

The image shows the cover of a magazine titled 'THE BEGONIAN'. The background is a lush, close-up photograph of a begonia plant with large, dark green, glossy leaves and several clusters of small, light pink flowers. The lighting is bright, creating highlights on the leaves and flowers. The title 'THE BEGONIAN' is printed in a large, bold, 3D-style font with a reddish-brown color and a dark outline. The word 'THE' is smaller and positioned above 'BEGONIAN'.

**THE
BEGONIAN**

March/April 2011

The Begonian

Publication of the American Begonia Society

American Begonia Society

Founded January 1932 by Herbert P. Dyckman

Aims and Purposes

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

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

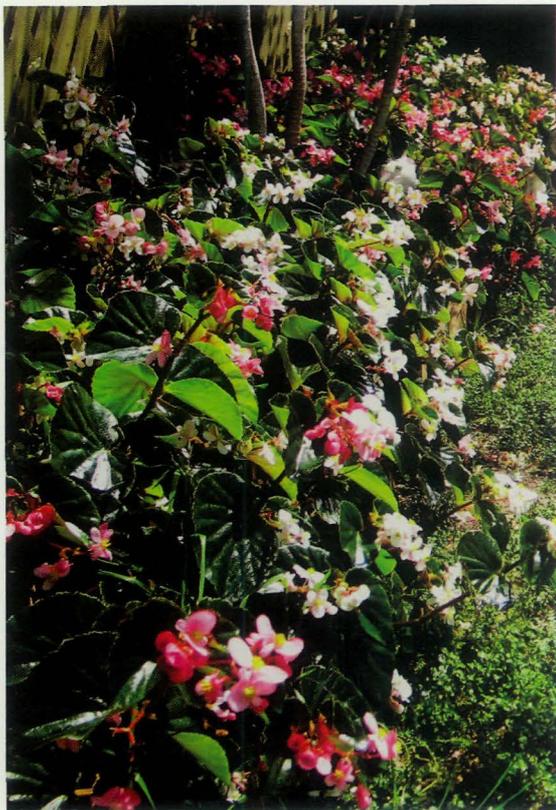
To standardize the nomenclature of begonias.

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

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

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

Photo, left: Beautiful semperflorens in the garden. Photo by Joe Romeo



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B. 'Jumbo Jet', an Irene Nuss hybrid pg. 48



Paphiopedilum haynaldianum

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On the cover: *B. coccinea* (hort).
"Hort." in conjunction with a species name
means this species name was not validly
published but is used in horticultural
literature. There is a *B. coccinea*, with red
flowers, that was published. Information
from Charles Jaros. Photo by Johanna Zinn

Back cover: Does anyone know the
identity of this beautiful begonia? See
page 77 for more photos and information.
Photo by Joe Romeo



President's Message

Spring is here and messages by Presidents everywhere usually talk about the wonders of nature and the emerging possibilities of the season. It is an exciting time of year and the renewal of everything seems to make all our hard work worthwhile.

I love spring and really look forward to all the new growth and blossoms.

This whole process is just as exciting when it is applied to people. I continue to hear countless stories about our members who joined and were too shy to be very involved. After nurturing from wise and caring begonia growers, these people have flourished into the superstars of the ABS.

Many of these stories revolve around individual acts of caring and recognition from someone who took the time to make

this new person feel special. These pivotal moments range from very small but memorable all the way to very involved and actual mentorship. In most every case this "blossomed" individual can recall with great affection the person(s) and/or events that caused them to begin to grow.

I like to think that our gardens extend beyond the confines of our own property and include more than the plants we tend, especially if we garden with our hearts.

Grow something special!

Cheryl

Putting the Record Straight

Antoon Hoefnagles, in being so kind to me in his article (Jan/Feb The Begonian pg. 6), describes me as a former Englishman! To put the record straight I am second generation Aussie on my Father's side and fourth on my Mother's. Would like to set the record straight – I'm an Aussie and proud of it! Thank you.

Cheers, Peter Sharp, Australia

Above: Flowers of *B. x chungii* from India
Photo by Rekha Morris

*2011 National Convention
&
Southwest Region Get-together*

Going Wild in Oklahoma

May 11-15, 2011

Oklahoma City, OK

***Make your reservations
TODAY!***

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***Call Kenny or Dianna Wilkerson
at (405) 390-4228
with any questions.***

Going Wild in Oklahoma

We are using the Biltmore Hotel Oklahoma for the convention - www.biltmoreokc.com. The Biltmore has years of experience catering to conventions, especially national class horse shows and the International Finals Rodeo.

For those folks driving to the meeting, the Biltmore is located at the intersection of I-40 and Meridian Ave on the west side of Oklahoma City. If you are flying into Will Rogers World Airport, the Biltmore has a contract with Airport Express shuttle service. Airport Express uses blue vans with an "Airport Express" logo in yellow letters. Airport Express will transport you between the airport and the Biltmore free of charge.

Our room rate is \$65.00 per night plus tax for a room with either one king bed or two double beds. This rate is guaranteed thru 27 April. Two breakfast vouchers are included for each room. For reservations please call 1-800-522-6620.

There will be a small number of larger rooms (suites) available at higher rates. If you have any questions about the facility or would like to inquire about more spacious accommodations, our convention contact is Brittany Littke.

Note: The Biltmore is a two-story facility and there is NO ELEVATOR to the second floor. All handicapped accessible rooms are located on the first floor. Please plan accordingly. Make your reservations early so you can get a room in the main building on the first floor.

Wednesday tour: We are planning a picnic lunch at the Wilkerson's home and greenhouse on the way the Mabee-Gerrer Museum in Shawnee (www.mgmoa.org).



It has a permanent collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman objects, Renaissance art, and Native American artifacts. The traveling exhibit during our visit is a display of Rembrandt etchings.

Built in 1919, the museum is located on the grounds of St. Gregory's University (<http://www.stgregorys.edu/>), which is one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in Oklahoma. The school traces its roots back to a mission founded in 1875 by Benedictine monks. We will also have an opportunity to view some beautiful stained glass windows in the university chapel.

Wednesday night seminar: For the past 35 years, Oklahoma State University has produced Oklahoma Gardening, a weekly 30 minute gardening show broadcast on a statewide PBS

network. Our speaker, Steve Owens, was the host of Oklahoma Gardening from 2001 to 2006 before he left the show to pursue a lifelong dream of owning his own specialty nursery. Today, Bustani Plant Farm (<http://www.bustaniplantfarm.com/>) is a unique nursery, which carries a mix of perennials, tropicals, and Oklahoma native plants.

We will set up the plant sale-room on Wednesday and Thursday, as required, and set up the show room for judging on Thursday.

continued on next page



Going Wild in OKC

Continued from previous page

Thursday tour: We will travel to Oklahoma State University in Stillwater to view the Botanical Garden and Arboretum <http://www.osubotanicalgarden.okstate.edu/> and all the outdoor display gardens. After lunch we will journey to Bustani Plant Farm, located just a few miles south of Stillwater, for a tour and shopping trip.

Thursday night seminar: Mark Howery, longtime Barkley Branch member and grower, will give a presentation on trailing scandent begonias. Mark is employed by the state of Oklahoma as a non-game wildlife biologist.

Friday: Show judging during the day.

Friday tour: We will travel to Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanic Gardens <http://www.okczoo.com/>. Mark Howery's office is located on the Zoo grounds and he will be leading the tour. You will be back to the Biltmore in plenty of time for supper and the plant sale. We plan to open the doors of the members' only plant sale and

the show room at the traditional starting time of 7:00 PM.

Saturday: The plant sale will be open to the public from 8:00AM to 4:00 PM. We are still working on the speaker lineup for the Saturday morning classes and seminars. Lunch is scheduled for noon. The afternoon is reserved for ABS and Southwest Region board meetings. We plan to start the awards banquet and fund raising auction at 7:00 PM.

If you put plants in the show we request you remove them Saturday night after the auction or early Sunday morning. We must have all plants and equipment out of the meeting rooms by Sunday noon.

We have tried to arrange the tours to show you places in Oklahoma where you have not been before. Your registration packets should be in the mail in early February. We hope to see everyone in Oklahoma City for the convention.

Call Kenny or Dianna Wilkerson at (405) 390-4228 with your questions.

Newsletter Editor's Forum Set for the OKC Convention

By Linda Tamblyn, The Begonian editor

Newsletter editors have a special set of challenges as they work to produce a publication their members look forward to reading. Often, a club's newsletter is also the first contact for potential members. And everyone is *always* on the lookout for more information on how to better grow, hybridize, or just enjoy their begonias.

Creating a publication, that informs the readers but also teaches, inspires or fascinates, takes a lot of work. It's very difficult if no one in your group writes or takes photos. And, for those of us with monthly meetings, just

getting out a basic newsletter each month may seem like a never-ending chore.

But, maybe if we work together as a group of editors, we can improve our newsletters and, even make our own jobs a little easier. Please join Tom Keepin, Freda Holley and myself around 7 pm on Thursday, May 12 at the OKC convention (the exact location and time will be announced later). All newsletter editors are encouraged to attend. We will discuss what YOU need and how we can all help each other put out quality newsletters.

Travel Begonia for “Going Wild in Oklahoma”

By Tom Keepin, Houston, TX

Several years ago the Traveling Begonia Division was introduced at a National Convention. This new division allowed members from other cities and states a chance to enter a plant or plants for judging. This division is easy to enter. First you need to live outside a 250 miles radius from the host city. Your plant can only be shown in a 4 inch pot. The same rules apply here as the rest of the Show - no white or colored pots and no decorative containers may be used. Terra cotta colored plastic pots or clay pots are acceptable.

You may enter more than one plant in this division as long as they are all different varieties or in different classes. The classes are Cane-like, Shrub-like, Thick-stemmed, Semperflorens, Rhizomatous, Rex Cultorum, Tuberous/semi tuberous and Trailing-Scandent.

Bringing a Travel Begonia is very

easy. When I take a Travel Begonia to a show I put my plants in a box with packing peanuts, carry it on the plane and put it under the seat in front of me. The overhead bin could be hazardous to the plant(s) from another passenger's carry-on luggage.

This division is judged just like all the others. Ribbons are awarded and a trophy is given to the best of that division.

Please take some time and look at your collection and pick out a 4-inch plant or several if you wish. Then bring it/them to 'Going Wild In Oklahoma' and enter it/them in the show. You could be a winner.

If you have any questions on entering this division please contact me - Tom Keepin, 713-686-8539 or email me at thefrogman@earthlink.net.

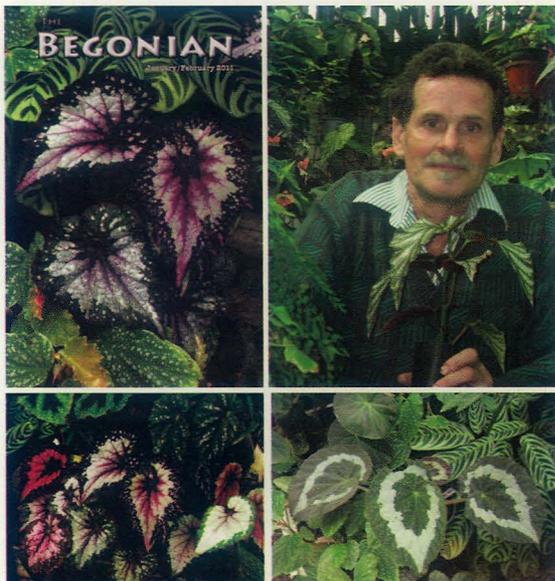
Correction

That beautiful cover photograph on the last issue of *The Begonian* (Jan/Feb 2011) should have been credited to JOE Romeo and not Tony Romeo as the credit reads. The photos on pages 2 and 4 should also be credited to Joe. My apologies for the mistake.

Joe is the President of the South Australian Begonia Society, an avid hybridizer and a wonderful photographer.

Thanks to Joe for all the beautiful photos he shares with *The Begonian*.

-Linda Tamblyn, Editor



Joe Romeo (top, right) should have been credited with the photo on the Jan/Feb 2011 *The Begonian* cover as well as the two bottom photos that appeared on pages 2 and 4 of the same issue.



In Memoriam: Irene Nuss 1918 – 2010

Irene Nuss was a special, faithful friend for forty (40) plus years. Her ability to create so many long lasting and superb

begonia hybrids was an amazing treasure to all who grow and love begonias. Tim remembers Irene as a special lady who always had a smile on her face and was dressed like she was going to a party. Hence his nickname for Irene was "Party Girl". Now there is a new star in the sky.

Thelma O'Reilly

Margaret Lee Branch

When I think of Irene, the famous hybridizer is not the first thing I think of. I remember mostly that she was always quick with a laugh or smile, quick to give a compliment, always friendly to everyone, generous with her time and knowledge, and easily embarrassed. Just writing about it I can picture her face turning red and the embarrassed smile that would follow. Also she was a lady at all times. As a begonia grower, one thing that always impressed me was that she could identify all of her "children" just by the flower cluster. On our first meeting she shared pollen and cuttings with me from plants she had brought to show that helped me develop many of my first hybrids. She was always very supportive of everything I did and seemed to be as proud of my accomplishments as if they were her own. On my first visit to her yard she gave me enough information, tips, cuttings, and ideas to last me many years. I'm still working on some of those ideas today.

Half of my hybrids are continuations of her work and I can still hear her compliments and tips when she saw them. I will miss her friendship and her sunny smile but for me she isn't really gone because I see things every day that remind me of her.

Brad Thompson

Mabel Corwin Branch

Irene Nuss... What do I say about such an old friend? In a nursery in 1979 I saw a beautiful plant and asked the clerk the name. She told me it was Begonia 'Irene Nuss' and that she lived in Westchester. I called her and she asked me up to see her plants. I'm hooked! I joined Westchester Branch and became a life member. In 1990 I was tiring of the drive so I started the Palos Verdes Branch. I took 48 plants to our garden one Sunday and about 34 people joined, including Brad Thompson who was our first President. At one time I had almost all of Irene's hybrids. I loved the lady and her plants.

Jeanne Jones

Palos Verdes Branch

What a wonderful woman and friend! Irene was always ready with a smile and the answers to all my begonia questions. Whenever I had to talk about our favorite subject she would light up and was never in a hurry. As a beginner, she was very patient with me and I had many questions. Whenever she was around people would gather. Not all of them had a question, they just wanted the pleasure of meeting her and telling people they had met this great lady named Irene Nuss. I love her dearly and will miss her.

Willie Mae Wilson

Palos Verdes & Westchester Branches

Irene Nuss is the reason I love Icaene begonias. When I first started going to the meetings she was speaking at Orange County and she had a ‘Jumbo Jet’. I didn’t get it (wasn’t fast enough) but the next month she was at Garden Grove (now Doug Frost) and I got it there. I wish I had known her about 40 years ago. I always enjoyed listening to Irene speak. I wish I could have been around when she was doing all her hybridizing. It would have been so interesting to see her talk about her new crosses, how and why she used what she did and how she went about naming them and choosing the different crosses, and to see some of the ones she threw away.

Mary Sakamoto
Orange County Branch

Irene Nuss was my mentor and my friend almost from the moment we met in July 1991 at the Westchester Show. By the next show I was Show Chairman but was afraid to enter any plants. Irene came to my house, looked over the collection, pointed to 3 or 4 and ordered me to put them in the show. One of those plants was her hybrid and Alfred D. Robinson winner, *B.* ‘Eunice Gray’ (Irene’s sister). Many of my first begonias came from Irene. I still have most of them. Her hybrids have passed the test of time. They are legendary and among some of the most famous begonias known all over the world. Anyone who knows anything about begonias will recognize *B.* ‘Irene Nuss’,

‘Kentwood’, ‘Jumbo Jet’, ‘Pink Jade’, ‘Symphony’, and my favorite *B.* ‘Silvermist’. *h* ‘Silvermist’ won the Alfred D. Robinson Medal in 1995.

The May/June, 1998 issue of the *Begonian* has several articles about Irene and you can find a list of her hybrids with the parent plants on Brad’s Begonia World website. *Irene Nuss In the Golden Age of Begonias* tells how she got started in begonias, how she hybridized, and how she helped found the Westchester Branch of the American Begonia Society in 1959. Jeanne Jones, in the same issue, told about Westchester honoring Irene in 1997 with a collection of many of her hybrids. It was Jeanne’s idea and a great success bringing together many other begonia legends including Irene’s chief mentor and beloved friend Rudolf Ziesenhenne.

When Irene had to move to Sacramento because of poor health, she distributed her plants to her many friends around Southern California. Earlier Herb Wilkinson had taken some of her original plants to Sherman Gardens in Corona Del Mar. They are still there today and thriving for all to see and enjoy. Irene is gone but her “children” live on. She will always be in my heart when I look at them and tend them. Irene Nuss is irreplaceable, but we can all be happy that we had her for so many years and she knew that we loved her dearly.

Janet Brown,
Westchester Branch



Irene Nuss hybrids. From top: *B.* ‘Symphony’; *B.* ‘Jumbo Jet’; *B.* ‘Eunice Gray’; *B.* ‘Silvermist’
Photos by Julie Vanderwilt
Opposite page: Amazing hybridizer and ABS friend, Irene Nuss, holding her namesake begonia, *B.* ‘Lady Nuss’ hybridized by Brad Thompson.
Photo by Janet Brown



Begonia Miracles

By Freda Holley, Choudrant, LA

No matter that I've now planted begonia seeds many, many times, when I see those little dots of green appear, I know a miracle has occurred. When I stare at them, I see the begonias from which they came and the begonias they may become - so tiny and yet so full of the future.

This year, the sense of miracle was especially strong because I decided to plunder my store of seeds long saved to see if they were still viable. Mind you, some of these had been trucked from Arkansas to Nacogdoches, Texas to Stillwater, OK and then to Ruston, LA. They have been stored in many different refrigerators and transported in coolers. I've tried to always keep them cool, but would the effort be good enough? You be the judge. All were planted on 12/9/2010 with the earliest germination on 12/20/2010. I like to plant in winter, when temperatures are coolest, and there is time for them to grow before

spring. Only the heat from a light stick set for 12 hours on, 12 off is used; I've never had trouble germinating at these temperatures. Here's the results germinated with year saved followed by packet name:

- ▶ 1991 *B. reniformis* X *macrocarpa*
- ▶ 1993 *B. dregei* [*natalensis*]
- ▶ 1994 *B. manicata* 'Crispa' and an unidentified black leaf rhizome
- ▶ 1996 *B. dregei* (listed a cross with *evansiana grandis* with a question mark, *hatacoa* 'Spotted', *crassicaulis* x *manicata* 'Crispa')
- ▶ 1997 *B.* 'Immense', 'Immense' x *crassicaulis*, *glabra* x *coccinea*
- ▶ 1994 *B.* 'Dovecot'
- ▶ 2000 *B.* U177 x U357, 'Skygaum'
- ▶ 2001 *B. dipetala*, *schmidtiana*
- ▶ 2002 *B.* 'Curly Face', 'Twister' [a *dregei* cross]
- ▶ 2003 *B. reniformis* x 'Caribbean Prince', *fernando-costae*
- ▶ 2005 Unnamed cane hybrid x *platanifolia*

In addition, there was one lot of *B. deliciosa* x a Rex cultivar germinated that was undated, but that had to be from the early 90's. I had several that have not germinated to date, but I suspect these were never viable as I've had trouble setting their seed in the past. These included *B.* 'Little Brother Montgomery' crosses, *platanifolia*, and *chitoensis*. You will note that individual pots have many to few seedlings; this has to do with the steadiness of my hand in tapping the seed envelope or the quantity in the envelope and not the year saved.

I also germinated several lots of Rekha Morris' seed including *B. dipetala*, *longifolia*, an Indian garden begonia with large orange flowers, a pink garden *semperflo-*

rens, *B. palmata*, and 2 lots of *B. formosana*. Some of these resulted in only one seedling, which you must look closely to see in the large pan. As a side note, I now have from last year's efforts a pot of *B. rex* one-year-old seedlings from a species from Rekha. This is notable because I've tried many times to get viable seed from *B. rex* in past years, but only this very healthy plant has yielded viable seed for me.

This I believe again confirms that begonia seed properly dried, packaged and refrigerated do indeed remain viable and yield miracles even up to 20 years later. Save your seed!



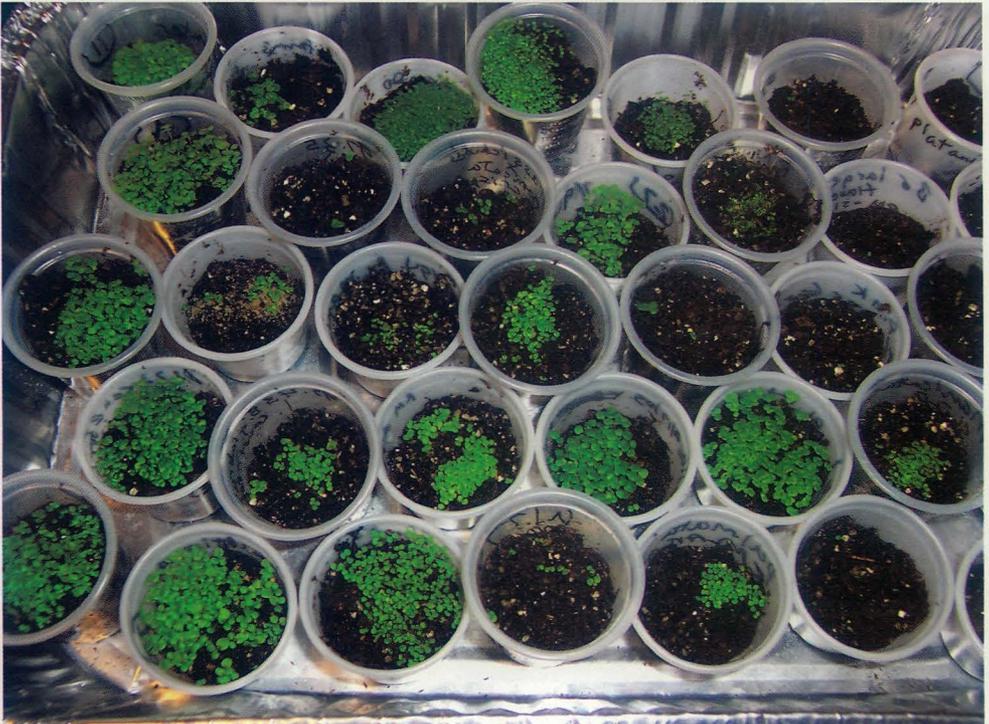
This page, left: *B. rex*: plants from last year's seedlings.

Below: December's seedlings. You must look closely at some pots as there may be only 1 or 2 seedlings.

Sparsity in all cases, however, is unrelated to the year that seed were saved.

Opposite page: Some seed already have their first true leaves by January 11. Note my one great failure as a germinator is a tendency to over plant the seed!

Photos by Freda Holley



A Word with You: Toothless

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

Teeth or no teeth, that is the question. Last time we looked at leaves with teeth; this time those without. Last time my need to visualize the terms took me to the tool box – and saws and potential weapons. But leaves without teeth take me to the linen or clothes closets; think pillow cases, ruffled curtains, frilly little garments – they can be *entire*, *undulate*, or *crispate*.

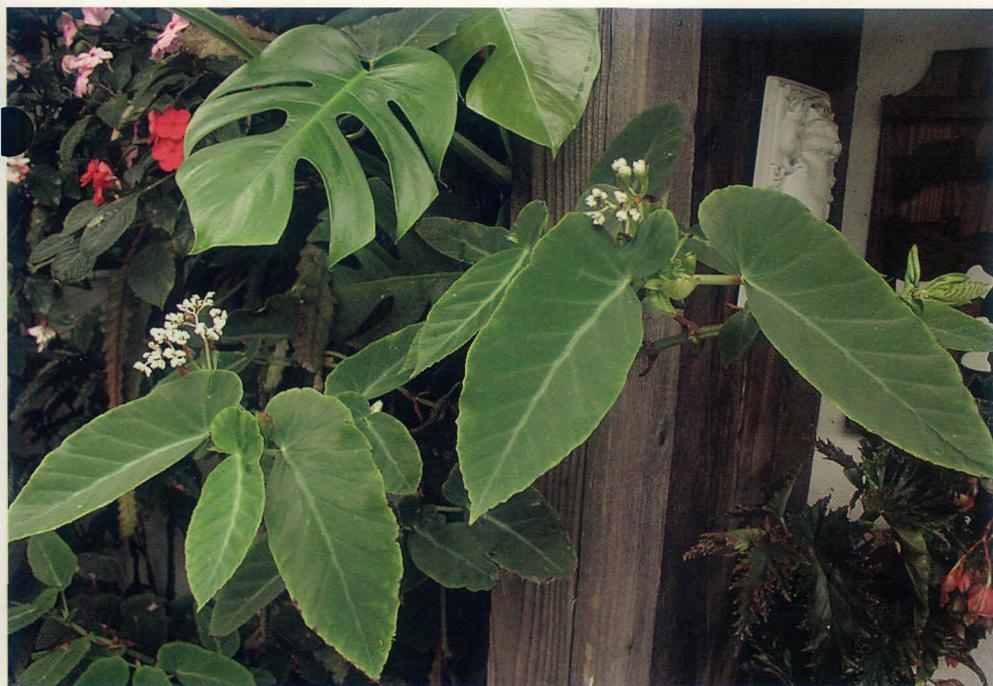
If the edge of the leaf is even, or in botanisppeak the margin is *entire*, there are no teeth, no ripples, folds, or other interruptions. The edge is smooth, even, entire. My thesaurus adds whole, inclusive, holistic, universal. What a pleasant way to express that visual. If only the margins of life were entire, but that's another subject. For those of us who like the tailored look, pillowcase and curtain edges are probably entire, as are the edges of shirts, pants, and jackets. Begonias with entire margins include *B. longipetiolata*, *B. ampla*, *B. salaziensis*, and *B. dregei* (sometimes).



Entire - *B. longipetiolata* Photo by Johanna Zinn

A leaf/margin edge can also wave a bit; if it does, it's *undulate*, from the Latin *undare*, to rise in waves. With this one we leave the tailored and move into a more decorative edge,

Undulate - *B. cubensis* Photo by Brad Thompson



Top: Undulate - *B. angularis*. Photo by Julie Vanderwilt. **Middle:** Undulate - *B. amphioxus*. Photo by Paul Tsamtsis. **Bottom:** Crispate - *B. 'Crestabruchii'*. Photo by Brad Thompson

like a lightly shirred or gathered edge on a curtain or pillow, as in *B. amphioxus*, *B. angularis*, *B. capanemae*, *B. conchifolia*, *B. cubensis*.

Last, but not least, is the frilliest, dare I say the most feminine edge, a *crispate* edge/margin. From the Latin *crispus*, or curly, this one is a more tightly shirred or curled edge. Think of café curtains tightly packed on a rod, or some frilly garment reserved for fun in the sun. Peak season leaf lettuce also has great crispate leaves. So do *B. 'Crestabruchii'* and *B. 'La Cresta'* though I wouldn't want them in my salads. I'm guessing, but the names probably came from the frilly, crispate edges.

So now, reading a begonia description without any pictures, visuals come to mind making my understanding of this vast field of vocabulary just a little richer. And trips to the leafy greens part of the supermarket leave me enjoying those leaves in a different way as well. Look around – examples abound.





B. 'Crestabruchii' The Lettuce Leaf Begonia

Truly a classic begonia cultivar, the frilly *B.* 'Crestabruchii' was introduced over 70 years ago in 1938. Easily recognized by its twisted leaf edges, this rhizomatous begonia was the happy result of a cross between *B. manicata* 'Crispa' and *B. heracleifolia* 'Sunderbruchii'. The large, heavy leaves, with their intensely ruffled edges (or crispate edges - see page 53), make for a particularly impressive plant when well grown. Give this plant plenty of space to accommodate its 6" - 12" leaves plus warm temperatures, shade and evenly moist soil. Above: This beautiful specimen of *B.* 'Crestabruchii' as grown and shown by Mike Flaherty. Photo by Julie Vanderwilt



Conservation Comments: *B. bogneri*

By Bill Claybaugh

Conservation Chairman, ABS

About five years ago, “Brad from Alaska” (Neugebauer) was in Houston on business, and was able to visit my home and swap several terrarium plants. Among the numerous, very desirable species he brought were two small cuttings of *B. bogneri* leaves, just starting to root and looking for a home. Naturally, I was glad to offer these tiny visitors a place to rest. Each of the plants were grown in a 2 inch plastic cup in a perlite-peatmoss mixture until it had about three or more leaves of 1½ inches in length. They were then transferred to seven-inch glass terrarium bowls and kept in my shade house, or later, moved to a shaded east window in the house. Through these years despite some surprise cold fronts, heat waves, and occasional dormancy, one of the *B. bogneri* plants survived and has now finally bloomed. The inflorescence had three male blooms, which

fell off fairly soon, and one female flower. After blooming, I went into the literature to see what I should have known earlier, to enhance my enjoyment of this extremely rare and unique begonia. Here is what I found

R. Ziesenhenné wrote a comprehensive article on this species in April 1973 (*The Begonian* Vol. 40, p. 76) in which he named the plant after the man who first discovered it, Josef Bogner, Inspector of the Munich Botanical Garden, Germany. The plant came from a very unique location on the island of Madagascar. The begonia was found on a steep, mossy granite cliff near the ocean at about 165 feet elevation. The location was very small, about 2.4 acres total, and was in an area that receives about 140 inches of rain

Above: *B. bogneri*
Photo by Bill Claybaugh

a year, on an average of 230 days. (No wonder this is a terrarium plant!) Rudy went into great depth to describe this plant and to relay his experience in growing it. He noted that under low light, his plants only produced male flowers (4 tepals) but under fluorescent lights it also produced female flowers (six tepals) on the same inflorescence with the male flowers. He also noted that the plant has a small tuber at its base, much like *B. dregei* (which we call semi-tuberous) from which several very small “zigzag” stems arise.

J. Doorenbos, in his book on *The Sections of Begonia*, notes this plant is in Section *Erminea* along with eleven other begonias from Madagascar. It is terrestrial, perennial, and semi-tuberous, with short upright stems. It also has a Chromosome number $2n = 38$. There is a much greater description of this plant (actually, the Section), but the thing that makes this begonia unique among all others is the leaf structure. The leaves are uniform in width, about 1/8 inch wide, about 4 to 5 inches in length, and although it is pinnate, you need strong magnification to see the side veins. Basically, the plant looks like grass.

L. B. Smith et al. in his *Begoniaceae, Part 1, Illustrated Key*, puts this plant in his Subkey 15 which would require the plant to have (a) blades basifixed, (c) blades entire, (d) blade midnerve continuing the direction of the petiole, (e) blades pinnate, (f) leaves separated by distinct internodes, (g) stems erect, and (h) the blade symmetric. Some of this information was a surprise to me because at first glance, there are no stems present. Only after close examination, could I see the small, 1/4 inch long, red colored stems from which about 8 leaves began at nodes along its length. This examination also revealed that each of the long green leaves had a short

(3/8 inch), red colored petiole (leaf stem). In Section 15 it was noted that *B. bogneri* (a) had a bisexual inflorescence, (b) inflorescence not dichotomous at the base, (c) blades cuneate at base, (d) petioles 4 mm long, max. and (e) blades linear. This inflorescence structure seemed very unusual to me, not being dichotomous as are most begonias. The three male blooms originated axially along the inflorescence and the one female bloom was at the inflorescence end (terminal). The seedpod also appeared unusual in that one wing was relatively large and fleshy whereas the other two wings were small, fat, and almost unnoticeable.

Mark Tebbitt has an excellent picture of *B. bogneri* in his recent book, *Begonias. Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*. He describes the plant in great detail and notes that this species will go dormant in the winter if grown under natural light. If placed under inflorescent lights, it sometimes avoids this resting period and will retain green all year. My plant has done both in different years.

Overall, this is an interesting plant to have in a collection. I am now in the process of propagating the plant with hopes of having some plants to distribute at the upcoming National Convention in Oklahoma City, May 2011. If you make the convention, look for *B. bogneri* in the sales room.



Above: *B. bogneri*

Photo by Charles Henthorne



Unknown Malaysian Begonia

*Photos and article by
Tony Pinto, Brighton, MA*

These are plants (pictured left and above) that I found at the base of limestone cliffs in NE Malaysia (bordering Thailand). I have no idea of their identity.

A friend took me to that location while I was out fish collecting (as usual) on Peninsular Malaysia, and I took a few pictures - I would not want to give the exact location away because it is quite accessible and I have found that other begonias have disappeared in many areas in peninsular Malaysia when plant collectors (commercial or private) became aware of them and took them away - it happens. If the plants were being propagated, I would have no hesitation giving the location out, but sadly this isn't so.

The location was around limestone cliffs where the begonias were growing with aroids and ferns (*Selaginella*). Plenty of bats were in evidence by their chirping around caves in the cliffs.



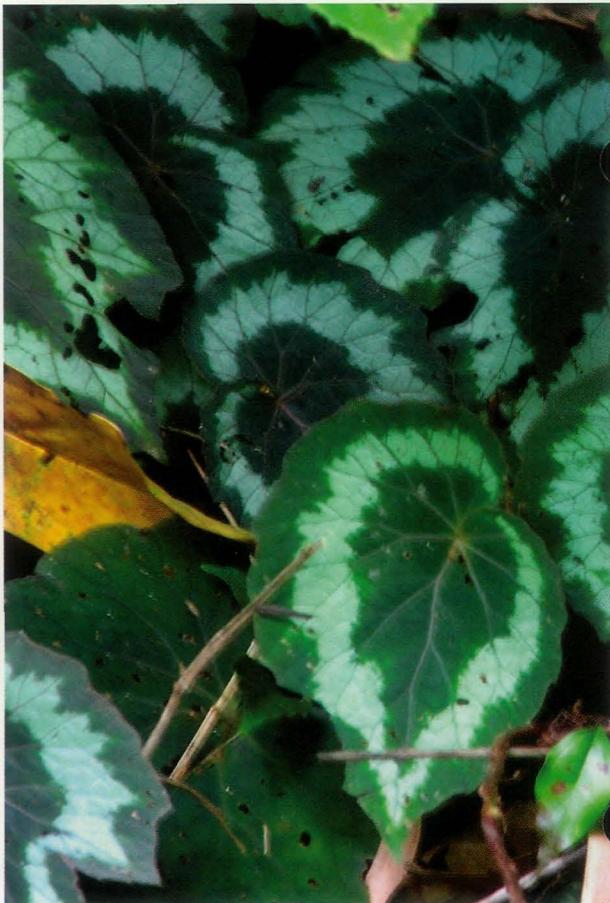
B. annulata

K. Koch

Article and photos by
Rekha Morris, Pendleton, SC

Of the many begonia species I have documented in Mexico and India, none have been as baffling as *B. annulata*, syn. *B. griffithii* [Platycentrum]. I had no problem recognizing them when I first encountered them on a magical evening in 2007 in eastern Arunachal Pradesh. This was the first day of my first visit to this section of Arunachal, and despite the long and exhausting fourteen-hour journey and the lateness of the hour, I could not settle in for the night without first looking around the hills. As we wound uphill I noticed several begonia species such as *B. palmata* and *B. silletensis*, but being familiar with them I did not stop to explore for others in their vicinity as I normally do.

By the time we reached an elevation of approximately 5000' it was almost dark, but quite unexpectedly I found myself impelled to take a closer look on foot. This stretch of the cliffs was so moist that the air was heavy with the peculiar musky scent of soggy leaves and even soggy soil. Trees, shrubs, ferns, vines and herbaceous plants had lost their contours in the haunting crepuscular indigo-violet light, which suffuses these mountain ranges when the sun sinks below the horizon. I walked, almost doubled over, peering into the seamless dark masses hoping to distinguish the characteristic asymmetrical foliage of begonias. As I reached the edge of the cliffside where it curved to form a shallow cave-like indentation I straightened up, and for the



B. annulata

first time, looked upwards.

Some ten feet up at the edge of a vertical rock face I saw an irregular, undulating streak of silver. As my eyesight adjusted I was transfixed in a surreal moment when the world dissolves and sentience has a single focus. For me this single focus was the incredulous sight of a row of *B. annulata* defining the edge of a steep bank as though they had been intentionally and artfully planted there.

The silver banded form of this species, familiar from botanical illustrations, was interspersed among unfamiliar forms with foliage in several shades of green, and a dark purple-bronze form. Returning to reality I became aware of the security officer pacing restlessly behind me. Unable to take photographs or attempt



An almost black specimen of *B. annulata* shines against a bright green *Selaginella*.

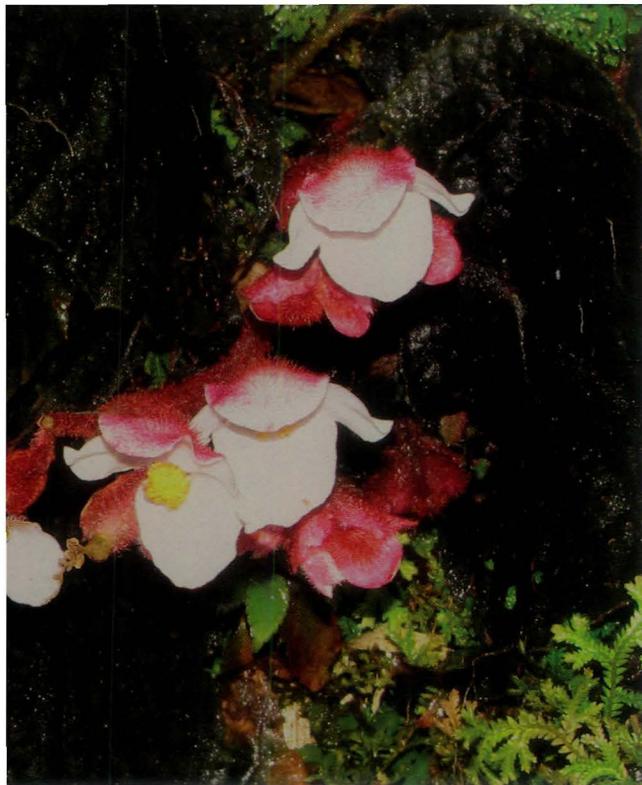
to look for begonias in the encompassing darkness, I reluctantly walked back to the car, and headed for our temporary base some thirty miles away.

Although I had no doubts regarding my identification of this species when I first encountered it in 2007, I have now become aware of ambiguities and uncertainties surrounding the identification of *B. annulata*.

The silver banded foliage of *B. annulata* resembling as it does the silver banded foliage of *B. rex* Putzeys, has been confused with the latter, and misidentified in several herbarium collections. In the wild I have documented both *B. rex* Putzeys and *B. annulata* with foliage which have the familiar silver banding, but I have also documented both these species in

monochromatic shades of green and maroon / purple-bronze. This variation in the color of the foliage appears to be common to other begonia species, which have silver, banded foliage such as *B. palmata*. However, in the case of *B. annulata* and *B. rex* the general shape of the leaves is also common to both making it difficult to distinguish between the two without their flowers and capsules.

C. B. Clarke described both in 1879. *B. annulata* is described as having “stemless, leaves cordate - ovate acute”, which are “pubescent beneath, hardly ciliate on the margin, peduncle bracts ovary and flowers pubescent”. The foliage of *B. rex* is also described by Clarke as being pubescent on the nerves beneath,” but unlike *B. annulata* it has

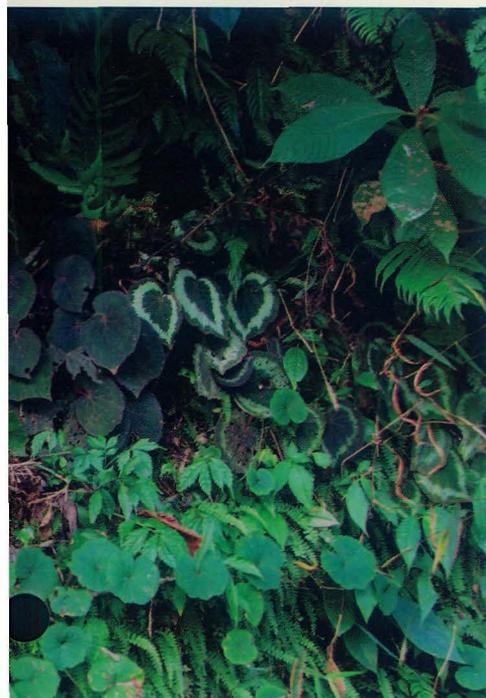
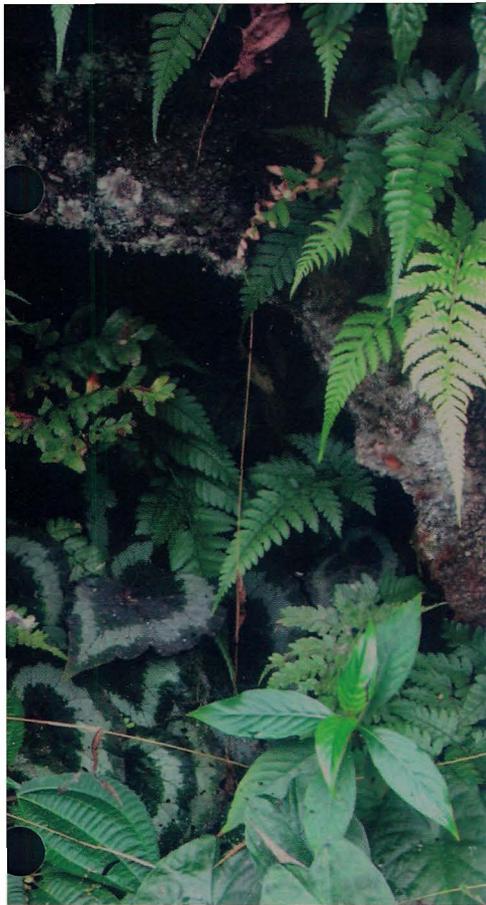


“peduncle upwards bracts ovary and flowers glabrous” [*Begoniaceae* , *The Flora of British India*, ed. J.D. Hooker, vol. IV, 1879, p. 147].

C. B. Clarke continues with a more detailed botanical description of *B. rex*, but his discussion of *B. annulata* referred to as *B. griffithii* plunges one in uncertainties and contradictions. Clarke continues by writing that *B. annulata* [syn. *griffithii*] “ appears to be a variety of *B. barbata* or *B. thomsonii* with an abbreviated stem.” *B. barbata* appears not to exist as the Smithsonian *Begoniaceae* declares “*barbata* Wallich, 1831, nomen nudem.” Moreover, I have documented *B. thomsonii* in the vicinity of colonies of *B. rex*, and have not yet recorded a single plant of *B. thomsonii* as having an abbreviated stem.

Setting aside for the moment other distinctions between *B. annulata* and *B. thomsonii*, in his description of *B. rex*, C. B. Clarke adds that “the whole plant is much less hairy than *B. barbata* and the allied species, the capsule is glabrous.” The capsules of *B. rex* I have photographed in the wild support this latter statement made by Clarke regarding the glabrous capsules. In my





experience the flowers of *B. rex* are not glabrous as Clarke asserts in his earlier statement, and which he modifies by conceding that the whole plant of *B. rex* is far less hairy. However, Clarke does **not** correct his earlier assertion that the flowers of *B. rex* are also glabrous.

I have not come across any published account, which attempts to clarify the distinctive characteristics, which necessitates classifying *B. rex* and *B. annulata* as separate species. Despite his misgivings, Clarke conceded that but for the authority of A. D. Candolle he would have classified *B. annulata*, *B. thomsonii*, and *B. barbata* as one and the same species. However, since 1879, when Clarke's coverage of the begonias of India was published, botanists and plantmen have continued to classify *B. annulata* and

Far left: Flowers and capsule of *B. annulata*. **Center, top:** Nestled in a tiny grotto, *B. annulata* takes center stage among the ferns and other foliage. **Center, bottom:** Several forms of *B. annulata*. **Far, right:** *B. annulata* - silver banded form.



B. annulata flowers

B. rex as distinct species without clearly specifying why this should be so.

Not being a botanist I use certain visually apparent characteristics to distinguish between the two species. The most obvious of these is the greater prevalence and density of red / russet hair on the petioles of *B. annulata*. The flowers and capsule of *B. annulata* both have this rufus quality. The reverse sides of the petals / tepals of *B. rex* are pubescent with either white or carmine hair, the leaves have ciliate margins, and are hairy on the reverse, the petioles have prominent white hair, but the capsules are glabrous. A. D. Candolle has classified both *B. rex* and *B. griffithii* with species with apiculate anthers, but minute details such

as these are not visible without magnification. However, it is possible to examine the stamen clusters of begonias without the help of a magnifying lens. Such an examination reveals that they form a symmetrical cluster, which are neither spherical nor conical but cylindrical, and they flare outwards at the terminus like a firecracker burst. The capsules of both these species have one wing

much larger than

the other two, however, the capsules of *B. rex* are smaller, and acquire a peculiar sharp curvature as they mature. Although the foliage of both these species is similar in appearance, those of *B. annulata* are thicker and more leathery in texture. Finally, in the wild it is simple for me to distinguish between the two as they grow at opposite ends of Arunachal Pradesh: *B. rex* in the west, and *B. annulata* in the east, and never do the twain meet!

The botanical ambiguities, which hamper a clear and straightforward identification of *B. annulata*, recede in significance when one has the good fortune to see them in the wild. Despite their striking appearance, they tend to cluster shyly in the clefts, fissures and recesses of cliff

sides or are camouflaged by species such as *B. roxburghii* and *B. longifolia* whose stature and flamboyant foliage obscures the handsome but comparatively much smaller *B. annulata*. In a few places where they are the dominant begonia species as on large moss covered boulders, they are visible only as long as other plants remain juvenile. I have photographic documentation of such boulders and rocky ledges early in the growth cycle of *B. annulata*, and yet have had difficulty locating these a

mere month after spotting them quite effortlessly.

With the growth of shrubs, vines and ferns, *B. annulata* is screened from view and from bright sunlight which easily scorches its foliage and its blossoms. The green forms are naturally more difficult to locate among the many shades of green in the overwhelming and rampant verdure of the tropical and subtropical habitat where they thrive at elevations from 3000' to 5000' in Arunachal Pradesh.



B. annulata on a rocky ledge

Companion Plants: Try an Orchid!

By Liese Butler, Oak Hill Gardens, Dundee, IL

“They’re so beautiful! So exotic! I wish I could grow orchids.”

We hear this comment a lot by plant lovers from across the country, who seek us out, looking for the exotic, rare orchids we grow here at Oak Hill Gardens.

Orchids are rare and exotic plants, but many can be grown under normal home conditions, alongside your tropical house plants. Our greenhouses house mainly orchids, but hanging over the orchids, under them, and alongside them are many unusual and common house plants including Bird of Paradise, African violets, ferns and Rex Begonias.

Many orchids can be grown in a normal home as long as good light is provided. Orchids like to be in bright, sunny windows, being protected, just a bit, from the hot, mid-day sun. East and west windows work well.

Most orchids in the wild grow on trees, with their roots exposed to the elements. This is why orchids should be potted in a chunky bark mixture. The bark holds

some moisture for the roots, while allowing lots of air to get to the roots. They should be watered thoroughly about once a week, letting the plant drain well. Water should never be left in saucers or pot covers. The plant should then be allowed to dry out before being watered again. Sometimes, during the winter months, when your home becomes dry, twice a week watering may be required.

Phalaenopsis, or moth orchids, are one of the most popular, and easiest to grow varieties. They bloom during the winter and early spring months, when our outside gardens are under mounds of snow. They can stay in bloom for 2-3 months, sometimes longer. The colors vary from pure white, to golden yellow and purple. Some have spots or stripes, others, a picotee edge. With over 100,000 varieties of orchids to choose from, there is literally something for everyone.

Not all varieties of orchids are “easy” to grow. Some require cool temperatures to thrive. Some go dormant for winter, and some are even deciduous, dropping all their leaves in fall before beautiful flowers appear in spring. Choosing a

variety that fits in well with your home growing conditions is important for successful growing.

Phalaenopsis, Paphiopedilum and Oncidiums are all varieties that can be grown well alongside your other indoor tropical house plants.

Anyone who has a green thumb and loves plants can also succeed in growing, and blooming beautiful orchids.

Whether it is violets, begonias, bromeliads or ferns, orchids can be grown alongside them creating an exotic garden in your home.





Top: *Paphiopedilum henryanum*. **Bottom:** *Paphiopedilum haynaldianum*.
Opposite page: *Phalaenopsis inscriptosinesis*. Photos courtesy of Oak Hill Gardens

Wings of an Eagle, Body of a Lion: *Begonia* 'Gryphon'

Article and photos by Cindy Moran, Baton Rouge, LA

Pan American Seed introduced a new seed-generated begonia last year named *Begonia* 'Gryphon'. I was fortunate to meet the breeder, Lynne Knosher, at the recent national convention in San Francisco. She was kind enough to reveal that some of its parentage was in the thick stem category and, indeed, as I now have plants that are 10 months old they do look like thick stems. Much more attractive than most thick stems I must say!

Our nursery received a perfect tray of 288 plugs last February and certainly germination of 90% or more is the key to commercially viable plants. We planted some in 4" pots and some in hanging baskets and after 8 weeks sold out quickly to our local retail nurseries. Lynne looked surprised when we mentioned putting them in hanging baskets but at the time we had no knowledge of their growth habit. Certainly they made beautiful baskets for a

long time until at the end of summer they started to look a bit leggy.

Of course as a begonia hobbyist I brought some home and tried them in several situations. I set one hanging basket on the patio as a pot plant among other begonia specimens, mostly canes, which are the only begonias we can grow easily in the summertime. Even many canes cannot tolerate our hot, humid South Louisiana summers similar to those in Florida. Indeed in buying new cultivars I learned long ago to stick to those from Texas or Florida growers. I can report that 'Gryphon' not only survived, but thrived. I put it in partial sun with midday exposure however on the first very hot, over 90-degree day, it did get sunburned. So I moved it to a place that only received sun until 10 a.m. and it recovered nicely in that exposure. Another pot in full shade did not do as well so a few hours of sun



seems to suit it.

I also planted a dozen 4" pots on a berm in the back garden where we have the best possible drainage for our heavy soil and frequent summer rains. These *B.* 'Gryphon' received about 75% shade from surrounding oak trees with a short period of full sun at mid-day. As the pictures show they also grew happily. In October

they were quite leggy and I cut them back to the ground in preparation for winter. So far they have survived freezes in the upper 20s. I will throw some pine straw over them if worse cold is predicted. No blooms have ever appeared on any of my plants so I treat them strictly as foliage begonias. I fully expect that they will be root hardy according to Florida feedback.

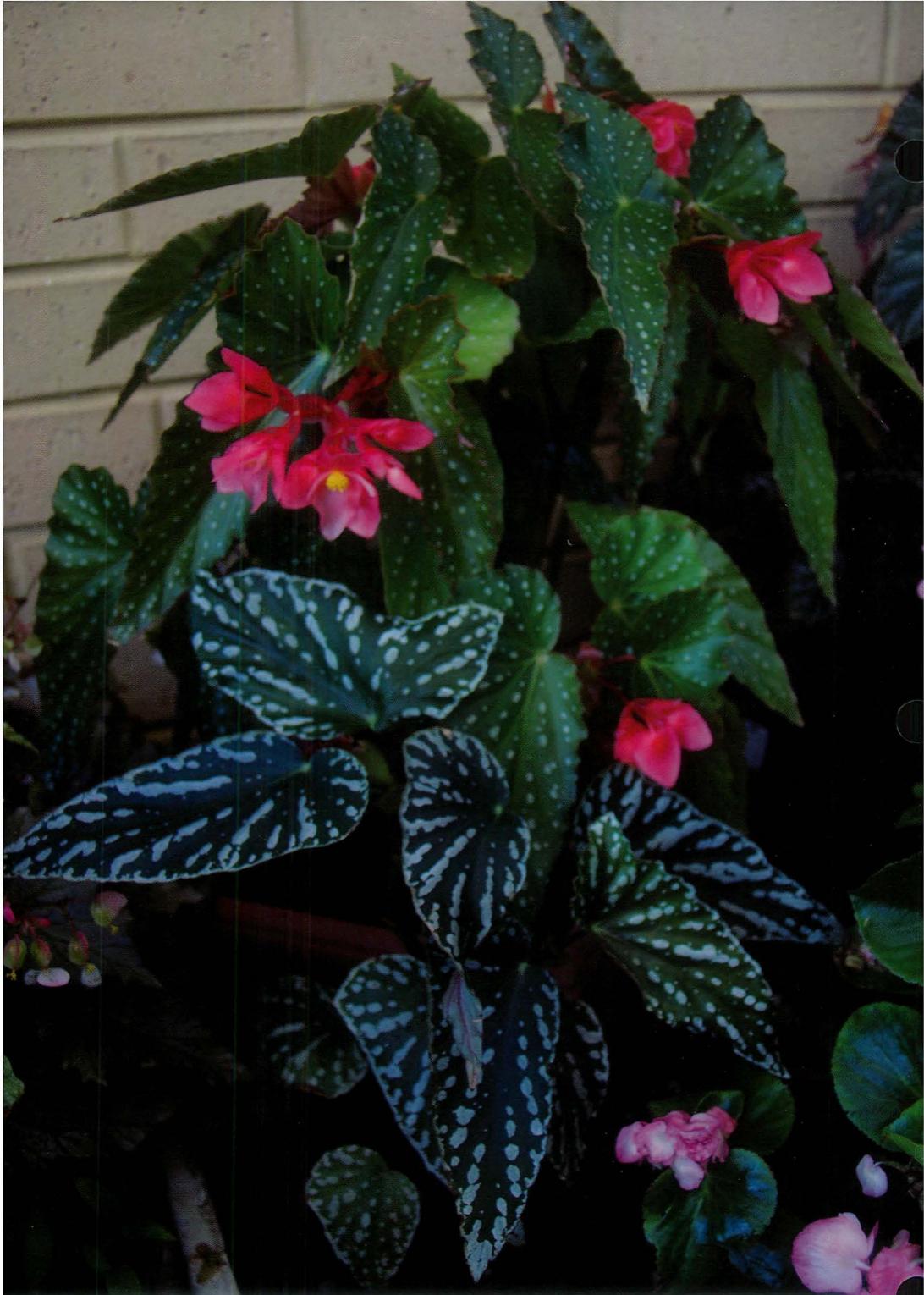
The success of this foliage begonia from seed bodes well for begonias available to the general public with their easy availability and good price compared to cutting-generated clones.

We hope to see more seed introductions soon.

Opposite page: *B.* 'Gryphon' thrives in a shady landscape. This page, left: Closeup shows the thick stems of this plant.

Below: *B.* 'Gryphon' in a basket looking good in August.





Two hybrids created by Joe Romeo. The plant in the back has been named *B.* 'Jade Elegance' and won the Best South Australian Hybrid in 2007. *B.* 'String of Pearls', the silver frosted plant in the foreground, is another of Joe's hybrids, which he says he is still road testing. Photo by Joe Romeo

ABS Book Store

New: Unidentified Species Listing, August 2010 by Mary Bucholtz & Charles Jaros, Co-Directors. This update includes previous listings through U520. The new material begins with U521 and ends with U603. Loose-leaf format for easy addition of new material. Many pictures. Notebook not included.

Domestic: \$40.00

International: \$50.00

Raising Cane: Experiences in Growing the Species Cane Begonias by Freda M. Holley. A wonderful work on the cane species with color photographs. **\$15.00**

Note Cards from the Jack Golding Collection. Eight cards with envelopes, each card a different begonia species. This collection of botanical illustrations is part of a series of renderings by Jack's daughter, Marilyn Golding White. The cards were used as Jack's season's greetings cards to his friends and associates. **\$15.00**

12 Postcard Packet, Taiwan Begonia. Published by Dr. Ching-I Peng. Beautiful pictures of Taiwanese begonia species. 2010 **\$ 5.00**

12 Postcards of Begonia Section Coelocentrum including B. pengii & B. masoniana. Published by Dr. Ching-I Peng. 2009 **\$ 5.00**

2010 Calendar, Taiwan Begonia by Dr. Ching-I Peng. Wonderful timeless pictures of begonia species. **\$ 5.00**

Begoniaceae, Edition 2, Part I: Annotated Species List, Part II: Illustrated Key, Abridgement & Supplement by Jack Golding & Dieter C. Wasshausen, 2002, Smithsonian Institution, Volume 43: 1-289 **\$55.00**

Seeing Begonia by Jack Golding 2003, Revised 2005. Jack Golding's last work. "...dedicated to the many who look at their Begonia but do not see the details."

\$15.00

Begonia Hybridizing: A Primer by Freda M. Holley, 2007. An invaluable source book for the beginning or advanced begonia hybridizer. **\$15.00**

Begonia Notes by Rudolf Ziesennehenne, reissued by the Thelma O'Reilly Reprint Fund. Originally printed in the Santa Barbara Branch, La Begonia Barbareña. **\$15.00**

Begonias - 1984 Update by Mildred L. Thompson, reissued 2009. "An addendum for particular portions of *Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide* (Times Books, 1981). Includes species, hybrids and many pictures. **\$18.00**

Begonias of Peninsular Malaysia by Ruth Kiew. A magnificent work with glorious pictures. **\$55.00**

Constitution of the ABS, Revised & Approved, 2008. **\$2.00**

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A Little Boy and His Begonia Treasure

By Chuck Ades, San Marcos, CA



Beefsteak Begonia
a.k.a. *B. 'Erythrophylla'*
Photo by Jem Wiseman

My parents divorced when I was very young, so for a period of 4 years my brother and I lived with guardians in Covina, California, east of Los Angeles. They had a daughter and a son. The son was in his late teens at the time. They had pointed out many of the mysteries of their garden to me. They had a large tree in their yard that had been cut down leaving a stump about 2 or 3 feet tall. The tree had leaves about 3" long and were hard with a smooth

edge before it was cut down. However, when this tree started re-growing it had large lacy leaves, much like a fern leaf. They also had another tree, an English walnut that had been burned down when a shed nearby had burned. Miraculously, when this tree re-grew it grew up as a Black Walnut tree! Needless to say, to a 5 or 6 years old, this was magic. This gave a wonderful feeling of mystery and awe to the garden. Now I realize that the tree that was cut down was an Acacia tree that has fern-like leaves in the juvenile stage and

smooth, smaller leaves when mature. Also, I now know that the English walnut had been grafted onto a Black Walnut rootstock. The fire had killed the English walnut that was grafted on the top, so the Black Walnut rootstock re-grew.

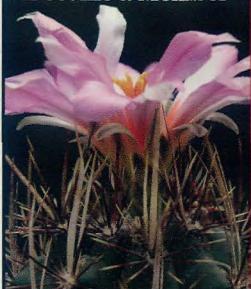
One day their son was talking to me, and he happened to mention that if I broke a geranium stem off (in many California gardens geraniums grow and thrive year after year) and stuck it into the ground that it would grow. I was intrigued; this was another mystery of their garden. He dug up a little plot of ground and than told me to break some geranium stems off of the plants that were growing on the side of the front steps of the house. I broke them off and stuck them into the prepared plot of earth, and promptly forgot about them. I guess I was a typical 6-year old. A few months later he asked me if I had looked at the geraniums. I had forgot about them so quickly ran to the area that I had planted them in. To my astonishment, not only had they rooted but also they were now twice as big as when I had stuck them. I'm sure that he had cared for and watered them for me. Again I was intrigued and impressed. In fact I started planting more stems of other plants. The next plant was

a succulent, *Aeonium*. They grew also. I was hooked for life on growing plants.

After living with the guardians for 4 years, my brother and I moved to Klamath Falls, Oregon to live with my mother and our new stepfather. It gets very cold in Klamath Falls. Sometimes the lake freezes over completely. However, we had a half-acre of land and grew a summer vegetable garden and planted flowers around the yard. Therefore, I was able to continue growing plants. One year I got a bicycle for Christmas when I was about 10 years old. I felt like a different person, I was emancipated and could travel "great distances" by myself. I soon discovered that many areas had alleys behind the homes and, to my delight, I found that many people discarded plants into the alleys. I started riding the alleys periodically looking for plants to bring home. One day, on one of my excursions, I discovered a begonia plant. At the time I didn't know that it was a begonia plant,

but I knew it was special. I couldn't understand why anyone would discard a treasure like this plant. I was excited and rushed home with the plant. I kept the plant for sometime. I now know that it was a rhizomatous begonia, commonly referred to as a Beefsteak Begonia. I don't recall what eventually happened to it, but I'll always remember that great discovery in a lonesome alley found by a 10 year old boy. Later in life, when I started my own wholesale nursery, I eventually found that I could grow these hobbyist begonias commercially. I'm sure that chance finding of that begonia in that lonesome alley had something to do with the fact that our nursery now grows and supplies many of the Begonia Society clubs with their sale plants. I'm glad that I found that begonia plant many years ago because it has introduced me to many new friends that I have met through the begonia society. Many chance happenings can sometimes result in wonderful results.

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The Giant-leaved *Begonia fusca*

The giant-leaved *B. fusca* is a rare species with leaves that can grow up to 18" across making it one of the largest of all begonias. The herbaceous foliage has a velvety/fuzzy texture. Pink blooms appear in autumn.

A Mexican native, it likes moist, but not soggy, soil. Be careful not to overwater. Give it a lightly shaded area, as it does not like the intense afternoon sun. *B. fusca* can handle 80 degree temperatures quite well when the humidity stays over 40%. Propagate this plant by division of rhizomes (it is classified as rhizomatous), as well as by leaf cuttings or seed.

This beautiful specimen was photographed at Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, during the 2010 ABS Convention.

Photo and notes by Charles Henthorne.

Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund

The Margaret Lee Branch, San Diego County, CA

The seed fund is a service to members

only. It is a privilege of your membership. Please self-pollinate your species begonias, collect the seeds and send them to the seed fund. We depend on your contributions of seeds to make a wider variety of species available to the members.

New seeds from Joan Campbell, Dr. Ronnie Benschaftrut, and Beatrice Huckriede.

B. bartonea hort. ('Winter Jewel')

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B. sikkimensis x *gehrtii*

Packets of seeds are \$2.00. Very rare seeds and newly collected seeds will be \$3.00 or more per packet when noted. California residents please add 8.75% 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:

American Begonia Society, Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund, Dean Turney, 467 Fulvia Street, Encinitas, CA 92024. E-address: dean @deansmail.us

Cost of mailing: US only: 1-12 packets \$1; 13-24, \$1.35; 25-36, \$1.71; 37-48 (2 cans), \$2.30; 49-60, \$2.66. Canada only: 1-12 packets, \$1.10; 13-24, \$1.46; 25-36, \$1.82; 37-48 (2 cans) \$2.35; 49-60, \$2.71. 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.

DISCLAIMER: The seeds distributed by the seed fund are identified as received from the donors. The species names (in italics) reported here are correct based on the latest information from *BEGONIACEAE*, Ed. 2; Golding, and Wasshausen. Hybrid names are made consistent with the *ABS Check List of Begonia Hybrids* edited by Howard Berg dated 9/13/2005.

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Begonias and Birthday Cake!

Members of the Long Beach Parent Chapter celebrating the 79th birthday of the American Begonia Society, which was founded in January 1932, by Herbert P. Dyckman.

The picture was taken by Nichole Gatten, 10 years old! (She is the granddaughter of one of the members.)

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B. foliosa var. *miniata* 'Rosea'

Photo and article by Charles Henthorne, Plano, TX

Also called the fuchsia begonia, or *B.* 'Corazon-de Jesus'. Shrub-like. Native to Columbia and Venezuela. Has 1" long, shiny, oblong ovate to sickle-shaped, mid-green leaves on slender stems. Fuchsia like 1¼ inch across pink to red blooms most of the year. Cannot tolerate drying out completely. Needs well-drained soil and humid environment. Shelter from direct sunlight from mid afternoon each day. For a bushier plant the tips can be pinched and the outer stems pruned during the growing season. Leaves will drop with sudden temperature change. Requires less water in the winter and cannot tolerate overwatering at any time. It can be propagated from cuttings. It does seem to grow better on the West Coast.



THE AMERICAN IVY SOCIETY INC

AIS is the International Registration Authority for Hedera, provides sources for new and unusual ivies: publishes three ivy newsletters, *Between the Vines*, and one *IVY Journal* a year with reports on research hardiness testing, life-sized

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Information: American Ivy Association, P.O. Box 2123, Naples, FL 34106-2123



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Opposite page: The female and male flowers of the unidentified plant featured on the back cover. Joe Romeo wonders if anyone can identify this beautiful plant. He says, "This plant was purchased at one of our shows, the label was marked "rare species, white flower from Jan Goodwin." I am assuming she grew it from seed. It is a very attractive plant. I would set seed but unfortunately it begins blooming with only male flowers and, then when these have fallen, the female flowers are produced. I have tried harvesting pollen but have not been successful. Contact Joe at joeromeo50@gmail.com



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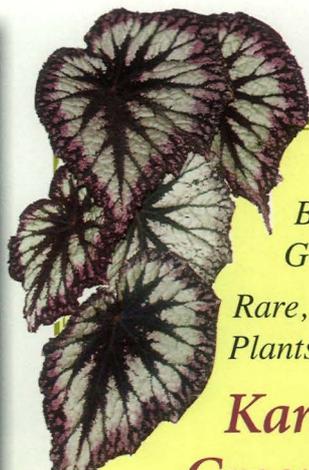


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