



# THE BEGONIAN

March/April 2015



# 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.



*B. peltata* var. *peltata* seedling  
Photo by Jem Wiseman

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### Editor, Art Direction and Design:

**Linda Tambllyn**, 5635 Woodward St.,  
Merriam, KS 66202; 913-231-1020;  
[begoniaskc@yahoo.com](mailto:begoniaskc@yahoo.com)

**Consulting Editor:** **Jan Brown**,  
[begoniabrown@yahoo.com](mailto:begoniabrown@yahoo.com)

### Nomenclature Editor:

**Kingsley Langenberg**, 3293 Country Lane,  
Waukegan, IL; 847-336-9104,  
[kingsley.langenberg@gmail.com](mailto:kingsley.langenberg@gmail.com)

**Quick Tips:** **Dianna Wilkerson**, 15356 Pheasant Run,  
Choctaw, OK 73020; [b2writer@cox.net](mailto:b2writer@cox.net)

### Editorial and Identification Assistance:

**Charles Jaros, Tom Keepin, Jem Wiseman**

### Advertising Staff:

#### Display Ads:

**Linda Tambllyn**, [begoniaskc@yahoo.com](mailto:begoniaskc@yahoo.com)

### Holiday Greetings:

**Frances Drescher**, 11529 Riverchase Run  
West Palm Beach, FL 33412; (561)625-5404;  
[fkddrescher1@comcast.net](mailto:fkddrescher1@comcast.net)



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Photo by Erin Aguiar

**Back cover:** *Begonia peltata* var. *peltata* seedling leaf. Photo by Jem Wiseman



# 2015 Slate for Officers of the ABS

The Nominating Committee, having received no further nominations, submits the following slate for officers of the American Begonia Society, to serve from the Annual Meeting 2015 to the Annual Meeting 2017. Ballots will appear in the next issue of *The Begonian*.

## FOR PRESIDENT



Residing in Southern California, **Martin Delgado** has been a proud and active member of the American Begonia Society (ABS) since 2009. Martin currently serves as 2nd Vice President of the ABS, Show Chairman for his home Westchester branch, President of the South Bay branch, and Vice President for the Orange County branch, and holds membership in several other active branches: Long Beach Parent Chapter, Doug Frost, and Rudolf Ziesenhenn. Since joining the ABS he has increased the number of friends at least threefold. He deeply loves begonias and the Society, which embellishes the world and his life. Martin has been honored to serve as one of your ABS Officers, and asks for your continued confidence and support.

## FOR 1st VICE PRESIDENT



My name is **Carol Orozco**. I am a member of the Alamo Branch of the ABS. I fell in love with plants as a young child. I have been a member of ABS since 1989. My favorite begonia is *B. 'Pink Diamond'*, a Rex begonia that can withstand our south Texas heat. It was hybridized by a member of our club, John Howell.

## FOR 2ND VICE PRESIDENT



My name is **Sally Savelle**. I am a member of Buxton (my home branch), Rhode Island, Southwest Region, and the Austin Area branch. While I have always loved plants and my flowerbeds, I became very interested in begonias around 2007 when I received cuttings of *B. 'Argenteo Guttata'*, a plant my grandmother had received some 45 years ago and that my mother shared with me. I have become particularly interested in species thanks to a program that I did with Bonnie Lambert on how species get their names and also the beautiful photographs of species on Flickr by Stephane Follin. My favorite begonias are *B. 'Marmaduke'* (one of my first and it's still alive!), *B. hernandioides*, *B. xanthina*, *B. lyallii*, and *B. versicolor* with the beautiful red hairs on its leaves and flowers.

continued on next page →

President: Martin Delgado  
1st Vice President: Carol Orozco  
2nd Vice President: Sally Savelle  
Secretary: Connie Saenz  
Treasurer: Carol Notaras

# President's Message

Wishing you all a glimpse of Spring!

You deserve it. What a long winter we all have had, some of us a lot worse than others.

The good news is that Southwest Regional is coming up in May, with wonderful seminars, a plant sale, and sympathetic friends with whom to share your winter woes. The next good news is that the snow will melt in Boston by the end of July and we will have a wonderful time at the Begonia Revolution. In addition, your new officers will be installed at the annual meeting. The final slate of candidates is listed in this issue, and the ballot will be in the May/June issue which you will mail to our Ballot Chair for counting.

I hope to see many of you soon in Houston and Boston.

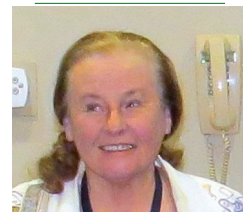
Good growing, Virginia Jens, President

## FOR SECRETARY



**Connie Saenz** is a member of the Alamo Branch of the American Begonia Society and resides in San Antonio, Texas. She is the current ABS Secretary and is seeking your approval to continue as Secretary for another two years. She has been an ABS member since 2004. Connie was the editor of the Alamo Branch newsletter for six years and currently serves as the branch National Director. She also belongs to the Austin Area Begonia Society and the Southwest Region. Her favorite begonia is *B. sizemoreae*.

## FOR TREASURER



My name is **Carol Notaras**. I have been President of the San Francisco Branch twice. In 1989 I was co-chairman of the San Francisco convention with my husband Peter. In 1992-1993 I was President of the ABS and served as treasurer for the last 22 years. I was chairman of the 2010 San Francisco convention. I have also served on several committees over the whole 20 years since becoming President.



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**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 Ziesenhenné. The pictures are many and stunning.

Domestic: \$21.00

International \$26.00. Includes postage.

**NEW: *Tuberous Begonias and How to Grow Them*** by the late Howard Siebold, 1998, published with the support of the ABS Millie Thompson Publication Fund. Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 98-74824 ISBN: 0-9628251-2-3 \$15.00

**NEW: *Unidentified Species Listing, Update, August 2012***

by Mary Bucholtz & Charles Jaros, Co-Directors

Second Edition includes U Numbers 001 through 621. Looseleaf format for easy addition of new material. Notebook not included.

Domestic: \$33.00

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**B. U604–621 to add to the August, 2010 Unidentified Species Listing**  
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***Raising Cane: Experiences in Growing the Species Cane Begonias***

by Freda M. Holley

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## ABS Bookstore

cal illustrations is part of a series of renderings by Jack's daughter, Marilyn Golding White. The cards were used as Jack's Season's Greetings cards to his friends and associates.

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***Begoniaceae, Edition 2, Part I: Annotated Species List, Part II: Illustrated Key, Abridgement & Supplement***

Jack Golding & Dieter C. Wasshausen, 2002, Smithsonian Institution, Volume 43: 1-289

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***Seeing Begonia***

by Jack Golding

2003, Revised 2005. Jack Golding's last work.

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***Begonia Hybridizing: A Primer***

by Freda M. Holley, 2007

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by Rudolf Ziesenhenné

Reissued by the Thelma O'Reilly Reprint Fund. Originally printed in the Santa Barbara Branch, La Begonia Barbareña.

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***Begonias – 1984 Update***

by Mildred L. Thompson

Reissued 2009, "An addendum for particular portions of *Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide* (Times Books, 1981). Includes species and hybrids and many pictures.

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continued next page

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# Rhizome v. Tuber?



Three examples: *B. 'Crestabruchii'* (Fig 1); *B. kenworthyae* (Fig 2 & 3).  
Photos by Linda Tamblyn

Watch for the answer in your next *The Begonian*  
brought to you by A Word With You!

Last month's answer to Picture Quiz  
January/February issue, page 11 - *B. herbacea*

## Epilithic v. Epiphytic?

Answer – Epiphytic.

Epilithic begonias grow on stone. Epiphytic begonias grow on another plant but are not parasitic. See November/December 2010, p. 219.





## New Cultivar: *B.* 'Teen Angel'

From Priscilla Purinton, Hybrid Registrar

### Official International Registration 1010

#### *Begonia* 'Teen Angel'

Walter Dworkin, 8 Rugby Road, Westbury, NY, has given us another wonderful hybrid cane. This chance seedling was developed in 1990 but wasn't distributed until it bloomed in 1992. *B.* 'Silver Mist' is the seed parent but the pollen parent is unknown. The name 'Teen Angel' has nothing to do with the size of the plant which can reach 36". Walter named it after a song that was popular in 1960.

First mentioned was in a publication in the November/December 2013 *The Begonian*, volume 80.

Registration applied for September 24, 2014; registration approved January 25, 2015.

The 6" by 3" silver leaves of 'Teen Angel' have strongly marked green veins on a smooth surface. The undersides of the leaves are apple-green and the veins are maroon, echoing the maroon petioles which are hairless and 1" long.

The leaves are rounded at the top with a wavy edge leading to a point at the bottom. The apple-green stipules are 1.25" long and ½" wide.

Male flowers have four oval, cherry-colored tepals, two large and two small. Female flowers have six tepals; four large and two small. The abundant flower clusters are supported by a 2.5" peduncle during their spring to summer

Continued on next page→



### *B. rex Putzeys* in Glass

This *B. rex Putzeys* (above) is an art piece I made by first putting the botanical in a frame. I put glass over the top in places so the botanical still showed through and then fused it in my kiln. Photo and information from Julie Vanderwilt

#### New Cultivar: *B.* 'Teen Angel' continued

blooming period. Male flower clusters have up to twenty 1¼" flowers, while the female flowers are 1½" in diameter and slightly fewer in number. Flowers and ovaries are cherry and carmine-colored when new, eventually fading to pink.

This variety has been tested by Don Miller of Steve's Leaves, Lewisville, TX. It is also available from Glasshouse Works, Stewart, Ohio, and Sunshine State Tropicals, New Port Richey, FL.



## How Do *Your* Begonias Grow?

Send your tips, tricks, successes and failures,  
photos or questions to The Begonian!

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### *B. dipetala*

Steven Ripper gave a program on unusual ways to grow begonias, and gave me this *B. dipetala* which he said he had grown 'dry'. It seemed to be a good choice for a bonsai specimen. It grew for about 18 months until it dried out while we were on vacation. Photo and information from Johanna Zinn



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# A Word with You: Cordate

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT



**T**oo late for Valentine's Day, but cordate is our focus; that's heart shaped. We've covered acute, obtuse, and cuneate, all describing the shape of the blade/leaf base where it attaches to the petiole. This time, cordate. And you guessed it, Latin cor, meaning heart, is the root. Cardio, cardiologist, came through the Greek kardia, the heart.

The Thompsons define cordate as heart shaped. But there's a continuum here. According to Jack Golding cordate leaf bases can be shallowly cordate,



cordate, or deeply cordate. (I suspect our Valentines can vary similarly.) Beyond deeply cordate we move on to 'spiraled.' A lot of the rexes are spiraled. That particular leaf base is the most distinctive in my humble opinion.

Mark Tebbitt does not include cordate in his glossary, but he uses that descriptor for a large percentage of begonias in his book. I thumbed through looking for an example or two of cordate bases, and was rather surprised at how many there were. Examples abound: *B. chlorosticta*, *coccinea*, *crassicaulis*, *diadema*, *gehrtii*, *gracilis* and lots more. Tebbitt describes *B. coccinea* as shallowly cordate and *B. heracleifolia* as shallowly cordate to broadly, deeply cordate; so I guess that particular begonia spans the continuum.

My mnemonics on this will definitely need to adjust that 'a' in cardio to 'o' in cordate. I got pleasantly side tracked when I went into my Webster to be sure I was spelling 'mnemonics' correctly and found Mnemosyne nearby. (That's Mnē-mō-sy-nē.) Thank the begonia gods I did that dictionary search as Mnemosyne will now be my

constant companion. Goddess of memory she is. Mother of the 9 muses. How delightful!

We've almost finished leaf base descriptors. The next one will be truncate. I think spiraled describes itself. Take a closer look at your leaf/blade bases and see how many you can describe now. But even better, how many scientific descriptions can you read and visualize?



Examples of cordate leaf bases. *B. coccinea* (Fig 1), *B. crassicaulis* (Fig 2), *B. chlorosticta* (Fig 3), *B. diadema* (Fig 4), *B. heracleifolia* (Fig 5). Beyond cordate is "deeply spiraled" as seen in this unidentified *B. rex* hybrid (Fig 6).





## ***Rudy's Longtime Missing B. 'McBride's Napoleon' Has Reappeared***

*By Bobbie West, Stanton, CA  
Photo by Erin Aguiar*

This last summer Sherman Gardens was the recipient of about 1000 beautiful orchids and other tropical plants, among them about 12 begonias, desperately in need of a lot of TLC and new soil. The collector was Ron Dier, a resident of Laguna Beach, California, who was moving to Northern California and needed to find a home for his large collection.

Darla Miller took over the task of inspecting and cataloging the orchids, and my begonia crew started on the begonias. Most of the begonias didn't have nametags, but we were able to recognize and identify at least

half of them. The three that stand out are B. 'Cajon Valley', B. 'Robinson's Peach', and one that hasn't been seen for a long, long time, B. 'McBride's Napoleon' - a rhizomatous with very large leaves and small white flowers. As I was re-potting it I found an old nametag down in the pot and had to decipher it because most of the ink had faded away. But, little by little, we figured it out and I was able to go to my research books where I found it listed. Rudy Ziesenhenné developed it back in 1946, but didn't register it until June 4, 1975. After that there was little mention of it. In fact, I couldn't find anything about it in any

of my books except Millie Thompson's. She mentioned it in her 1982 book, but nothing was found anywhere else.

When I started to re-pot it the rhizomes were piled so high all I could do is start pulling them apart. But there were more rhizomes than I had room for in the pot, so what was I going to do with all of those rhizomes? What a dilemma!

Of course I couldn't throw them away. So I came up with this plan. I would take them home and put them down until they started growing. Then I would give one rhizome to one person in each branch and have them grow it and share it with the other members when it got large enough. That way it would get back in circulation a lot faster than I could do it by myself.

Right now I have given out five rhizomes to five different branches, and when I can get

time I will visit the other five and get a rhizome started in their area. I gave one to Dean Turney down in the San Diego area to grow and share. If I have any more to share I will give him one for the ADR Branch to put in the R.Z. collection.

All I ask of the members who have received a rhizome from me is to share it with their members. And, as for the one I have growing, as it gets bigger I will make more and share with other clubs out of my area.

By the time we have the 2016 Convention out here we should have quite a few in circulation, and maybe even in the Show.

I feel so lucky to have been one of the people to discover a forgotten begonia and help get it back in circulation. There are so many others I wish we could find. This discovery just goes to show it is possible.

Let's keep looking!

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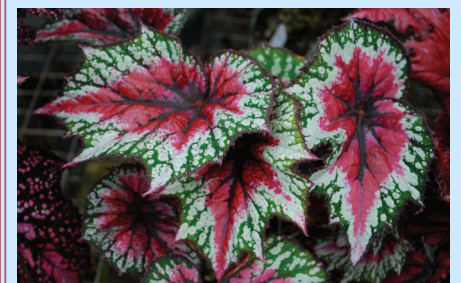
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## The Effect of Temperature on Begonias

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

### In the Mailbox

A strange event happened this fall. Here in Tampa Bay, it turned much cooler than normal, very early. It all began with a record low of 57°F in October, but by the middle of November, it was clear cooler weather would be settling in. Since I cover my greenhouse during Thanksgiving break, I was getting prepared and decided to do so earlier than usual, as nights well into the 40°s were already occurring. It was a smart move.

By the time the middle of December came around, we had already experienced 6 nights in the 30°s, with the lowest of 36.9°F in early December, and other nights in the 40°s. Many days were held to the 50°s-low 60°s. These are rather chilly temperatures even for winter, yet winter had not arrived. The often-damp mornings, saturated with dew, complicated these conditions. In case you are unaware, I grow 80% of my begonias outdoors, under shade, all winter, as the greenhouse is usually for propagating. Therefore, most begonias were rather stagnant during this period.

In the middle of December, it warmed, considerably. During the cool period we did get a day or two of mild weather, but this was a period of warmer weather with highs in the 75-80°F range, mild nights, often foggy, culminating with the New Year arriving well into the 80°s. I am typing this noticing the new growth that has occurred on begonias, both in and outside. It is clear to me that temperature drives their growth as much, if not more, than humidity or environment.

I have always noticed this trend in the past, as mild spells during winter began the

new growth for the year. But with a stable pattern for weeks, after such chill, and still long nights and some clouds, the begonias were growing. Fast. Despite not a lot of sun (the warm days were more hazy than anything), I could see cuttings rooting and canes throwing off new growth buds.

Last winter, I did an experiment by not heating the greenhouse so much at night, but focusing on elevating the daytime temperatures. We had a number of cloudy, cool days, perhaps 60-65°F, with little sun. I put the heat on for an hour during the heart of the day so the inside temp, combined with solar heating, went up. Then it was shut off and allowed to relax to normal. Nights were kept above 45°F. Humidity was elevated through normal watering and spraying. I was pleased in that the plants inside showed significant growth compared to outdoors. By the time late February comes to Tampa Bay, it is warmer, and the threat of cold basically finished. It has been known to frost in early March, but that is a rare, chilly night. Taking the plastic off the greenhouse increases the light, as the shade cloth is all there is between the potent Florida sun and the plants. The greenhouse-grown plants were far more advanced come spring.

So, for those of you who grow in some kind of heated environment, you may want to look at elevating the day temperatures rather than focus on keeping the nights warm. Just a thought as the brighter, longer, warmer days of spring arrive. Good growing!



*B. palmata* flower petals (above)  
*B. duncan-thomasi* flowers (overleaf, pages 60–61).  
Photos by Jacky Duruisseau

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## *Begonia* 'Jim's Cotton Candy'

By James Georgusis, Metairie, LA

*Begonia* 'Jim's Cotton Candy' is a cane that originated as chance seedlings born in 2004. It is believed to be a selfing of *B.* 'Torch'. It is almost identical to *B.* 'Torch' in its leaf size, shape, and coloration. Dark green upper and deep red under leaves. The inflorescence is same as *B.* 'Torch' in size, flower count, and frequency (nearly at every leaf node) except it is ice pink in medium bright exposure and can be nearly white in deep shade.



*B.* 'Jim's Cotton Candy'  
Photo by Mike Flaherty

In deep shade the leaves are unchanged in leaf color but tend to be larger and flatter. Node spacing and cane height are also extended in deep shade situations. It is seldom without flowers and grows vigorously when well fertilized. This plant can attain a cane height of up to 5 feet, and has a natural spread of 2½ feet without pruning. It can be used as a landscape plant in frost-free areas, as a patio specimen in pots in shaded areas during spring, summer, and fall before temperatures drop below 35°F, and as a beautiful basket plant if cane height is pruned to encourage branching - adding to its natural fullness.

*B.* 'Jim's Cotton Candy' has very strong vertical canes that are finger thick and quite straight, which lend to making it nice as a standard-grown plant. You can leave the cane on the mother plant until the desired height is attained, then cut at the base, treat with rooting hormone, abort all lateral buds (leaving the top 3 or 4 to establish the head), and place it in a gallon water jug to initiate roots. Once roots reach about a half-inch long transfer it to soil in a growing pot. Care must be taken not to damage the delicate water roots. Staking the newly potted plant for stabilization is very necessary. Pinch the apical stems to encourage the remaining laterals to sprout and you are on your way to a unique form of begonia culture.

*B.* 'Jim's Cotton Candy', originating from southern Louisiana, can grow and endure high heat and humidity as well as cold damp situations. It was commercialized through Oglesby Plants International, a wholesale plant nursery located in Altha, FL. It can be sourced through mail order retail plant growers.

*B.* 'Jim's Cotton Candy' was found growing in my mixed plant collection when I lived in Harahan, LA., which is a small town south west of New Orleans. I worked as a head grower and production manager for Oglesby for 7 years before retiring and relocating back to the New Orleans area in May of 2013. Since the age of 10 I have been growing many plant families. As a hobbyist I grew exotic tropical plants and when I entered the commercial sector adjusted to mainstream crops such as mums, poinsettias, etc. in the '70s.



## Growing Begonias in Bozeman, MT

By Barb Stafford, Bozeman, MT

A favorite thing to do on a cold snowy, Montana, day is mix up some potting soil and transplant, divide or take leaf cuttings of begonias! They thrive in our sunroom but not in direct sunlight. The leaf cuttings start out under lights where there is more humidity. We run a humidifier for the others. Occasionally there will be a begonia that prefers cooler temperatures so it is always a challenge to figure out the best place for each one.

continued on next page →

Plenty of snow outside but it's always spring in our sunroom in Bozeman, MT. (top). *B.* 'Black Coffee' growing in a coffee cup, of course (center). *B. bowerae* (bottom).







## Bozeman, MT

Continued from page 63

I had a very beautiful Iron Cross begonia. It was over two feet wide and a real conversation piece. I gave it so much attention that I killed it with kindness. I over watered it. From then on I always check the soil before watering. I continue to learn about these beautiful plants and read *The Begonian*, cover to cover.

We may not be able to grow Rex or rhizomatous begonias outside because living a mile high in elevation, our summer nights are still too cold for them. But grown as houseplants we enjoy their beauty year-round.

My begonias help me get through our Bozeman, Montana winters! They are so easy to propagate. I enjoy sharing them with friends and family.



*B.* 'Super Curl' (opposite page, top); Propagating my plants is a favorite winter pastime (opposite page, bottom).

The plant table in the sunroom with a little extra light for the bottom shelf (this page, top);

*B.* 'Othello' (center, left);

*B.* 'Hurricane' (center, right);

*B.* 'Pigskin' (bottom)



## *B. ludwigii* and *B. maynensis* Seedlings



These *B. ludwigii* (top, left), and the *B. maynensis*, with little striped spots (top, right) were planted from seeds on 9-29-2014 in 1 inch plastic cups. The same seedlings (bottom, left and bottom, right) on 1-16-2015 after being pricked out and planted in community trays. Both sets of seeds were obtained from Jacky Duruisseau's Ecuador expedition taken in May/June 2014.

Plants grown and photographed by Jem Wiseman



# The Begonias of Ecuador: 2<sup>nd</sup> Expedition

## Part 3 May 29–June 20, 2014

Article & photos by Jacky Duruisseau, Bois France

**Piñas area:** We set off again in the morning. The 4x4 proceeds with difficulty on the muddy track of the Buenaventura Reserve. Three trees have fallen! They aren't big ones, but we must cut them with a machete and drag them off with ropes (Fig 33). *B. parviflora* is still present and *B. tiliifolia*, too (Fig 34). No fruit, unfortunately. The forest is wonder-

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Problems on the trail! (Fig 33); *B. tiliifolia* at the Buenaventura Reserve (Fig 34); A very nice Araceae, *Philodendron verucosa* (Fig 35); A fern at about 2000 m (6,500 ft) (Fig 36); A butterfly in the Buenaventura forest (Fig 37); *B. guaduensis* in blossom (Fig 38)



ful and very rich here. Araceae, orchids, Bromeliaceae, and ferns are everywhere and grow with an incredible exuberance (Figs 35 and 36). Many multicolored butterflies follow along with us (Fig 37). In the evening, we encounter the rare “oiseau-taureau” or “bull-bird”, *Cephalopterus ornatus*, perched above the trail. A very curious bird!

We leave this wonderful place, headed towards Cuenca. Before reaching El Pasaie, we again see on the slopes of the road, *B. ludwigii* and *B. guaduensis* (Fig 38) in blossom and with...seeds!

**Alausi/Huigra area:** After Cuenca where we stay the night, we go again towards the Andes in the center of the Ecuador. We had visited this area in 2012 and near Zhud, we find again two tuberous species *B. froebelii* and *B.*



39



40

*aequatorialis*: the first one is in dormancy and the second one is in blossom. Fruits of the last season are present on the two species and we can collect some seeds. After seeing pictures of *B. aequatorialis* (Figs 39 and 40), Mark Tebbitt thinks that there are maybe two

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*B. aequatorialis*? *B. pleiopetala*? (Figs 39/40); An amazing biotope... (Figs 41/42); The Posada de las Nubes Hacienda (Fig 43)





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Agriculture as before... Near The Posada de las Nubes Hacienda (Fig 44); *B. ludwigii*? *B. compacticaulis*? (Fig 45); A new species? Flower buds. Leaves. Tall knotty stems with an orchid growing among them. (Figs 46, 47, and 48)

plants: *B. aequatorialis* and *B. pleiopetala*. If so, it would be the first record of *B. pleiopetala* in this area, the Cañar province.

We go towards Alausi. In a mountain meadow, we again find *B. froebelii* and *B. aequatorialis* with fruits. I'm still very amazed at this unusual begonia biotope. Here we are at an altitude of about 2800m (9200ft), no forest, no gorge, no stream, and the begonias grow in grass in full sun from morning to evening! (Figs 41 and 42)

We leave Alausi to reach our stop for the night, the Posada de las Nubes Hacienda (Fig 43), after 7 km of a very giddy track! Here, we are at the end of the earth...in a wonderful place, an authentic one, received by nice and warm people. We'll keep an unforgettable memory of them (Fig 44).

The next day will be the last one for searching for begonias.

The Huigra area, on the return towards "civilization", is often referenced in the *Flora of Ecuador* by Wasshausen and Lyman B. Smith. Maybe we'll find two unknown species for us: *B. compacticaulis* and *B. triramosa*? But the information about them is vague: "around Huigra", "5 km from Huigra", "North of Huigra", "between Huigra and Naranipata", etc. No GPS coordinates (this flora was written in 1979). The *B. compacticaulis* description could fit *B. ludwigii* and it is certainly this one that we see very often on

the slopes, a begonia that is going into dormancy, with very tall stems sometimes 1 m size (with fruits) (Figs 45 and 46). Mark Tebbitt also thinks that *B. compacticaulis* and *B. ludwigii* could be the same species. As for *B. triramosa*, this species is a mystery to us! We find an unknown begonia with pink flowers and tall knotty stems that form true bushes (Figs 47 and 48) but nothing that fits the description in the Flora. A new species? We also see *B. guaduensis* and *B. piurensis* in the same place.

As usual, the last day arrives too fast! And also as usual, we think there are still many things to see, to discover and to do. However, our results are positive: we found about 25 begonia species - some new for us: *B. buddleifolia*, *B. maynensis*, *B. urticae*, *B. humilis* - and perhaps some sp. nov. for science (in the Gobenian section and sp. 28/2014). The seed harvesting was especially good this time.

**Acknowledgements:** Many thanks to the American Begonia Society, the ABS Branches (Sacramento, Buxton, Carbel Corwin, Middle, Palm Beaches, Potomac) and all the ABS members who helped me: this travel was made possible by their generous financial support. I sent many seeds to everybody. Good growing my friends!

I should like to thank also Dr. Mark Tebbitt for the precious help he gave to me about the identification of some species we have seen in Ecuador. I'm sure that when he finishes his work, especially on the Gobenian section species, he will communicate the results to us.



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## *Seeds of Time:* A Conservationist's Mission

*Reviewed by Linda Tamblyn, Merriam, KS*

Deep under a frozen mountain in Norway lies The Svalbard Global Seed Vault. This gene bank stores seeds from over 90 countries and may be the Noah's Ark for the future of our food supply.

The film, *Seeds of Time*, focuses on crop diversity pioneer, Cary Fowler. His sole motivation revolves around globally preserving seeds that might be lost as farmers move towards growing single variety, high-yield crops. From 1903 to 1983, 94% of the crop varieties once grown have gone extinct. Tomato varieties dropped by 92%, celery by 98%, corn by 91% and on and on. Fowler's mission seeks to ensure the diverse genetic material needed to hybridize plants better suited to face current and future challenges as they arise. Conservation for food security "isn't as sexy" and doesn't get funded as quickly as other conservation programs but, certainly, it is just as crucial.

And, while it might be easy to dismiss the topic of food security as dry or lackluster, this film shatters that stereotype. Fowler guides us through the N.I. Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry, in Leningrad Russia, as he narrates the story of Vavilov and his colleagues. During the 28-month Siege of Leningrad in the 1940's, members of the Institute carefully guarded the seeds; confident that, once this was over, those saved seeds would be there to start agriculture again. Some, even starving to death with bags of edible seeds sitting on their desks rather than jeopardize the agricultural future of their people and their country. Later in the film, members of The Global

Crop Diversity Trust hang their heads in sadness as they listen to a representative from a Philippine gene bank. She sobs uncontrollably as she describes a series of fires, which completely destroyed their collection. Floods, fires, power outages, and other disasters have destroyed or severely damaged seed banks all over the world. When that happens it means species are lost forever – totally extinct. Gone to never return.

The film highlights an unexpected bond between the science of conservation and cultural heritage of agriculture. In Peru, on picturesque mountain slopes, the efforts of crop diversity scientists, in league with the indigenous farmers, pay off. Years ago when a new strain of potato, Peru's staple crop, was intro-

duced, and gained popularity, the old varieties (over 1500 of them!), began to disappear. When, in time, the new potato began to fail, matters were further complicated by the antagonism between the different communities. The International Potato Center gene bank, in Lima, and local leaders initiated a program using a very creative solution. By establishing the Potato Park, a kind of living gene bank, old varieties were reintroduced and the communities – once enemies – now come together to tend the crops. The farmers, so profoundly affected by their experience, became the first indigenous people to voluntarily send seed samples of the diverse potato varieties to the Svalbard facility.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault seeks



Cary Fowler walks the long, icy road to the Svalbard Global Seed Bank (opposite page, top).

Credit: Mari Tefre

Crop diversity scientist, Fowler, listens at The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources in Rome, Italy (opposite page, top). Credit: Henrik Edelbo  
Peruvians on the hill top (above). Credit: Henrik Edelbo





to expedite safety duplications of all the seed banks' collections in the world. Located under the coldest part of a mountain, temperatures stay low and steady naturally making it an ideal place to safely store seeds. But, it's a race against time to avoid those sudden and mass losses of entire species when problems occur at other facilities that are often underfunded and in need of upgrades.

Programs like Seed Savers Exchange, practice onsite preservation - in other words, crops are actually grown every year and those seeds are stored for the next season. Grassroots projects like this endeavor to maintain the largest variety of plants possible and to create the most positive impact on conservation efforts.

While this beautifully shot and insightful film concentrates on agricultural crops I wonder how essential it is to keep *all* the plants we have - from an old variety of green bean, or a begonia, or even a "weed"? It's easy to believe only poli-

ticians and scientists can play a role in conservation advancement but small farmers, backyard gardeners, and plant lovers around the globe can make a difference. A lesson can be taken from the gesture made by the Peruvian farmers. That bunch of carrots at the market or a fragrant slice of warm bread on my plate won't look the same - now they symbolize, not only my sustenance, but also evoke a desire for the wellbeing, heritage, and nourishment of generations to come.

I highly recommend *Seeds of Time* to anyone with an interest in plants and the importance of conservation, or, simply to anyone looking for a film that educates, inspires, and entertains at every turn.

Find out more information about the film, *Seeds of Time*, or watch the trailer at: <http://www.seedsoftimemovie.com>. See the website for more information and to check for a local screening in your area. Copies of the film are sometimes available from local libraries. DVDs, for personal use, should be available for purchase in July 2015.



Planting seeds at the Seed Savers Exchange in Deborah, Iowa (opposite page). Credit: Damian Kussian  
Inside the USA National Seed Bank in Fort Collins, Colorado (top). Credit: Tom Parkin  
Potato wild relative hunters in Arizona, USA as the sun sets (bottom). Credit: Kirsten Johnson



## Southwest Region Get-Together

Houston, TX May 21–23, 2015

We're finalizing the plans on what looks to be a wonderful Southwest Region Get Together for 2015. Watch for more details of the tours, seminars, and workshops to be announced SOON. A full day judging workshop will be offered and a few spots are still available. Oh, yes! And a wonderful sale and show!! Mark your calendar today.



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Rates for our group are \$89.

Please send questions or requests to join the judging school to:

Cheryl Lenert, 281-255-9004, lenert@flash.net

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**President...** Virginia Jens, 2483 Waterside Dr, Lake Worth, FL 33461; 561-568-0124; [vjens2483@gmail.com](mailto:vjens2483@gmail.com)

**Past President...** Charles Jaros, 106 Pine Valley Ct., DeBary, FL 32713; 386-218-9833; [cjbegonia@yahoo.com](mailto:cjbegonia@yahoo.com)

**1st Vice-President...** Mike Flaherty, 1505 East Valley Rd, Santa Barbara, CA 93108; [mikeflaherty@cox.net](mailto:mikeflaherty@cox.net)

**2nd Vice-President...** Martin E. Delgado, P.O. Box 39685, Downey, CA 90239; 562-310-8380; [mdlbrarian@consultant.com](mailto:mdlbrarian@consultant.com)

**Secretary...** Connie Saenz, 13627 Stoney Hill, San Antonio, Texas, 78231; [csaenz56@yahoo.com](mailto:csaenz56@yahoo.com)

**Treasurer...** Carol Notaras, 2567 Green St., San Francisco, CA 94123; 415-931-4912; [cnotaras@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cnotaras@sbcglobal.net)

## Appointed Chairmen & Directors

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

**Awards...** Cheryl Lenert, 21744 FM 2920, Hockley, TX 77447; 281-255-9004; [lenert@flash.net](mailto:lenert@flash.net)

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

**Book Store...** Jan Brown, 310-670-4471, [begoniabrown@yahoo.com](mailto:begoniabrown@yahoo.com)

**Branch Relations...** Tom Keepin, 4513 Randwick Drive Houston, TX 77092-8343; 713-686-8539; [thomas.keepin@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.keepin@gmail.com)

**Business Manager...** Doug Byrom, 1725 Brazos Bend Ave., Smithville, Texas 78957; 512-237-0390; [douglasbyrom@gmail.com](mailto:douglasbyrom@gmail.com)

**Conservation...** Johanna Zinn, 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032, 703-323-7513, [jazinn@cox.net](mailto:jazinn@cox.net)

**Convention Advisor...** Mary Sakamoto, 13362 Mount Hood Dr., Santa Ana, CA 92705; 714-852-3695; [m.sakamoto@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m.sakamoto@sbcglobal.net)

**Convention Chair...** Linda Kammerer [elkay6@gmail.com](mailto:elkay6@gmail.com)

**Entries/Classification...** Vacant

**Facebook Manager...** John Boggan, [dcbegonias@gmail.com](mailto:dcbegonias@gmail.com)

**Grants Committee...** Martin E. Delgado, P.O. Box 39685, Downey, CA 90239; 562-310-8380; [mdlbrarian@consultant.com](mailto:mdlbrarian@consultant.com)

**Historian...** Sandra Threadcraft, 3058 Weslock Circle, Decatur, Georgia 30034; 404-243-8686; [Sunmoontrine@yahoo.com](mailto:Sunmoontrine@yahoo.com)

**Horticultural Correspondent...** Gregory Sytch, 6329 Alaska Avenue, New Port Richey, FL 34653-4301; 727-841-9618; [gsytch@cs.com](mailto:gsytch@cs.com)

## The Begonian May/June 2015

# Deadline Date March 28

Send your photos, growing tips,  
or articles to:

[begoniaskc@yahoo.com](mailto:begoniaskc@yahoo.com)

**Internet Editor...** Julie Vanderwilt, 720 Mission Park Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93105; Phone 805-687-8033 [vanderwilt@cox.net](mailto:vanderwilt@cox.net)

**Judging...** Maxine Zinman, 2770 Kimble Rd., Berryville, VA 22611; 540-955-4555; [begonia@visuallink.com](mailto:begonia@visuallink.com)

**Members-at-Large...** Sandy Boyd, 5 Walnut Circle, Chico, CA 95973; 530-891-5760; [smacboyd@gmail.com](mailto:smacboyd@gmail.com)

**Membership...** Paul Rothstein, 2 Flock Lane, Bella Vista, AR 72714; [paroon2001@yahoo.com](mailto:paroon2001@yahoo.com)

**Nomenclature...** Dr. Kathleen Burt-Utley; 6150 36th Ter N, Saint Petersburg, FL 33710-1716; [kburtutl@uno.edu](mailto:kburtutl@uno.edu)

**Registrar of Hybrids...** Priscilla Purinton, 129 Queens River Drive, West Kingston, RI 02892; 401-782-8154 or 401-688-0678, [ppurinton@gmail.com](mailto:ppurinton@gmail.com)

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

**Public Relations...** vacant

**Save Our Species Coordinator...** Johanna Zinn, 4407 Jensen Place, Fairfax, VA 22032, 703-323-7513, [jazinn@cox.net](mailto:jazinn@cox.net)

**Seed Fund...** Michael Ludwig, 6040 Upland Street San Diego, CA. 92114-1933; [claytonmkellyseedfund@yahoo.com](mailto:claytonmkellyseedfund@yahoo.com)

**Slide Library...** Charles Jaros, 106 Pine Valley Ct. DeBary, FL. 32713; 407-687-5621; [cjbegonia@yahoo.com](mailto:cjbegonia@yahoo.com)

**Unidentified Species (U Numbers)...** Co-Chairs: Charles Jaros, 106 Pine Valley Ct., DeBary, FL 32713 386-218-9833; [cjbegonia@yahoo.com](mailto:cjbegonia@yahoo.com)

Mary Bucholtz, 1560 Lancaster Terr., #1008, Jacksonville, FL 32204; 904-353-9111



