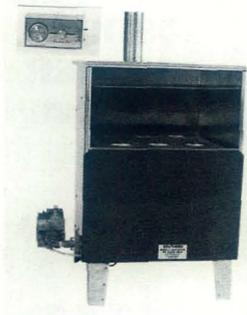
ABS is always looking for people who love and grow begonias. Our Begonian is full of useful information about our favorite plant and branches can offer even more information. If your area does not have a branch, write to me (address page 39) for information about forming a branch.. It only takes seven (7) interested ABS members.

Mary Bucholtz,
Branch Relations Chair

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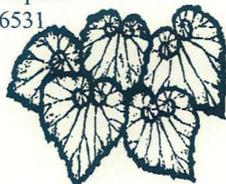
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COMING EVENTS

March 2-6, 2006 ABS Convention in Miami, Florida at the Sheraton Miami Mart. The convention planning is moving ahead full steam. Packets should be in your hands in early January. It will be a great one!

SWR Get-Together: *Information coming.*

March 22-26, 2008., Association of Australian Begonia Societies Convention in Brisbane, Australia. Begin your plans! More information to come.

**Due date for the February/March 2006 issue is
January 1, 2006**

*Remember to use the Current Officers' Page
Addresses; changes and corrections occur with each issue.
Note the new membership chair information on these pages.*

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