# Begonian January/February 2009

The

## The Begonian

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#### American Begonia Society

#### Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

#### **Privacy Policy**

#### **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: Doris Happel** took this photo of *Begonia* 'Maurice Amey' in the Four Arts Garden which is sure to be on the 2009 Convention Tours in Palm Beach.

**Back:** Charles Jaros sent this photo a few years ago of *Begonia* 'Tequesta' which was the Best Begonia at the Palm Beach Tropical Flower Show. Will we see it again at Convention 2009?

## In This Issue

In this issue we welcome back **Jacky Duruisseau** of the French Begonia Society who reminds of the difficulty in identifying a variable species. **Mike Flaherty** has found another unique begonia. **Rekha Morris** and **Jack Golding** amend the description of *Begonia sikkimensis* var. *kamengensis* and we get the opporunity to include more photos of this species. Bill Claybaugh questions the origins of another beautiful cultivar. And most of all the Palm Beach Society members give us views into what Florida holds for us in 2009.

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Begonia 'Silver Dollar'. Photo by Mary Bucholtz.

Remember: Get Those Dues In Now to the Membership Chair

## **President's Message**

Well it is the start of a new year and I hope everyone had a lovely holiday season. I thought 2007 went by fast, but 2008 just flew by. It is winter here in California and I hope we are getting some much needed rain. The last few years have been very dry. In about a month, maybe two months for some of you, it is time to start thinking about begonias again. Don't worry that some of your plants may not look their best. It is winter and begonias look awful this time of year. They don't like the cold and tell you about it by dropping their leaves. Wait until it starts to warm up before you even think about throwing anything away. For now look at catalogs and try and remember what plants you saw last year, but were not able to find or buy. Maybe you can get a head start on putting together your wish list.

I am sorry to say that here in California we have lost another one of our long time members. **Joy Blair** helped me judge the Palos Verde show in August and five weeks later she was gone. She was the type that would read up on everything to do with begonias and she had a mind like a steel trap for remembering all their growth habits. She loved a lot of different plants, but I think begonia and orchids were her favorites. We will all miss her.

May Butcholtz, our branch relations director, is starting up the Branch Relation Newsletter again and the first issue has already been sent out to the national reps. Be sure and look for it and take it to your meeting so everyone can read the issue.

If you have not gotten your dues in to **Donna Marsheck** by now, you will begin missing issues so hurry them in.

The last thing I want to remind you of is the convention that is coming up in late April early May in West Palm Beach Florida. Put the dates on your calendar and try and come. You won't be sorry that you did. Florida is lovely this time of the year, we always have a good time, and you won't believe the plants.

Bye for now and stay warm.

Mary Sakamoto

## **Holiday Greetings**

A big apology to Bobbie Price, who was the *very first* contributor to the Holiday Greetings and whose name was inadvertently left off the list last issue. Please note that she assisted in bringing you that holiday issue and that her greetings continue into the new year!

#### Holiday Greetings 2008 Gold

**Bobbie Price** 

## **Propagating a new chapter:** Mid-America Begonia Society

There was a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm in the room at Loose Park Garden Center on October 11 - and the subject was begonias. This was the second meeting held to gauge the interest in forming a club in the Kansas / Missouri area and 25 people showed up hoping to make this work. We even had begoniacs from Topeka and Wichita make the trip to show their support.

Attending were folks who have grown begonias for many years as well as novices with just one or two begonias but a passion to learn, and of course, collect more plants. The group decided to start with a manageable schedule of four meetings for the 2009 year. Those meetings will be held on March 14, June 13, September 12 and November 14. All the meetings are scheduled from 1pm to 4pm at the Loose Park Garden Center, 5200 Pennsylvania, Kansas City, MO. (Note: Since a fee is charged for the room there the group will be looking for another location that we might be able to use free of charge. Ultimately this may slightly alter our schedule.)

A committee has been formed to hammer out the details and charter for our group. They will meet on November 15, 2008. Everyone was in full agreement that we will want to focus on increasing our knowledge of begonia culture, nomenclature and having fun, hands-on programs. If you are an ABS member in the Midwest we encourage you to join our group. Please contact Linda, 5635 Woodward, Merriam, KS 66202 or by email at **begoniaskc@yahoo.com**.

Linda Tamblyn

## Convention 2009 Note

#### **Convention Goers!**

Airlines are making it harder to take extra luggage. UPS shipping from the convention will be simple and easy. For those of you who acquire lots of wonderful plants during the convention sale and tours, UPS will be setting up right at the hotel on Saturday to provide boxes and packing material. You can pack your own, or they will do it for you. They will enter your delivery information into the UPS computer system and ship all packages ut on Monday. Convention registration material will go out during the first week in January.

#### **Doris Happel**

See also pages 10 and 31.

## Letters to the Editor

#### Unidentified Begonia from Brazil

My new region of love is the Brazilan Highlands plateaus and savannas in the State of Goias, wild cowboy country. After wrecking two 2WD rent-a-cars on dirt roads I decided to buy a used 2002 4WD Ford Ranger pick-up. I leave it in Brasília. I fly to Brasília using air mileage obtained from the use of my credit cards. My mechanic shop in Brasília is specialized in preparing cars for rallies so it's always in good condition.

I read about the Maranguape begonia in the November/December 2008 issue of the *Begonian*. My begonia is from near Guaramiranga, further up the mountains along the same road. I found a photograph of "Begonia Ceará" at < http://www.brazilplants.com/begoniaceae/begonia-ceara. html >. All three are obviously the same plant. (I still have my two plants from the region but they never bloomed; I assume they need a photoperiod, however short in Ceará)

> Best regards, Jacques Jangoux, Brazil

Jacques' plant as stated in the article is Begonia U440. Jacques sent along a map to show the locations, but it did not show up well when reduced in size. If anyone wishes to see the map, I will be happy to forward it. fh

#### Why it is difficult to identify a species... by Jacky Duruisseau Photos from Jacky Duruisseau and Charles Salamone

AFABEGO members send often to us photos of their begonias. Some propose them for our bulletin, *Le Bégofil*. Others, many, would like that we identify their begonias with these pictures. Let's drop the hybrids whose multitude complicates matters !

It is very easy to distinguish at a glance *Begonia ulmifolia*, *Begonia paulensis* or *Begonia masoniana*, but in most cases a photo of the plant is not enough for us to determine it.

By way of proof, the following pictures who show the same species: *Begonia susaniae* Sosef (section Scutobegonia) we found in several forms near Tchimbélé, in Crystal Mountains to Gabon, on December 2003. We have remarked that the different forms of this plant does not cohabit in a place, we see one and only one form of *Begonia susaniae*.

The scientific description of this species was written by Marc Sosef in the book: *Begoniaceae*, volume V, Sections "**Scutobegonia**" and "**Loasibegonia**" published by the Wageningen University to Neerland. It shows us that a species may be very variable. Contrary to what we usually think, the botanical characters of a plant are not precise. They stand often in a bracket more or less wide, and often, very wide !

So, we don't recognize *Begonia* susaniae only with the stem! In fact: the stem is almost symmetrical to distinctly asymmetrical; it is usually broadly elliptic-ovate, sometimes ovate or almost circular; usually, it is gradually tapering or sometimes slightly acuminate at the top. Sizes are:  $3,5 / 12.5 \times 2,4 / 7,0$  cm. Margin is usually irregularly dentate,

sometimes more coarsely dentate or only slightly sinuate to entire. It is ciliate or sparsely so.

Upper surface is very variably bullate with a few small solitary bullae with small clustered bullae to densely bullate or bullate with few to many large solitary bullae.

As for flowers, which makes up the basis of the plant's classification, they are so very variable and a layman cannot identify precisely a plant!

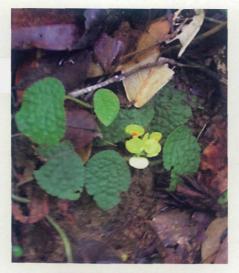
The petals of male flowers are yellow or orange outside, but sometimes are cream-coloured when the plant is young. Inside, they are entirely yellow or yellow with a red patch and nerves in the half basal. The androecium has 19-33 stamens!

The female flowers have the same diversity.

So, perhaps you ask to me: "but, have not the different forms of **B. susaniae** any common features? Yes, they have: blade leaf is peltate; fruits are pendulous and wings are curved upwards; this begonia grows near the streams or waterfalls. It is a terrestrial plant, but we can often see it as an epiphytic plant on mossy rocks and trunks. It grows only in South Cameroon and North Gabon in Crystal mountains.

In conclusion, you easily understand that our miserable pictures do not allow to identify begonias...Don't be cross with us if we cannot find the name of your favorite plant from a photo !

However... if one day, you walk in the rain forest in the North of Gabon, and then you see on a river bank, a shady and damp slope or on a mossy trunk, a begonia with a peltate blade, with wings on frui







Photos of Jacky Duruisseau and Charles Salamone show us various forms of Begonia susaniae found at different locations in the rain forest north of Gabon.





with fruits pendulous, it may be that it is a *Begonia susaniae* Sosef...unless it is a *Begonia lacunosa* Warburg. Would you believe it, *Begonia lacunosa* Warburg... has peltate leaves, fruits with wings and pendulous, grows in Gabon in the Crystal mountains, near streams, has male flowers that are yellow, sometimes orange outside and yellow or yellow with a red patch and red nerves on the half basal inside?

#### Begonia 'Mandela' by Michael Flaherty, Santa Barbara, California

A few years ago I visited Australia for the first time. The highlights of my trip were a visit to **Peter Sharp's** begonia garden at the Sydney Botanical Garden and **Ross Bolwell's** begonia nursery. Peter Sharp personally gave us a tour of his lovely begonia garden recognized as the world's largest outdoor begonia gardens. A collection of species and hybrids including Peter's hybrid Semperflorens *Begonia* 'Island Gem'.

Ross showed genuine Aussie hospitality by picking us up at the train depot and taking us to visit his begonia lovers. dream nursery. I was very impressed with the plants in Ross's first greenhouse, a mixture of begonias growing in pots and in the ground. In the middle of the greenhouse was Ross's Alfred D. Robinson Medal winner for 2002, Begonia 'Flamingo Queen'. The next house was for the rhizomatous begonias, and this house was extraordinary because of the quality of the plants, colors and varieties that we don't see in the USA. The third house knocked my socks off! It was filled with the BEST collection of cane begonias I have ever seen and I do get around. One in particular caught my eye because it had almost black leaves with many white spots and beautiful white flowers. I asked Ross for the name and he said it was unnamed.

Two years had passed since my visit to Ross's nursery when I was doing some research on begonias in South Africa. I read about Nelson Mandela and his love of gardening and that he was born near Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, the area where **J.F. Drège** first found *Begonia dregei*. It was then that I thought about the beautiful unnamed black and white cane begonia of Ross's and to name the begonia after the man that brought blacks and whites together and ended apartheid.

I talked to Ross about his cross of *B. U078* x *B.* 'Lenore Olivier' and asked if he would consider naming it *B.* 'Mandela'. Ross thought the name appropriate and agreed to name the plant after Nelson Mandela the Nobel Peace Prizewinner of 1993.

July 18, 2008 was Mandela's 90th birthday and his foundation continues to fight AIDS, helps many children charities and advocates for a variety of social and human rights organizations. This is truly a magnificent plant to honor a wonderful man Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Nelsons Mandela's words, "To plant a seed, watch it grow, to tend and then harvest it, offered a simple but enduring satisfaction. The sense of being the custodian of this small patch of earth offered a small taste of freedom." From 'A Prisoner in the Garden' a Book published in 2006 that tells about Nelson Mandela's garden and prison life.

Photo: Gary Hunt of terrarium fame next to \_\_\_\_\_\_ B. 'Mandela'.



#### Convention 2009, Palm Beach, FL Tours 2009 by Johanna Kitson

Growing begonias in Palm Beach is unique from other growing climes. On Wednesday you will see how wonderfully Zone 10 treats begonias. Palm Beach is a long barrier island located between the Atlantic Ocean's Gulf Stream Current and Lake Worth. Yearly temperatures range from 35° to 95°F with humidity ranging from 55-100%. Begonias that love these conditions thrive in our landscapes.

First, we will be touring the garden located at the Society of the Four Arts where Begonia popenoi grows waist to shoulder high and Begonias U475. thelmae, and plebia (svn. barsolouxii) intermingle adjacent to maidenhair ferns along the edges of the Jungle Garden pathways. After the hurricanes, even more begonias were added to this renovated garden including Begonia 'Maurice Amey', 'Sinbad'. coccinea pink and white, 'Challenger', 'Manaus', chloroneura, odorata, 'Big Mac', heracleifolia, nelumbiifolia, and a few others! Begonia convolvulacea is growing up the trunks of a couple of palm trees. All of these species and hybrids thrive amongst other tropical and semitropical plants such as Bismarkia and oil palms, pandanas, ferns, aroids, and exotic bromeliads. Coral pathways lead you through eight different sub-gardens to make one large demonstration garden. Four water features add to the mystic and humidity allowing Begonia longipetiolata to grow freely along a limestone rock.

A private garden is next on the tour. Being located right along Lake Worth allows plants in this yard to have plenty of air circulation and the needed humidity they require. A wooden Victorian looking shade-house contains orchids, ferns and some succulents. Rare palms, such as a very large Red Ceiling Wax palm and an Old Man palm, adorn the front of the home and shelter the many begonias growing beneath them. Many of these begonias were planted after our last convention in 2000. Large beds of bromeliads, including the newly released *Alcanteria odorata*, are planted throughout this lovely property. Along the lake a Secret Garden is located. Many unusual and rare plants highlight themselves at every turn in the pathways.

A short distance down a walkway is the Flagler Museum where touring it will add to your knowledge of Florida history.

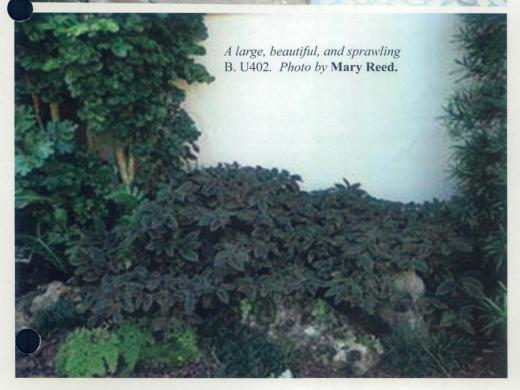
Mr. Flagler developed parts of Palm Beach and opened Florida up to the masses by installing the first railroad. The estate was a wedding gift to his wife.

Lunchtime offers inside or outside seating at a local restaurant famous for seafood, sandwiches, salads, and definitely not low calorie desserts...strawberry pie and mango topped ice cream comes to mind.

You will be glad you had that dessert when you arrive at the next tour, as it is a six-acre estate chock-full of horticultural wonderment. Those calories will be needed to walk around to see everything! The owner has collected plants from around the world and has a very good eye for design. The front yard offers a look at the rain forest he has created and the back yard shows off sun loving plants of all types. Very large sculptures created by the owner sit in the middle of the succulent garden.

Mounts Botanical Garden has highlighted all three properties you will see on Thursday on its yearly Mother's Day garden tour.

B. U402, Venezuelan species. to the left. Begonia 'Ricinifolia' in the middle. Photo by Mary Reed



The first garden has an open look and is full of colorful blooming sunloving plants. This collector's garden is highlighted by an arbor leading to a secret garden, a pond with waterfall, a shade house, and winding pathways all implemented by the owner. High filtered shade provided by palms and trees enable many begonias to thrive.

The second garden is enclosed overhead by tall native cypress, oak and maple trees. Several fishponds supply extra humidity needed for eight different types of maidenhair ferns, 80+ begonias, and many odd, unusual plants, such as Angiopteris, Dorestenia, and Monolena. Trees provide vertical gardening space for orchids, bromeliads, shingle plants, philodendrons, and an Anthurium 'Billifolius rex'.

Visiting two nurseries will give you opportunities to buy plants. Excelsa Gardens, one of the nurseries that supply exotic plants to the Philadelphia Plant Show, carries succulents to tropicals. Then onto Tropical World nursery that has a small lake and natural bogs, complete with lotus lilies adorning the nursery's surrounding landscape. Again, lot of plants!

We are then off to rest and relax around the lunch table at the Wellington Club.

To end the day we arrive at another member's garden where her acre holds vast beds of bromeliads, palms, tropical bamboo, butterfly plants, tropical fruits, brugmansias, and many, many begonias. Several of the yahoo begonia pictures posted in the last year are from this garden.

After our convention in 2000, we donated several trays of four-inch begonias to the newly located American Orchid Society in Delray Beach. Friday you will see them several years later growing in the landscape and complimenting the AOS grounds and enclosed orchid house. The gift shop offers many souvenirs ranging from books to glassware.

Then we travel to West Palm Beach to traverse Unbelievable Acres. This property was a blank slate thirty years ago and has developed over the years into a rain forest of many rare and desirable plants. The owner was a county extension agent for 30+ years and has recently retired to tend to his plants full time. Seeing all the begonias in this yard will be reminiscent of how they grow out in the wilds of the forest. Stands of cane begonias reach heights of ten feet and stalks are two inches in diameter.

On Sunday we will trek to Miami to indulge ourselves in yet another begonia search visiting Palm Hammock Orchid Estate. We will have the opportunity to add to our collections of unusual and rare plants once again.

Ah, yes, another convention to be "Bewitched, Bewildered and Begonia'd." Hope to see you all in April 2009.

## **Editor's Notes**

It is difficult to think ahead to March, but in these days in winter when you cannot work outside, I wish some of you who are not regular contributors would take a few minutes to share your thoughts about a specific begonia or begonias in general. The March issue will have to be assembled in January and the larder as always is almost empty!

I remind everyone that when you receive a new issue, the first day of its date is the due date for articles to be in the following issue. So when you open the January/February issue you know that items for the next one are now due.

Continued on page 14

#### 2009 ABS AWARDS - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS ANN SALISBURY, AWARDS CHAIRMAN

They are the American Begonia Society's "Magnificent Seven". You have an opportunity to make 7 nominations for 2009. Note that the Ziesenhenne Award criteria has changed from its original form.

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

There are many worthy members that are possible winners for these awards. If you have nominated someone in the past and they have not won, please nominate them again. Note the new criteria for the Rudolf Ziesenhenne Award. The committee may present only one of each of the awards each year.

I must receive these nominations by March 15, 2009. Remember the Board has approved email nominations; however, by mail or email, one nomination per page! Please mail all nominations to:

#### Ann Salisbury, Awards Chairman P. O. Box 452 Tonkawa, Ok. 74653 Email: geneann@sbcglobal.net

#### AWARD CRITERIA:

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

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

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

The **Rudolf Ziesenhenne Award** is presented to an Editor who collects and edits the works of others for a publication either U.S. or international and: a. who encourages a broad array of writers both scientific and practical to write and contribute articles. b. who issues a publication on begonias that is both excellent in design and content and which contributes to our knowledge and appreciation of begonias.

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

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

The **Gene Salisbury Award** is given to a grower who exemplifies the very best in cultural practice, but who also bring to us by their careful work the new species and hybrids. These are growers who contribute to our society simply through their excellence in growing begonias.

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

Recent past recipients of these awards:

				<u>O'Remy</u>
Year	Dyckman Award	Gray Award	ADR Medal	Award
1995	A. Salisbury	M. Blanton	B. 'Silvermist'	
1996	C. Notaras	K. Mounger	B. 'Sweet Diane'	
1997	J. Coulat	none	none	
1998	E. Calkins	G.& A. Salisbury	none	
1999	G. Salisbury	M. Bucholtz	none	
2000	M. Sakamoto	F. Holley	B. 'M.Sakamoto'	
2001	R.& W Macnair	B. Thompson	B. 'Little Miss Mummy	<sup>2</sup>
2002	R & L Fuentes	H. Jaros	B.'Flamingo Queen'	
2003	J. Brown	C. Lenert	B. 'Cowardly Lion'	
2004	M. Zinman	C. Jaros	B. 'Black Gold'	
2005	Michael Kartuz	Don Miller	B. 'Holley Moon'	Tim O'Reilly
2006	Johanna Zinn	Rekha Morris		Charlie Lenert
2007	Howard Berg	Morris Mueller	B. 'River Nile'	R.L. Holley
2008	Mary Bucholtz	Bill Claybaugh	none	Richard Macnair
Year	Ziesenhenne Award	Salisbury Awar	d Marge	Lee Award
2001	Ed and Phyllis Bates			
2002	Tamsin Boardman			
2003	Freda Holley			
2004	Karen Bartholomew and			
	Chuck Anderson			
2005	Brad Thompson	Gene Salisbury	Tom Ke	epin
2006		Charles Jaros	Cheryl I	Lenert
2007	Tom Keepin	Bob Golden	Carol No	otaras
2008	Paul Tsamtsis	Doug & Joyce Prie	dgen Donna M	Marsheck

Continued from page 12.

Here in Louisiana, it seems that winter is coming early - are we into global cooling? We had our first freeze in October and we've had a couple since. Yesterday, it was 27 degrees; this morning it was back up to 31.

I have had seed on *B*. *U062* this year for the first time and I am anxious to see if

it germinates. Incidentally, if anyone has a really good digital photo of this plant, I would like you to share it with **Rekha Morris** and myself; she has promised to look at it and see if she thinks it is related to the *B. malabarica* and *B. dipetala* plants she has seen in India.

 $\sim FH$ 

**O'Reilly** 

#### Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund Listing The Margaret Lee Branch, San Diego County, CA

The seed fund is a service to members only. It is a privilege of your membership.

Below is the current list of seed available from the Seed Fund. Please self pollinate your species begonias, collect the seeds and send them to the seed fund. We depend on your contributions of seed to make a wider variety of species available to the members.

- B. angularis
- B. barkeri
- B. boliviensis
- B. carolineifolia
- B. carrieae
- B. cinnabarina
- B. convallariodora
- B. crassicaulis
- B. cucullata var. arenosicola
- B. dipetala
- B. dregei
- B. fischeri
- B. glabra
- B. gladulosa (syn. dayii hort.)
- B. herecleifolia
- B. incarnata
- B. karwinskyana
- B. kenworthyae
- B. lindleyana
- B. ludwigii
- B. nelumbiifolia
- B. peltata
- B. pinetorum (pk fl)
- B. reneiformis
- B. reneformis ( syn. vitifolia hort) (red form)
- B. rotundifolia
- B. sericoneura

B. sikkimensis B. tayabensis U083 U412 B. ulmifolia B. wallichiana

Rarely listed: \$2.00/ packet

The following seeds are from **Rekha Morris'** trip to Dominica and Central America. Please see Rekha's article in the Sept/Oct 2007 issue of the *Begonian*. Page 178. It contains descriptions of the listed species.

- B. convallariodora
- B. dominicalis (pink form)
- B. glabra
- B. involucrata
- B. multinervia
- B. oaxacana
- *B. sericoneura* (different from Mexican form)
- B. udisilvestris

These seeds are from Rekha Morris' trip to India. See Rekha's article in the Jan/Feb 2004 issue of the *Begonian*. Page 6.

RM-AR-415 B. aborensis RM-AR-537 B. U545 RM-AR-488 B. silletensis subsp. silletensis RM-SI-310 B. dipetala [with red veins] \* RM-SI-301 B. dipetala [with burgundy reverse foliage] \*

Continued on page 16.

Rarely listed limited supply: \$2.00/ packet

B. paulensis B. xanthina

Hybrids: \$0.50

B. 'Benigo'B. 'Hawaiian Sunset'Semp: Large redSemp: Large wh/pk flB. 'Vanderveldiana'

Packets of seeds of species and U numbers are \$1.50. All packets of cultivars (including open pollinated) seeds are 50¢ per packet. Very rare seeds and newly collected seeds will be \$2.00 or more per packet. California residents please add 7.75 % sales tax. All orders must be accompanied by check or money order, payable in US funds ONLY, to The Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund.

Please send your order with payment to:

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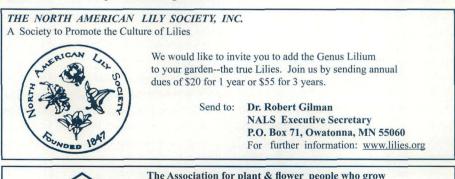


## **Conservation Comments** Bill Claybaugh Conservation Chairman, ABS

#### The Eye of the Storm

How do you prepare your begonia collection for a hurricane coming in, like tomorrow? Read on and I'll relate my recent experience with Hurricane Ike that swept the US from Texas, through Oklahoma, and on to Ohio with winds in the 120 to 75 mph range.

We knew it might happen, but our luck had held up for almost 50 years with no major hurricanes coming nearer than 75 miles of our home. Hurricane Ike ended that string of good luck with all of the typical devastation that a "Category two" storm can bring. To briefly recount, Hurricane Ike moved through the Gulf of Mexico throughout early September '08 with lower Texas its presumed target. Suddenly, in the last two days before landfall, it abruptly veered northward and headed directly toward Houston . Everyone had to do some major scrambling to react to this sudden and abrupt change in direction. Suddenly windows needed boarding up, and our precious begonia collections had to be safely tucked away, out of the devastating winds and rain to come. I crammed as many begonias as possible into my two shade houses and the rest I put on the ground under large oak trees or on the front and side porches. On September 13 the initial winds and rain from the storm arrived in the Houston area and took out electric power over a very broad area. By 4:00 am on the 14th, the leading edge of the eye of the hurricane had reached Crosby which turned out to be directly in the path of the eye of the storm. The leading edge had east winds in the 110-120 mile per hour range. This wind blew down three large oaks, two over 80 feet in height, in the front yard. It also uprooted a 70 foot tall oak and gently laid it down



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on top of my large shade-house. A couple hours later the wind shifted and came out of the south. This wind blew down two large oaks, totally destroying our swimming pool pump, filter and chlorinator. (A new system just installed two weeks earlier). Two hours later, at 8:00 AM, the wind shifted to come out of the west putting a 50 foot tall oak into the swimming pool and a 80 foot oak on to the house roof. Overall we lost 11 big trees, all uprooted, except for one large elm which had the top twisted out.

My biggest fear during the Hurricane was that my two shade houses would be destroyed and my begonia collection would be scattered over Harris county. To my surprise, neither shade house suffered major damage. I built both the shade houses myself and tried to make them relatively strong because of the possibility of hurricane force winds. The large shade house, 20 by 32 feet in size, is framed with 2x4, 2x6, and 4x4 treated lumber. The sides are plastic lattice work and the roof is corrugated PVC plastic. For the hurricane, I left every thing open and just let the wind blow through. The small shade house is an 11 x 17 foot lean-to with a corrugated PVC plastic roof and very large openings in all walls. Again, I left all doors and windows open to let the wind blow through.

Now to the important stuff. How did the begonias fair in this mayhem? The answer is, "Just fine, thank you"!! I had about 500 large begonias in the large shade-house and after the storm, I could only find about 10 that were actually damaged by the wind. I had two nice plants of *B. wollnyi* near the door and one of these was totally destroyed. The other broke up badly, but was salvageable. The other plants that were damaged were also near the open door and had their leaves ripped off. The lattice work sides obviously offered considerable protection from the high winds, but the open door was an invitation to destruction. The little shade house had no plant damage.

The major plant loss occurred not directly from the winds but rather from falling tree limbs. The begonias, my yard plants, which were on the ground under trees, were severely damaged. Some of the trees were those that were uprooted but several trees just had small limbs ripped off and these fell directly on top of the begonias. Overall, a real mess! A major conclusion from this overview of the Hurricane destruction is not to leave plants under trees. Keep them on the ground where the wind velocity is the lowest, but move them next to large structures such as the house or garage, and away from the trees

As I write this article it is late October and I am still very busy trying to repair the damage from the storm. The cane-like begonias get an annual cutting about this time of year, so the damage from the storm doesn't seem to matter much. The main canes are still intact and merely need trimming. The rhizomatous plants on the other hand seem to need more care than usual. With the loss of many leaves, the plants needed less water, but I didn't respond quickly enough so many ended up with rotting rhizomes. My solution, now that the damage has been done, is to remove some of the saturated root ball and repot into smaller pots using new, drier potting mix with about 50 percent perlite. This should allow the rooting system to dry out, get air, and reestablish the proper balance between roots and leaves. Hurricanes are not fun, but with a little preparation, one can "Save Our Species" and others.

You can find Bill Claybaugh's address on page 39.

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#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD MEETING AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY September 5, 2008, San Francisco, CA

President Mary Sakamoto opened the meeting and asked Cheryl Lenert to read the Aims and Purposes of the Society.

There were 19 board member votes present.

The proceedings of the prior meeting in Houston, TX, were accepted as published in the *Begonian* with one correction. The reference to the Saint Louis area in the branch relations paragraph is not correct. The correct reference should be to the Kansas City area. With that correction the approved proceedings are reclassified as minutes.

A motion to adjourn the board meeting to the annual business meeting to avoid having to conduct two meetings passed.

> Respectfully Submitted *Richard Macnair, Secretary*

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY September 5, 2008, San Francisco, CA

Treasurer **Carol Notaras** presented the financial reports for the last quarter of the fiscal year and the complete fiscal year. For the last quarter, May 1 to July 31, 2008, total income was \$15,567.26

and disbursement was \$28,670.16 in the general fund. The beginning balance was \$18,418.70 and ending balance was \$5794.17. The seed fund had a beginning balance of \$192.52 and an ending balance of \$478.37. Savings accounts had a beginning balance of \$63,900.53 and an ending balance of \$68,133.16. Combined checking and savings totals were \$82,559.11 beginning and \$73,927.33 ending. For the fiscal year August 1, 2007 to July 31, 2008, the general fund had a beginning balance of \$12,702.28 and an ending balance of \$5,315.80 with income of \$71,722.61 and disbursement of \$79,109.09. The seed fund had a beginning balance of \$323.37 and an ending balance of \$478.37. Savings accounts had a beginning balance of \$60.972.21 and an ending balance of \$68,133.16. Checking and savings totals were \$74,431.08 beginning and \$73,927.33 ending. The report was accepted.

**President Sakamoto** discussed the privacy policy and announced that only board members will be allowed to obtain personal information on ABS members for any reason.

Past President **Janet Brown** reported that there are still two Begonian DVD recordings available and the price has not changed. She also reported that the constitution and by-law manuscript including changes has been proof read and is in the process of being published.

President Sakamoto announced that the Executive Board approved the seed exchange agreement between ABS and Bali Botanic Garden in Indonesia.

Holiday Greetings Chair **Wanda Macnair** reported that \$2725 was contributed this year.

A report from Grant Committee Chair Johanna Zinn stated that at the Houston Convention \$1000 was awarded to Hugh Nguyen for a collecting trip to Viet Nam and \$2000 was awarded to **Rekha Morris** for collecting in India and Mexico. No further applications have been received.

The membership chair's workload was discussed and recognized as being burdensome. In addition, current procedures are expensive. A motion to give the membership chairman complete responsibility for maintaining membership passed. It is understood that this includes collecting dues and issuing *Begonians* in the most cost effective and least time consuming manner.

Branch reports for Delaware Valley, Buxton and Southwest Region were presented.

President Sakamoto reported that Branch Relations Director **Mary Bucholtz** is still attempting to get branches started in Michigan, Kansas and Rhode Island.

A convention report from Florida described tours to be held at the 2009 Convention in West Palm Beach in April.

A motion directing the president to appoint a committee to review the timing requirements for the annual business meeting passed. The purpose of this action was to try to avoid having an annual meeting with such poor attendance as this year. President Sakamoto appointed **Cheryl Lenert, Janet Brown** and **Richard Macnair** to the committee and asked them to report their conclusions at the next board meeting in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Internet Editor Julie Vanderwilt discussed the ABS website and asked for input. A stipend for the Internet Editor was discussed. An amount on the order of \$75 per month was determined reasonable.

> Respectfully Submitted, *Richard Macnair, Secretary*

#### In the Mailbox by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

#### GROWING BEGONIA LIKE ORCHIDS!

In the past few years, I have finally been bitten by the orchid bug! Living and growing in Florida, orchids abound everywhere. They are easy to grow, diverse (which feeds my ADD) and versatile. After having a few here and there, I began collecting them.

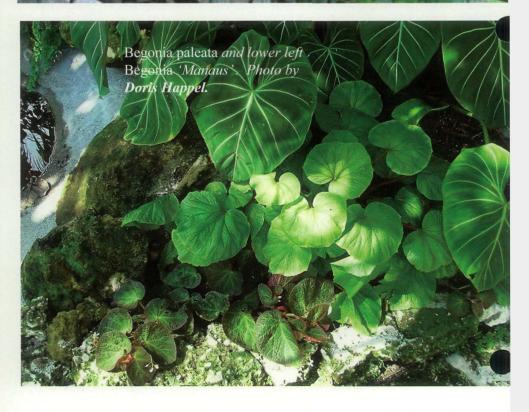
Since orchids have specific potting requirements, I started thinking how begonias enjoy somewhat similar environments, and the need to dry out. So, I began experimenting.

First, I started adding some potting material that encourages good drainage. The obvious is fine fir bark. This allows moisture to continue to flow through the pot, which is perfect for begonias. While bark breaks down rapidly in our warm, humid climate, that is generally not a problem with begonias because they need to be repotted annually, if not sooner.

Then, I began thinking.....if cuttings like moisture, but not wetness, try this fine fir bark in a mix with 2/3 perlite and some peat moss. Instantly, cuttings began rooting much quicker and with overall lushness.

Canes and shrubs work better for this method.

Working with orchids, I discovered how very important cleanliness is. Spreading a disease or virus is as simple as using the same, dirty cutting tool. So, I began keeping rubbing alcohol on hand, close to my potting area, to dip the tools in. I have noticed an improvement in the speed at which cuttings root. I still dip in rootone, but this is probably an old custom I picked up while growing up in New Jersey. Old habits die hard! *Continued on page 36.*  Begonia popenoi *background left and right;* Begonia *Selph's Mahogany' middle background; small begonia in front of rock is* Begonia longipeliolata. Photo by **Mary Reed.** 



## 2009 Convention Plants by Johanna Kitson

Exciting and spectacular plants will be offered at the April 2009 Convention.

Begonias have been procured from nearly a dozen sources, in country and abroad, so the selection will be superb and all good begoniacs will be able to go home with something new and exotic.

Especially interesting will be the new Asian species never before supplied at a convention. We are even having a special hybrid section propagated to offer what we thought were lost hybrids of **Paul Lowe**, our founding president here in the Palm Beaches. Several people are growing terrarium plants this year so the supply of these should be ample for convention attendees as well.

So, be ready to send in that registration as soon as you get your convention packet!

See also "Convention 2009 Note", page 5.

#### Don't Miss The Plant Sale!

## In Memory: Joy Blair

On September 18, 2008 Joy Blair passed away from pancreatic cancer. She will be a great loss to our San Gabriel Branch and to all the branches she belonged to in the Southern California area. Less than a month before she became ill she had judged the Palos Verdes Branch show. She lived only two weeks from the date of diagnosis.

Joy was an officer early in her club days. She was so outgoing and loved to talk and was often appointed as the Vice President. This is the hardest job in any club, the one who gets the speakers. She was always there to bring plants or to price them, to clerk or to judge. She was involved in so many clubs (16 at last count) and if she belonged she helped out.

At our regular meetings she was always the person to bring a plant, usually several plants, for Show & Tell. Joy also brought information from all the other clubs she belonged to, about when their shows or sales were.

Joy Blair loved her flowers and she oved people who shared her interest in them. You could always count on Joy whenever she was needed and she helped ailing clubs to keep going. And she was also ready to help out at conventions here and away whenever they needed her.

Services were held at Rose Hills on September 27 and there were many, many of her friends there to show how much they loved her. She will be missed by everyone who know her, but especially by all those who love and grow begonias.

"If you saw my yard, you'd understand I really do love all flowers. But if I have to choose one species, my favorite, it would be begonias. My favorite begonia is *B. rajah*. It originates from Burma and is an indoor variety that lives in a terrarium in my home. I love its deep purple and green foliage color and small pink flowers. To all of my daughters' great surprise a couple of weeks ago, a good friend of mine, Joy Paris, asked them if they knew about the 'Joy Blair' begonia. Well, you see, I hybridized it a while back and Goldie Frost named it after me." Joy Blair, 1930-2008

Jov Paris, CA

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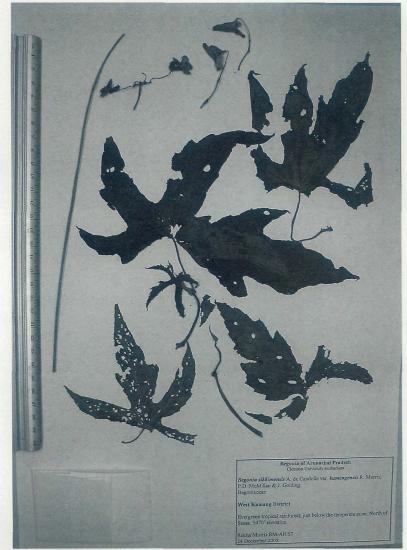




Rekha Morris' photos show clockwise from upper left, the new variety blooming in Pendleton, SC and in India; then B. U 522, and finally B. sikkimensis in India.

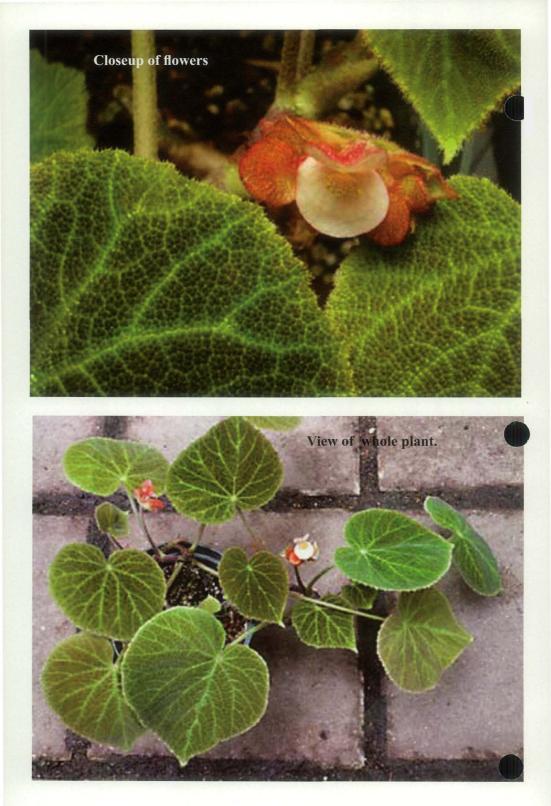
## **Designation of the Type for** Begonia sikkimensis **A. de Candolle var.** kamengensis by Jack Golding

This supplement is to validate the new name published for *Begonia sikkimensis* A. de Candolle var. *kamengensis* R. Morris, P.D. McMillan & J. Golding in the *Begonian* 75:210-211, 2008 by adding to the description the designation of the Holotype Specimen, RM-AR 57, Clemson.



**Holotype:** Arunachal Pradesh, West Kameng District. Evergreen tropical rainforest, just below the temperate zone, 5470' elevation, north of Sessa, 23 December 2005, Rekha Morris RM-AR 57 (Clemson –holotype, US – isotype)

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## **B. 'Benitsubomi' - A Beautiful Cultivar.** by Bill Claybaugh and Rekha Morris

In the fall of 2006, I bought a small unidentified plant at an Astro Branch plant sale that I took to be B. pustulata. I placed the small species in the back of my shade house along with several other plants of B. pustulata, imperialis, and 'Silver Jewel'. Over the course of the next year, I noticed this particular plant grew with unusual vigor, better than all of the others. With time it became a beautiful example of what I thought must be a light green, uniformly colored B. pustulata, probably something new that Rekha Morris had brought back from Mexico. The blade surface was pustulated, the margins serrated, the overall leaf shape was ovate with a distinctly cordate base and an obtuse apex, and the plant grew with a meandering habit.

Just before the ABS Convention in Houston in May 2008, to my pleasure, the plant bloomed and what a surprise. The flowers initially were a light orange/yellow with a white interior. Farther, the exterior of the senals were covered in numerous dominate hairs of several colors, in dark and light shades. I immediately knew something was amiss in my identification, but really had no clue as to the plants true identity. Fortunately, help was on the way. As part of the 2008 ABS Convention tours, the Judges and Clerks visited my house to see the shade house, begonias in flower beds, the Newport Garden Club Flower Show, and other highlights. While there, I cornered three of the best to give me some help in the plant identification. Specifically, I asked Maxine Zinman, Mary Buckholtz, and Rekha Morris if they had any idea as to what this beautiful plant might be. Maxine immediately recognized it as B. 'Benitsubomi', a Japanese cultivar from the late 70's, and Mary was able to confirm this. Rekha thought that although

it was not a pure *Begonia pustulata* species, it had *pustulata* in its ancestry.

Checking the Astro data base for cultivars, I learned that B. 'Benitsubomi' was a Japanese hybrid of Misono, 1978. B. 'Al Clark' x B. imperialis var. brunnea (which is now recognized as just B. imperialis). B. 'Al Clark' in turn is a hybrid of B. alice-clarkiae x imperialis var. brunnea. In the Begonian I found one reference to the plant, a brief mention that June Shawver had won a Best of Show with this cultivar in 1988. I also asked Jack Golding to check his extensive library to see what he could find and he returned a photo which absolutely confirmed Maxine's identification. The reference is a Japanese publication, Begonia in Color, Yuji Morotane and Hadeaki, page 98, 1983. Later at an Astro Branch meeting, Fukumi Smith translated the name of this plant to mean "Red Bud" (Benit = the color red and subomi = a flower bud).

After checking the information on this cultivar, I sent the data to Rekha who wrote the following:

"Despite what the Japanese say, your hybrid, B. 'Benitsubomi', does not have B. imperialis characteristics. What it has are characteristics of B. pustulata, and just about every B. imperialis I have seen in the USA labeled as such is not imperialis but a hybrid of B. imperialis and B. pustulata, with pustulata as the dominant strain. Patrick McMillan and I looked at this problem and wrote a short article in the Begonian a couple of years ago.

The photo you sent shows a bit of the stem, and this habit of sprawling is one of the most obvious characteristics of *pustulatas* I have recorded in the wild. Conversely, the wild *imperialis* which I also finally found a few years ago does not do this. Do you remember the *imperialis* exhibited by the **Pridgens** at the Houston Show? It was from a leaf I gave of one of the three forms of *B. imperialis* I collected, and its growth habit is compact. There are other characteristics as well, but that is the most obvious one. Another equally obvious one is the texture of the foliage - *imperialis* leaves are quite velvety in texture and not what is clearly indicated by the species epithet, *pustulate*.

Whatever the Japanese are growing as *imperialis* is dominantly *pustulata*. I want to grow the Japanese cultivar to observe it closely before I venture on writing about it, but perhaps you want to do this. If you do that it is fine, I'd just like to keep emphasizing that all the *imperialis* plants I have seen in cultivation so far, are not pure *imperialis*, but mostly *pustulata*!"

#### Continued from page 29.

While orchids are far more susceptible than begonias to pick up diseases, our summers are hot, wet and humid with rains frequently leaving plants wet all night and into the morning - just what orchids do not like! Well, begonias are not thrilled with this, either. So, the recommended spray control for orchids has allowed begonia foliage to look much better in summer. I sprayed every 4 weeks or so, as a prevention, and it also showed improvement. My new heat-tolerant Rex hybrid looked much better.

Lastly, orchids appreciate a pot that is not too deep. I began to accumulate azalea or "squatty" pots, and the rhizomatous appeared much happier than before. Of course, the big rhizomes will grow anywhere, but the compact varieties spread more evenly.

There are a few more behaviors that I have picked up along the orchid trail, but not all have been successful. However, experimenting is a learning process, and as a middle school teacher, learning is what I do! (The kids could not realize what they teach me on a daily basis).

By the way, for those that remember all the issues I had after that horrible hurricane season of 2004, well, I have recovered well. Newly planted palms have created new shade, the shade houses, converted from greenhouses because all the sun would have cooked everything, have worked well. They are exposed to the cold, but frost cloth has worked wonders for the few freezing nights we have. I have learned new growing techniques in a vastly different growing environment, and my yard is becoming the tropical paradise it used to be like. But, most importantly, I am having fun!

Contact Greg Sytch with all your questions about growing at Gregory Sytch, 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301; Ph: 727-841-9618; gsytch@cs.com

## Future Directions in Hybridizing by Ross Bolwell

What I notice about all of these commercially available begonias is that the best groups from which to choose begonias for Australian conditions have



been ignored. I consider that are four such groups: cane stem begonias; hardy rhizomatous begonias; shrub-like begonias and trailing-scandent begonias.

These groups display more resistance to disease than the others, are more suited to Australian temperature ranges and climatic conditions and have huge potential for breeding. There are enough species and cultivars among them to provide the building blocks for future development.

The above is an excerpt from Ross Bolwell's article, "Hybridizing From a Different Angle" that was taken from the September 2008 issue of Begonia Australis, journal

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of the Association of Australian Begonia Societies. Ross Bolwell is the creator of the beautiful Begonia 'Mandela' described on page 8 of this issue of the Begonian. and one of the world's great begonia hybridizers. I believe that his words apply equally well to the begonias hybridized in the U.S.. He concludes the article with these words: "... if we are to put begonias really on the map, we need to realise that this will only come from mainstream exposure and that is through the general public. They have to know just how good begonias are and what these plants can do to meet their needs. This will occur only if we breed plants that meet those needs."

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## **COMING EVENTS**

April 29-May 3, 2009, Palm Beach, Florida, 2009 ABS Convention. See pages 5, 10, and 31.

#### Australia 2011

## **New Editor Needed!**

Next issue closing date: January 1, 2009 Note New Address for Membership Chair Below

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