

The
Begonian

July/August 2007

The **Begonian**

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American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

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

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

To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

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

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

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

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Cover

Front: **Rekha Morris's** photos of *B. xanthina* show us an incredible diversity of the species in various photos beginning with this one.

Back: Here's another look at *B. xanthina* from Rekha; now check out page 135.

In This Issue

Directory of Begonia Societies 140

In this issue are several articles about species. The information presented by **Millie Thompson, Rekha Morris, Charles Henthorne,** and **Bill Claybaugh** should help in the growing of these unusual plants that are not known for being easy to grow. Plus learn about an aid for growing them from **Johanna Zinn**. In addition there are a number of new Unidentified Species listed with information from **Thelma O'Reilly**. The Buxton Branch has been busy this spring and they share with us some of their exciting activities.

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Vote!

Send Award
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Send Holiday
Greetings

Donations!

President's Message

Congratulations to *Begonian* Editor **Freda Holley** as she completes 10 marvelous years as our Editor (1997-2007). There is no doubt that the *Begonian* is the most important part of the American Begonia Society. It is our heart and soul and intellect. Freda has done an amazing job of covering all our interests, including growing, hybridizing, and the scientific study of *Begoniaceae*. She has made friends across the world for herself and for the American Begonia Society and she has brought us together in friendly contact. Her *Begonians* will be treasured forever. Thank you, Freda Holley.

The Southwest Region Annual Get-Together in Oklahoma City was lots of fun with a little bit of hard work to add spice. The tours were very interesting, the weather most cooperative (it only rained once and no tornadoes), the seminars superb. Freda Holley has been installed as the new Director of Southwest Region as **Gene Salisbury** finishes his great term. The Plant Sale was fantastic. Thanks to Ann and Gene Salisbury and other members of the Barkley Branch for putting on a great Get-Together.

The ABS meeting covered a great many topics which you can follow when the Proceedings are ready for the next *Begonian*. I was a bit premature in my announcement of the new web site in my last letter. It was reported that it will be a few months before it is finished which means mid summer. It takes a great deal of work from many people so that when you go on the site all you have to do is "click" on your favorite topic.

The *Begonians* on DVD project is moving to completion and that too will be ready by September, possibly sooner. **Cheryl Lenert** received approval by the Board to hold the 2008 convention in

Houston, Texas sometime in May.

I wish to thank our Parliamentarian, **Linda Lawson**, for her invaluable help in keeping us moving along. She is very patient with my shortcomings with "Robert's Rules of Order" and I am very grateful for her help.

It was also decided at the meeting to sponsor a perpetual trophy in memory of **Hugh McLauchlan** for the Ayr Flower Show. When this was mentioned to **Samuel Kennedy**, President of the Scottish Begonia Society, he told us that the SBS was going to give a trophy to the ABS for the September convention. The exchange of trophies will take place on Sunday, August 5 at a special ceremony in the Patron's Pavilion at the Ayr Flower Show. The ABS will present the Hugh McLauchlan trophy to the division winner at that time. **Maxine Zinman** and **Charles Jaros** will be judging at the show. This is the first time an American Begonia Society judge has been asked to take part in the Ayr Show. It is a truly historic event forging a bond of friendship between the ABS and the SBS that will never be broken. We only wish Hugh McLauchlan could be with us.

ABS CONVENTION 2007, *Begonias* in Paradise, California Style. Don't miss it! There is still time to register. The first tour (and it is going to be fantastic) is on Tuesday, Sept. 4 so you should be checked in to the Ayres Hotel by Monday. From then on you will hardly have a minute to catch your breath. The Plant Sale will astound you. A few changes in the Seminar speakers: Freda Holley has accepted our invitation to speak. Unfortunately, **Ewen Donaldson** and **Bill Ash** have had to withdraw. Convention Chairman **Margaret Fisher** and her committee are working very hard to give you a wonderful, exciting week filled with *begonias* and friends, old and new. The very important Annual Meeting will take

place on Saturday afternoon following the luncheon. And your new President and Executive Board will be installed at the banquet. Please try to attend as many days as you can. You will have a wonderful time and enjoy our California hospitality.

The deadline for getting your ballot to Ballot Counting Chair **Ingeborg Foo** is July 15. Be sure to vote to show your support for those people who give of their time and effort to run the ABS.

Good growing this summer.

In friendly contact,

Janet Brown

2007 Holiday Greetings

by **Wanda Macnair**

Requests for donations for the Holiday Greetings in the November-December issue will be accompanying the minutes of the board meeting in OK.

Costs of mailing the *Begonian* are going up and we would like to encourage more activity on the part of donors this year. Most branches do contribute and individual donations are also very helpful. Categories of donations are

Bronze, \$1-\$25,

Silver, \$26-\$50,

Gold, \$51-\$100, and

Platinum, over \$100.

This activity does help to meet the always increasing expenses of publishing the *Begonian*, and gives us a chance to show our appreciation for the good work of our editor. Because of deadline pressures, donations should be received by Sept. 1.

Please make checks to ABS and send to Wanda Macnair, Holiday Greetings Chair, 59 Walker St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Thank you for your attention to this tax-deductible donation.

Wanda Macnair

Editor's Notes

As you will see in Janet's message, this issue completes my ten years of editorship of the *Begonian*. It has been a wonderful experience for me. First, had I not had the motivation from this, I doubt I would have kept up with the internet revolution and computer and imaging changes. Most importantly, however, I would not have come to know and appreciate the gifts of the many who have contributed to the *Begonian* over the years. To mention all would take up much space so I just want to thank ever single one of you who have made the effort and given us all so much pleasure from your work!

I am hoping that someone out there would like to come forward and assume the editorship. The rewards will make it worthwhile and let me say that in the internet age, the whole process is infinitely easier than when I started out. Almost all the articles come to me now in computer file form and little has to be typed by me. A new perspective and new ideas would lead to a better *Begonian*, I am sure.

Please note also that Wanda Macnair who has done such a great job with putting together the holiday donations has issued her annual call. Remember individual donations as well as Branch donation help to allow the six bimonthly issues to continue. Postage is up again.

As Janet also says, the SWR Get-Together was sumptuous and I have so many new to me plants to try. So far with a cool rainy spring here they are all doing great. Now let's see what the coming hot weather does to all. I have so many plants now that I feel like the old woman in the shoe - crowded!

Please note the corrections to the last issue (page 130) and remember to get your votes in for the election.

Freda Holley

B. amphioxus Sands

by Mildred L. Thompson

In 2005, when I decided to grow a few *Begonia*, friends generously sent some very interesting and intriguing species that I had not grown before. **Bill Claybaugh** was one of these friends. Among the species that he sent was *B. amphioxus*. When it arrived, it had lost all of its leaves, but after a few weeks there were leaves and the plant was growing and thriving. I was fascinated with the exotic glossy vivid green leaves with various sizes of brilliant deep red spots.

B. amphioxus was discovered and collected by botanist **Martin J. S. Sands** accompanied by **A. Lamb** and **A. Bacon**. They found *B. amphioxus* growing on and around the small limestone hill of Batu Punggul far inland in Sabah,¹ while they were exploring the craggy outcrop and the surrounding dipterocarp² forest. Batu Punggul is close to Sansiang, a large tributary of the Sepulut river in the Pensiangan District; this made it possible to travel by boat through the forest to the place where *B. amphioxus* was found growing on steep banks between boulders around the limestone hill and in rock crevices of the outcrops in complete or partial shade at altitudes between 400 feet and 1000 feet. April 29, 1984 specimen no. 4045 was designated the holotype, the specimen with which the name, *B. amphioxus*, is permanently associated.

Martin Sands wrote the original citation for *B. amphioxus*; it was published May 1990 in *Kew Magazine*, Volume 7, pages 77 - 81. Within these pages is the colorful Plate 149 by Christabel King. Plate 149 was prepared in 1986 from plants growing at Kew Gardens; these plants were grown from propagating material

collected by Martin Sands in 1984 during his field work in Sabah. In addition detailed drawings of the male and female flowers also by Christabel King can be found on page 80. Martin Sands wrote that this species was named *amphioxus* to describe the leaf shape which is sharp at both ends. The specific epithet, *amphioxus*, is derived from the Greek *amphi* which means in two ways and *oxys* which means sharp.

For botanical classification *B. amphioxus* was originally placed in the section *Platycentrum* with reservations. After **Ruth Kiew** and **S. Anthonysony** collected this species in the native habitat on Batu Punggul and on the nearby Batu Tinahas Ruth Kiew determined that *B. amphioxus* was typical of the section *Petermannia*; this information was published July 2001 in *The Gardens' Bulletin, Singapore*, Volume 53: 247-8. The Asian species in this section are usually with upright stems or less often with rhizomatous or tuberous growth. Some of the species placed in this section that are presently in cultivation are as follows: *B. aequata*, *amphioxus*, *augustae*, *atricha*, *bipinnatifida*, *breviromosa*, *cholorosticta*, *cumingii*, *malachosticta*, *polilloensis*, and *serrati-petala*.

For horticultural classification *B. amphioxus* can be classified as shrub-like, with distinctive foliage, unusual coloring.

B. amphioxus has erect and branching stems; the mature plant can reach the height of 24" to 30." The reddish very pale brown stems are suffruticose;³ there are usually several stems arising from the base of the plant. Some of these stems can be decumbent with the tip ascending and others can be repent and root at nodes. The ovate to oblong lanceolate reddish

very pale brown stipules have an acuminate apex; the stipules fall off early. The light green petioles measure from 1/2" to 2 1/2". Glossy vivid medium green leaves have crimson spots of various sizes scattered over the leaf blade; the undersurface is a paler green with paler crimson spots. There is a deeper crimson spot over the umbo, the place of petiole attachment, and the location varies in distance from the apex of the leaf. The leaf blade is usually peltate; sometimes it is not peltate or scarcely peltate. The shape of the leaf is narrowly elliptic to lanceolate and measures between 2 1/2" to 6" long and 1/2" to 1 1/4" wide. The apex and base are long acuminate thereby giving the appearance of being pointed at both ends. The undulate leaf margin is shallowly crenate or serrate and is edged with crimson to further enhance the exotic beauty of the leaf. Most of the leaves are concave above the umbo; some leaves more so than others.

The inflorescences are axillary; the male flowers are cymose and female flowers are solitary. The male flowers have four very small tepals that are greenish white and often flushed pink. The two outer tepals are broadly ovate and the two inner pair are obovate and slightly smaller. There are 55 to 60 stamens; filaments are white and the anthers are pale yellow. The female flower usually has three to five small greenish cream-colored tepals which are often fused at the base, a characteristic rarely occurring in the family *Begoniaceae*. The shape of the tepal is ovate and sometimes ovate-elliptic with an acute apex; the female tepals are a little larger than the male tepals. The stigmas are bright yellow and the styles are a lighter yellow. The green tinted cream colored ovary has two wings and sometimes a third wing which is usually smaller. The shape of the wings is oblong and rounded, truncate or abruptly

cuneate at the base.

It is important to consider the climate and conditions found in the natural habitat for the species; this will supply valuable information that will give a guide to the successful growing in a particular environment in cultivation. Sabah is located near the equator where the typical temperatures range from 75 to 90 degrees, with the lower temperatures at night. The relative humidity is 85 to 95 per cent. This information indicates that in most cases *B. amphioxus* requires the additional humidity available within the contained atmosphere of a terrarium or a humid greenhouse. Martin Sands wrote that this species grows successfully in hanging baskets at the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens where it obviously has the necessary high humidity found in the equatorial climate of the natural habitat. Martin Sands states that the night time temperature should not fall below 65 degrees and for the daytime temperature it is desirable that it should not exceed 77 degrees. He also suggests that the humidity should be 70 per cent.

I have less than ideal conditions for growing *B. amphioxus*. I have heating and air conditioning, but neither is controlled; it is only controlled by what is being used in the remainder of the building. I grow under fluorescent lights in the contained atmosphere of a terrarium where there will be sufficient humidity. In spite of these less than optimum conditions, it is growing nicely and has filled the terrarium.

The terrarium that I find satisfactory was suggested to me by **Johanna Zinn** and it has worked well. I call it the "ice buckets terrarium" because it is made up of two clear plastic ice buckets⁴ with one inverted over the other (12" wide and 18 1/4" high). When using this type of terrarium I find that it is best to use a squatty plastic pot which will fit at the bottom of

the terrarium. Layer the bottom of the pot with white Alpine marble chips and then a layer of perlite over the chips. The long fiber sphagnum moss/perlite mix is ideal for the growing mix. Use only the appropriate size plastic container for the size of root system; after the plant has developed move it only to the next larger size pot. Before putting the potted species in the terrarium place a layer of the white Alpine marble chips on the bottom of the terrarium.

Fertilizing is extremely important. For all of the *Begonia* species that I grow in terrariums I find that either Hyponex or Shultz is best when used according to the instructions on the box.

Since this is a fairly large plant at maturity, pinching and pruning is essential to keep it within the confines of the terrarium and at the same time produce a more compact plant. Taking stem cuttings and pinching the growing tips produce good results. Use the stem cuttings for propagating. Place the cuttings in the same growing medium in individual small plastic pots and then place them in a large clear plastic box with a cover under fluorescent lights. Soon they will develop into small plants.

I have received information from growers in various geographic locations who are growing *B. amphioxus*. **Mary Bucholtz** (northern Florida) grows this species under fluorescent lights in a terrarium and places it either at the end of the fluorescent light fixture or just outside of the light fixture on a table. **Bill Claybaugh** (southern Texas) grows this species in a 6" pot using the sphagnum moss/perlite mix and places the pot in a 36 gallon terrarium under fluorescent lights in the house. The plant fills the terrarium. He finds that cuttings root easily. **Leora and Charles Henthorne** (northern Texas) grow theirs

in a terrarium under fluorescent lights. They find it easy to grow and propagate even in the summer when the temperature can go to 82 degrees in their plant room. **Charles Jaros** (southern Florida) finds that this species is difficult to grow outside of the terrarium. However, he mentions that Harmony House (commercial grower in southern Florida) grows this plant successfully in their greenhouse with 65 - 70% humidity. **Michael Kartuz** (southern California) grows *B. amphioxus* in a terrarium under fluorescent lights. He has not seen any flowers. He intends to grow it in a warm humid greenhouse. **Tom Keepin** (southern Texas) grows *B. amphioxus* two ways: one in a terrarium under fluorescent lights and the other in a garden room in a pot. He finds that the plant is a fuller when grown in the terrarium. The growing mix is Sunshine LC1, a fine peat based mix for starting seeds and cuttings. **Morris Mueller** (northern California) grows this species under fluorescent lights. The plant is grown in a plastic pot using his regular potting mix for begonias and the surface of the mix is covered with long fiber peat moss. It is placed inside a terrarium. **Gene Salisbury** (Oklahoma) grows *B. amphioxus* in his greenhouse but does not think that it grows satisfactorily; it merely survives in his greenhouse conditions. **Carol Smith** (New York City) grows *B. amphioxus* successfully in a terrarium under fluorescent lights. She cuts it back frequently to keep it within the size of the terrarium, but plans to move it into a larger terrarium.

I would like to thank **Mary Bucholtz, Bill Claybaugh, Leora and Charles Henthorne, Charles Jaros, Michael Kartuz, Tom Keepin, Morris Mueller, Gene Salisbury, and Carol Smith** for sharing information about their growing environment for *B. amphioxus*.



Millie Thompson's photos of B. amphioxus bring out the beauty of this plant from leaf to flower.



I would also like to thank **Jack Golding** for generously sharing and sending the botanical references to me that I needed to complete this article. I also appreciate his very valuable comments.

Endnotes

- ¹ northeastern portion of the island of Borneo, Southeast Asia
- ² a forest dominated by the tall

- 3 trees of the *Dipterocarpaceae* family
- 4 slightly woody; woody at the base
- 4 clear plastic party buckets can be found at party supply stores.

Corrections

There were several major errors in the last issue of the *Begonian* (May/June 2007). First, about all those years in the election ballot, they all should have been **2007!** Please correct them and as all other information in the ballot is correct, please do use it and vote for the officer slate. The due date is **July 21, 2007. Why not send it today?** My apologies!

Next, a printer's gremlin caused **Mildred Thompson's** last name to get disappeared (page 93), but I'm sure you knew that no one else could write such careful descriptions of a wonderful plant! Next on the same page, in the title I entered **Ming-Jou Lai's** name incorrectly; Millie's had the correct spelling: Lai. Also, all the photos should be jointly credited to Mildred and **Ed Thompson**. Hopefully, her equally great article on *B. amphioxus* in this issue reaches you without such errors! And I thank Mildred for accepting all these errors with grace and good humor!

~FH

Recent Publications

All the copies of the *Unidentified Species Listing* are gone, but Ann Salisbury plans a reprinting of the 8 1/1 x 11 size. Please let her know if you want one right away. **The cost is \$7 including postage.** All proceeds from this publication go to the Thelma O'Reilly Reprint Fund.

She also still has a few copies of *Begonia Notes* by Rudolf Ziesenhenné. **These are \$15 which also includes postage.**

Send your check made out to American Begonia Society to:

Ann Salisbury
P.O. Box 452
Tonkaway, OK 74653
geneann@sbcglobal.net;
1-580-628-5230

Unidentified Begonia Species Listing

By Thelma O'Reilly, Project Director

Begonia U 511

Brazil. Plant material obtained by **Charles Jaros** in summer of 2005 from Powerhouse Orchids, Deland, FL. Owners wife brought plant from Brazil. It bears a resemblance to *Begonia luxurians*, but there are differences. The leaf blades undersides are a dark reddish color and the habit is much fuller according to Jaros.

Begonia U512

This begonia species is grown by **Charles Henthorne**, Plano, Texas. The name he grow it under is *B. xanthina* var. *picta*. He would appreciate confirmation of the name. Note: The latest publication of *Begoniaceae*, Edition 2, by **Jack Golding et al.** lists *B. xanthina* var *picta* as a synonym of *B. xanthina*.

Begonia U513

Asia, possibly Vietnam or Thailand. Plant material collected by **Mary Sizemore** in Fall of 2001. Rhizomatous. Rhizome upright, jointed at or below soil surface. Leaf blades ovate, green, lobed with sparse bristly hairs giving a rough texture to upper and undersides of blades. Petioles glabrous, red, four sided. Staminate flower buds white.

Begonia U514

Asia. Plant material brought from Thailand by **Bruce Pearson** of Tropical World. Rhizomatous. Leaf blades bronzish dark green with light green veins, under-surface dark red with raised green flushed pink veins, scabrous on blade surface and veins. Petioles glabrous, bronzish green. Stipules membranous, keeled. Staminate flowers pink, 4 tepaled. Peduncles and pedicels pinkish red.

Begonia U515

Thailand. Plant material collected by Mary Sizemore in 2004. Leaf blades green, ovate, elongated slightly pebbled with thickened texture, under surface green with bronze veins. Petioles red, red spot at umbo. Staminate flowers white emerging from leaf axils.

Begonia U516

Vietnam. Plant material collected by Mary Sizemore. Cane-like or shrub-like. Leaf blades green, silver/pink spotted, under-surface green with red veins. Margins silver, serrate. Petioles red, free branching. Staminate flower buds small, ivory edged with pink.

Begonia U517

Peru. Collected by Mary Sizemore prior to November 2005. Shrub-like. Leaf blades green splashed with silver, elongated, yellow/green veins. Staminate flower buds greenish ivory. Peduncles pink. Pedicels greenish ivory.

Begonia U518

Vietnam. Plant material collected by Mary Sizemore prior to November 2005. Rhizomatous. Leaf blades forest green, leather-like with red webbing, under-surface red with red webbing. Pistillate flowers white flushed pink.

Begonia U519

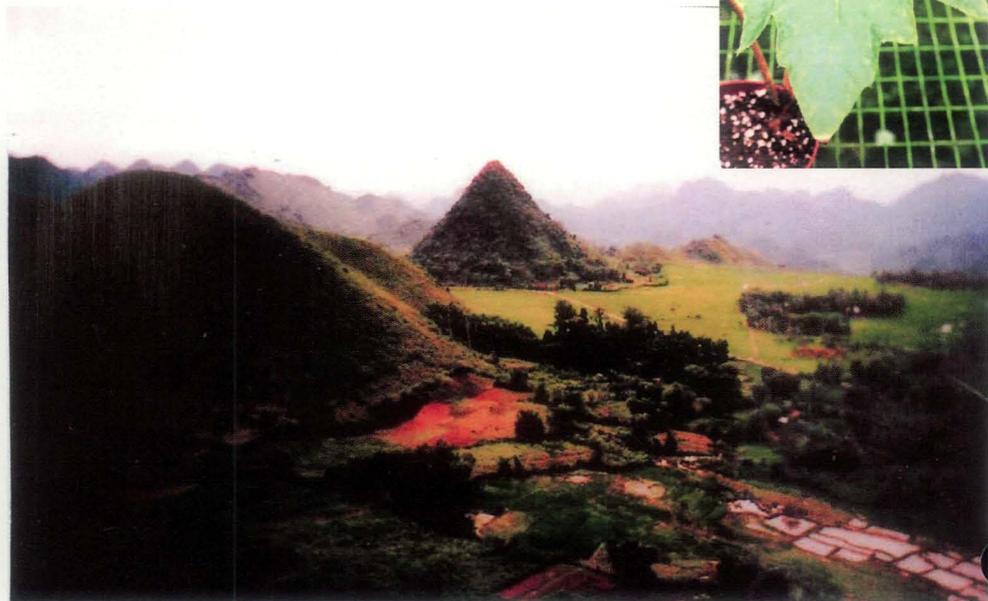
Vietnam. Plant material collected by Mary Sizemore prior to November 2005. Rhizomatous. Leaf blades green, pubescent, lobed. Petioles bronze, pubescent.

B. U520

Vietnam. Plant material collected by



Maary Bucholtz captures B.U514 above right, B.U511, above left, B. U517, center inset, and B.U.519, right insert. Below is Tan Jieu Hoe's photo of an area near a 2002 collection site in Vietnam.



Mary Sizemore prior to November 2005. Rhizomatous. Leaf blades green with silver highlights, pustulate with red hairs, bronze veins. Leaf blades undersurface green with white hairs, red veins with red dotted margin. Margins sparsely hairy with few intermittent red dots.

Begonia U521

Thailand. Plant purchased by Charles

In The Mailbox

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

Thanks to some internet perusing, responses from members, and the "old reliable" growers, we seem to be able to group growers that sell begonias by mail now. In our *Begonian*, we have Kartuz Greenhouses. Mike has grown and sold quality begonias for years. Logee's is an institution and a wonder to visit. Rob's Violet's grows mini-begonias and has a stellar reputation. Weiss sells for a short warm season out of Ohio and I've heard good things about them. Lauray in Connecticut also sells nice begonias, and can be easily found on an internet search. Bonnie's Greenhouses has also had great raves! There are a few others, and I apologize if I missed a few. Google is a great tool and you should find what you are looking for there.

However, Antonelli's has recovered from their disastrous fire and moved to a new location. Through them, we now have Michael's begonias, who has had the mentoring of several key begonia people to help him. Check out his website at www.antonellibegonias.com and search for his link. I've looked at his offerings and catalog, and it is a nice expansion of different begonias. I'm always open for visitors.

Thanks to everyone who responded.

Jaros at Plant Market in Bangkok, June, 2006. It was also viewed in Thailand at other plant markets in Mai and Chiang Rai. Rhizomatous. Leaf blades green, overlaid with silver markings; large (between 6" and 12"); undersurface prominently red veined. Petioles red with red hairs. Staminate flowers light pink.

Tips for summer: Summer is the growing season for begonias. In our hot, humid Florida climate, we are aware of our rainy season and keeping begonias well-drained. You should, too, if you grow outdoors. Always keep in mind that begonias LOVE loose soil, on the light side.

However, after struggling with finding a decent potting mix to do cuttings in, I have returned to the basics with great success. I mix 2 parts peat moss (dry), 3 parts perlite and 1 part vermiculite; mix well and lightly moisten. Cuttings have done much better this year. Funny- returning to your roots is always a good visit in the basics. For some of my "trickier" types or tropicals that are touchy, I go to 4 parts perlite for that "extra draining" they require. Do try this mix and tell me how it works for you.

On a different side, please begin to use my new EMAIL address. It is gsytch@tampabay.rr.com. Yes, I have gone Digital! As always, feel free to contact me by snail mail at 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey FL 34653, or phone (727) 841-9618 if you have any questions that need to be answered. The link on the website should be changed shortly, once I notify them! Then, you can simply just click on the link and off goes your question to me.

Let us hope the hurricanes stay away, and that a wonderful summer of growing awaits us with just the right amount of rain, not too much heat, and great begonias! Good Growing ~ Greg

The many faces of *B. xanthina*

by Rekha Morris

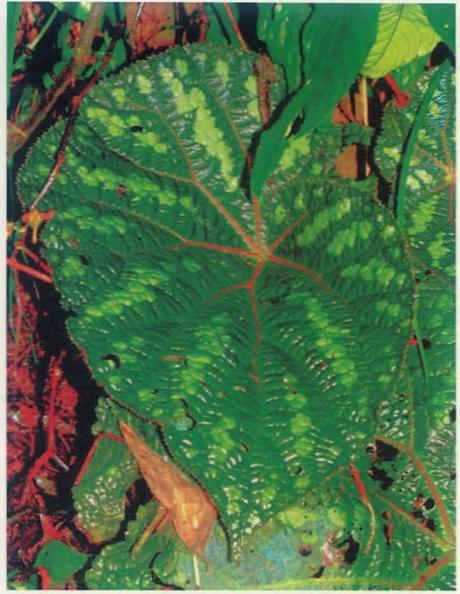
Documenting begonias in the Eastern Himalayas of Arunachal, India remains as exciting and full of possibilities as it was the first time I was there in the spring of 2005. So it was with a sense of undiminished expectation that I returned there in the wake of the monsoon season in September/October 2006 to both explore a region of Arunachal new to me, and to revisit areas with which I was familiar and which I knew to be begonia habitats. One such habitat lies in West Kameng district where I had documented *B. xanthina* [Platycentrum] in four or five small colonies. I had planned to return to this section of the mountains not so much to locate additional colonies of *B. xanthina* but to find a tuberous species I had documented in April 2005 but whose tubers had not survived the trauma of relocation in the USA. In December 2005 there was no sign of this tuberous species which has since been identified with the help of **Dr. Mark Tebbitt** as *B. asperifolia*, a species recorded in China but not in India to date. Although it was extremely satisfying to find this species albeit with difficulty, it was *B. xanthina* W. J. Hooker which sent my senses reeling.

In April 2005 I was lucky to see a few emerging leaves of *B. xanthina* which in December were weather beaten and barely visible as they prepared for dormancy during the relatively drier season. As I headed for the now familiar cliffs on a wet, overcast day in early October, although my thoughts were on finding *B. asperifolia* my senses were immersed in savoring the sumptuously verdant mountains whose soaring peaks were lost in mist and clouds.

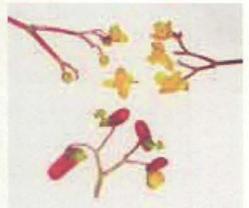
Splashes of color from the brilliant reds of *Clerodendrum speciosum* and *erythrina* on the lower slopes were replaced by the cooler, softer shades of purple and primrose of *impatiens*, and the lapis and white of *Hydrangea heteromala* in bloom at higher elevations. In the light drizzle these sporadic and intermittent glimpses of saturated color through the enveloping mist had an intensity I have never experienced in sun drenched landscapes.

Uncertain of spotting the all green foliage of *B. asperifolia* among the many layered vegetation in every shade of green imaginable, I reluctantly turned away from this blissful enjoyment to carefully scrutinizing the cliffs and rocky outcrops all but obscured by vines and shrubs. Stopping to admire and photograph a golden cluster of *Dendrobium fimbriatum* dangling over a jutting rock face, I noticed another dot of yellow-gold amongst the undergrowth. Pulling and tugging aside the tangled growth revealed the first of many plants of *B. xanthina* in bloom I was to encounter that day. From about 3500' to 5000' *B. xanthina* flourished in small but innumerable colonies with flowers in various stages of maturity.

Although it was documented in Sikkim by **J. D. Hooker** and in Bhutan by **C. B. Clarke** in the 19th century, *B. xanthina* like most of the other begonias I have been documenting, has not been recorded for Arunachal. As its species name indicates, its yellow flowers distinguish it from other begonia species from this region. However, what I had not realized until this trip in 2006 was the equally if not greater distinctiveness of its foliage. The ovate leaves unequally cordate at the base range



Rekha Morris captures more of the many faces of B. xanthina.



from 6" to around 15", and have a curious puckered surface texture. Whether the foliage is a cilantro green with splashes in lighter shades or a metallic purple-bronze the prominent red venation and the seer-sucker surface texture combine to make *B. xanthina's* foliage striking. When these two features appear on deep, rosemary green foliage highlighted by maculation varying from celery to silver, the impact is stunning. The purple-red underside of the leaves with silver maculation, and the bright yellow floral scapes held above the foliage are *B. xanthina's* equivalent of "gilding a lily."

It is this entrancing variation of color and pattern in the foliage of the numerous *B. xanthina* I encountered which makes that rain soaked day in October memorable, and as I now watch the tiny emerging leaves on the several rhizomes I brought back, I am overcome by a nostalgic longing for their misty mountain habitat.

Acknowledgement

For this and other memorable days documenting begonias in Arunachal Pradesh in India I am indebted to **His Excellency Sri S. K. Singh**, Governor of Arunachal and his wife, **Her Excellency Srimati Manju Singh**. To them and their staff in Raj Bhavan, Itanagar, and especially Sri Michi Paku, A.D.C. to the governor, and **Sri Panthri**, Personal Security Officer to the governor, my deepest gratitude for facilitating my explorations in Arunachal. I also extend my gratitude to **Srimati Sadhna Deori**, Additional District Commissioner, Pasighat for her help and *hospitality* in Pasighat, and in enabling me to explore in Siang.

This trip to India in September-October, 2006 would not have been possible without the generous financial sup-

port from various chapters and members of the American Begonia Society. I extend my appreciation to **Janet Brown**, president of the ABS, **Joan Coulat**, **Normand Dufresne**, **Charles & Leora Henthorne**, **Antoon Hoefnagels**, **Tom Keepin**, **Lulu Leonard**, **Morris Mueller**, **Carol & Peter Notaras**, **Thelma & Tim O'Reilly**, **Ann & Gene Salisbury**, **Johanna Zinn**, the Astro Branch, The Atlanta Branch, the Alamo Branch, the Begonia Society of Palm Beaches Branch, the Bessie Buxton Branch, the Dorothy Caviness Branch, the Potomac Branch, the San Jacinto Branch, the Begonia Society of Austin, and the Melbourne Begonia Society of Australia.

Continued from page 137.

So I watched and worried, and after approximately 6 weeks, the leaves that were left, regained their strength and color, and new leaves started to appear.

I then realized that I and my *B. xanthina* were over the hard part of growing. The *B. xanthina* is presently doing very well, and I have gained several new plants from the initial small rhizome. During this time I have also started seeds of this begonia. They are doing very well at the present time, and I look forward to sharing them with others when they have grown large enough. As of now, I have not seen any blooms, but am anticipating them. With all of the above pointing to challenges well met, I would encourage anyone who has the chance to try this most interesting begonia. If more people would attempt to grow this begonia, we could be assured that it would be in cultivation for years to come.

Charles Henthorne gives us the practical experience of growing this begonia in Dallas, Texas. You may contact him there at charleshenthorne@verizon.net

Challenges: Conquer or Lose

by Charles Henthorne

As most other begonias, I like a good challenge. Through the years, I have chosen many new begonias to try, and for the most part have been successful in finding, starting, and keeping alive many of the different begonias that I had previously only heard about. Of all the different kinds of begonias, I have had a particular fondness for the yellow blooming types. Therein lies one of the most, if not the most difficult challenge I have faced in a long time. I certainly don't want to discourage anyone from trying any challenges that arise in the growing of begonias. It is only by facing challenges such as these, that the world has a chance to save many of the rare and endangered species of both flora and fauna.

So with that being said, I will discuss one of my most favorite begonia challenges so far. In March 2006, I received a small rhizome of *B. xanthina*. I had wanted to try this for several years, but had been unable to obtain either a cutting, leaf, or seeds to try. I had heard that *B. xanthina* was a definite challenge to grow, and for the most part many people told me not to bother looking for a start of this almost impossible to find begonia. And there lies the second challenge. The second rapidly became the first. Where and when could I get a start of this hard to find begonia.

I spread the word around the begonia world, and after many months, I had the cherished rare rhizome. When I first received the small rhizome, I was faced with several questions. Should I cut it up for several different chances to grow this species? Should I leave it intact, as I had received it? What kind of potting medium should I use? What light? What temperature? Terrarium or not? Outside or

inside? Water? So many challenges had arisen from the initial two, but I decided to start with this as I have done with all others that I have obtained over the years. I approached this challenge by trying terrarium culture on this rhizome. I also wanted to use the same medium that I used with all my other terrarium begonias.

So with those decisions in mind I then decided to cut the rhizome into equal parts, and obtained three equal sized pieces. I placed them in the growing medium which was slightly damp and covered the terrarium completely. I placed the terrarium on the bottom shelf of our stand, which had an 80 watt fluorescent light. I left this on 8 hours a day. After approximately 4 weeks, I had one part of the rhizome sprouting leaves. These grew enough so that, after about 4 more weeks, I could obtain leaf cuttings, which I did, and I immediately placed these in the same terrarium as the rhizomes. These also rooted well and gave me additional plantlets. I only added water when the medium was dry to the touch, and then only added a few ounces to the terrarium, remembering that it is always better to underwater, than to overwater. It is easier to add water, if necessary, than to try to dry out a very wet terrarium.

I felt that I had indeed met the challenges and was ready to declare victory. Then one day, late in the month of February of this year, I looked and found all of the new growth limp and losing color. I panicked and worried over the fact that I might lose this hard to find, and supposedly, hard to grow begonia. After the initial shock, I regained control of my emotions, and remembered that I had read that this plant had a tendency to go dormant.

Continued on page 136.

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND LISTING
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The seed fund is a service to members only. It is a privilege of your membership.

There have been several recent requests for a listing of the seed fund inventory. This is the current list—June 2007.

Species

Seed packets in this list cost \$1.50 or more as indicated for rare or limited amounts.

- B. barkeri* Knowles & Westcott, [**Gireoudia**], Mexico
B. boliviensis A. De Candolle [**Barya**], Bolivia
B. carolineifolia Regel [**Gireoudia**], Mexico
B. crassicaulis Lindley [**Gireoudia**], Guatemala
B. cucullata Willdenow var *cucullata* [**Begonia**], Brazil
B. cucullata var *arenosicola* C. De Candolle, Argentina
B. dipetala Graham [**Haagea**], India
B. fischeri Schrank [**Begonia**], Central & South America
B. glandulosa W.J.Hooker [**Gireodia**], Mexico
B. gracilis Kunth var *martiana* [**Quadripergonia**], Mexico
B. heracleifolia Schlecht. & Cham. [**Gireoudia**], Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador #1
B. heracleifolia #3 white flowers
B. heracleifolia #4
B. heracleifolia #5
B. heracleifolia collection #1
B. heracleifolia collection #2

- B. incarnata* Link & Otto [**Knesebeckia**], Mexico
B. johnstonii Oliver ex J.D.Hooker [**Rostrobegonia**], Tanganyika, Kenya
B. lindleyana Walpers [**Gireoudia**], Guatemala
B. ludwigii Irmscher [**Knesebeckia**], Ecuador
B. malabarica Lamarck [uncertain], India, Ceylon
B. manicata Brongniart [**Gireoudia**], Mexico
B. peltata Otto & Dietrich [**Gireoudia**], Mexico
B. pinetorum A. De Candolle [**Gireoudia**], Mexico, pk fl
aff. B. roezlii Regel [**Cyathocnemis**], Peru
B. sericoneura Liebmann [**Gireoudia**] Central America
B. stigmosa Lindley [**Gireoudia**] Mexico
B. ulmifolia Willdenow [**Donaldia**], Guyana, Venezuela
B. wallichiana Lehmann [**Doratometra**], Mexico
U #083
U #320
U #412
U #443
U #444

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- B. 'Cachuma'* Ziesenhenné, R#439
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B. (cucullata var *arenosicola* X unknown)

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

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

Are We Missing a Bet?

At one of our SWR Meetings, we held an auction where some of our hybridizers donated a plant which was then sold with the right to name it. The occasion made what I thought was a good bit of money for SWR. However, it seems that other groups have cottoned to this idea in a supersize fashion. In the American Rose Annual for 2006 (which arrived in 2007), in an article entitled "O Rose, Who Dares to Name Thee" this trend is decribed in detail. It seems that companies and individual hybridizers are selling the rights to name a new hybrid for big bucks.

For example, Jackson and Perkins offers the 'Custom Rose Program where for \$75,000 the buyer gets to choose the name of the rose and receives 300 "exclusive custom roses" along with certificates featuring the chosen name. Thank that's a bit high a price for 300 roses and certificates? According to a J&P press statement, "each Custom Rose Program participant and a companion will be flown first-class to Los Angeles where they will enjoy two nights in a five-star hotel, dining in the region's elite restaurants and several other surprises. During their visit they will travel to the Jackson & Perkins research facility near Camarillo, Calif., to choose their personal rose... And if you still think this program pricey, the participant will also receive a case of Dom Perignon champagne to mark the arrival of the selected rose.' Wow. Individual hybridizers only charge \$2,000 to \$7,500 just for the naming privilege.

This goes with the trend in fiction for authors to auction off the naming of a character for a big donation to charity.

ABS is certainly deserving of charity dollars, hybridizers. How about starting a new begonia trend?

~FH

Directory of Begonia Societies

*All information is the latest available to us
at the time of publication.*

International Societies

Australia

Association of Australian Begonia

Societies: Carmel Browne, 'Paradise',
Browns Road, Belli Park, Qld 4562,
Australia; Ph: (02) 54470204, begoniataalk@bigpond.com

The Victorian Begonia Society, Inc.:

Mr. Bruce Blanchonette, 22 Romsey Avenue
Sunshine North 3020, Australia; Ph: (03)
93367601

The Melbourne Begonia Society: Mrs. Val
Sayers, 17 Giotte Street, Canterbury, Vic .
3198, Australia. Ph: (03) 9836 9300

The N.S.W. Begonia Society, Inc. :

Alan Gibson, 18Priory Court, Balkham
Hills, NSW 2153 Australia. Ph: (02) 9624
5637

The Queensland Begonia Society, Inc.:

Mr. Peter Henderson, 79 Chuter Street,
Staford, Qld, 4053, Australia; Ph: (07) 3359
4319

South Australian Begonia Society Inc.:

Mrs. Myrnie Jennings, P.O. Box 118,
Highbury SA 5089, Australia. Ph: (08) 8264
6490

The Begonia Society of Western Australia:

Mrs. Lyla Kilpatrick, 26 Penzance Street,
Bassendean WA 6054, Australia, Ph: (08)
9279 5415

Belgium

Societe Belge du Begonia: Piron Gilles,
Pres., Chemin de Lancre, 4 B-4970 Coe,
Belgium

Canada

British Columbia Fuchsia & Begonia

Society: Lorna Herchenson, Pres. 2402
Swinburne Ave. North, Vancouver B.C. V7H
1 L2 Canada

England and Wales

The National Begonia Society:

Alan Harris,
7 Babraham Road, Sawston, Cambridge,
CB2 4DQ, England, Ph: 01223 834202,
email: alanharris392@aol.com

France

Assoc. Francoise de Amateurs de

Begonias: Mr. Jacky Duruisseau
3 route du Puy Lanete Maisonneuve
17100 Le Douhet, France. Ph; fax: 05 46
74 38 90 Email: jkdur@club-internet.fr

New Zealand

Canterbury Begonia Circle.

Mike Stevens, 47 Burnside Cres.,
Christchurch, New Zealand Ph: 03-358-
4126, Email: m.i.stevens@xtra.co.nz
Web site: geocities.com/begoniacircle

Japan

Japan Begonia Society: President: Mr.
Naoyuki Uemura, 5-27-10 Higashiohizumi,
Nerimaku, Tokyo 178-0063, Japan Ph/
Fax: 81-3-3921-5132

Scotland

Scottish Begonia Society:

C/o-260 Bellfield R. Coalburn
Lanarkshire, Scotland M1100NQ, ULK

United States

Guests are welcome at all meetings. Contact the National Director listed below for time and place of meetings or other information.

Regional Group

Southwest Region: Wanda Macnair, 59 Walker St., Cambridge, MA 02138; Ph: 617-876-1356

Branches

California

Alfred D. Robinson Branch: Doris L. Smith, 4505 Long Branch Ave., San Diego, CA 92107-2333, Ph: 619-222-1294.

Doug Frost Branch: Joyce Hesse, 636 S. Gilbuck Dr., Anaheim, CA 92802-1322., Ph: 714-778-3546

Long Beach Parent Chapter: Margaret Fisher, 7552 Danube Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647-4637, Ph: 714-847-1889

Mabel Corwin Branch: Eleanor Calkins, 910 Fern St., Escondido, CA 92027-1708, Ph: 760-746-4743

Margaret Lee Branch: Ingeborg Foo, 1050 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92083, Ph: 760--724-4871

Leslie Hatfield Monterey Bay Area Branch: Karen Crumme, 25105 N. Crmel Hills Dr., Carmel, CA 93923-8302

Orange County Branch: Mary Sakamoto, 9682 Featherhill Dr., Villa Park, CA 92861, Ph: 714-637-8787.

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

The Joan Coulat Sacramento Branch: Morris Mueller, 163 Hartnell Pl., Sacramento, CA 95825-6609, Ph: 916-927-4921

San Francisco Branch: Carol Notaras, 2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123, Ph: 415-931-4912 Email: cnotaras@sbcglobal.net

San Gabriel Branch: Ken Dahlquist, 696 McKinley Ave., Pomona, CA 91767-3226, Ph: 909-622-6125

Rudolf Ziesenhenn Branch: Mike Flaherty, Pres., 1505 E. Valley Rd., Santa Barbara, CA

Santa Clara Valley Branch: Mary Ann Leer, 1220 Webster St., Santa Cruz, CA 95062-1626

South Bay Branch: Houston Knight, 13455 Hadley, Whittier, CA 90601, PHh 562-693-1973

Theodosia Burr Shepherd Branch: Beverly Paulson, 397 Baker Ave., Ventura, CA 93004-1558, Ph: 805-642-3198

Westchester Branch: Janet Brown, 7825 Kentwood Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90045-1150; Ph: 310-670-4471; JBBrown3@aol.com

Whittier Branch: Joy Blair, 1006 Pomeroy Rd., Downey, CA, 90240-3711 Ph: 562-928-3975

Delaware Valley

Delaware Valley Branch: Bernard Wiener, 229 Ellis Road, Havertown PA 19083, Ph: 610-446-2160
wiener1@verizon.net

Florida

Begonia Society of Tampa Bay: Charles Jaros, 200 Maureen Dr., Sanford, FL 32771, Ph: 407-328-0618

Miami Begonia Society: Tim Anderson, 9995 SW 66th St., Miami, FL 33173, Ph: 305-274-9813

Begonia Society of Palm Beaches: Virginia Jens, 12352 Westhampton Cir, Wellington, FL 33414, Ph. 561-798-0593

Georgia

Greater Atlanta Branch: Rekha Morris, 318 Woodland Circle, Pendleton, SC 29670-9433, PH; 864-646-3584, email: shivana@juno.com

Illinois

Greater Chicago Branch: Esther Detlefsen, 3336 N. Oak Park Ave., Chicago, IL 60634, Ph: 773-282-2255

Massachusetts

Bessie Buxton Branch: Normand Dufresne, 4 Plantation Drive, Cumberland, RI 02865, Ph: 401-658-2463

New York

Knickerbocker Branch: Nikki Taussig, 233 Harison Ave., Highland Park, NJ 08904-1815 email: nytaussig@netscape.net

Oklahoma

Fred A. Barkley Branch: Kenny Wilkerson, 15356 Pheasant Run, Choctaw, OK 73020, PH: 405-390-4228; email: begoniafiend@cox.net

Dorothy Caviness Branch: Laura Stranger, 3904 Fairview, Bartlesville 74006, Ph: 918-333-0091

Pennsylvania

See Delaware Valley above

Texas

Alamo Branch: Lucille Dyess, 3971 Flagle, San Antonio, TX 78237

Astro Branch: Tom Keepin, 4513 Randwick Dr., Houston, TX 77092-8343, Ph: 713-686-8539

Dallas Area Branch: Don Miller, 2342 Dorrington Dr., Dallas, TX 75228-5855, Ph: 214-823-1070

Mae Blanton Branch: Joan Kessinger, 14808 Meadowland Cir., Newark, TX 76071, Ph. 817-489-5055. Email: jdbk@earthlink.net

Houston Satellite Branch: Pat Foreman, 217 E. Schreck Street, Baytown, TX 77520-1953, PH: 281-424-1648

San Jacinto Branch: Lisa Holmes, 315 C.R. 417, Dayton, TX 77535, Ph: 713-562-2376

Virginia

Potomac Branch: Johanna Zinn, 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032, Ph: 703-323-7513

**Please check your listing
and if it has an error,
notify the editor before July
1 so that corrections may be
included in the next issue.**

Conservation Comments

By Bill Claybaugh

Conservation Chairman, ABS

Species Survey - Preliminary Results

The 2007 Species Survey is off to a great start. Species lists obtained in only the first two months had an additional 72 varieties now being grown that were not "found" in the earlier survey in 2002-2003. A few of the species now known to be in cultivation include *Begonia aborensis*, *albo-coccinea*, *albomaculata*, *antsir-anensis*, *asperifolia*, *atracha*, *burkillii*, *chingii*, *chivatoa*, *dioica*, *fimbriata*, *griffithiana*, *hatacoa* var. *rubrifolia*, *hatacoa* var. *viridifolia*, *henryi*, *hoehneana*, *integrifolia*, *iridescens*, *karwinskyana*, *letestui*, *ludicra*, *lyniceorum*, *mariti*, *multistaminea* and many more. The complete list of species found in the earlier Species survey is available at

<http://absastro.net/salpa/foundspecies.htm>

If you have not prepared your list and sent to me, please do so. The goal of the ABS Conservation Committee is to understand which begonia are in cultivation today, and to obtain pictures to aid in future identifications.

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A Walk-In-Terrarium

by Johanna Zinn

While walking down one of the seasonal aisles at Costco last fall, I found a solution to the problem I had been having with begonias growing in terrariums too small for them. Costco had an inexpensive six-foot by six-foot plastic greenhouse (walk-in-terrarium = w-i-t) for sale...a greenhouse in which my plants could grow to more normal proportions. Perhaps I would not need to trim petioles and leaves as they matured to prevent them from rotting against the sides of the terrarium.

The first candidates for the w-i-t were *B. chloroneura*, *B. sizemoreae*, *B. staudtii*, and *B. lyman-smithii*. I had been removing leaves from them to help them fit their enclosures, and I was anxious to move them into a larger space. First, however, we needed to put together the greenhouse, and I needed to determine what containers, potting soil, and humidity levels would be appropriate.

The greenhouse is made from fairly thin, somewhat rigid, clear plastic. It wouldn't be suitable for outdoor use, but it is perfect for my needs. We tucked it into a corner of our partially heated and cooled basement, and had an electrician hang T-8 light fixtures over the top. We placed energy efficient T-8 full-spectrum fluorescent light bulbs into the fixtures, and set a timer to turn them on for twelve hours each day.

The basement corner is located away from the door and windows so the w-i-t will not be exposed to drafts or direct sunlight.

Several small, individual plant stands were placed inside the greenhouse to elevate the plants off the cool basement floor. We also placed a box fan and humidifier inside the little greenhouse. I

thought that plastic pots would retain too much moisture. **Mildred Thompson** wrote that moss lined containers had worked well in their greenhouse. While shopping for containers to line with moss, I found preformed coco fiber pots in wire baskets that seemed to provide the same benefits as moss without the mess. For small plants, I am using clay and plastic pots until the plants are large enough to place in the coco fiber pots.

I haven't settled on a specific potting soil mix, but the one that I am using is a very free draining mixture of orchid mix, Miracle Grow potting soil, and perlite. Initially I placed cut, moistened sphagnum moss on top of the potting soil to keep algae from growing on it, but the moss kept the petioles too moist, and a few plants lost several leaves. I have removed the moss and the plants are beginning to put out new leaves.

Since I do not measure humidity levels in my terrariums, I chose seventy five percent humidity on the humidifier dial as my starting point. I used the same model humidifier as I use in our plant room because of its accuracy—the setting on the humidifier generally correlated with the measurement on the hygrometer. However, seventy five percent humidity left the walls dripping on cold nights and seemed to be keeping the plants' leaves wet. Seventy percent humidity seemed to be working well until mildew appeared on *B. handelii* [mildew magnet], and, surprisingly, on *B. staudtii* and *B. malachosticta*. *B. handelii* was located in front of the fan and as far away from the moisture plume as possible, and *B. staudtii* and *B. malachosticta* had been sitting under and in front of the humidifier. *B. handelii* is now sitting

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Above left is an external view of Johanna's *W-I-T* and below right a view from inside. *B. 'Bonfire'*, a selection of *B. boliviensis* and *B. rajah* appear to grow happily in its environment. All photos by **Johanna Zinn**.



frozen outside the basement and I have moved *B. staudii* and *B. malachosticta* away from the moisture plume from the humidifier. I removed the affected leaves and sprayed with an oil and baking soda spray.

The humidity level has been turned down to sixty-five percent and I have placed a hygrometer in the enclosure to get an accurate humidity measurement. With the humidity level set at seventy percent, the hygrometer was reading ninety percent near some of the plants. The difference may be the small size of the w-i-t. The hygrometer should have been placed in the w-i-t from the beginning, and I should not have assumed that the humidifier would work with the same accuracy as it did in a larger room.

The hygrometer is now reading eighty percent and I will try to keep the humidity level between seventy-five and eighty percent. My hope is that the temperature will remain constant throughout the year.

This winter I have the humidifier set to provide warm mist, but will use cool mist in the summer. During the day, when the lights are on, the temperature has ranged from the mid-seventies at the top of the enclosure, to sixty-six to sixty-eight degrees F on the floor. At night, the floor temperature ranges from sixty to sixty-two degrees F to sixty-four to sixty-six degrees at eye level. When the warm mist becomes cool mist and the air conditioner is on in the summer, those temperatures may change. If the summer temperatures remain cool enough, I would like to grow *B. gracilis* and *B. boliviensis* in it; both are plants that cannot tolerate our Virginia summer heat.

Because the soil mix drains so well, and the coco fiber pots are porous, I have to water more often than I thought would be necessary. The soil may also dry fairly

quickly because of the constant air movement from the fan.

Watering once a week is usually often enough, but, on occasion, the plants have needed watering after five or six days. Since the plants have just been repotted, they have not needed fertilizing.

Plants that seem to be content in the w-i-t include *B. parva*, *B. breviformosa*, *B. staudtii*, *B. longipetiolata*, *B. hatacoa*, *B. polygonoides*, *B. sizemoreae*, *B. variegata* [formerly *B. masoniana* var *maculata*], *B. squamulosa*, *B. barsalouxiae* = *plebeja*, *B. U475*, *B. U498*, and *B. U047*. *B. lyman-smithii* and *B. chloroneura* are still deciding whether or not they will survive. These plants share the space with seedlings that have just been potted up and other small plants. I may reach full capacity within a few weeks.

A few evenings after we purchased the greenhouse/terrarium, one of our sons looked at it and mentioned that he had seen other models at 'his' Costco that were larger. AAArrgh!

Johanna Zinn grows begonias in Fairfax, Virginia and is a master at terrarium growing. She is also a frequent contributor of articles and great photos to the Begonian. You may write her at 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032 or email her at jazinn@cox.net. Johanna has agreed to write up a column on terrarium growing for the Begonian answering questions from readers. Terarium growing seems to be a reviving trend in the plant world this year and advice will hopefully help this trend. Since many species ABS is trying to save can only be grown in the U.S. via terrariums, this is a trend we want to encourage in every way we can. ~FH

Begonia handelii var. *handelii*

by Bill Claybaugh

The first time I saw *B. handelii* var. *handelii*, then called *U480*, was at the 2005 ABS Winter Board Meeting in Tampa at the University of South Florida. The plant was small, about one foot in height, with fairly plain green leaves and overall unimpressive. Unimpressive that is until you searched down through the foliage and found the one staminate flower present. WOW! Who ever saw a begonia flower more than three inches across? It seems that everyone at the meeting discovered the flower at the same time and I remember the mad scramble to the plant sales table to purchase one. I got there too late, so had to wait until later to purchase my first plants of *U480*. In the spring of 2006 I put several into my shade house and waited, and waited, and waited. Finally, this spring, 2007, three of the plants came into bloom with not one, but numerous large lightly pink male flowers each over 3 inches in width. The plants are about 18 inches in height now with the plain green leaves about nine inches in length, 5 inches in width and with the characteristic "creeping" stem as described by **M. C. Tebbitt** in his recent book. I have included a picture of these flowers for everyone to see.

Now that the plants are blooming and with only pistillate (male) flowers I began my research to learn more about these amazing plants. On my computer I found an article of M. C. Tebbitt, *Edinburgh Journal of Botany*, 2003, sent to me by **Jack Golding** last year which describes the plant in great detail. Mark detailed the variety I am growing, *B. handelii* var. *handelii* and another variety *B. handelii* var. *prostata*. These two varieties vary only in the size of the flower tepals, the *handelii* variety having the larger tepals. Because most people don't have access to

this informative article, I thought everyone would benefit from my description of my flowers; so here it is.

Each inflorescence only contains staminate flowers which are axillary, cymose, dichotomously branched at the base, three branches total on each peduncle with each branch containing a central flower. Each branch of the inflorescence has two persistent bracts, 1 cm long, 0.4 cm wide, with acute apices and serrate margins. Each pedicle is about 5.0 cm in length, 0.2 cm in diameter and is colored dark pink. The two large tepals (sepals) are ovate in shape and each approximately 4.2 cm long, 2.7 cm wide with an entire margin and a broadly acute apex. The two small tepals (petals) are obovate in shape and approximately 2.3 cm long, 0.8 cm wide with an entire margin and a broadly acute apex. The androecium is about 1.5 cm in diameter, is actinomorphic (round) in shape, and contains about 70 pistils each of which is about 0.7 cm long with near equal filament and anther. The anthers appear to be oblong-obovate in shape without any connective extending upward. All of these observations are within those described by Tebbitt, with the exception of no extended connective.

Another surprise with this plant is that it is usually dioecious that is, like *B. roxburghii*, the plant will bear only male or female flowers and not both. Both of these plants are in Section *Sphenanthera* as are other varieties found in our collections such as *Begonia acetosella*, *aptera*, *multangula*, *silletensis* and more. My plants, which are from stock in broad distribution, have only male flowers.

Not to sound obsessed with plant sex, but from a technical viewpoint, does anyone have a *B. handelii* var. *handelii*



*Bill Claybaugh photographs the *B. handelii* plant and its very large all male flowers. Has anyone seen the female flowers? Let Bill and the editor know.*



that bears female (pistillate) flowers? If so, please send an e-mail to me at absastro@hotmail.com and give some thought to sending the *Begonian* Editor some pictures of your plant and flowers.

Bill grows his begonias near Houston, Texas and you will find his address on page 159 as Conservation Chair. Indeed, if anyone has a female B. handelii, the editor would like to know about it.

In Memory Nettie Daniels

Nettie Daniels, a dear friend known to many in the begonia world, died March 19, 2007 in a car accident.

The Pease family met Nettie and Gene about 40 years ago while looking for the location of a Santa Barbara Branch Show. At that time they lived in Camarillo, CA. It wasn't long after seeing the begonia show that Nettie and Gene became active members of the Theodore Burr Shephard Branch in Ventura.

Nettie had a delightful smile and shared it often with ABS members while attending annual conventions.

At the time of her passing, her sister Bea informed us that the only begonia left in Nettie's house was **Rudy Ziesenhenné's** hybrid, B. "Gene Daniels".

Nettie was an active, independent lady and continued to live in the house that she and Gene planed and designed years ago in Brookings, Oregon. At one time she studied and worked in interior design.

In 1942 Nettie became a WAC. After leaving Chanute Field, she served in New Guinea and the Philippines mapping out the reconnaissance flights for the Air Corps.

We had a special friendship and will miss her.

With love, Nettie.

**Ruth, Walter, and
family Pease**

In Memory Kathlyn Calvert

We have lost a great friend and a lover of begonias. Kathlyn Calvert died on Sat. May 12, 2007. She was 86 years at death. Due to her illness Kathlyn and her husband, Merrill, of 67 years, have not been active for several years.

Kathlyn was an honorary member of the Fred A. Barkley Branch of the A.B.S. Kathlyn and Merrill were not Charter members of the Barkley Branch by missing the first meeting when the Branch became a member of the A.B.S. Both were also very active in the Southwest Region. Many years ago the Calvert's and the Barkley Branch helped the Southwest Region get back on their feet by growing and donating plants and Merrill fixing up a rental truck to take the plants to Dallas, TX. for a plant sale with all profits going to the Southwest Region.

One had only to go to their home in Nicoma Park, OK to see their love of begonias as well as orchids and Merrill's love of cactus and succulents. Kathlyn was so willing to share her knowledge in the care and raising of begonias. You never left their home without cuttings or plants. They were always very gracious in letting us use their greenhouses to grow plants for our sales and yearly picnics.

I remember attending my first National Begonia Show in the early 1990's on the East coast and carrying a suitcase of cuttings from the Calvert's for the plant sale room. I don't believe any cuttings

ever made it out of the set-up room - all wanted them because they were such fine specimens.

Kathlyn and Merrill were jointly awarded the Mae Blanton Award in 1986. Kathlyn won many Cultural Awards and first place ribbons with her plants. Kathlyn had the honor of having *B. 'Kathlyn Calvert'* named for her by **Dorothy Caviness**.

Diane Horne

In Memory

Maybelle Green

It is with great sadness that I write this memoriam for a longtime friend, avid begonia grower and supporter of the American Begonia Society. Maybelle Green passed away on March 2, 2007.

I first met Maybelle when my mother and I first joined the Miami Branch. I was 17 at the time. Maybelle was teaching elementary school during this period but always took the time to share a cutting and talk begonias with me; a fast friendship soon developed with my family and me. My father always commented that he enjoyed their football chats and that she certainly knew the game.

Maybelle held numerous offices and board positions within the Miami Branch including President. Maybelle also served as Show Chairman at both the 1985 and

1993 ABS Conventions held in Miami. I was Convention Chairman of both events and when I asked Maybelle to be show chairman again for the 1993 event she just looked at me and said "only for you will I be show chairman again". But that was the type of person Maybelle was.

Maybelle attended various ABS conventions where again she made many friends. As an ABS judge Maybelle judged many local branch shows and Conventions. Maybelle was also an exhibitor and won many Division Trophies and Best of Shows during her years of growing.

After retirement and Hurricane Andrew Maybelle divided her time between the homes of her two daughters Michelle in Houston, Texas and Sharon in Port St. Lucie, Florida. While in Houston Maybelle became an active member of the Astro Branch in Houston. Members always eagerly awaited Maybelle's return to Houston after her stay in Florida. Maybelle's family always knew how important plants were to her and always made arrangement for her to attend the various plant functions in South Florida and in Texas.

Such was my friend Maybelle Green; she certainly followed one of the Aims and Purposes of the American Begonia Society: To bring into friendly contact all who love and grow begonias.

We will miss you Maybelle.

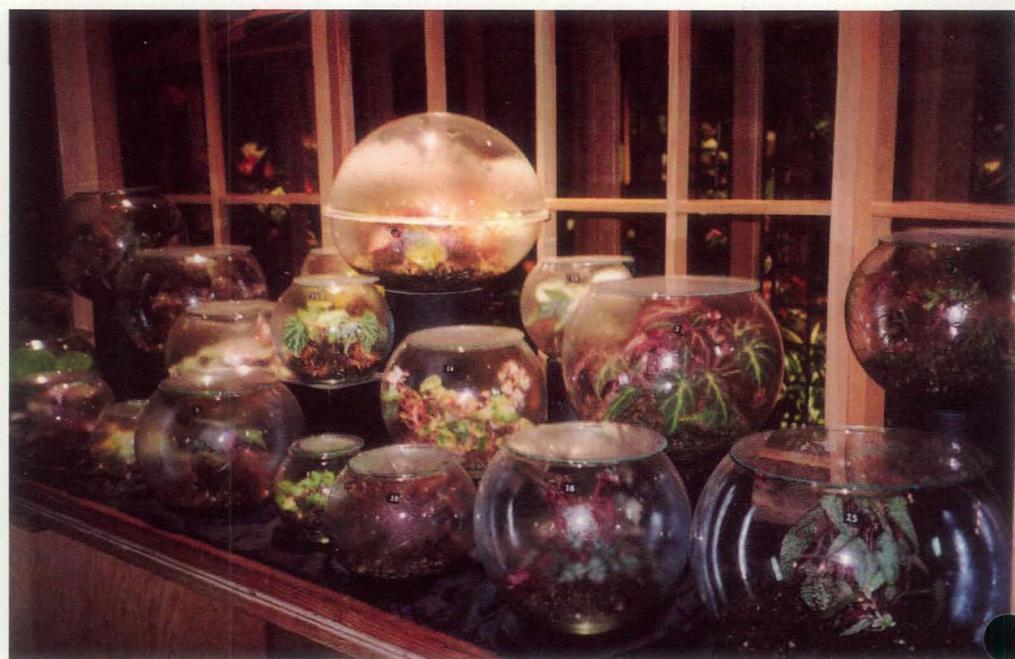
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Buxton Branch's plant room with a wealth of terrariums is above. Below is Wanda Macnair's bay window display with a wide array of terrarium plants.



The Buxton Branch Goes To The Boston Flower Show

by Bonnie Lambert, Buxton Branch (MA)

For the second year in a row the Buxton branch has put together a winning plant room at the Boston Flower Show! Thanks to the following members and their 30 plus plants: Cynney Passavant, Ann Tanona, Norman Dufrenes, Ann and Gene Kosinski, Sarah and Brian Glemboski, Stuart Hammer, John Harrington, Penny Light, Tony Pinto, Bonnie Lambert (Room Chair)

This year's theme was "Yes you can"...so we put together an easterly lit/artificially lit 6ft x 8ft room titled 'A Tropical Paradise Under Lights'.

We mixed terrariums, pots, species and cultivars and received a first place with a Mass Hort. Society Cultural certificate. Members came in from RI, MA and CT to assist with the arrangement starting at 8am and that finally unfolded by 5pm. What always takes the longest is coordinating the plant names with the list of final numbers. Extra plants go into the show to be judged individually, so no one loses out.

We also get judged on our state-

ment—does it illustrate the theme... We like to educate the public too. It must be working because several people joined the ABS.

Many *Begonia* species are naturally found within the understory of massive, tropical trees, or at the edge of remote waterfalls. In nature, they have adapted to their low-light or potentially too wet environment by growing red pigments, drip-tips or "hairs" on their leaves. Individual ranges may be extremely narrow, even at the equator. To get the delicate species or hardier cultivars to grow and thrive in a centrally heated home requires artificial light to keep them looking their best. In addition, seeds germinate better, tubers sprout earlier and cuttings take faster under lights. Several unrelated species such as *Schefflera*, *Ficus* and *Pelomias* also make wonderful companions because their growing conditions are so similar. On the left, you can see how we arranged it all for a winning display.

Yes, You Can

by Wanda Macnair

The title of this article "Yes, You Can" was the theme of the 2007 New England Spring Flower Show. In March of 2006, when the theme was first announced, I decided this was the perfect time to bring the attention of the public to the ease of growing plants requiring extra humidity. I contracted to enter a small bay window in the structure classes of the Amateur Horticulture Competition and soon was

having difficulty deciding which plants to leave home.

My objective was to display a broad range of color, shapes and patterns in the foliage of begonias requiring an enclosed atmosphere. This objective was becoming difficult to accomplish in a small bay window so I asked if the Amateur Horticulture Committee would allow me to move into a large bay window instead. At that time

it was January, 2007, and there were only two other large bays spoken for. The Committee was delighted with the idea so the decision was made.

One of the reasons we have specialized in terrarium plants is because of our light exposure, which is mostly northern. In addition, there are several trees that shade the windows. Even in the winter our regular begonias languish. To compensate for this lack of light, there are two light carts on the second floor and a former Ping Pong table illuminated by fluorescent lights in the basement. Our lifestyle of maintaining perennial beds and a huge vegetable garden four hours away in Maine in addition to our gardening in Cambridge has also contributed to our tendency to grow plants requiring an enclosed atmosphere because they do not require constant attention.

During the summer, the most precious plants go to the basement, which is cooler. During the winter those most prized plants are on the second floor, because the ancient furnace raises the temperature too much in the basement. Lights on the second floor are on mostly at night to have any heat produced by them coming during the coolest part of the day.

We religiously adhere to **Mildred and Ed Thompson's** recipe for growing medium, utilizing long-fibered sphagnum moss and perlite, except that we use gardener's charcoal in the bottom of the containers. We scrounge whatever containers we can find for growing, but for showing, we need clean glass bubbles or plastic containers.

In the statement of intent for the bay window display it was emphasized that many of the terrarium plants come from rain forests where they have a heavy canopy of growth overhead. Hence, they may be grown in windows without much light or under artificial light. In fact, if the

containers are placed where they receive direct sunlight, the plants will cook. This is because the light causes an intense rise in temperature.

This temperature rise might be avoided to some extent by opening the lid a bit or by growing in a container with a hole in the top but it is safest to avoid direct sunlight.

Species plants used in the display were: *Begonia amphioxus*, *bipinnatifida*, *decora*, *hemsleyana* (U404), *imperialis*, *luzonensis*, *polilloensis*, *prismatocarpa* 'Variegation', *prismatocarpa*, *rajah*, *scapigera*, *staudtii*, U309, U074, and *variabilis*. Cultivars that were used could be grown in the open by many growers, although the conditions, especially in the winter, in the Northeast are difficult for humidity-loving plants. Begonias 'Dido', 'More Change', 'Red Doll' and 'Silver Jewell' rounded out the exhibit. Some plants were used because they were a certain size and fitted in well. Plants not needed in the exhibit were entered in either the Begonia class or the class for enclosed atmospheres.

The result was a blue ribbon, a cultural certificate and the Thalassa Cruso award for the bay window. There was much interest by the public in this method of growing plants.

Although begonias are very susceptible to powdery mildew, there is no problem with terrarium-grown plants, unless they already have the mildew spores when planted, because the covers keep the spores away from the plants. One problem—a mold growing on top of the medium tends to grow if the plants are kept too wet, and are fertilized. Even chemical fertilizers have a bit of organic material in them that feeds the growth of the mold.

Growers of terrarium plants need to remember that the plants only prefer high humidity around their foliage. They

do not want wet feet. When they are dry enough to water, a turkey baster helps to control the addition of water. Excess water may be removed by absorbing with paper towels.

Vigorously growing plants need to be pruned by removing the larger leaves and snipping shoots before they tend to take on the shape of the container. A few judges are very picky about leaves even touching the sides of the containers. Also, some judges don't like perlite to be visible in the growing medium.

An additional pleasure I receive growing plants in this manner is that

even without fertilizer the plants tend to grow fast and require pruning from time to time or moving to a larger container. What do you do with all those cuttings? Propagate them, of course. We now have a number of terrarium growers in the Buxton Branch, and, like **Johanna Zinn, Charles and Leora Henthorne, Morris Mueller, Millie Thompson**, we share with other members of ABS. We expect to have Ziploc bags containing plants to donate to the LA convention. We usually bring two extra suitcases with plants, and then we have some room to pack our own purchases going home.

Wanda Macnair, Cambridge, MA

Letter from a Hybridizer

*Recently, in going through old **Begonia Leaflets**, I found these quotes from a letter (May 1986) by **Dorothy Caviness** whose many hybrids have been widely circulated thanks to **Gene Salisbury**. I found it interesting and thought you might too. And see page 150.*

About 5 1/2 years ago we moved to Mustang, OK and I became interested in growing from seed. Once I started the next step was to grow from my own seeds. I started with several tubers in the greenhouse and they bloomed in wintertime. That was my first attempt at hybridization and **Kathlyn Calvert** called it 'Dorothea'. Next came a cane that I call 'Juanita Jewel' which I dearly love. It was kept in a basket in the greenhouse and everyone that came in would always ask "What's that?" I asked Kathlyn Calvert if she would grow it for me for I knew she would grow it to its full potential and this she certainly did. Kathlyn did a great job on this plant but it just would not bloom and some checking revealed that it had nematodes. It seems I had brought soil in from the garden to level my greenhouse floor and when the cane was a baby I had set it on the ground.

That was a big mistake. Now I never set anything on the ground but place my plants on egg cartons or plastic.

So we chopped the plant into a lot of cuttings, the cuttings grew fine, and much to our surprise it wasn't very long before they bloomed a bright pink. B. 'Juanita Jewel' was named for my dear sister who was a jewel to everyone who knew here. I was so happy that I was able to show my sister this plant before she passed away because she knew how much I love my begonias and I knew she knew this was my way of expressing how much she was loved and honored.

A lot of the plants that I've hybridized with have come and gone in my greenhouse, but I can always spot their offspring so I feel they're still around. I am not a serious hybridizer -- I do it strictly for the enjoyment I get out of it. But what little success I may have had in hybridization would not have been possible without an individual who has always been supportive and encouraged me from the beginning. That person is Kathlyn Calvert and I hope she will let me show my appreciation by naming my double curl cane after her.

~Dorothy Caviness

A CURIOUS THING

By Jeanne M. Kunze

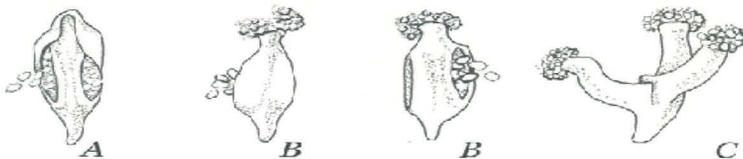
I am writing this at the end of March 2007 and my *Begonia* 'Bethlehem Star' is blooming and something curious about its staminate flowers caught my eye. I examined a sample flower under my microscope and noticed that it had two different types of stamens and a pistil like structure. They were the usual yellow in color with a total combined count of 14. It seemed to be trying to be both male and female but did not have an ovary. My understanding of *Begonia* flowers was that they are either male or female. I recorded my observations in a sketch of the parts in question. As you can see from the accompanying illustrations, one type of stamen (A) dihisced longitudinally with a wing-like flap on each side of the apical end. The other type of stamen (B) also dihisced longitudinally as well but had an asymmetrical grouping of glandular tipped papillae at its apex. The pistil-like part has three branches with the same asymmetrical arrangement of pappellae facing away from the center joining of the angular and curved arms. Each of these parts measured .5 cm in length. My observations of the products of the stamens were that they were colorless, translucent and oval in shape.

There were pistilate flowers as well in bloom on the plant that looked 'normal'. I tried to cut a cross section of the ovary but was not successful and my microscope is probably not strong enough to see the structural interior of the ovary anyway. The exposed ovules also appeared colorless and translucent but more round in shape. The flower had two pale pink tepals with a few deeper pink spotting.

The plant is growing in a contained atmosphere in a north east window here in Billerica, Massachusetts about 25 mi. NNW of Boston. If I remember correctly I bought the plant at a Buxton Branch plant sale but do not know who the grower was.

A reference article for a similar finding in Guangxi, China by authors Shin-Ming Ku, Yan Liu and Ching-I Peng can be found at

<http://ejournal.sinica.edu.tw/bbas/content/2006/2/Bot472-13.pdf>



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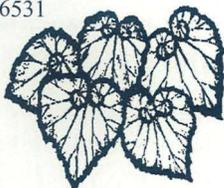
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COMING EVENTS

July 7, 2007, Westchester Branch of the American Begonia Society 48th Annual Show & Sale, Covenant Presbyterian Church, 80th & Sepulveda, Los Angeles, CA 90045. 9-5. This year we are honoring **Robert Golden** and will have a display of his beautiful new begonia hybrids. Bob has won Best In Show at Westchester many times. Contact: **Janet Brown**, 310-670-4471, begoniabrown@yahoo.com.

2007 American Begonia Society Convention^A: Scotland! Contact Janet Brown for more information at jbbrown@yahoo.com or 310-670-4471. **2007 American Begonia Society Convention^B, Los Angeles, CA, Palos Verdes Branch hosting.** Packets should be in your hands; if not, contact Margaret Fisher at 714-847-1889.

March 21-24, 2008, Association of Australian Begonia Societies Convention hosted by the Queensland Begonia Society (inc) in Brisbane, Australia. Easter 2008 from Friday, March 21, 2008 at 3 p.m. and concluding with a bus trip to the Sunshine Coast on Monday, March 24, 2008. Begin your plans! More information to come.

**Deadline for the September/October issue
will be July 1, 2007.**

The Begonian

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Entries/Classification.... Vacant

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