



THE
BEGONIAN

September/October 2013



Begonia luxurians in planting at the Sherman Library and Gardens in Corona del Mar, CA.
Photo by Susan Grose

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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.

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Front cover: *B. 'Spiral Galaxy'* a hybrid created by Joe Romeo.

Back cover: The completely pale green leaves of *B. kingiana* with a conspicuous bright yellowish green patch at the junction of blade and petiole (photo: P. T. Ong).
Read more pg. 178

President's Message

It has been an interesting journey these past two years, from 1st Vice President to President of ABS.

I thank all of you for the support you have given me. I hope to be able to get to some branch meetings, as well as to meet some of our 200+ members-at-large.

You may have already seen some of our new social media sites. John Boggan has set up the ABS Facebook page. We also now have a group site for Members-At-Large on Yahoo, dedicated to those members who do not have a branch affiliation. This is a combination electronic Round Robin and electronic monthly meeting for those without branches or begonia friends in their community. Already in place, is our ABS-ND site, which all National Directors should join. Gary Turner worked diligently on the ABS website, helping to do some much needed edits. Unfortunately, the time involved became overwhelming for him right now and he has had to resign. ABS owes him a world of thanks for all the work he did. And we are again accepting applications for the webmaster position.

Some of you have also heard from ABS regarding the required 7 ABS members to maintain your charter. If you are below 7 ABS members, it may be as easy as getting your ABS friend from another branch to pay dues and become a member of your branch. Please remember that all branch members must be a member of ABS, but visitors are always welcome

at our meetings. If you are a member of ABS, you can have as many branch affiliations as you have money to maintain! Just remember to let our Membership Chair, Paul Rothstein, know that you have more than one branch affiliation.

I also will be in touch with Committee Chairs, to review the objectives for their committee, and how ABS could help to better achieve their goals. So Chairs- put your thinking caps on now! My count was approximately 1 committee for every 30 or so members. With the electronic age of communications, I'd like to see more participation from members. You can always Skype your meetings.

Finally, one of the most fun parts of ABS is our annual convention. The 2014 Convention will be in Tampa. It's such a fun time to meet others who share your interest and make new friends. Start saving now. You get the best plants and see the best gardens and hear the best speakers, AND it's fun.

I know many of you are contemplating the annual begonia move from garden to garage or basement or sun porch. For us here in Florida, it's almost crystal ball time: will the frost warning affect my micro-climate or not? To cover or not to cover: that is the question. So here's hoping, wishing, and praying that Mother Nature is good to us in the coming months after this long difficult summer.

Good growing!
Virginia Jens

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Begonias of Southern California

The 1st Southern California Regional Begonia Show of the American Begonia Society (ABS) will be held at the Sherman Library & Gardens, 2647 E. Coast Hwy in Corona del Mar, CA. The dates are Sept. 7th & 8th, from 10:30 am to 4:00 pm both days.

The ten ABS branches of Southern California will be represented with a fascinating variety of beautiful begonias on display. Also, there will be hundreds of begonias for sale.

Members of the ABS will discuss the care and propagation of begonias throughout the show.

Admission to the Gardens is \$3.00, with free access to the Show, and free parking.

Everyone is welcome. For more information call Bobbie West at (714)816-0717 or email: bboopfans@aol.com.



San Diego County Begonia Society Plant Show and Sale

The San Diego County branches of The American Begonia Society will hold a Plant Show and Sale on Saturday and Sunday, October 5 and 6, 2013, from 10am to 4pm. The show will be in Room 101 of Casa del Prado in Balboa Park. This free show is open to the public.

Spectacular foliage and blossoms of begonias will be on display. There will be many beautiful begonia plants for sale. Begonia experts will be available to answer questions.

For more information call Marla Keith 760 815-7914;
Email Marla.keith@cox.net

Exciting News!

The next Southwest Region/ABS Get-Together will be held on May 22, 23, and 24, 2014 in Shreveport, Louisiana. Come on Wednesday, May 21 to participate in a tour on Thursday, May 22 of the Gardens of the American Rose Society, the largest rose garden in the United States, and other local delights. There will be seminars, a show, and, of course, a plant sale. Stay at the Holiday Inn Airport West at a rate of \$79 plus tax per night. Hotel transportation is available from the airport and is conveniently located on Interstate Hwy 20 West. If coming by air, get those reservations in early for the best rates on United, American, or Delta. Look for more information to come in the following months. Contact Freda Holley at (318-251-2296) or email at gehrtii@icloud.com



Originally this *B. fluminensis* was grown from seed. Now it's being propagated by a wedge cutting.
Photo by Jem Wiseman

2014 ABS Convention, Tampa, Florida

Plans are well underway for the 2014 ABS Convention to be held in Tampa, Florida March 19–23. We have contracted with the Marriott/Westshore for this event at a room rate of \$110 for up to 3 in a room, including breakfast. As March is very high season in Florida, we are thrilled to be able to offer such a great rate. The Marriott is just a couple of minutes from the airport and offers a free shuttle. A gorgeous pool, Wi-Fi, a full service bar and restaurant are also on site. Call Marriott Reservations at 1-800-228-9290 and ask for the American Begonia Society group. If you use the email below you can be sent an electronic direct reservation link. We already have commitments from a couple of speakers, and are hard at work on a few more. And it wouldn't be Tampa if we didn't have a few surprises up our sleeves. So save the date, mark your calendars, put in for the time off at work, start watching for a good airfare deal, notify those who need to know and plan to be there. We all look forward to seeing you in Tampa next March! Email: begoniaconvention2014@aol.com

Madagascar: Our Second Trip

Part 1

January 20th / February 19th 2013

Article & photos by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois France



Fig. 1 *B. francoisii* Fig. 2 *B. ankaranensis* Fig. 3 *B. sambiranensis*

Sunday January 20: For this second trip we travel for the two months after December, as we did in 2009. Why? January and February are in the middle of the rainy season and tuberous begonias have started growing, so they are visible and the other kinds are in blossom, and maybe have fruits - with seeds. We plan to bring back many!

But now it is snowing at Roissy airport! Many flights are canceled. However, we embark on time - but then the plane waits for de-icing. We finally take off after 5 hours of delay. Bye-bye snow and cold!

Monday 21: We land at Antananarivo the next day at 8am. It is 25°C (77°F) and the sky is overcast. The “Chez Jeanne” driver is waiting and takes us to the inn where we meet Jeanne and her husband, Siegfried. We rest all day and in the evening we do some shopping before starting into the bush. Before going to bed, we receive a text message from Chantal, a friend: “Hi Jacky and Colette, take care, a very big cyclone is coming to Madagascar!” Fortunately, the storm avoids us and goes towards the south!

Tuesday 22: Antananarivo(Tananarive)/ Antsirana(Diego-Suarez) after a stop at Mahajunga (Majunga) and a safe flight. Eugène Goulam waits for us and we meet him again with pleasure; Eugène is a nice and dynamic guide. He drives us to his lodge in the Ankarana reserve. *B. francoisii* is in the same place as 2009 but it has

grown more (Fig. 1). Many grow at the edge of a trough and on the north bank of a nearby river. On to the lodge: the old palm bungalows have been replaced with new permanent ones; but, no shower! - only the place where it will be put when the water tower is built. For now, we have a bowl with a pitcher of water...

A little walk in the evening after the meal: chameleons, frogs and geckos (*Uroplatus*) are having a meeting.

It is very hot and some sudden showers don't cool the air.

Wednesday 23: We devote this day to again visit the tsingy (a forest of razor sharp rock formations). We see the same begonias in the limestone cracks: *B. antsiranensis*, frequent in the north of Madagascar, and *B. ankaranensis* (Fig. 2), an endemic species of Ankarana. Unfortunately, no blossoms, but they are all well grown. I had hoped to find *B. razafinjohany*, which grows in Ankarana, but it needs a lot of rain and now they have not started.

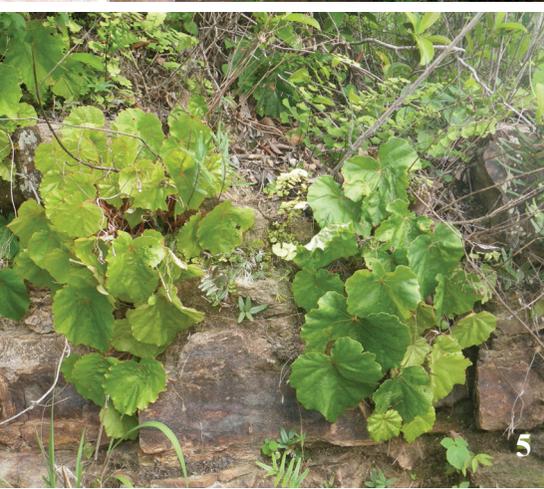
On the other hand, I find *B. sambiranensis* (Fig. 3) (from the Sambirano river, which is as well the name of the area around Ambanja). This begonia grows on a limestone cliff near the entrance of a big cave (the “bat cave”) (Fig. 4). In 2009, this species had still not sprouted. This small tuberous species (the tuber is very small, about 5 mm / 1 cm size) often has only one leaf and we can see many dry fruits with



seeds; sowings are visible on the stones of the cliff.

The deciduous forest houses many birds: parrots, *drongo*, *coucal*, flycatchers, etc. We meet some Lepilemurs: these nocturnal, very small lemurs live in tree forks and spend all the day looking at the tourists. Eugène shows us some interesting trees, such as rosewood and the very nice and strange *Pandjakabetana*, the sacred tree.

Thursday 24: Let's go! We start towards the south with Eugène and his wife, Patricia. She'll cook for us and will look after the car while we search for begonias. We plan to reach Majahunga in four days. A big storm in the night! No, it is still not the rainy season. Some stops on the road to look for begonias: we again see *B. françoisii* near a waterfall. The place is *fady* (sacred) and we cannot take photos! Again we also find *B. nossibeana* (Fig. 5) on the rocks of the bank of the Mahavavy River at Ambilobe. Many leaves, but no flowers; some fruits with seeds.



When we come back to Ambilobe, children show to us a brook with rocks where we again find *B. sambiranensis*. The children say that this species blooms in April and the flowers are pink. Farther along we see a *Gloriosa superba* in yellow blossom. Wonderful!

We sleep at Ambilobe after a lunch (fish undercooked...) at "Chez Mama".

Friday 25: We go on south towards Ambanja and stop at a plantation of cacao trees where we can taste the juice that runs down into a banana tree leaf (Fig. 6) from



Fig. 4 Begonias grow at the entrance to 'Bat Cave'
Fig. 5 *B. nossibeana*
Fig. 6 Cacao plantation

bags where they have put the hulls of the cocoa beans. Good! Farther, we see a ylang-ylang plantation; the big, scented yellow flowers (Fig. 7) of ylang-ylang are used as a base for many perfumes.

We arrive at Ankify from where boats go to Nosy Be, a very touristy Island. We have a picnic on the beach with Eugène and Patricia and we go up to the Panoramic Inn for a cool beer.

At nightfall, we stop to Ambanja, the capital of Sambirano. Very hot day with clouds in evening, but no begonias today!

Saturday 26: Antsohihy, where we are going today, is a small town, 215 km from Ambanja. The landscape is totally different and wooded mountains appear in the distance, maybe the Manongarivo Mountains (Fig. 8). Will we find begonias? First we search in a brook near the road. I come back empty-handed after a very aggressive wasp attack! Three stings! These insects bite you and then put a venom drop on the bite. Cool!

Later, at the village of Djangoa, I surprise a young and pretty girl who is bathing! "Azafady ramato kely (sorry miss), I'm only searching for begonias." At the second stop on PK 424, I find one: *B. françoisii*. Only this one! What a pity! Where do they grow? Further on, we decide to climb up a small wooded mountain, following a brook. After walking for an hour and going up about 250 m, we see... *B. françoisii*you again? Enough! It will be the last one during that first part



Fig. 7 Ylang-ylang flowers are used in making perfume
Fig. 8 The Manongarivo Mountains of Madagascar
Fig. 9 An endemic chameleon



10



11



13



12

Fig. 10 Bismarck palms near Ankaramibe
 Fig. 11 *Oeceoclades* sp. orchid
 Fig. 12 Very large dust mite! Fig. 13 Majahunga market

of the travel.

We have a picnic at Ankaramibe where we can see *Furcifer* ssp. *pardalis* f. *ankaramibensis*, an endemic chameleon of this place; very nice (Fig. 9).

We arrive on a plateau where the only trees are Bismarck Palms (Fig. 10).

Sunday 27: The journey south ends today. We leave the Antananrivo road to go west towards Mahajunga. After a picnic, washed down with plenty of rain, we arrive at the Ankarafantsika reserve. This park is in a deciduous forest and it is a flora and fauna reserve. It is well-managed and visi-

tors can eat and sleep. An excursion on the lake allows us to watch many birds: Heron, Purple Heron, Great White Egret, Squacco Heron, Night Heron, etc., which nest in a reed bed; the water is covered with Water Hyacinths, probably the most aggressive aquatic weed known in the tropics; we see two big Nile crocodiles (we are advised not to walk in the park at night!).

Patricia cooks a chicken with spaghetti, while three lemurs (*Propithecus coquerel*) settle themselves in a tree for the night, and Sickle-billed Vangas have a loud chat close by the lemurs. Good night!

Monday 28: We begin the day with a

walk in the reserve towards a spectacular canyon which reminds us of the Red Tsingy near Antsirana (Diego-Suarez). Colette spots an orchid (*Oeceoclades* sp.) (Fig. 11) and a wonderful *Gloriosa superba* in blossom that grows here. We meet some strange animals, such as this very big (about 15 mm) red dust mite (Figure 12) and a very large spider, *Nemophila*, but NO begonias!

The road that leads to Majahunga really drives us to despair: totally deforested, almost desert and with overpowering heat!

Rest, shower and a cool beer at the hotel. In the evening aggressive and thirsty mosquitoes attack...

Tuesday 29: We spend this day visiting Majahunga, an old colonial town, the second one of Madagascar. Eugène shows us the two markets. Very strong odors, colorful displays and smiling merchants, nice and welcoming. Here, we can buy fowls, eggs, fishes dried on the ground, small dry prawns (stirred with a shovel), live crabs, relishes (Fig. 13), honey, medicinal herbs, many vegetables (garlic, onion, bell pepper, tomatoes,

carrots, squashes) and fruits (mango, pineapple, banana, cinnamon apple, etc.).

In the afternoon we visit the Amborovy Red Cirque in north Majahunga, a very colorful place where some artists come supplied with red, yellow, white, beige, ocher, grey, powders; they are “sand in bottles painting” specialists (Fig. 14).

We end this touristic interlude with a walk on the beach towards a harbor village at the time when the pirogues come back (Fig. 15).

Tomorrow we return to Antananarivo. *Veloma* (bye-bye) Eugène and Patricia. We have enjoyed your company and we’ll find you again with great pleasure for another trip.

We are a little disappointed about the begonias. But the Makira forest and the Masoala Peninsula are waiting for us... we are going to catch up.

to be continued next time...

Fig. 14 Making a sand picture
 Fig. 15 Canoes land at Majahunga



14



15

A Word with You: Muricate, Pustulate, Foveolate

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

Some of these vocabulary choices may be useful in conversation and in the plant room; some are useful for awareness of begonia distinctions; and some just teeter on the edge of the useful chart, mostly because they don't appear often, if at all, in the relevant begonia literature.

My piece on *bullate* got a "pretty obscure" comment from my husband. Possibly. But the last three leaf surface definitions seem even more so. *Muricate*, *pustulate*, and *foveolate*. I drew them from Jack Golding's *Seeing Begonia*, in order to tidy up this set of leaf surface vocabulary, but I didn't find many examples of use in plant descriptions, and some books don't include them in indices or glossaries.

So why include them? Because the differences, subtle as they appear to be, reinforce the concept of a continuum, not rigid distinctions. More than memory challenges, these words paint points to consider when observing begonia leaves and distinguishing them from each other. And these three words provided me with a very pleasant time shuttling back and forth among my dictionaries, botany books, and begonia literature.

Muricate. Per Mr. Webster, it comes from *L. muricatus*, pointed, from *L. murex*, the point of a rock. Cassell's says the Latin *murex* is a shellfish. "...the shell in poetry is represented as the trumpet of Triton," who was the son of Poseidon, and trumpeted through this shell to calm or agitate the sea. Look up *murex* seashells on the internet – it's a huge family. There's a visual I can work with. Per Golding, *muricate* is "with uniform low obtuse elevations." He references *B. 'Black Raspberry'* and *B. 'Pebble Lane'* as examples. Presumably *B. muricata* is too.

Pustulate. Here distinctions get blurred, as Webster says "any small elevation, like a pimple or blister,"



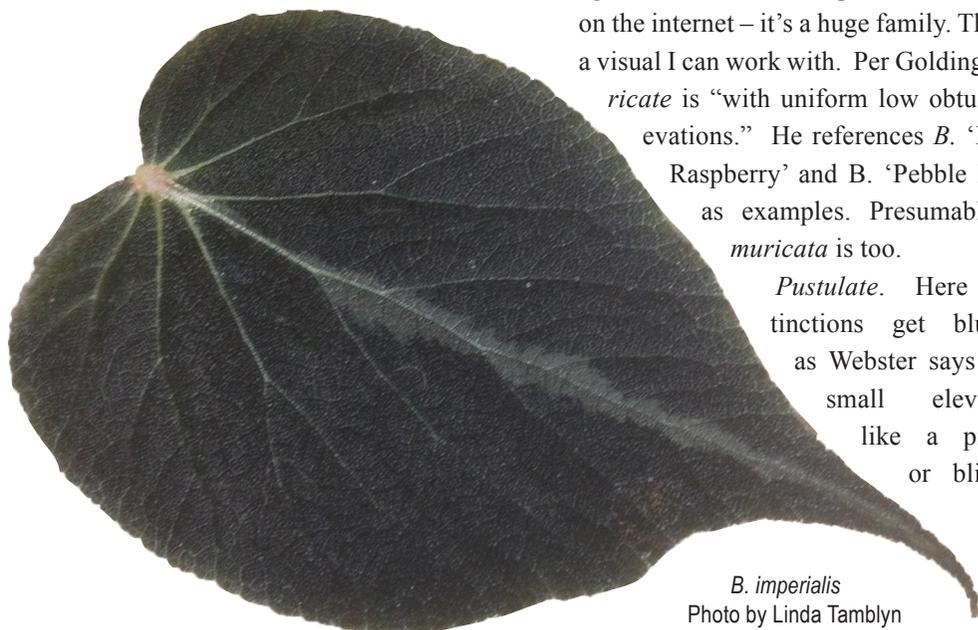
B. 'Black Raspberry' Photo by Julie Vanderwilt

words which also define *bullate*. Both feel like a trip back to teenage facial eruptions. Golding references *B. 'Emerald Jewell'*, *B. imperialis*, and *B. 'Silver Jewell.'* The UK's National Begonia Society page describes *B. masoniana* as having "large, green, pustulate leaves" and of course, the iron cross. *B. pustulata* probably lives here too.

And *foveolate*. Per Mr. Webster, it's "marked by minute depressions or pits." Per Cassell's, the Latin *fovea* is "a pit, as a trap for catching game, a pitfall." Another useful visual. I don't find it in any other glossary except my ancient copy of Alfonso Wood's 1889 textbook as "having shallow pits." Golding references *B. 'Tom Ment.'* A serendipitous web find describes *B. pustulata* leaves as "...bullate and setiferous above, foveolate and rough hairy along the veins underneath."¹ Now there's the language that "incentivized" me to write this column in the first place.

¹Baranov, Andrey. *Studies in the Begoniaceae*

http://openlibrary.org/books/OL3520713M/Studies_in_the_Begoniaceae



B. imperialis
Photo by Linda Tamblin



A Rare New Natural Hybrid of Andean Tuberous Begonia

Article and photos by Dr. Mark C. Tebbitt, California University of Pennsylvania, PA

In a previous volume of the *Begonian*, I reported three newly discovered natural begonia hybrids (Tebbitt, 2013); in this shorter article I wish to share a photograph of another new hybrid that similarly involves Bolivian tuberous species. This hybrid (Fig. 1) was discovered in January 2012 at a single location near the Andean market town of Vallegrande. It was restricted to a small portion of roadside cliff at an altitude of 7180 ft. Here water was seeping out of the cliff face, and it was on this wetter area that the hybrid was found. Several hybrid individuals were observed growing alongside the presumed parent species, a pink-flowered new subspecies of *B. micranthera* and an undescribed yellow species of begonia. A photograph of the former species appears on the cover of the May-June 2012 *Begonian*, while photographs of the latter may be found on pages 56 and 57 of the March-April 2013 *Begonian*. The hybrid plants were very variable in their features but often combined the deeply lobed leaves characteristic of this unnamed subspecies of *B. micranthera* with the relatively short stature of the yellow-flowered species. In addition they differed from either of these two species in having either pale cream flowers or in a few cases flowers that were an odd combination of pink mixed with yellow.

Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank the ABS for funding this expedition and Alexander Parada for his assistance in the field.

References:

Tebbitt, M.C. (2013) Three New Natural Hybrids of Andean tuberous begonias. *The Begonian*. 80: 29–32.

Figure 1. The new natural hybrid (opposite page).

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The 'Tortoise' of Limestone Hills in Peninsular Malaysia

Article by Joanne Tan Pei Chih

Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), 52109 Kepong, Selangor, Malaysia.

B*egonia kingiana*, also known as the tortoise shell begonia is easily distinguished from other Peninsular Malaysian begonias by its thick, peltate leaves and hairless leaf stalks. The leaf, however, is very variable in pattern, shape and size. It ranges from completely purplish to almost black (Fig. 1) or green with purple markings (Fig. 2), to green with a bronze pattern resembling a tortoise shell (Fig. 3), hence the name tortoise shell begonia. The leaf blades are commonly round with short pointed tip, other shapes recorded include broadly oval and asymmetric. In addition, the leaf blades can be significantly different in size, from small (about 2.5×4 cm), to medium (about 6.5×8 cm) to large (about 8×12.5 cm).



Fig. 1 - The purple-leaved form. Photo by M. Y. Chew

Fig. 2 - The green with purple markings.

Fig. 3 - The green-leaved form with bronze markings resembling a tortoise shell. Photo by A. R. Rafidah

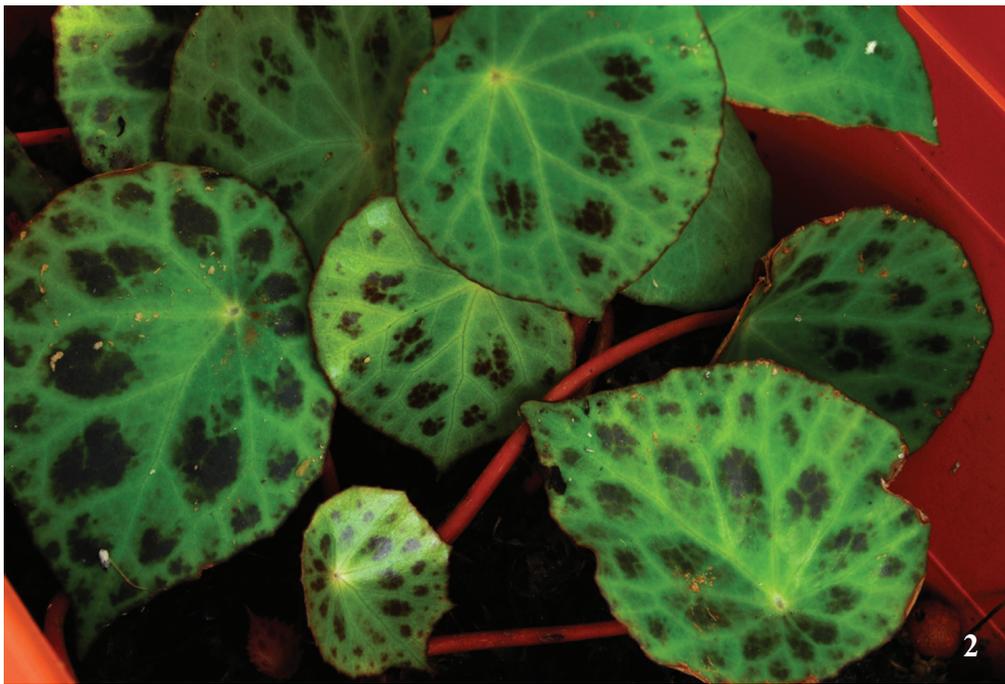






Fig. 4 – A stingless bee seen stealing pollen from a flower of *Begonia kingiana* cultivated in the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) (Photo: P.T. Ong). **Fig. 5** - (on back cover) Fleshy rhizome of *Begonia kingiana* forms fibrous roots that cling to vertical limestone rocks. **Fig. 6** (see pgs 180-181) - Completely pale green leaves with a conspicuous bright yellowish green patch at the junction of blade and petiole (photo: P. T. Ong).

the north of Peninsular Malaysia such as Kedah (Langkawi Island) and Perak to the eastern states of Kelantan and Terengganu, and as far south as Pahang and Selangor (Kiew, 2005). The variation among natural populations is possibly due to geographic isolation and genetic drift.

Although *Begonia kingiana* is widely distributed in limestone areas of Peninsular Malaysia, particular

The flowers of *Begonia kingiana* (Fig. 4) also display a wide range of color. The tepals and fruit color from pale pink, to pink, greenish pink, light green, pale green and bright red. For tepals, the outside is always darker than the inside.

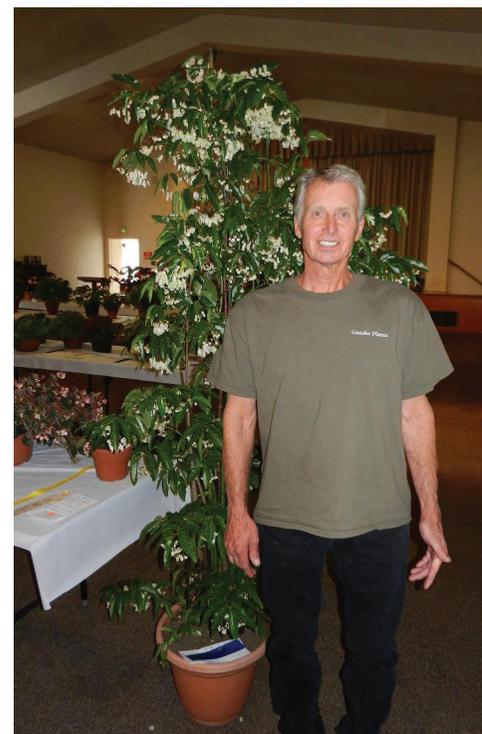
The tortoise shell begonia is an easy species to cultivate, suitable as a pot plant or a hanging basket plant. To grow them, a potting mix that drains well needs to be used. When established, they can be grown in partially shaded to bright areas in the green house. To get more plants of *Begonia kingiana*, propagation is simply by making leaf or rhizome cuttings.

The tortoise shell begonia is endemic to Peninsular Malaysia where it is widely distributed throughout the country but confined only in limestone areas (Fig. 5 - on back cover). It is often found growing in partial shade and cool humid conditions on vertical limestone cliffs.

Natural populations are recorded from

color forms, however, are threatened due to habitat disturbance. Genetic diversity is important for a species' long term survival in nature. When genetic diversity degrades, it will pose greater challenges for the survival of the species in the wild due to inbreeding. In Malaysia, most limestone hills are not protected except for those that lie within the National Park (Taman Negara). Therefore, begonias that grow on limestone are threatened by quarrying for cement or marble and by land use changes or burning due to land clearing for development or agriculture. Therefore, it is important that limestone hills in Peninsular Malaysia are surveyed for their plant diversity in the hope that the hills with high biodiversity and rare species will be legally protected in the near future. Only then, can the limestone plant species such as *Begonia kingiana* continue to thrive.

...continued on next page



My *B. albo-picta*

By Mike Flaherty, Santa Barbara, CA

This plant has been by my front door for about 8 years. I'm 5'10 so you can see how tall it is. It was purchased from Brad Thompson when he worked at Hi-Mark Nursery in Carpinteria, CA. I have only repotted this plant once and it takes no special care. In my opinion it's of the easiest begonias to grow. This one gets only morning sun and, then, is in total shade all day. I received 96 points for this plant and a blue ribbon.

Begonia kingiana ...continued

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Joanne Tan is a researcher at the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), under the Flora of Peninsular Malaysia Project funded by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

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Begonias Go South

Peter Sharp, Hobart, Tasmania

Quietly they're doing it, and doing it so very well. A new begonia collection is taking shape and form, unheralded and unannounced, and yet an event of great importance in the struggle to preserve our heritage of plants in the face of human development.

Australia's southmost city, Hobart, capital of the island state of Tasmania, is home to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, situated on a sloping site with entrancing views of the city and its river Derwent. One of Australia's oldest (1818), the RTBG delights its many visitors with grand old trees, significant plantings, historical landmarks and ever-changing floral displays whilst still retaining youth and vigor enough to find space and expertise to introduce a whole range of new (to it) members of the begonia family. Not just the tuberous varieties, which till recently and for many years they grew to perfection, but all those other so very beautiful and varied species and cultivars, which are so little known. Thus we have another botanical garden of world renown added to the all too short list of those which pay due regard to one of the most numerous and varied plant families in all the world,

laying the foundations for another precious species bank of the *Begoniaceae*.

The Hobart gardens were, until February 2007, noted for the annual display of tuberous begonias, ranked with that of the renowned Ballarat Botanic Gardens in Victoria for true excellence. Then came disaster in the form of Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus and the collection of 250 rare and valuable tubers had to be destroyed, no cuttings possible, along with other large collections of *Hippeastrums*, *Liliums* and *Impatiens*, the latter being the most likely culprit in the importation of the virus from the mainland.

A long period of rigorous disinfection followed and strict measures were introduced to ward off any similar attacks on their precious plant collections. What of the future? Re-introduce tuberous begonias? Forget them? Try something else? Give up? Not those horticulturists in Hobart – they determined to try again and in fact to go one better. Nursery staff decided to introduce the whole range of begonias, not just the tuberous types. They would grow from seed as the importation of plants was now a most difficult process due to strict quarantine regulations – introduced quite rightly to preserve Tasmania's pre-eminence in the production of fruit and other essential crops.

Seed of tuberous begonia from a commercial source was tried but, as was to be expected, the results fell far short of the blooms once grown from their named varieties. They will pursue this avenue, but without the funds required to obtain and quarantine reliable named tubers the future here is not good. Perhaps there's a sponsor out there who would like to help

the RTBG replace those tubers which had to be destroyed?

Seed of *Bs. sanguinea* and *acetosa* came from the Sydney Gardens in response to a request from Lorraine and these were the starting point. They germinated well and were soon put on show in the walk-through conservatory which is a feature of the Gardens. They proved to be ideal plants to complement and enhance the highly regarded and constantly changing displays which are the delight of visitors to the Tasmanian Gardens. I recently enjoyed seeing the use of *B. albo-picta* var *rosea* in an arrangement of orchids and other plants.

Word got around that the other begonia types were all the go in Hobart Town and more seed arrived, from the Sydney Gardens and from Marilyn Watson of the Melbourne Society and all are doing well on the propagation benches as I write. I saw young seedlings of *Bs. luxurians*, *curtii*, *angularis* and *listada*, amongst others, showing very well indeed. Local gardeners looked about and found remnants of very old begonias, dating back to the early twentieth century no doubt when they were prized house plants, and soon the RTBG boasted pots of *Bs. Erythrophylla*, two examples of *bowerae* hybrids which I cannot recognize, 'Cleopatra' of course, *scharffiana* blooming well in the cold winter weather and some beautiful specimens of *albo-picta* var *rosea* donated by Government House, the Garden's next door neighbour, still holding a few flowers despite winter's arrival. And that old favourite *B. 'Cathedral'* just had to have survived and has now been developed into many stunning potted treasures.



Fig 1 - Author with Megan Marrison, begonia grower, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

Fig 2 - *B. 'Cathedral'* at Tasmanian Gardens

Fig 3 - *B. 'Cleopatra'* as part of conservatory display Tasmanian Gardens

Conservation Comments from Austin

By Johanna Zinn, Fairfax, VA

The organizers of the joint SWR/ABS Convention in Austin found time in their seminar schedule for me to have a discussion about conservation with ABS members. I asked the attendees what they thought the ABS should do to promote conservation of Begoniaceae.

To begin the discussion, I suggested that the ABS support students studying or doing research on Begoniaceae. I planned to ask the Executive Board to consider providing funds for this grant from the bequest to ABS by Morris Mueller. Later in the week, the Executive Board did approve the idea of a grant, and voted to support two students with grants

of \$1,000.00 each. Funding was approved for future grants for additional students.

Meeting attendees suggested the following ideas to promote begonia conservation.

Support public gardens: Public gardens not only grow and conserve begonias; they also educate the public and stimulate interest in them. We can support public garden begonia collections by donating money, plants, seeds, or cuttings, or by volunteering at the garden. Fort Worth Botanic Garden, in particular, has made a commitment to maintaining, propagating, and displaying a large begonia collection. The U. S. Botanic Garden has a large begonia collection, and

has a begonia display in the conservatory that will be in place through October. Let any organization that promotes begonias know that you appreciate its efforts.

Participate in the Adopt-a-Species Program: Individuals or ABS branches can adopt one or more species. Contact me if you would like an outline of a program that will help with the process of adopting begonia species.

Support the ABS Seed Fund: Seeds provided to the seed fund can enable ABS members to grow begonias they might not be able to find as plants or cuttings. Seeds donated could also be used by ABS to share or trade with other institutions.

Form a Propagation Committee: Propagation committees, whether ABS or branch based, could propagate and distribute, or trade rarely grown species. Propagation committees could share with branch members or other branches, or donate plants to local, regional, and national ABS sales. Plants could also be sent to public gardens with begonia collections or to help a garden start a begonia collection. Individual members don't need to wait for propagation committees to be formed to share plant material.

Provide financial support to researchers and collectors: These individuals travel to begonia habitats and bring back photos, information, and sometimes plant material for the rest of us to enjoy. The Conservation and Research Fund does not have sufficient funds to provide grants large enough to cover more than a small portion of their expenses. Individual and branch contributions can help supplement the Conservation and Research Fund grants.



An incredibly beautiful species, *Begonia chlorosticta*
Photo by Johanna Zinn

Conserve cultivars as well as species:

Update individual growers species lists: It would be interesting to see what species ABS members are growing. There might be some species not on the lists that the ABS might choose to find, propagate, and distribute. Please send your lists to Johanna Zinn. When I have several lists, I will send the compiled information, without personal identifiers, to the ABS website.

If anyone would like to donate money to individual collectors, the Conservation and Research Fund, for students studying Begoniaceae, or to institutions such as Fort Worth Botanic Garden, please send your contribution to Carole Notaras, ABS Treasurer. Please be certain to clearly indicate the intended recipient of your donation.

Please send any other suggestions to help ABS promote conservation of begonias to me at jazinn@cox.net.



Begonias Go South

...continued from page 185

The future of the Hobart collection is assured and will gradually be added to. Problems will continue to be overcome, funds hopefully will become available and staff will add to their knowledge of *Begoniaceae*. Begonias of display quality will continue to be raised, and I am certain sure that Lorraine, Margot and Megan, horticulturists with whom I have had many long and delightful conversations in the writing of this article, will make sure that this will be so.

Fig 4 - *B. 'Erythrophylla'* as part of conservatory display Tasmanian Gardens

Fig 5 - *B. scharffiana* as part of conservatory display Tasmanian Gardens



There has been much discussion on Yahoo regarding rooting begonia leaves - rhizomatous and rex. While there does

appear to be different methods of success, the standard of taking leaf cuttings is as follows:

- 1) Use a very porous mix. I use 2/3 perlite and 1/3 vermiculite during summer, and add a handful of peat in winter to combat dryness. My leaves may be outdoors under shade, so the air can get drier here in winter.
- 2) Whether using whole leaf or wedges, bury to the petiole - where the leaf meets the stem - or the vein ends. Dipping in Rootone or a root developer may help to callous the cutting.
- 3) Use either small pots (2 1/2" or 3") or shallow pans. The deeper the pot, or larger, the more moisture it may hold. That can lead to rot.

- 4) Place in bright indirect light, never in strong sunlight or strong light. They can gradually be placed in stronger light once rooting has occurred.

It is not necessary to fertilize until a few weeks into rooting, and then I use a spray feed and include some 1/2 strength fungicide for protection. Depending on the season, leaves may show babies in 4-6 weeks. I transplant once the babies have begun to rival the original leaf in size. 4" azalea pots work best, and be careful not to overwater. This YouTube video displays what to do: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qF1cLyzQvaY>.

MAL Yahoo Group! - In case you have not heard, any Member At Large can join a Yahoo group, just to discuss what we love - BEGONIAS! Go to Yahoo Groups and search out ABS-MAL. It will appear as the first link. <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/ABS-MAL/>.

This is where you will be able to see pictures, videos and ask questions and receive quick responses. Share photos, get an I.D. on your plant. I will be assisting, and you can ask me anything. I will also use those questions to post more videos, pictures, and information. TAMPA 2014 - March. The Tampa Bay Branch of ABS will be hosting the 2014 convention in late March. This is a beautiful time in Tampa. Plants have long awakened from winter, flowers are blooming, and begonias are bursting. Make your plans to attend a convention in the sunshine state, where the average weather is near 80F and it is our dry season, so sunshine prevails. I live less than an hour from downtown Tampa, so I hope y'all will stop by and see my begonias! Seeing how I grow outdoors, all year, under shade, will be an eye opener for you begoniacs up north.

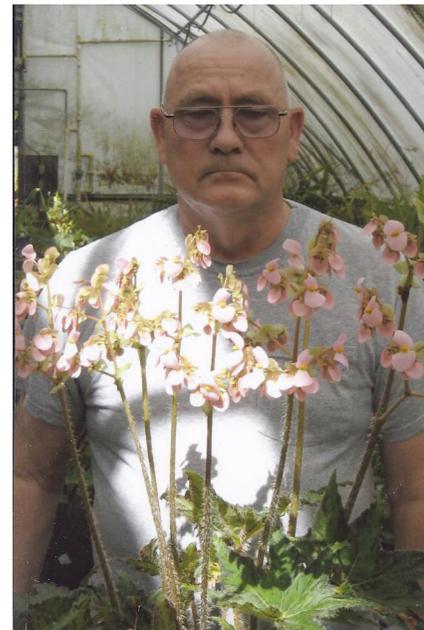
If you have any questions, please do feel free to email me at <http://gsytch@cs.com>. I will respond as quickly as I can. Good Growing!

In the Mailbox

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent



Whole rhizomatous leaf used for propagation with plantlet emerging.
Photo by Jem Wiseman



What?! You called me away from the workbench for a photo!! Tim Anderson pauses in his day's routine to begrudgingly pose for the photographer, even as he examines the flower display provided by one of his more recent hybrids.

Begonia's Legends

Tim Anderson: A Hybridizer's Hybridizer

Article and photos by Lee Sinoff, Miami, FL.

When you're a nationally and internationally recognized begonia hybridizer whose distinctive new introductions are sought far and wide, and whose older introductions are so well established, they're often mis-labeled as species, part of the reality you deal with is the fact that your new hybrids may need to handle not just any one hardiness zone in North America — but all the hardiness zones.

That can include the need to handle conditions ranging from very hot to very cold, very humid to very dry, very bright shade to very dim sun. - even hardiness conditions on other continents, too.

Creating new hybrids which can prosper in many hardiness zones, in spite of the potential for extreme swings in growing conditions, can be downright vexing. But, that's the very arena Tim Anderson chose when he began hybridizing begonias, more than 40 years ago. Not that he had any choice.

Inventing new begonias was never a vocation for Tim, nor an avocation. No, playing the role of fairy godfather to cooperative, prospective begonia parents and their blossoming courtship was a pure labor of love.

He began exploring his love affair with plants as a young



The entrance to the Palm Hammock Orchid Estate in Miami, FL.



boy, growing succulents on a windowsill in Illinois. As he matured, Tim was drawn to many different types of plants, but begonias captured his eye and his imagination.

“Begonias are like looking at nature through a kaleidoscope,” he would say. “As a hybridizer, begonias give me a wide palette of colors, patterns and textures to work with — and an even wider ‘canvas’ to experiment on.”

Hybridizing is a process which can easily take years for offspring to show their true personalities and, as Tim points out, the same courtship may yield many variations and, quite possibly, surprises. That process includes growing out the plants to see just what those personalities will be, along with any surprises, which may also show up.

“The truth is, you never know what you’re going to get... until you get it,” Tim explained.

Artist in a Lab Coat

Tim doesn’t wear a lab coat, but he describes hybridizing as combining the skills of a research scientist with the curiosity of the inventor, the flair of the artist seeking a spark of distinctiveness and the patience of a teacher who recognizes great potential.

The equation involves finding suitable parents, trying

out different combinations and looking for some magic!

“Hybridizing can also involve integrity,” Tim once said. “Say you’ve gone through the whole process — nurturing the young plants, growing them out, investing time, effort and heart — and, after the personalities have presented themselves, you realize there’s nothing particularly special or commercially distinctive in the entire batch! So, you give the plants away to begonia people who just love begonias, even when they’re not seemingly distinctive. It’s really all about the plants, not the commerce.”

A Magic Garden

Tim and his wife Ann bought a small landscape nursery in Miami, in 1973, then known as the Daisy Farm, and moved into the home on the property. Armed with an undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture and a Master’s in Horticulture and Agriculture, both from the University of Florida, Tim formed a Landscape Architecture business.

They bought some additional land immediately to the west and north, added several more shade-houses to the existing nursery, added shade-cloth canopies to most of the open space, started growing begonias and landscape plants commercially



Some of Tim's many hybrids are shown in the next 11 figures.
 Fig. 1 B. 'Tim's Passion' Fig. 2 B. 'Dale Sena'
 Fig. 3 B. 'Deco Checks'

Fig. 4 B. 'Doc' Fig. 5 B. 'Phil Iloo' Fig. 6 B. 'Little Beaver'



Fig. 7 B. 'Green Goddess' Fig. 8 B. 'Emaly Israel'
Fig. 9 B. 'Judy Cook'

and changed the name to Palm Hammock Orchid Estate.

With help from Ann's sister Carol, they turned the entire five-acre area into one of the most unusual, engaging, lush, special garden nurseries you'll ever visit. It's a pure tropical paradise filled with begonias which will knock your socks off, plus orchids, ferns, water plants, flowering vines, tropical specialties and many other exotic things, all under shade-cloth, accented with the lyrical sounds of Enya, Celtic Woman, soft New Age music and Irish instrumentals, waterfalls, bubbling streams, koi ponds and dancing butterflies, moving from flower to flower.

As a landscape architect, Tim has always been seeking begonias he could use in landscaping. But, in Miami, that means putting shade-loving begonias — which might enjoy some direct sunlight — in fixed locations which could well experience 8-14 hours of full, intense, boiling sun every day, from April to October.

Solving that problem provided direction and inspiration for Tim's hybridizing. The result has generated close to 200 distinctive begonias, some needing full sun, partial sun, filtered sun, bright shade or deeper shade. Of course, not all of Tim's hybrids are appropriate

for landscaping.

Regardless, his search for landscaping begonias in his hardiness zone is one of the things which have kept Tim playing the role of fairy godfather for so many new begonia hybrids, along with his passion for begonias in general, coupled with his passion for nature's kaleidoscope.

Palm Hammock Orchid Estate

palmhammockorchidest.tripod.com/2011-new-begonia-hybrids-2.html

Begonia Oasis

palmhammockorchidest.tripod.com/begoniaoasis/home.html

Lee Sinoff (rainbow-foliage@att.net; strategic-branding@att.net) is a two-time Past President of the Miami Begonia Society, and a Marketing & Communications, Operations and Project Management generalist and consultant, based in Miami, FL.



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Fig. 10 B. 'Christmas Star'
Fig. 11 B. 'Doctor Block'



11

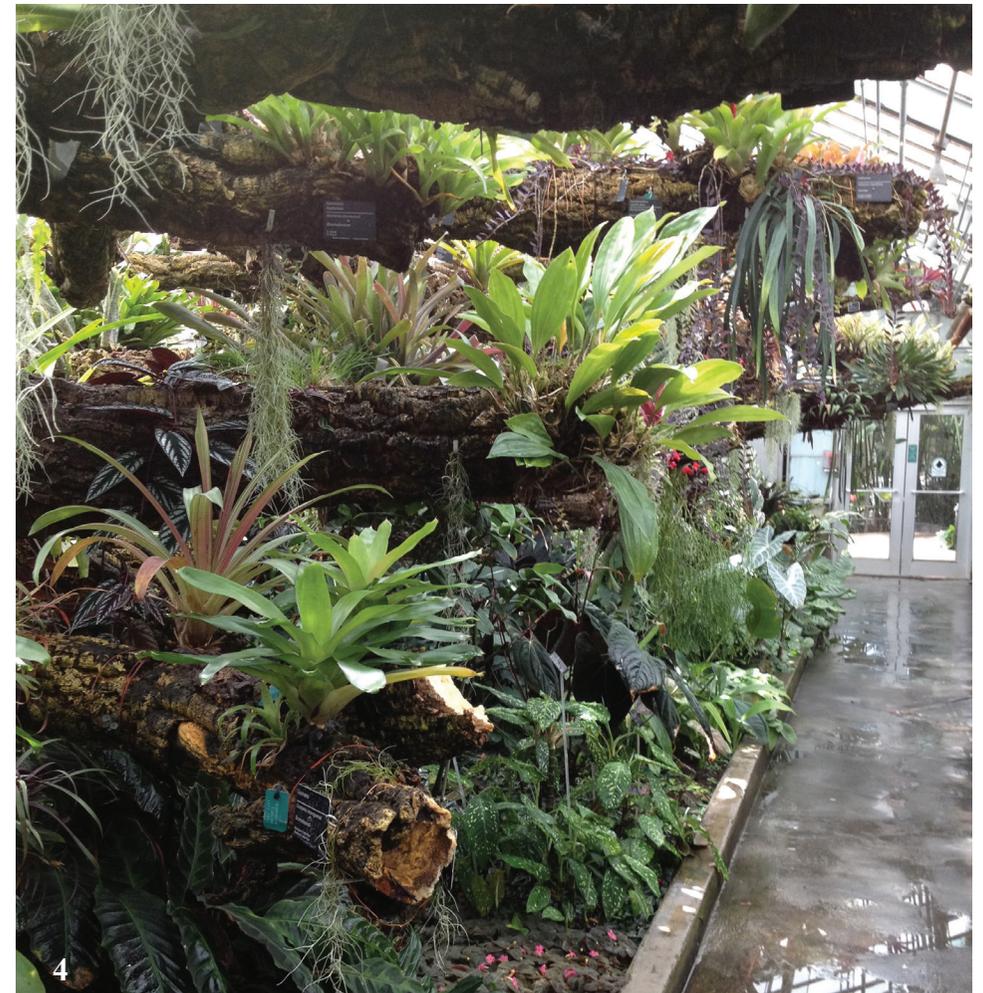
At the Montreal Botanical Garden

Photos and article by Linda Tamblin, Merriam, KS

Recently I traveled to Montreal and remembered an article written by Jessica Chevalier in March/April 2012 *The Begonian* titled *Jardin Botanique de Montreal* (pg. 105). According to the article, there was an entire greenhouse devoted to begonia and gesneriads so - it only made sense that I would visit the Botanical Garden while I was there.

A path winds through the Begonia and Gesneriad house with plantings on either side

giving it the feel of a jungle. A “wall” (constructed of chicken wire filled with planting medium) holds a variety of plants tumbling and trailing down the sides. One of my favorites was a very attractive little plant labeled *Begonia* sp. 02 Madagascar (Fig.1). Every leaf on a *B. hispida* was covered with tiny plantlets (Fig. 2). On the grounds was also an Insectarium (Fig. 3). All the greenhouses were beautifully and naturally planted (Fig. 4).



NEW: *Begonia Hybridizing:*

By The Hybridizers, Edited by Freda Holley, published through the Millie Thompson Publication Fund, March 2013. This great new book by Freda Holley is filled with articles written by some of our most famous, prolific and successful hybridizers. It is a philosophy of hybridizing divided into three parts and includes articles by Ross Bolwell, Walter Dworkin, Freda Holley, Gregory Sytch, Chuck Ades, Brad Thompson, Patrick Worley and Rudolf Ziesenhenn. There are many stunning pictures.

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Jack Golding & Dieter C. Wasshausen, 2002, Smithsonian Institution,
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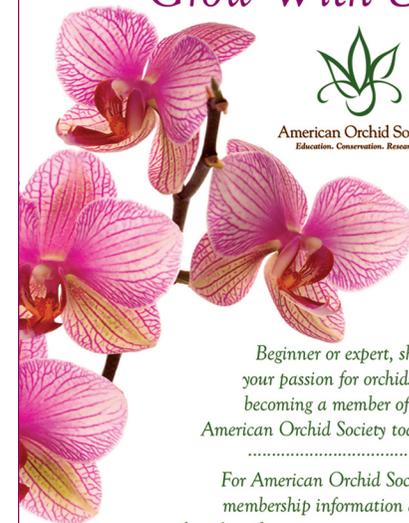
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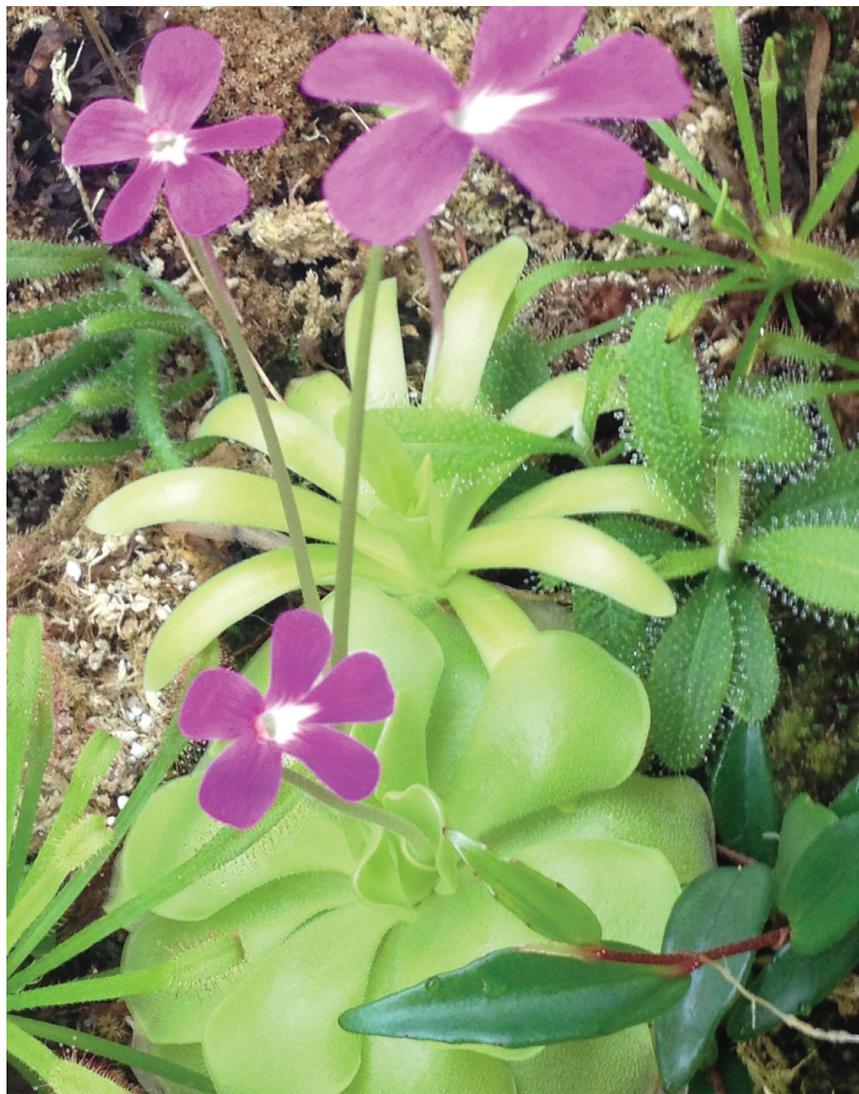
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Carnivorous butterworts, sundews with a *B. polygonoides*. Photo by Linda Tamblin

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