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January/February 2012

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.

Left: *B. 'Emerald Jewel'*
 Photo by Tony Pinto



Editor, Art Direction and Design:

Linda Tamblin, 5635 Woodward St., Merriam, KS 66202, 913-231-1020. begoniaskc@yahoo.com

Consulting Editor:

Jan Brown, begoniabrown@yahoo.com

Nomenclature Editor:

Kingsley Langenberg, 3293 Country Lane, Waukegan, IL 847-336-9104. kingsley.langenberg@gmail.com

Quick Tips: **Dianna Wilkerson**, 15356 Pheasant Run, Choctaw, OK 73020 b2writer@cox.net

Editorial and Identification Assistance:

Charles Jaros, Tom Keepin, Jem Wiseman

Advertising Staff:

Display Ads:

Linda Tamblin, 5635 Woodward, Merriam, KS 66202, 913-231-1020, begoniaskc@yahoo.com

Plant Society Ads; Holiday Greetings:

Wanda Macnair, 59 Walker St., Cambridge, MA, 02138, 617-876-1356, wmacnair@msn.com

The *Begonian* is published bimonthly by the **American Begonia Society, Inc.** at Allen Press, P.O. Box 368, Lawrence, Kansas 66044-0368 USA. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the society, its officers, or the editor. Contents, except where labeled otherwise, may be reprinted without limitation, provided credit is given to "The *Begonian*, magazine of the American Begonia Society."

American Begonia Society
 P.O. Box 471651
 San Francisco CA 94147-1651

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

Membership - Send inquiries about address changes, missing copies, dues, subscription, back issues and circulation to Membership Chair, Paul Rothstein, 2 Flock Lane, Bella Vista, AR 72714. 479-855-1665 parooan2001@yahoo.com. Paypal accepted.



B. U496 from the Buxton Show pg. 6



B - tubers with stolons pg. 9



B. aliciae - tubers with stolons pg. 16

Contents

- 4 President's Message
- 5 Begonia Fiesta
- 5 Letter to the Editor
- 5 Check Your Mailing Labels
- 6 Buxton Branch Show
- 7 Happy ABS 80th Birthday Memories
- 8 Binders for The Begonian
- 9 *B. ovatifolia* A. de Candolle
- 14 The Pollinators
- 16 *Begonia aliciae* C.E.C. Fischer
- 18 In the Mailbox
- 19 Palos Verdes Show
- 20 A Word with You: Stamen
- 22 The Jack Golding Archive
- 25 Update on the International Database of the Begoniaceae
- 26 Westchester Branch Show and Sale
- 27 Jacqueline Mildred Davis
- 27 In Memory: Leslie Dunn Hatfield
- 28 Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund
- 30 ABS Convention 2012
- 31 2011 Index
- 36 *B. U012*

Front cover: *Begonia microsperma*
 Photo by Janet Welsh

Back cover: *Begonia ovatifolia*
 C. B. Clarke 27117 & 27093 [BM], Darjeeling, India. This herbarium page is from the Natural History Museum in London also referred to by the initials "BM" = British Museum of Natural History.
 Article on pg. 9

President's Message

Well the busy holiday seasons are over and I hope everyone received their favorite begonia(s) as a special present. Most everyone has their begonias tucked away for the winter with the exception of those who live in the tropics or sub-tropical area. Isn't it nice to see those beautiful shades of green, some spotted and splashed with silver and others with beautiful metallic sheens and let not forget the largest group of begonias the rhizomatous with their fabulous shaped leaves and interesting foliage. What



an upswing for the winter doldrums. This really is an exciting and varied plant group.

2012 will be a busy year and I want members to mark their calendar for these important dates. The Southwest Region Get-Together will be May 16-20, 2012 and is being hosted by the San Antonio Branch in of course San Antonio.

The 2012 American Begonia Society Convention is August 8 – 12, 2012 and is being hosted by the San Diego Branches in beautiful San Diego. This is a milestone for ABS as it marks our 80th birthday.

Let's support these host branches and attend these fabulous functions. I hope to see many ABS members there.

Our ABS Research Director Howard Berg has resigned his position and I want to take this opportunity to thank Howard for all his years of commitment to ABS. We hope to see Howard and his wife Barbara at many future ABS functions. Thank you again Howard.

Of course this leads us to a vacancy as Research Director, if you would like to volunteer your name for consideration or know of someone who should be approached for consideration let your President know.

Well, this ends this issue's President's Message. I know of one New Year's resolution I will be keeping and that is to stay in friendly contact with all ABS members and, of course, to acquire more begonias. Happy 2012 to all.

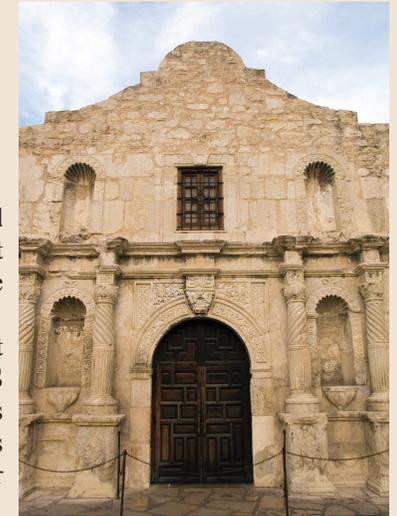
Charles Jaros, ABS President

B. taiwaniana x B. rex [hybrid]
Photo by Joe Romeo

Save the Date! Begonia Fiesta May 16-20, 2012

Come to San Antonio, Texas! Visit the Alamo and the Riverwalk and attend the 2012 Southwest Region Get-together Begonia Fiesta hosted by the Alamo Begonia Branch of the ABS.

The Begonia Fiesta will be held at the Airport Hilton Hotel. Room rate is \$89.00 for ABS members. You can extend your stay by two days prior and two days after the convention for this rate. So, circle your calendar, book it in your Blackberry, or put it in your iPhone! Y'all come!



Letter to the Editor

I thought you and readers of *The Begonian* might be interested in an article I wrote for *Science* (1 July 2011, vol. 333: 40-41) magazine entitled, "Sampling Java's Many Treasures". The article is for science tourism. I was asked to write this article by Dr. Bruce Alberts, Editor-in-Chief of *Science*.

Please know how much I appreciate working with the ABS over the years and am grateful to the many people who contributed to my expeditions. This cooperative effort greatly contributed to helping develop New England Tropical Conservatory (NETC) and the work our institution undertakes in Indonesia. I look forward to future opportunities that ABS and NETC may develop for our mutual benefit.

Sincerely, W. Scott Hoover, Director of Research,
New England Tropical Conservatory
Research Collaborator, Smithsonian Institution

Check Your Mailing Labels

Please make sure to check your mailing label for your membership expiration date. If it reads November, December, or January and you have not renewed yet this will be your last *Begonian*.

Please renew online at www.begonias.org or send a check to:

Paul Rothstein
2 Flock Lane
Bella Vista, AR 72714

If you do not know your membership expiration date you can email Paul at paroan2001@yahoo.com



Buxton Branch Show

Top: A view across the show room.
 Above, left: *B.* 'Christmas Candy'
 Center: The branch banner
 Right: A tuberous collection
 Photos by Tony Pinto

Happy ABS 80th Birthday Memories

By Thelma O'Reilly, La Mesa, CA

The O'Reilly family moved from Rhode Island to San Diego, California on June 3, 1963. Three days later the family was settled in a motel. While my husband, Tim, searched for a rental house, I searched newspapers for nursery listings and went begonia hunting.

As a Federated Garden Club Judge for many years in Virginia and Rhode Island, I grew beautiful leaved begonias to use in floral arrangements.

At one nursery I found a table of begonias and was approached by a lady who introduced herself as Phyllis Kautsky and invited me to join her at a Begonia Branch meeting in two weeks.

At the meeting I was surprised by the huge number of people and the large table of sale begonias. Phyllis introduced me to many branch members including the famous Paul and Marge Lee who invited me to visit their garden and receive some begonia cuttings.

The speaker was another famous personality, Sylvia Leatherman, who discussed many of the begonias and seed

she collected in Brazil. During the break I joined the Crosstown Branch and purchased a few begonias.

Marge and Paul Lee invited me to clerk at the big begonia show in Los Angeles in July. One judge did not show. The Chairman, Ruth Pease, invited me to judge. I was thrilled to meet other team members including famous Rudy Ziesenhenne and Dorothy Behrends.

We bought our present home in 1964 in the foothills of San Diego County. Begonias became the focus of my life.

The San Diego area was the home of many important begonia personalities and growers. I joined several branches including Alfred D. Robinson, Eva Kenworthy Gray, La Mesa and San Miguel Branches. I met members from all areas of California when Paul and Marge invited me to attend the official ABS Board Meetings monthly in Los Angeles.

I also enjoyed meeting new friends at local meetings. Alice Clark was special. She explained how the ABS was founded by Herbert P. Dyckman in January 1932 and that *The Begonian* was the official monthly publication of the ABS. New branches were forming throughout the country.

Wonderful memories remain of the exciting days working with Alice on her beautiful book *Begonia Portraits*. Alice was an artist. Her talent showed in the colorful detailed paintings and descriptions that were originally published in *The Begonian* between 1943 and 1949.

In 1978 Alice began turning over to me all of her begonia material includ-



B. rex hybrid
 Photo by Tony Pinto

continued on next page

Happy 80th Birthday continued

ing correspondence, personal letters, index cards, sketches and books. I must mention one of the books that I have never heard about or seen before. It has a red hard cover with the title *Begonia Circle Letters 1931-1941* in silver print. The "Forward" page reads, "The following cultural notes and descriptive references on begonias were compiled over a ten year period (1931-1941) by Mrs. Bessie R. Buxton from "Circles" or Round Robin letters in which she participated." It is 312 pages. Shortly before her death in 1956 Mrs. Buxton, who was a close friend of Mrs. Eva Kenworthy Gray, forwarded this book to Mrs. Ethel Calloway, Mrs. Gray's daughter, who gave it to Alice Clark. On January 2, 2011 I gave this treasure to Michael Ludwig who is Director of KOLZ Begonia Research Center.

The Eastern Region of the ABS grew and became very successful. They published *Eastern Region News* with

Howard and Barbara Berg and Millie Thompson as Chairman.

Texas developed several active branches and held excellent conventions.

My special friend and collaborator for 30 years before her retirement is Carrie Karegeannes. We studied begonia species from countries around the world.

There is another group of workers on my memory list that I cannot thank enough for their dedication and hard work, the Editors of *The Begonian*.

Since the year 2000 many of our long-time expert members have left us and we miss these special people; Rudy Ziesenhenné, Joy Logee, Ralph and Mabel Corwin, Margaret Lee, Millie Thompson, Helene Jaros, Walter and Ruth Pease, Jack Golding and Irene Nuss have joined the galaxy of stars in the sky.

It is thanks to the dedication of the begonia lovers mentioned above, as well as many more we don't have room to name, that we are now celebrating the 80th birthday of the American Begonia Society.

Binders for The Begonian

Over the last few months we have received several inquiries from members asking about storage binders that will fit the holes in *The Begonian*. After checking with several companies we found that these binders have now been discontinued. This problem is being looked into and we hope to find a solution in 2012 so we can solve the problem by January of 2013.

In the meantime, for those who do not have binders already on hand, may we suggest using loose-leaf book rings (pictured) which are readily and inexpensively available from office supply stores. Also available are magazine files, which can be found affordably in metal, plastic or corrugated paper.

Our apologies for any inconvenience but please know that we are working diligently to find the right solution.



B. ovatifolia A. de Candolle

Yet another new begonia find from Arunachal Pradesh

Article & photos by Dr. Rekha Morris, Pendleton, SC

A few years ago when I was attempting to document species begonias of Veracruz state, Mexico, *B.* kept eluding all my attempts to locate it. Or so I thought until I finally found a small colony after a long, 6-hour hike up a muddy, boulder-strewn path to about 7000' where it grew at the edge of a cliff side. Once I saw this colony in flower, I realized that I had already found isolated plants with one or two juvenile leaves, and had failed to recognize them as *B. fusca*.

Something similar has occurred with my search for *B. ovatifolia* [Diploclinium]. Although it was recorded in Sikkim and in the Khasia hills [now in Meghalaya], I was disappointed that I did not find this species among the ones I recorded in the Khasia hills in 2008. After several disappointing delays due to strikes and violence around Darjeeling, I was finally able to get there in April 2011. Shortly after the road from Bagdogra [the nearest airport] began winding uphill towards

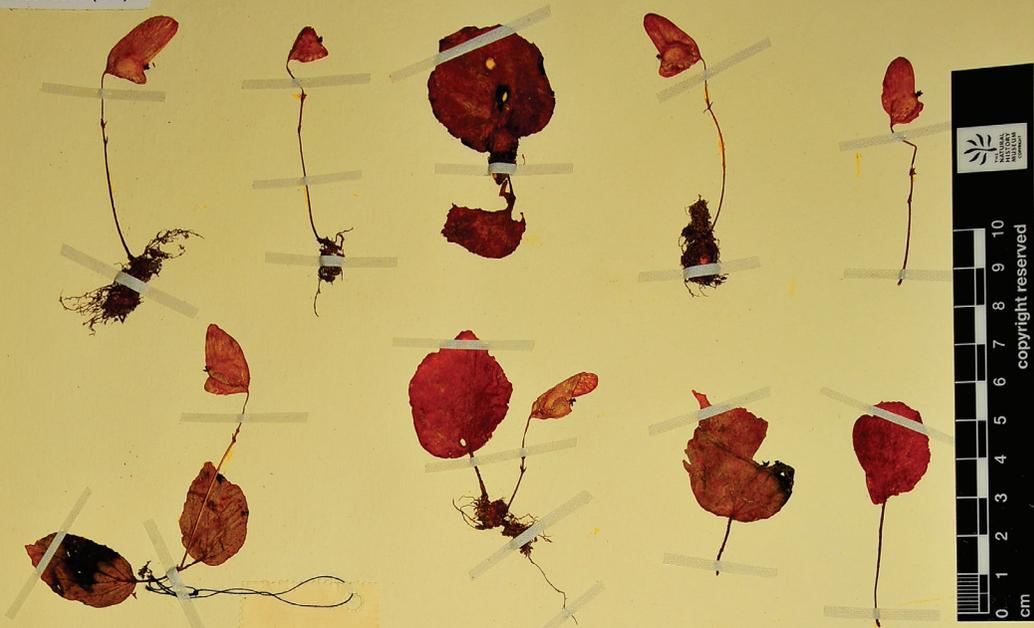
Darjeeling, I stopped to photograph a small colony of *B. roxburghii*, growing in a hollow some 50 ft uphill from the road.

In negotiating my way through the boulders and tangles of vines and shrubs to reach the small patch of *B. roxburghii* I found myself walking up a mushy water run-off gully skirting the hillside on one side of this hollow. Although there had been no recent rains, the area was green with small ferns, vines and shrubs except for the few gigantic boulders protruding from the hillside.

Instead of the usual tangle of sub-tropical vegetation, the austere gray-black surfaces of these boulders were relieved by scattered patches of a dull green, mounding moss. It was on one of these mossy hummocks that I caught sight of a flutter of brown, which happily turned out to be begonia capsules. Forgetting *B. roxburghii* I began photographing these, and since the capsules were held barely



B. ovatifolia capsules, Arunachal, 2006



H492
12487

British Museum Expedition
FLORA OF TIBET 1935
Capt. F. Kingdon-Ward
No. 12,487
Locality

12,487. *Begonia*.
Valley of the Bhareli. 5,000' - 1,000'.
28.x.35. In fruit. Dwarf plant on
sunny sandstone cliffs.

British Museum Expedition
Plants of Tibet, 1935
Capt. F. Kingdon-Ward
no. 12,487

Kingdon-Ward collection
Valley of the Bhareli. 500-1000'
1935. In Fruit. Dwarf plant on
sunny sandstone cliffs

Identified as *Begonia josephii*? Unable to decipher who made this identification.

Begonia josephii D. DC. ?
Determinavit C. Y. Chen 1972. 9. 6

Kingdon Ward's collection with Rekha's typed notations
Photo courtesy of Dr. Peng

6-8" above the surface I surmised that the begonias growing here may well be a tuberous species. As close as this was to the Sikkim border, I hoped that this species might turn out to be either *B. ovatifolia* [recorded in Sikkim] or *B. gemmipara*, which Hooker had first recorded in the environs of Darjeeling, and later in Sikkim. In gently pressing down on the moss I felt tiny bumps at the base of the wiry petioles, which were indeed small, somewhat elongated, fleshy tubers.

Dr. Tebbit describes *B. ovatifolia* var. *cretacea* as having short, fleshy rhizomes which might describe the short, elongated rootstock of these plants of *B. ovatifolia* from the environs of Darjeeling. In the absence of flowers and foliage, I had no indication as to which of the small tuberous species, *B. ovatifolia* or *B. gemmipara*, I had so fortuitously stumbled upon. However, as I examined a couple of the boulders which had these patches of dry begonia capsules, I found a few tiny dry leaves caught in the cobwebs or among the debris wedged between little clefts and fissures. Most of these were so dry and brittle that they crumbled as I tried to pry them loose, but a few retained their shape.

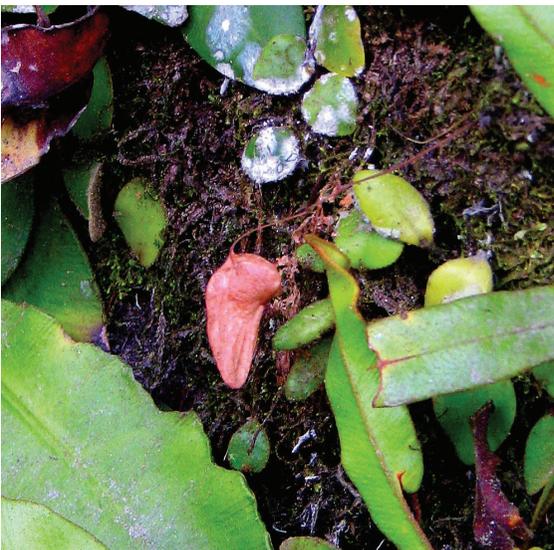
Months later when I began looking through herbarium samples of Indian species from Kew and the herbarium at the Edinburgh Botanical Garden, I was able to use these dry leaves and capsules to key this species, and conclude that in all probability I had documented *B. ovatifolia* [= *B. U608*] in the environs of Darjeeling in 2011, the species I had looked for in vain in the Khasia hills in 2008.

In the *Flora of British India, 1879*, C. B. Clarke describes *B. ovatifolia* as a tuberous species with "the whole plant rarely exceeding 6 in." with "leaves 1 - 2½ in. in diam., roundish or ovate, roundish or ovate cordate or scarcely rounded at the base". In the introductory passage the leaves are also described as "ovate sometimes acute more or less serrate equal or scarcely unequal at the base." The dry herbarium samples from the various herbaria substantiate Clarke's description and their general characteristics are reflected in the single leaf from the environs of Darjeeling which retained its shape despite the prying and stretching I subjected it to prior to photographing it with the capsules and tubers.

Clarke describes the capsule wings as unequal, and the capsules as being ½ by 1 in. including the wings, with the "upper margin of the longer wing straight or convex



Top: *B. ovatifolia*, tubers with stolons, Arunachal, 2006. Center: Leaf fragment and dry capsules, *B. ovatifolia*, Arunachal, 2006. Bottom: *B. ovatifolia* in cave in Arunachal, 2006



Top: Capsule of *B. ovatifolia*

Above, two photos: Comparison of *B. ovatifolia*.

Left: *B. ovatifolia* documented in 2006 in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Rekha Morris

Right: *B. ovatifolia*, Khasia, 1886. C.B. Clark, 45107. Kew

upwards, capsules dehiscing on all three faces.” As I sifted through sheets of herbarium specimens to select appropriate ones for comparison with the capsules from the species I had documented in the environs of Darjeeling, the general shape of the leaves and the unequal wings of the capsules of *B. ovatifolia* began to stir vague memories of a species I had documented in Arunachal over 4 years earlier, and which had been identified by a begonia specialist as *B. dioica*.

2005-2006 marked my debut in the field of Indian begonias, and knowing next to nothing, it was with great effort

and help from experienced begonians [among them the late and ever-generous Jack Golding] that I had been able to identify some of my finds as *B. rex* Putzeys, *B. xanthina*, *B. hatacoa*, *B. silletensis*, *B. aborensis*, *B. griffithiana*, and *B. burkillii*. After registering the half a dozen species I could not identify with the American Begonia Society’s numbers denoting their unidentified status, I deferred working on them. Among this lot was one with the tentative identification of *B. dioica*.

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Peng of Academia Sinica of Taipei, Taiwan, who has shared his photos of herbarium specimens of Asian species from the Natural History Museum, London, Kew and Edinburgh with me, I have been able to compare my photos of the misidentified *B. dioica* from Arunachal and those of *B. ovatifolia* from the environs of Darjeeling with samples of *B. ovatifolia* from these herbaria. As in the case of the much sought after *B. fusca* in Mexico, I realize that I had found *B. ovatifolia* [which is not *B. dioica*] in Arunachal in 2006 several years before I began searching for it in the Khasia Hills!

An Indian adage maintains that the Gods look after the foolish, and it appears that much of my begonia documenting attempts and successes have established the veracity of this nebulous belief in divine favor enigmatically bestowed on those who know little or nothing, and yet attempt the impossible!

The rootstock of the larger plants of *B. ovatifolia* from Arunachal consisted of clusters of round, hard tubers somewhat distinct from those I had found on plants in the environs of Darjeeling. However, the rootstock of the younger plants from Arunachal were also fleshy like those from the environs of Darjeeling. The capsules of both, and the single leaf from each of these two sites where I have documented *B. ovatifolia* are indistinguishable.

An unusual feature of *B. ovatifolia* from Arunachal is the presence of stolons as is clearly visible in a photograph accompanying this article. Dr. Tebbitt has described *B. ravenii* from Taiwan as being the “only cultivated species with stolons” [*Begonias*, 2005, p. 73], and as being “notable for having thread-like stolons that are produced from small tubers, a feature that is otherwise very rare in the genus” [p. 200]. Apart from *B. ovatifolia* from Arunachal, there is another species from India, which has this unusual characteristic, *B. integrifolia* from the Western Ghats of Karnataka.

Yet another surprising result of the hours spent in sifting, sorting and scrutinizing dozens and dozens of dry, mind-numbing herbarium specimens has been to come across a sheet of dry specimens from the Natural History Museum [London] marked as a collection made by Kingdon-Ward in 1935 in the “valley of the Bhareli”.

It is doubtful that the majority of botanists working with Asian begonias, who are far more knowledgeable and better trained than I am, would recognize this find spot. To me the reference is evocative of my first glimpse of the Kameng River as it pours out of the steep, narrow ravines, and flows in wide sinuous sweeps out of Arunachal and into Assam to join the Brahmaputra River. There is a hilltop from which I have watched and photographed this river at all times of the day each time I am in this area. Majestic as it invariably is, it is in the crepuscular hours with the diffuse apricot glow of the setting sun illuminating the distant peaks that the Kameng River acquires some of the indefinable resonances of mythic dreamscapes.

It is this river, which is also referred to by the local population of Bhalukpong, on the borders of Arunachal and Assam, as the Bhareli River. It was in a cave-like indentation some 800’ in the cliffs above the valley through which it flows that I

located and photographed the species I am identifying as *B. ovatifolia*. A handwritten note on Kingdon-Ward’s sample identifies it as *B. josephii* followed by a question mark. Comparisons with herbarium specimens in the Museum of Natural History [London] where this sample is housed, as well as those in Kew and Edinburgh, indicate that this sample is that of *B. ovatifolia*, coincidentally collected by Kingdon-Ward in the same river valley at approximately the same elevation, 500-1000’ 70 years prior to my documentation of this species.

The quest, however, is not quite over, as I have yet to document the flowers of this diminutive species with proportionately over-sized capsules in the wild. Nevertheless, with some temerity I identify Kingdon-Ward’s herbarium sample as *B. ovatifolia*, and present my collection of tubers, leaves and capsules as being those of *B. ovatifolia*, first recorded in Arunachal in 2006, and again in 2010, as another new find for Arunachal Pradesh, where *B. ovatifolia* has never before been recorded.

Acknowledgement:

The most substantive aspects of research for this article would not have been possible without the generosity of Dr. Ching-I Peng of Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan. All the herbarium samples from Kew, The Natural History Museum [London], and Edinburgh I have been able to examine to support my identification of *B. ovatifolia* were photographed by Dr. Peng, who shared these images with me.

The images of herbarium samples included among the photos illustrating this article were taken by Dr. Peng.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for his invaluable friendship ever since Jack Golding mentioned my work with Asian begonias to Dr. Peng, and encouraged him to visit my collection in Pendleton, SC.

The Pollinators

Peter Sharp
Sydney, Australia

To me the most fascinating part of gardening is propagation, the creation of new life, as it were. This taking and starting cuttings is most certainly an intriguing and rewarding experience but my favourite thing is to see my begonias setting seed, to see the tepals curl and the ovaries swell, the fruit set and mature, with eventually a multitude of tiny, tiny seeds there for the taking.

I well remember the first time I saw this happening. My begonias were in a bush house, a very rough first bush house¹ I must admit, but it sufficed, and *Begonia listada*, whose wondrously beautiful leaves beguile me still, sat on the bench and dutifully came into flower. A week or so passed and one morning I saw that the tepals of some of those flowers were curling up and looking most unhealthy. What had I done wrong? I was bereft to think that I had perhaps failed in my husbandry but a knowing friend assured me that my *listada* was about to become a parent. Oh joyful day! The seeds eventually were gathered and sown and germinated to produce a great crop of seedlings, far too many in that one small punnet, of course, but this is the way we learn.

Then of course my enquiring mind wondered how this had happened?

I knew that my *listada* produced both male and female flowers on the one plant and I wondered what had moved the pollen from stamen to stigma, or had it simply floated there on a wayward breeze. Research into

¹ Bush House (Australian) - shed with four corner poles cut from the bush and roofed with brush, built for shade rather than shelter or comfort.



Begonia flower and pollinator. Photo by Kingsley Langenberg

what references I could find revealed some interesting facts:

Pollinators can range from animals, birds and insects to wind and water.

The animals and insects all need an attractant and an incentive to arrive at the right flower at the right time. The attractant may be scent, colour, pattern or familiar appearance, or combinations of these; the incentive is usually food, nectar and/or pollen as eat-in or take-away, or maybe both.

Begonias obviously have a few problems here. Many of them have no scent, none of them produce nectar, and pollen is produced by the male flower at a distance from the female. Many of their flowers are far from flamboyant enough to compete with the tropical plants amongst which they live. I believe that the shapes, colours and patterns of their foliage perhaps help to produce the necessary visual impact to attract a passing pollinator.

The begonias we grow are far from their native habitats and of course their natural pollinators were left behind when their forebears were collected, so they must rely on what we have available. Bees come immediately to mind, for they are both nectar and pollen gatherers. Another problem for our begonias – how to get the bees to visit the female flowers which have neither nectar nor pollen to

offer? Nature to the rescue, as usual, for she has so designed the begonia stamens as to resemble closely the pollen producing stigmas of the males, thus fooling the bees into thinking that more pollen may be collected there. I have indeed watched the bees doing just this, visiting both sexes without discrimination.

The other likely pollinator is, to my mind, the wind which could surely lift a cloud of pollen and spread it throughout the surrounding flowers.

To get the timing right for either of these likely pollinators to achieve germination is a hit or miss operation and frequent bee visitations and viable breezes are the order of the day. They must get it right sometimes!

However, the surest way to pollinate your begonia flowers is to do it yourself. This is a simple operation and consists of passing the male flower's stamen across the top of the female's stigma, gently now but ensure that contact is made. The presence of pollen may be detected by shaking a male flower and looking for a small cloud of yellow pollen but I must admit to having difficulty with this and seldom sight that elusive, precious substance. Hand pollination should be repeated over a period of several days when the pollen is showing, and it is advisable to use several male flowers to ensure success.

Have you seen pollinators at work amongst your begonias? What were the results? I would be most interested to hear of your experiences in this fascinating field – or maybe you too could put them into an article for your journal?

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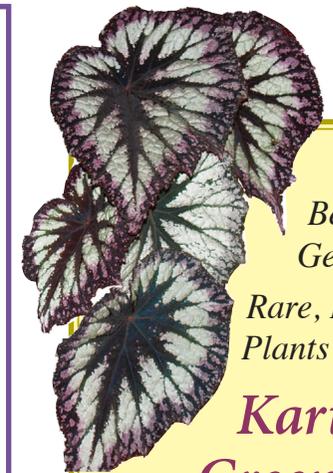
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Begonia aliciae

C.E.C. Fischer

A little known critically endangered species of the Southern Western Ghats, Kerala, India

E.S. Santhosh Kumar and P. E. Roy

Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, Palode Karimancode P.O., Thiruvananthapuram Dt. Kerala 695 562. India

Begonia aliciae, one of the few niche specific species of the genus *Begonia*, seen endemic to the misty mountains of Idukki district of Kerala state, India. Prof. Edward Barnes, who was a professor of chemistry, working at Christian college, Chennai, south India, first collected it. He died at the early age of 49, and was a passionate naturalist who utilized every opportunity for the pursuit of his hobby of collecting plants along with his wife Alice. They spent most of their holidays making extensive family tours to the hills of south India and even a short stay of a few days in Sri Lanka. These trips enabled the couple to collect many beautiful species of the genera like *Impatiens*, *Begonia*, *Arisaema* and *Sonerila*. Their family friend, C.E.C. Fischer, and even Prof. Barnes himself later described many of their interesting collections as new to science.

C.E.C. Fischer, who named it after Mrs. Alice Barnes, described *B. aliciae*. It was known only from a few old collections from Kadalar valley and Devala sholai of Kerala and Tamil Nadu states of India until Santhosh & al. (2002) rediscovered it from one of its previous type localities after a lapse of 64 years from its first collection. Repeated searches in Devala sholai which failed to locate this species indicate that it might have been wiped out from that area.

During one of our recent plant explo-

ration trips to Idukki district of Kerala, another population of *B. aliciae* was located about 50 km away from its previous locality, the Kadalar valley. The Anakkulam-Mankulam ghat road that starts from Munnar in Idukki district and ends up to Ernakulam district of Kerala was one of the good plant collection routes during the colonial period. Prof. Barnes and his associates collected many plants from these regions. Similar to its previous locality, all individuals of the population are seen as lithophytic herbs at altitudes of about 1200 m on wet rocks. It is usually associated with *Sonerila rheedei*, *Argostemma anupama*, *Peparo-mia reflexa*, *Acranthera anamallica*, etc.

Begonia aliciae is a scapigerous herb with a tuberous base. Leaves are pale green in color, ovate to rotund – ovate with rounded or truncate leaf base and acute or acuminate leaf apex. Each leaf ranges from 3.5-12 cm long and 2-6 cm broad with crenate margins. Five basal nerves and two of the lateral nerves next to midrib are nearly vertical for a short distance and then bend downwards. Flowers originate in 10-20 cm long peduncles bearing a smaller simple leaf similar to the radical leaf. Male flowers are seen above the female flowers and four perianth segments are often seen in the male flowers with six in the female flowers. Stamens are 14-17 and are usually united to form one bundle. Style glabrous and

their stigmas are broad and crenate at margin. Ovary 2-celled and subglobose with semi-obovate wings on either side, which unite below the ovary and taper into a pedicel. Placenta are two in each cell.

Introduction of a few seedlings to the field gene bank of Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute was futile owing to its highly adaptive ecological niche specificity. The authors have collected a few samples of seeds for multiplication and their germination trials are underway. In all these localities, less than 200 mature individuals were observed and facing various threats including pest and diseases, floods, grazing, etc. Protection of habitat is the only solution to its conservation for posterity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are thankful to the Director, TBGRI, for the facilities provided, for the constant encouragements, and to the Kerala Forest Department for the permission granted.

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- Fischer C.E.C. 1939. New or little known plants from Southern India . X. *Begonia aliciae* C.E.C. Fisch. *Kew Bull.* 1939 (5): 247.
 Santhosh Kumar E.S., Abdul Jabbar M. and M. Saleem 2002. Rediscovery of *Begonia aliciae* C.E.C. Fischer (Begoniaceae) from the Western Ghats of Kerala. *Rheedea* 12(2): 185-188.



Opposite page: *B. aliciae* female flower
 This page: Two views of *B. aliciae* in habitat



B. 'Gryphon' Photo by Tony Pinto

In the Mailbox

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

It has been a busy season as I have been tutoring after school amongst taking care of the yard and shade houses. But, based on feedback, here is some pertinent information I have received...

Solenia Begonias

This is a new series of begonias that is meant for the mass color market. Research has proven that, while having some Reiger in its background, Solenia varieties do not produce tubers and are grown as annuals. They are reported to tolerate a lot of sunlight, more than normal, and last until a hard killing freeze. Available in spring, more likely in private garden centers, they can be

mass planted or grown in containers. Living in Tampa Bay, they are not a good candidate for our hot, humid, and rainy summers so I do not grow them. It is possible to overwinter held on the dry side, only to revive in spring once the weather has warmed.

Dragon Wings In Pink And Red

This garden center sensation has been around for years now, making inroads as both a long season landscape annual in partial sun, or in shade as a container plant. Here in central Florida, I grow them as winter annuals only to "oversummer", which means cut back, held rootbound and dry, and then once cooler fall weather returns, I feed and water for the new winter season. My plants last two years before they expire.

Gryphon Begonias

A new perennial that is just getting started, this is usually grown from seed for the bedding market. There have been good results as a true perennial, returning from less severe winters (usually zones 8 and higher) with some success in zone 7. It appears a nice mulch is required for root zone comfort. Here in Tampa Bay, it performed well until the true heat of July, then went downhill and is struggling, but I imagine that is moisture at the root level. Our summers are very rainy, very wet! I will await its return this year.

If anyone has any experience with these varieties, please feel free to write me feedback at gsytch@cs.com. Happy growing and spring should arrive shortly!



Palos Verdes Show

Left: Al Palacio's terrariums at the unjudged show from September 2011

Below: Palos Verde Show room
Photos by Jennifer Coffey



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A Word with You: Stamen

By Claudia Goodridge,
New Haven, CT

Bizarre weather has been the norm here in New England – those volunteer gourds I mentioned last time didn't mature, as I suspected they wouldn't, but it was a late October, EARLY snow storm that finally killed those dioecious vines and blew away the leaves. Now the small gourds, still bright green, are highly visible, almost like a string of Christmas lights up in that tree. My closely related, and somewhat protected, window boxed begonias fared better and stayed green for a few days after the storm.

Back to flowers, and *stamens*, the reproductive part of the *staminate* or male flower. The yin to the yang of the *pistillate* flower. The *stamen*

has two parts – 1, the *anther* and 2, the *filament*. The *filament* derives from the Latin *filum*, a thread. This *filament* is the support for the *anther*. *Anther*, from the Latin *anthera*, a flowery plant, houses the pollen, making this the critical part of the *stamen*. No pollen, no seed. *Stamen* in my Latin dictionary also means thread, “the warp, which in the upright looms of the ancients was stretched in a vertical

direction.” A good visual for me. But then, I rather like the second definition too, “the thread ... that by which Ariadne guided Theseus through the labyrinth.”

I could surely use such a thread to guide me through the labyrinth of flower vocabulary. The maze begins no matter where you start ... each male begonia flower has from one to multiple *stamens*; the *stamens* can be arranged symmetri-

cally or not; (the asymmetrical arrangement is often likened to a bunch of bananas.) The *filaments* can be separate or fused into a column; they can be shorter or longer than the *anthers* they support. The *anthers* themselves can be any number of solid geometric shapes – think eggs, spheres, and balls.

I've only scratched the surface here, the surface available to the human eye.

Get out your magnifying glass and take a closer look at the variety in *staminate* flowers.

Reference:

Cassell's Latin Dictionary, revised by J.R.V. Marchant, and Joseph F. Charles. Funk & Wagnalls Co., New York and London.

Above: The staminate, or male, flowers of *B. fulvo-setulosa*. Photo by Jacky Duruisseau



The Jack Golding Archive in the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis

Article & photos by
Dr. Rekha Morris,
Pendleton, SC

There is little doubt that begonia specialists and enthusiasts around the world have benefitted from the monumental compilation of begonia species by Smith, Wassenhausen, Golding and Kerageannes, *Begoniaceae*, published by the Smithsonian, and its complimentary 2nd edition prepared by Golding and Wassenhausen.

As a novice begonia enthusiast in 2001 I had little inkling of the complexities regarding this genus of over 1500 species spread across all the major tropical rain forests of the world [with the exception of the rain forest in Queensland, Australia]. Finding myself quite suddenly and unexpectedly fascinated by the species begonias I had just begun to notice in the state of Veracruz, Mexico, I little expected to find myself floundering in my attempts to identify these species whose incredible variety of foliage and forms had captivated me. All I was seeking was a single monograph or several, with illustrations identifying Mexican species. ABS members informed me that there was no such monograph, and my search for such a monographic coverage of Mexican species resulted in failure. In skeptical desperation I turned to Jack Golding not realizing that I was stepping into the botanical equivalent of a sorcerer's cave from which there would be no escape.

Jack's patient and generous guidance and help from my days of total ignorance about begonias to whatever I have



Jack Golding
Photo by Marilyn White

learned, and continue to learn today, has been a gift which resembles one of the many magical and mythical sources of unending wealth: a genie's lamp, a rainbow with a pot of gold, a golden fleece, a fire bestowing immortality, or a wish fulfilling tree beyond the Hebrides. Perhaps the most appropriate analogy to describe what Jack's introduction to the world of begonias has meant to me is that of a hidden cave of riches guarded by hydra headed monsters!

The monsters are not the begonias themselves but the botanists and plantsmen whose intricate discussions and dissenting descriptions have woven such a tangled web that all but deters us from venturing into what appears to be the arcane and forbidding world of begonia identification. Now that Jack is no longer with us to help others like myself who might find that they have inadvertently stepped into a morass of botanical lit-



From left to right: Andrew Colligan the curator of the archive, Dr. Rekha Morris and Dr. Ching-I Peng, a world-renowned begonia specialist and plant collector. Photo taken by Marilyn White

erature on species begonias, we have his legacy in the form of the Golding Archive generously presented by his daughter, Marilyn White, to the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis.

Although the Golding Archive was established in the archives of the Missouri Botanical Garden within the past year or so, it has been skillfully and analytically categorized by the archive curator, Andrew Colligan. I consider myself fortunate to be among the first two begonia enthusiasts to visit and avail myself of this invaluable begonia research facility. This visit was initiated by Dr. Ching-I Peng, a world-renowned begonia specialist and plant collector,

Herbarium Curator and Director of the Biodiversity Research Museum of the Research Center for Biodiversity, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan.

Dr. Peng had never met Jack Golding just as I had not, but like me had corresponded with him, and benefitted from Jack's enormous collection of articles, notes, and what are now a unique repository of discussions between botanists from around the world. Since Dr. Peng had been a Ph.D. student at the gardens, and worked under the direction of the inimitable and influential botanist and garden director, Dr. Peter Raven, now Director Emeritus, it was Dr. Peng who made the appropriate arrangements



Marilyn White, Jack's daughter, standing in front of the gray boxes which contain all his files and folders.

Photo by Dr. Peng

organization of its contents.

The material in the Jack Golding Archive at the MBG has been divided and boxed in 5 categories: 2 boxes of approximately 8000 slides, 4 boxes of correspondence, 8 boxes of files on species, 6 boxes of literature on species begonias, and a box of miscellaneous papers and photos.

The boxes on correspondence contain correspondence between Jack Golding, Lyman Smith, Wassenhausen, and Cary Kerageannes, with occasional notes from Doorenbos, with regard to nomenclature and designation of species. It is on the basis of the research and discussions embodied in these letters that the Smithsonian volume on *Begoniaceae* was pub-

lished. The significant and informative notes pertaining to species begonias in this extensive correspondence is also included in the files on species begonias from around the world filed alphabetically from A to Z. The boxes on literature, again filed alphabetically, contain the most valuable and difficult to access articles, illustrations, photos, monographic studies, whether published or as unpublished drafts, in English, French, German and Latin.

Anyone wishing to conduct in-depth research on any species from around the world will find this resource as not merely a starting point of their research but more than likely will discover that the Golding Archive marks the end of their quest.

Work in the archive is facilitated by the congenial assistance of its well informed curator, Andrew Colligan, and by other facilities provided by the MBG. The facilities for visiting scholars and serious researchers whether botanists, horticulturists or otherwise, provided by the MBG are unrivalled for ease of access and affordability. The MBG has acquired several houses at the very edge of its extensive grounds [less than 5 minutes walking distance], which have been converted into apartments for visiting researchers. Since there are numerous scholars visiting the MBG whether to do research or attend symposiums and botanical meetings and conferences, it is best to make advance reservations for these accommodations by contacting the MBG.

I have yet to work in any institution in any part of the world which provides such opportunities for research in circumstances carefully orchestrated to enable the research to be conducted with the minimum of effort and expenditure.

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Update on the International Database of the Begoniaeace

By Bernie Wiener, Havertown, PA

Ross Bolwell and Lloyd Traven announce that Peace Tree Farm will have exclusive North American and European rights to import, license and distribute Ross' incredible new begonia introductions. Material will be sent to the laboratory for initiation and testing and then the initial list of cultivars will be finalized. The key is that these begonias will be distributed widely. The intent is to make propagated materials available to growers everywhere. This means a steady stream of new begonias will be coming to the world market.

There is a critical part of this that you need to know: A portion of the proceeds of every plant sold in this program will be definitively earmarked specifically to defray the costs and support the completion and continuation of the International Begonia Database. Lloyd suggested this to Ross from day 1 as something he thought was extremely important to all of us, and that this needed to be done the right away. We also wanted to make sure that Ross's amazing begonia breeding was supported financially. No matter where the database ends up being housed, it will need some continuing support and, this is a powerful beginning.

There have been a good number of companies expressing interest in licensing these begonias, and we anticipate that the program will hit the ground running but it will take some time before the full rollout - initiation, virus-testing, buildup of clean stock, all of which happens after we choose which to bring out first. It is going to be exciting, and we hope you will all join in, if only to help support the database.

I knew Jack Golding and Millie Thompson and gave them moral support for the



Top: Ross Bolwell holding *B. 'Angel Glow'* one of his cultivars. Below: A section of Ross' greenhouse growing area. Photos from Ross Bolwell

years that it took to get their publications printed. They spent unbelievable time doing research and it required help from so many begonia growers throughout the world. Now we have the new technology where through the Internet we can help Ross by contributing our experience in growing begonias. I have been contacting the arboriculturists in my area so they are acquainted with the database and sent a plea to the branch national directors to have a meeting on how to use the database. It requires time and a desire to help someone who does not know where to go for answers to their unknown begonia questions. So please do your share to help develop Ross' database.

P.S. Read Ross Bolwell's article in the Nov/Dec 2010 The Begonian outlining how the database began.

Westchester Branch Show and Sale

By Martin E. Delgado, Downey, CA

The Westchester Branch of the American Begonia Society proudly held its 52nd Annual Begonia Show and Plant Sale on July 16, 2011. The annual Westchester event is the only judged begonia show in Southern California and showcases begonias and their companion plants. In spite of dire predictions of grid-lock traffic due to the closure of a major thoroughfare to the show venue, hundreds of attendees proved reports false and experienced a “Garden Party” of beautiful and unusual begonia species and cultivars.

Judges Mary Sakamoto, Michael Ludwig, and Elaine Baxter had the rewarding, if painstaking, task of reviewing over 100 entries in virtually all categories for begonias. Considering the number of entries from Westchester and neighboring branches, judges and clerks were busy much of the day. Best in Show Trophy went to *B. ‘Sparkle,’* grown by Robert Golden, a typically fine submission that appeared as “perfect” as could be. Tomoko Gherardi won the Novice trophy for her *B. mazaе*. An enthusiastic new member, Ms. Gherardi not only entered fine plants, but also successful entries for the “Arts & Crafts” category. Cultural awards went to plants grown by Robert Golden, Martin Delgado, Katsuko Nakagawa, Tom Cootz, Janet Brown, Patricia McElderry, Debbi Iniguez, and the husband & wife team of Virgil and Janice Griffith, with Mr. Cootz’ 14 entries garnering him the Robert Lindgren Showing is Sharing Award as well. The handsome show trophies were ceramic artworks by Nels Christiansen, no doubt serving as further incentive to participate in next year’s Show.

The Show Honoree for 2011 was Patricia McElderry of Los Angeles, renowned grower, lover and promoter of begonias and Senior Judge for the ABS. Recipient of the 2011 Marge Lee Award at the Oklahoma City Convention earlier in the year, Mrs. McElderry had a stellar year

indeed. One of her lovely hybrids, *B. ‘Muriel,’* was elegantly positioned in the special honoree’s display, beautifully designed and arranged by Diane Hodapp and Branch President Stephanie Rose - Hard workers who also served as show clerks!

After nearly 20 years of superior service as Westchester Show Chair, Janet Brown thought she might have a rest by passing the torch to Martin Delgado, but perhaps the new Chairman’s need for support and guidance resulted in more work for her than ever before! In fact, an event of this caliber will always require a team effort from many dedicated ABS members.

A rewarding experience, the goals of the Westchester Show - stimulating and promoting interest in begonias, bringing into friendly contact all who love and grow begonias - were successfully met this year.



Top: Best of Show - *Begonia ‘Sparkle’*

Center: Show clerks Maria Groll, Stephanie Rose, and Diane Hodapp hard at work.

Bottom: The Flower of the Show - Pat McElderry.
Photos by Nels Christianson



Jacqueline Mildred Davis

August 22, 1926 – September 17, 2011

By Joan Davis, Santa Clara Begonia Club

It is with a heavy heart that I report the passing of one of our dear longtime members Jackie Davis. Jackie passed away peacefully at her home in Aptos, CA on Saturday, September 17th in the early morning hours at the age of 85 with family by her bedside. She is survived by her husband Harry J. Davis of 60 years; and she was the mother of four daughters, grandmother to eleven and great grandmother to ten and a friend too many.

Jackie was an avid gardener and until recently she belonged to both the Monterey and Santa Clara begonias clubs and served as President for many years. She took great pride in her begonia garden and Harry and Jackie hosted an annual club meetings for many years. Harry and Jackie generously provided begonia seed to the national seed bank and plants to Bay Area begonia club members. Anyone visiting the gardens always came home with many begonia slips. It is impossible to calculate the numbers of novice growers that Jackie inspired, encouraged and taught how to grow begonias, but I was one of those many years ago now.

It was a privilege to be able to count Jackie as a friend and this grand lady will be remembered with much love and affection. We will miss her smile and feisty nature and her love of begonias. I like to think she is somewhere now working in a begonia garden with dirt under her fingernails like she so loved to do!



In Memory: Leslie Dunn Hatfield

By Bill Schramm, Salinas, CA

The Monterey Bay Branch of the ABS is sad to report that our dear friend, Leslie Dunn Hatfield, passed away on June 17, 2011 at the age of 93.

Leslie was born on 1 January 1918 in Oakland CA, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Dunn. A resident of Monterey Bay for 44 years she was preceded in death by her husband Arlie Hatfield, son Charles Proctor and 5 siblings.

Throughout her life Leslie loved gardening and plants especially begonias and ferns. In 1971 she founded the Monterey Bay Branch of the ABS. Monterey Bay was, and still is, a world center for growing tuberous begonia. This is what attracted Leslie but she also developed a lasting interest in rhizomatous begonias and maintained a large collection in her greenhouse. Always generous with both advice and plants she was beloved by all Branch members and an inspiration to many novice growers.

In 2009 the name of the Branch was changed to the Leslie Hatfield Monterey Bay Branch of the ABS – an action that gave her great pleasure and ensured that her memory will not fade away.

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.

The Seed Fund now offers a PayPal option. This option is available through the ABS Website. Go to the Seed Fund Page and select the link "Current Seed Listing pay with PayPal". There is a small "PayPal" fee on top of the "shipping and handling" fee to cover the cost of using PayPal. Choose the fee amount in the drop down menu at the bottom of the page as with the shipping and handling drop down menus. By policy, new seed additions are made after they are first published in *The Begonian* and updated as supplies vary while filling orders. This is the best source for the current available seed list.

New seeds from Kingsley Langenberg.

- B. grandis* •*B. guaduensis* •*B. rubriflora*

New seeds from Rekha Morris: Seeds from India and Mexico

I would like to apologize for an error in the identification of a species, and make a correction with regard to seeds I disseminated as *B. dioica*. Those seeds, collected in Arunachal, were seeds of *B. ovatifolia*, a species which I have since documented at a couple of sites. Please see my article on *B. ovatifolia* in *The Begonian*, Jan./Feb. 2012 issue. -Rekha Morris

From Arunachal, India:

- B. aborensis* var *aborensis* RM-AR-903 •*B. acetosella* var *acetosella* RM-AR-990
- B. acetosella* var *hirtifolia* RM-AR-961 •*B. griffithiana* RM-AR-955
- B. hatacoa* RM-AR-928 (limited \$3.00 / pkt) •*B. limprichtii* RM-AR-1014 (limited \$3.00 / pkt)
- B. roxburghii* RM-AR-817

From environs of Darjeeling:

- B. ovatifolia* RM-DAR-1 (tuberous species growing at about 4000 – 5000' see this issue page 10)

From Karnataka, South India:

- B. dipetala* RM-SI-890 •*B. floccifera* RM-SI-G01 (limited \$3.00 / pkt) (garden origin)

From Oaxaca, Mexico:

- B. breedlovei* RM-08-307 •*B. oaxacana* RM-08-349 (limited \$3.00 / pkt)
- B. polygonata* RM-08-313 (limited \$3.00 / pkt) (An unusual species which I have seen thriving in full sun and in semi shady conditions.)

- B. sacrophylla* RM-08-309 (limited \$3.00 / pkt)

From Veracruz, Mexico:

- B. barkeri* RM-08-304B

From Australia:

- B. large semp* RM-DAR-27 (from garden of Lesley Pawsey)

From Taiwan:

- B. formosana* RM-TW-899

New seeds from Donald and Daphne Prince:

- B. 'Dragon Wings'* (mixed dark red, red pink, and red)

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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.

ABS Convention 2012

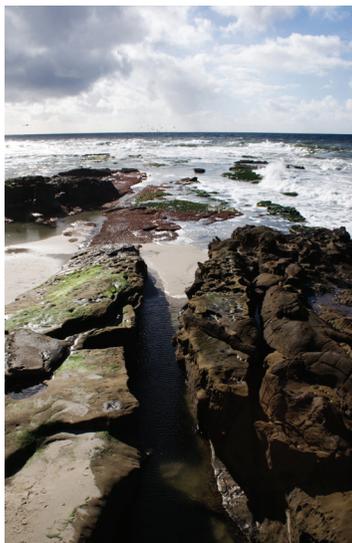
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More details will follow as we finalize the details. We are looking forward to a great crowd.



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Contact:

Linda Tamblyn 913.231.1020

Email: begoniaskc@yahoo.com

2011 Index

Articles

- 2011 ABS Awards 5
A Big Thanks! 84
About my trip to Gabon 7
A Branch Project by the Margaret Lee Branch of the ABS 190
ABS Book Store 23, 69, 109, 192
ABS Elections 2011 Nominees 147
Adventitious Plantlets 136
After the Hurricane 196
A Glimpse from the OKC Show 128
A Little Boy and His Begonia Treasure 70
A Wee Bit About the Bookstore 193
A Word with You:
Cutouts 86
Cutouts Part II 132
Living Arrangements 171
Pistil 220
Teeth 24
Toothless 52
B. aborensis Dunn 89
B. annulata K. Koch 58
B. bipinnatifida 87
B. 'Crestabruchii' The Lettuce Leaf Begonia 24
B. foliosa var. miniata 'Rosea' 76
B. griffithiana A. de Candolle 142
B. hatacoa Hamilton ex Don 214
B. 'It' 223
B. kui 102
B. 'Pinafore Sport' 189
B. thomsonii 175
Begonia lacunosa 226
Begonia letouzeyi 8
Begonia mannii 149
Begonia Miracles 50
Begonia prismatocarpa for Terrariums 218
Begonia rubriflora, L. Kollmann, a new species and a new identity for Begonia U014 137

- Begonias and Birthday Cake! 75
Begonias as Hedge Plantings 6
Begonias at the Boston Garden Show 117
Begonia sericoneura: Beautiful Bloomer 14
Begonia Shade Garden at Florida's Winter Park Garden 25
Begonias In The Back Country 210
Begonia Tissue Culture Project 103
Begonia x chungii: A Natural Hybrid 18
Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund 22, 73, 108, 129, 191, 209
Companion Plants - Amaryllis 16
Companion Plants: Try an Orchid! 64
Conservation Chairman 166
Conservation Comments:
B. bogneri 55
B. eminii 130
B. subvillosa var. leptotricha 168
Correction 47
Critter Control 12
Dedicated to "Study Our Species" 152
Getting My Adopted Species, B. scharffii, Circulated 195
Going Wild in Oklahoma 13, 45
Go Wild In Oklahoma 85
Greetings from a Parallel Universe 184
Growing Begonias in Barnes Arboretum 154
Growing Begonias in Sweden 236
Holiday Greetings 205
How I Grew A Champion: B. masoniana 113
How to Water Your Plants 194
How to Write U-numbers 150

- In Memoriam: Irene Nuss 1918 - 2010 48
In Memoriam: Jack Harris 37
In the Mailbox 115, 183
Kudos to the Rhode Island Branch 111
Letter to the Editor 134, 165
Making More Rex Begonias 182
More on the Begonia Database 8
My Begonia Buddies 157
Newsletter Editor's Forum 46
Newsletter Editor's Project 127
Official Ballot ABS Election 2011 148
Palos Verdes Begonia Show 198
President's Message 4, 44, 84, 124, 164, 204
Proceedings of the Annual Business Meeting ABS 206
Proceedings Of The Board Meeting 126
Proceedings of the Board Meeting ABS 207
Putting the Record Straight 44
Request for Holiday Ad Donations 88
Sepals and petals, a new approach to Brazilian Begoniaceae 27
Share Your Quick Tips 125
Smallest Waterlily in the World Brought Back from the Brink of Extinction at Kew Gardens 232
Terrarium Containers and Where to Find Them 134
The Challenge of Rex Begonias 179
The Gazebo Show: Art in the Garden 224

The Genus Begonia L.
(Begoniaceae)
in New Guinea 94
The Giant-leaved Begonia
fusca 72
Theresa Olmsted: 92 and
Still Growing 157
The Use of Social Media 183
Travel Begonia 47
Unknown Malaysian
Begonia 57
Update on Unknown
Malaysian Begonia
205
Walter Pease: In Memoriam
11
Westchester Branch 52nd
Annual Begonia Show
& Sale 88
What's Your SOS Plant? 112
Wings of an Eagle, Body of
a Lion: B. 'Gryphon'
66

Contributors

Authors

Ades, Chuck 70
Asplind, Ann-Sofie 236
Bolwell, Ross 8
Brown, Janet 11, 49
Butler, Liese 64
Claybaugh, Bill 16, 55,
130, 168
Dicken, Cindy 218
Duruissseau, Jacky 7, 8,
226
Gagul, Janet 94
Goodridge, Claudia 12,
24, 52, 86, 132, 171,
220
Henthorne, Charles 72,
76, 189
Higson, Michael 196
Hoefnagles, Antoon 6
Holley, Freda 50
Jaros, Charles 189, 204
Jens, Virginia 136
Jones, Jeanne 48
Kartuz, Michael J. 179
Keepin, Tom 13, 85
Knight, Randal 25

Kollmann, Ludovic Jean
Charles 27, 137
Langenberg, Kingsley 150
Lenert, Cheryl 4, 44, 84,
124, 164, 166
Lines, Brenda 103
Macnair, Richard 206
Macnair, Wanda 88, 117
Mirenda, Thomas 184
Moran, Cindy 66
Morris, Dr. Rekha 18, 58,
89, 142, 175, 214
Moultrie, Mary Elizabeth
37
Mounger, Kit 210
Nakamura, Michiko 102
Olmsted, Sheryl 157
O'Reilly, Maureen 14
O'Reilly, Thelma 48, 152
Pinto, Tony 57
Purinton, Priscilla 111
Romeo, Joe 68, 76, 113, 134
Sakamoto, Mary 49
Salisbury, Anna 5
Sharp, Peter 44
Sytch, Greg 115, 183
Takana, Akiro 102
Tamblyn, Linda 46, 87, 112,
127
Thompson, Brad 48
Turney, Dean 190
Wagner, Wally 194
West, Bobbie 157
Wiener, Bernie 195, 154
Wilson, Willie Mae 48
Zinn, Johanna 134

Photographers

Asplind, Ann-Sofie 236,
237
Brown, Janet 48
Claybaugh, Bill 16, 17, 26,
55, 130, 131, 166, 168,
169, 170, 190
Dicken, Cindy 218, 219
Duruissseau, Jacky 7, 10, 37,
162, 171, 173, 220, 222,
226, 227, 228, 239
Fischer, Prof. Eberhard 233,
234, 235
Gagul, Janet 95, 96, 98
Gatten, Nichole 75
Goodridge, Claudia 12, 13

Grose, Susan 87, 149
Harrington, David 111
Heim, Dan 122, 133
Henthorne, Charles 56,
72, 76, 82, 100, 101,
102, 135, 189, 223
Higson, Michael 196, 197
Hoefnagles, Antoon 6
Holley, Freda 50, 51
Hunt, Gary 201, 203, 224,
225
Jens, Virginia 136, 206,
207, 208
Kartuz, Michael 161, 162,
179, 180, 181, 182
Kollmann, Ludovic Jean
Charles 28, 29, 121,
137, 138, 140, 141
Langenberg, Kingsley
24, 86
Lines, Brenda 103, 104,
106, 108
Macnair, Wanda 116, 117
Mattis, Diane 195
McDole, Butch 37
Moran, Cindy 66, 67
Morris, Dr. Rekha 18,
20, 21, 40, 44, 58, 59,
60, 61, 62, 63, 89, 90,
91, 92, 93, 142, 143,
144, 145, 146, 147,
160, 174, 175, 176,
178, 203, 214, 215,
216, 217
Mounger, Kit 210, 211,
212
Oak Hill Gardens 43,
64, 65
Olmsted, Sheryl 156
O'Reilly, Thelma 3, 14,
15, 152, 153
Pinto, Tony 57, 205
Ponsonby, Claire 25
Ramsay, BJ 163, 184, 186,
187, 188, 200
Romeo, Joe 1, 2, 3, 4, 42,
47, 77, 80, 81, 68, 113
Schnapf, Josh 155
Tamblyn, Linda 84, 112
Thompson, Brad 52, 53
Tsamtsis, Paul 53



B. versicolor male flowers. Taken at the Buxton flower show by Tony Pinto

Vanderwilt, Julie 49, 53,
54, 122, 125, 132, 133
Wagner, Wally 194
West, Bobbie 157
Wiseman, Jem 2, 23, 70,
124, 164, 149, 202,
204, 240
Zinn, Johanna 52, 128,
135, 150, 151, 171,
172, 173

Individuals

Barnes, Pat 111
Bates, Edgar 152, 209
Bates, Phyllis 153, 209
Benshafrut, Dr. Ronnie 73
Boardman, Bruce 152
Bogner, Josef 55
Brown, Janet 153
Bucholtz, Mary 126, 151

Byrom, Doug 134
Calkins, Eleanor 153
Campbell, Joan 73, 209
Candolle, A.D. 61, 62
Clarke, C. B. 59, 60, 61
Claybaugh, Bill 166
Cohen, Nancy 108
Cootz, Tom 153
Daniels, Patty 124
David Harrington 111
DeLand, Merle 204, 206
Dickens, Cindy 128
Dimmitt, Dr. Mark 14
Doorenbos, J. 56
Dyckman, Herbert P. 75
Fischer, Eberhard 232
Fisher, Margaret 126
Flaherty, Mike 54, 147
Foo, Ingeborg 153
Fuchs, Fred 137

Fugua, Mary 209
Goodwin, Jan 76
Happel, Doris 136, 155
Harris, Jack 37
Heidtman, Deb 111
Henthorne, Charles 134,
135
Henthorne, Leora 135
Hoefnagles, Antoon 44
Holley, Freda M. 126
Howery, Mark 13
Huckriede, Beatrice 73, 108
Hvegholm, Susanne 236
Irene Nuss 49
Jaeger, Jim 153
Jaros, Charles 126, 147,
151, 196
Jens, Virginia 147
Kammerer, Linda 111
Keepin, Tom 128, 196

Keith, Marla 153
 Kiew, Ruth 94
 Kilpatrick, Lyla 113
 Knosher, Lynne 66
 Kroneke, Alex 108
 Ku, Shin-Ming 102
 Lenert, Cheryl 126
 Letouzey, Dr. René 8
 Ludwig, Michael 152, 153
 Macnair, Richard 126, 148
 Macnair, Wanda 126, 204
 Magdalena, Carlos 232
 Mann, Gustav 149
 McElderry, Patricia 88
 McNamara, Kathy 197
 Mentelos, Tom 137
 Morris, Dr. Rekha 13, 50,
 51, 126, 152
 Neugebauer, Brad 55
 Notaras, Carol 148
 Olmsted, Theresa C. 156,
 157
 O'Reilly, Maureen 153
 O'Reilly, Thelma 14, 152,
 153
 Owens, Steve 13
 Pease, Walter 11
 Peng, Dr. Ching-I 19, 102
 Pinto, Tony 205
 Purinton, Priscilla 111
 Rahm, Peter 205
 Rogers, Dr. George 108
 Romeo, Joe 47
 Rose, Stephanie 153
 Salisbury, Anna 126
 Salisbury, Gene 164
 Savage, Phyllis 117
 Sena, Dale 136, 204
 Sharp, Peter 6
 Sherman, Jocelyn 111
 Smith, L. B. 56
 Sosef, Marc 8
 Tamblyn, Linda 84, 126, 204
 Tebbitt, Mark C. 56, 87, 149,
 171, 172, 149
 Thompson, Brad 49
 Tien Hiep, Nguyen 102
 Tsamtsis, Paul 126
 Turney, Dean 153
 Vanderwilt, Julie 84
 Wilkerson, Dianna 13, 125
 Herb Wilkerson 49
 Worton, Melissa 153

Ziesenhenné, Rudolf 49, 55
 Zinn, Johanna 166, 126

Plants

Begonia Hybrids

Allen Langdon 224
 Angel Glow 166
 BabyWing pink 137
 Bandit 117
 Beau Rouge 180
 Black Velvet 117
 Broken Heart 1, 3
 Caravan 164
 Caribbean Prince 50
 Christmas Candy 137, 212
 Chuck Jaros 16
 Coral Sabers 117
 Corazon-de Jesus 76
 crassicaulis x manicata
 'Crispa' 50
 Crestaburchii 53, 54
 Curly Face 50
 Dovecot 50
 Dragon Wings 137, 210
 Erythrophylla 70, 189
 Erythrophylla Bunchii 189
 Erythrophylla Helix 189
 Eunice Gray 49
 Fascinatín' Rhythm 212
 Firebird 137
 Fire Flush 117
 Fragrant Spice 201
 Fred Martin 224
 Golden Glow 190
 Gryphon 66, 67, 117, 128
 Immense 50
 Immense x crassicaulis 50
 Irene Nuss 49, 117
 It 223
 Jade Elegance 68
 Jumbo Jet 43, 49
 La Cresta 53
 Lana 212, 213
 Linda Dawn 105, 106
 Little Brother Montgomery
 50
 Little Miss Mummy 212
 Lois Burks 117
 Lucerna' aka 'Corallina de
 Lucerna 196
 Marmaduke 117
 Miss Julie 117

Miss Priss 117
 Orange Blossom 16, 17, 26
 Penny Lahn 117
 Phoe's Cleo 117
 Pinafore 189
 Pinafore Sport 189
 Priscilla Beck 136
 Red Fred 224
 reniformis x 'Caribbean
 Prince' 50
 Rex (hybrid) 1, 117, 182
 Red Planet 117
 Red Umbo 202
 Salamander 117
 San Miguel 117
 Satin Jazz 161, 163, 179
 Shaun's Dream 82
 Silvermist 49
 Silver Mist 117
 Silver Twist 1, 3
 Skygaum 50
 Snow Capped 117
 Sophie Cecile 213
 Splotches 163, 172, 173
 Stained Glass 117
 Star Search 16
 Stars & Stripes 26
 String of Pearls 68
 Suzie's Curl 117
 Symphony 49
 Twisted Sister 117
 Twister 50
 Valentine Lace 180
 Vista Queen 117
 Withlacoochee 210, 212,
 213
 Wrong Number 16

Begonia Species

aborensis 83, 89, 90, 91,
 92, 93, 175
 acaulis 94
 acetosella var. acetosella
 20, 21
 albobracteata 97
 amphioxus 24, 53, 87, 153
 ampla 52
 angularis 27, 29, 53
 annulata 43, 58, 59, 60, 61,
 62, 63, 178
 archboldiana 94
 arfakensis 98
 argenteomarginata 98

augustae 97
 axillipara 97
 barbata 60, 61, 178
 barsalouxiae 117
 bartlettiana 94
 biolleyi 14
 bipinnatifida 83, 86, 87, 97
 bogneri 55, 56, 117
 boliviensis 213
 boliviensis 'Bonfire' 24
 bowerae 24, 86
 brachybotrys 97
 brassii 94
 brevirimosa 97
 brevirimosa subsp. exotica
 97
 bufoderma 117
 bullatifolia 27
 burkillii 153
 calliantha 97
 capanemae 53
 carolineifolia 132, 133
 carrieae 107
 cavallyensis 153
 chitensis 50
 chlorosticta 87, 165
 clemensiae 97
 coccinea 30, 43, 50, 105, 106
 corallina 30
 crassicaulis 86
 crispula 27, 29
 cubensis 52, 53
 cucullata 168
 cumingiana 96
 davisii 239
 deliciosa 50, 86
 descoleana 137, 139
 diadema 86, 125
 dichroa 30
 diffusiflora 97
 dipetala 50, 107
 djamuensis 97
 dosedlae 97
 dregei 50, 52, 56, 153
 egregia 24, 27, 30, 153
 elaeagnifolia 112
 eliasii 97
 eminii 130, 131
 evansiana 211
 evansiana grandis 50
 fernando-costae 50
 filibracteosa 97
 fischeri 16, 168

flexicaulis 97
 foliosa var. miniata 'Rosea'
 76
 formosana 51
 fruticella 97
 fulvo-villosa 97, 98
 fusca 72
 gilgiana 97
 glabra 27, 29
 glabricaulis 97
 glabricaulis var.
 brachyphylla 97
 goegoensis 2, 24
 gracilis 24
 grandis 94
 grandis spp. sinensis 122
 grandis var. grandis 211
 griffithiana 123, 142, 143,
 144, 145, 146, 147, 175
 griffithii 58, 60, 62, 142,
 143, 178
 grisea 27
 hatacoa 178, 203, 214, 215,
 216, 217
 hatacoa 'Spotted' 50
 hatacoa var. aubergine 216
 hatacoa var. hatacoa 214,
 215
 hatacoa var. rubrifolia 203,
 215, 216
 hatacoa var. viridifolia
 214, 215, 216, 217
 hemsleyana 132, 133
 heracleifolia 86
 heracleifolia
 'Sunderbruchii' 54
 herbacea 27
 hirsuticaulis 97
 hirsutula 230
 hispida var. cucullifera
 152, 153
 humboldtiana 97
 hypolipara 14
 integerrima 30
 isoptera 87
 itaguassuensis 27
 kaniensis 96
 kelliana 97
 kenworthyae 107, 112
 kerstingii 97
 kui 83, 100, 101, 102
 lacunosa 203, 226, 227,
 228, 230

lanuginosa 14
 lauterbachii 97
 leathermaniae 27, 29, 30
 ledermannii 97
 leopoldinensis 27
 leptotricha 168
 letestui 120
 letouzeyi 3, 8, 9, 10, 36,
 37, 230
 limprichtii 24
 listada 6, 164
 longifolia 18, 19, 20, 21,
 50, 63
 longipetiolata 52
 lunaris 30
 luxurians 24, 123, 132, 133
 lyallii var. lyallii f.
 masoalensis 36, 37
 macduffiana 30
 maculata 29, 30
 malmquistiana 97
 manicata 'Crispa' 50, 54
 mannii 149
 masoniana 4, 113, 114, 117
 media 97, 103, 105, 106,
 173
 meisneri 216
 microsperma 131
 minjemensis 96
 monantha 97
 montis-bismarckii 97
 mooreana 98
 moszkowskii 97
 multidentata 97
 mystacina 97
 mysteriosa 27
 naumoniensis 97
 nelumbifolia 16, 17
 nicaraguensis 14
 novalombardiensis 97
 novoguineensis 97
 odorata 105, 106
 oligandra 94
 otophora 97
 ovalifolia 94
 oxyloba 86
 oxyphylla 6
 oxyura 97
 palmata 18, 19, 20, 21, 51,
 58, 59
 papuana 97
 partita 117
 paulensis 6, 117



B. U012

This attractive little plant prefers bright light, high humidity and high temperatures.
Culture notes and photo by Charles Henthorne

- pedatifida 86
pediophylla 97
peekelii 97
peltata 107
pentaphragmifolia 97
physandra 94
pilifera 14
pinnatifida 97
platanifolia 27, 29, 50
polilloensis 87, 132
popenoei 104, 105, 106
potamophila 162
prismatocarpa 218, 219
procumbens 117
pulchra 98
quadrialata 24
quadrialata var.
quadrialata 220
radicans 1, 3, 30
rajah 23
randiana 97
ravenii 153
reniformis X macrocarpa
50
rex 1, 51, 59, 60, 61, 62,
128, 153, 171, 175, 182
rhodantha 97
rieckei 97
roxburghii 63, 171, 172,
177
rubriflora 123, 137, 139,
140
rubro-venia 178, 214, 215,
216
salaziensis 52, 222
saxicola 27, 29
scapigera 153
scharffii 195
schmidtiana 50
sementacea 164
semperflorens 6, 42, 50
sericoneura 3, 14, 15, 16,
107
serraticauda 97
serratiflora 87, 95, 97, 153
sharpeana 96
silletensis 58, 175
silletensis var. silletensis
89, 91, 92
simulans 97
sogerensis 97
solananthera 117
soli-mutata 149
spilotophylla 97
staudtii 131
stilandra 97
strictinervis 97
strigosa 98
subacida 27, 29
subcyclophylla 96
subelliptica 97
subvillosa 168, 170
subvillosa var. leptotricha
168, 169, 170
subvillosavar. subvillosa 168
suffrutescens 97
susaniae 9
symbeccarii 98
symbracteosa 98
symgeraniifolia 98
symhirta 98
sympapuana 98
symparvifolia 98
symsanguinea 98
tafaensis 97
taliensis 86
thelmae 117
thiemei 132
thomsonii 60, 61, 163, 174,
175, 176, 177, 178
torricellensis 97
U002 211, 212
U014 137
U040 150
U084 14
U172 14
U173 14
U177 x U357 50
U253 14
U309 204
U331 14
U402 27, 29
U475 150, 151
U513 150
U521 105, 106, 109
U574 18, 19, 20, 21
ulmifolia 27
umbraculifera 27
unidentified plant 76
vaginans 153
vandewateri 97
venosa 6
versicolor 117
vittariifolia 9
warburgii 97
variana 97
weigallii 97
wollnyi 153
xanthina 175
x chungii 3, 18, 19, 20,
21, 40
- ### Non-Begonia
- Aeonium 71
Aerangis luteo-alba var
rhodosticta 184
Aerangis rhodosticta 185
Angraecum distichum 185
Azadirachta indica (neem)
93
Bulbophyllum blumei 163,
187
Bulbophyllumechinolabium
163, 187, 200
Cattleya pumila 185
Cattleya sincorana 185, 187
Cis Schweinfia dasyandra
184, 186
Cis Schweinfiasheehanae 186
Davidia involuocrata 154
Dendrobium dichaeoides
185
Dendrobium jenkinsii 185,
188
Dendrobium laevifolium 186
Habenarias medusae 187
Hydrangea heteromala 176
Hydrangea 'Lime Light'
224
Impatiens cathartii 175, 176
Macroclinium aurorae 163,
188
Miscanthus sinensis 24
Nymphaea 'Kew's Electric
Blue' 235
Nymphaea thermarum
232, 233, 234, 235
Oncidium 64
Paphiopedilum 43, 64, 65
Paphiopedilum
haynaldianum 43, 65
Paphiopedilum henryanum
65
Phalaenopsis 64, 65
Phalaenopsis
inscriptiosinesis 65
Sedum 84
Selaginella 59
Sempervivum 84
Sigmatostalix eliae 187

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ABS Elected Officers

President... Charles Jaros, 106 Pine Valley Ct., DeBary, FL 32713 Phone 407-687-5621; cjbegonia@yahoo.com
Past President... Cheryl Lenert, 21744 FM 2920, Hockley, TX 77447; Phone 281-255-9004; lenert@flash.net

1st Vice-President... Virginia Jens, 2483 Waterside Dr, Lake Worth, FL 33461; Phone 561-568-0124; vjens2483@gmail.com.

2nd Vice-President... Mike Flaherty, 1505 East Valley Rd, Santa Barbara, CA 93108; mikeflaherty@cox.net
Secretary... Richard Macnair, 59 Walker St., Cambridge, MA 02138; Phone 617-876-1356; RNmacnair@msn.com

Treasurer... Carol Notaras, 2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123; Phone 415-931-4912; cnotaras@sbcglobal.net

Appointed Chairmen & Directors

Audit... Paul Tsamtsis, 1630 F St., Sacramento, CA 95814-1611

Awards... Ann Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653; Phone 580-628-5230; geneann@sbcglobal.net

Ballot Counting... Ingeborg Foo, 1050 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92083; Phone 760-724-4871

Book Store... Jan Brown, begoniabrown@yahoo.com Phone 310-670-4471.

Branch Relations... Tom Keepin, 4513 Randwick Drive Houston, TX 77092-8343; Phone 713-686-8539; thefrogman@earthlink.net

Business Manager... Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653; Phone 580-628-5230; geneann@sbcglobal.net

Conservation... Johanna Zinn, 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032, 703-323-7513, jazinn@cox.net

Convention Advisor... Mary Sakamoto, 9682 Featherhill Dr., Villa Park, CA 92861; Phone 714-637-8787; m.sakamoto@sbcglobal.net

Convention Chair... Carol Notaras, 2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123; Phone 415-931-4912; cnotaras@sbcglobal.net

Entries/Classification... Vacant

Grants Committee... Mike Flaherty, 1505 East Valley Rd, Santa Barbara, CA 93108; mikeflaherty@cox.net

Internet Editor... Dean Turney, 467 Fulvia Street, Encinitas, CA 92024; Phone: 760-942-1919; B.deanturney@gmail.com

Historian... Jeanne Jones, 1415 Via Margarita, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274-2143; Phone 310-378-7527

Horticultural Correspondent... Gregory Sytch, 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301; Phone 727-841-9618; gsytch@cs.com

Judging... Maxine Zinman, 2770 Kimble Rd., Berryville, VA 22611; Phone 540-955-4555; begonia@visuallink.com

Members-at-Large... Sandy Boyd, 5 Walnut Circle, Chico, CA 95973; Phone 530-891-5760

Membership... Paul Rothstein, 2 Flock Lane, Bella Vista, AR 72714; Phone 479-855-1665; paroan2001@yahoo.com

Nomenclature... Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653; Phone 580-628-5230; geneannsbcglobal.net

Parliamentarian... Linda Lawson, 525 Terrace Place, Norman, OK 73069-5034; Phone 405-364-2425

Public Relations... Gene Salisbury, P.O. Box 452, Tonkawa, OK 74653; Phone 580-628-5230; geneann@sbcglobal.net

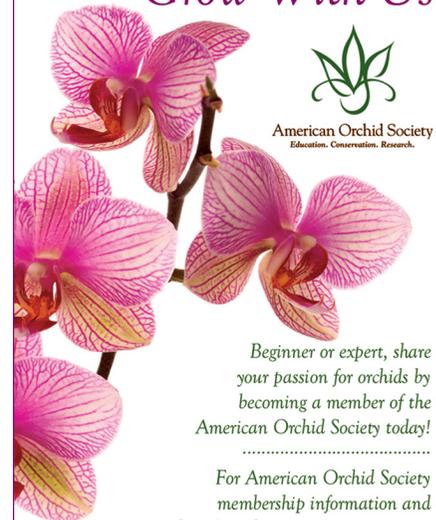
Research... vacant

Save Our Species Coordinator... Rekha Morris, 318 Woodland Cir., Pendleton, SC 29670; shivavana@gmail.com

Seed Fund... Dean Turney, 467 Fulvia Street, Encinitas, CA 92024; dean@deansmail.us

Slide Library... Charles Jaros, 106 Pine Valley Ct. DeBary, FL 32713; Phone 407-687-5621; cjbegonia@yahoo.com

Unidentified Species (U Numbers)... Co-Chairs: Charles Jaros, 106 Pine Valley Ct., DeBary, FL 32713 Phone 407-687-5621; cjbegonia@yahoo.com
Mary Bucholtz, 1560 Lancaster Terr., #1008, Jacksonville, FL 32204; Phone 904-353-9111



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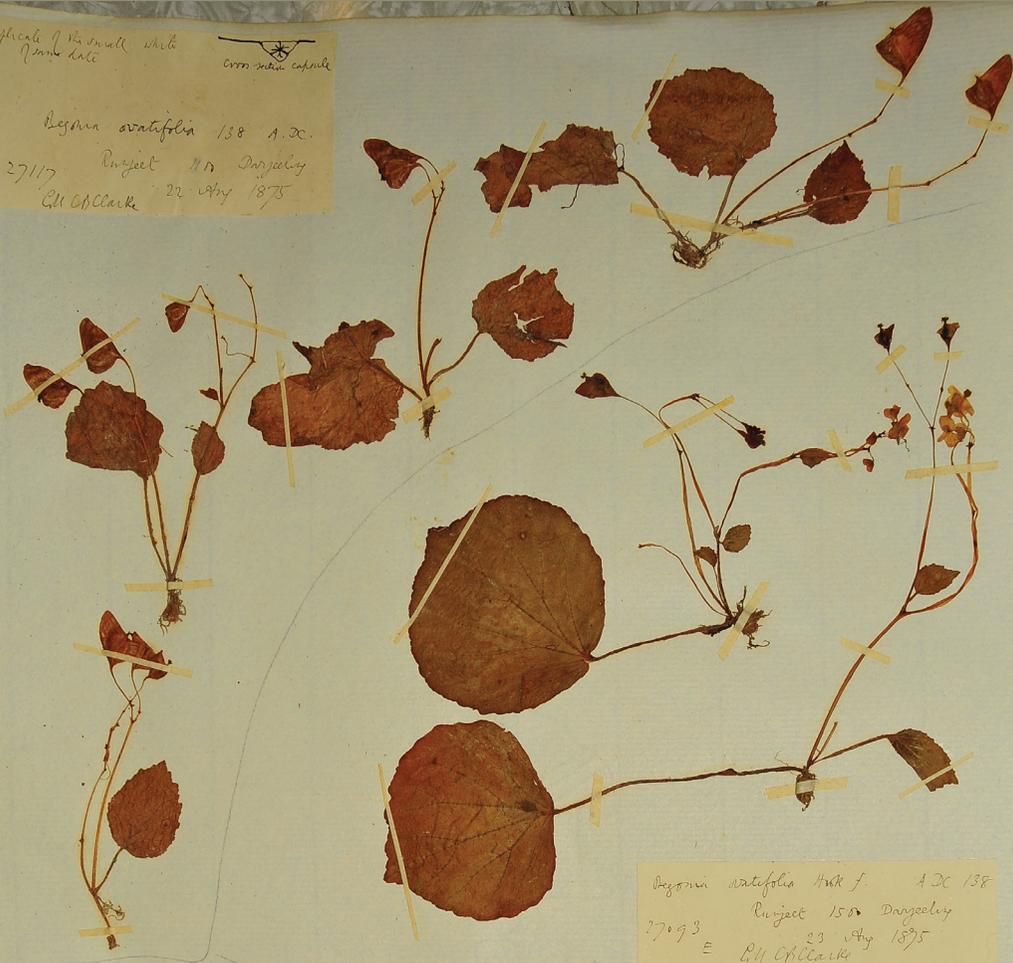
16700 AOS LANE, DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA 33446
561-404-2000

Duplicate of the small white
of same date

conv. nana capsule

Begonia ovatifolia 138 A.D.C.

27117 Project 110 Dargeluy
C.H. Clark 22 Aug 1895



Begonia ovatifolia Hook f. A.D.C. 138
Project 150 Dargeluy
27093 E 23 Aug 1895
C.H. Clark



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Herb. Acad. Cal. Herb. f. J. Thomson
33. *Begonia ovatifolia* Wt.
Herb. Mus. Botanic. Regio. Imp.
alt 4000 feet. C.H. Clark

Begonia ovatifolia, A.D.C.