

THE

# BEGONIAN

July/August 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.

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*B. salazensis* flowers  
Photo by Jacky Duruisseau

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SWR Get-Together Show, *B. burkillii* pg. 134



*B. bogneri* pg. 139

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**Front cover:** The rarely encountered  
*B. lophoptera* growing by a stream  
in southern Peru.

**Back cover:** Tony Pinto found and  
photographed this unknown species in 2006  
while fishing (looking for tropical fish) about  
100 km from Pontianak (West Kalimantan),  
Indonesia. It was in a wooded area close to a  
stream, near the top of a hill.



## President's Message

If I didn't see you in Houston, you missed a great time! In spite of the weather maps, we only had a little rain during the convention. We had great seminars and came home inspired to hybridize and to make creative terrariums. The show was beautiful and Wow! How many sale plants can you fit in one room? Next year we're in Dallas so start planning now.

The American Begonia Society Annual Convention will take place starting on July 29, 2015 in Boston. Please get the registration materials at the ABS website ([www.begonias.org](http://www.begonias.org)). Get those registrations in! These get-togethers are the very best way to increase your begonia knowledge and collection.

Our Business Manager, Doug Byrom, looked at two of our current issues and was inspired to join these issues into a challenge to ABS members and friends. The first, as most of you know, is that the Tampa convention raised only about \$2900 for ABS. Our monthly expenses for 9 months of the current fiscal year are approximately \$39,588, of which \$20339 are incurred in the publishing of *The Begonian*. Dues, our primary source of income, to date are \$18,847. While many members feel that the Morris Mueller bequest can be used freely, it was given with conditions for use: funds can only be used for education, research, and conservation. Therefore, the Executive Board has segregated these funds in the Morris Mueller Scholarship Fund, to ensure the funds will be used as Morris requested. This leaves a major shortfall in operating funds, which are being covered by dipping into our limited reserve funds.

Our second consideration is the Master Plan for Ft Worth Botanic Garden. Many of you know that Debbie Garrett was able to get the "Botanic Garden" designation on the basis of the begonia collection. The collection has been lovingly cared for by Texas volunteers, and is very extensive. The new master plan has a children's garden on the site where the current greenhouse sits. A new greenhouse will be built and the collection moved so that the children's garden can ultimately be built. Doug felt that the effort could be jump started by raising funds so the city will know we're serious about this effort.

So, here is the SWR Challenge to branches and members-at-large: Money contributed to the Challenge will be matched by SWR, up to \$10,000! Fifty percent (50%) will go to ABS operating expenses and 50% will go to the new begonia greenhouse at Ft. Worth Botanic Garden. Over \$1800 was raised in under 24 hours at SWR, through donations and an auction. Please see Doug's article on the challenge in this issue (page 129).

Remember to mail in your ballot on the slate of officers and the constitutional issue. The Executive Board is looking in to alternatives to having to tear the ballot out of *The Begonian*. So please be assured that we understand the problem, and will do our best to resolve it.

We will be installing new officers at the Annual Meeting in Boston this summer. I have enjoyed working with all of you. Please give our new President the support that you have given me. Remember, an organization is only as strong as the efforts of its members. Virginia Jens, President

**NEW DUE DATE**  
for  
**The Begonian**  
**Sept/Oct 2015**

**Deadline Date**  
**July 21**

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or articles to:  
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# Proceedings of the American Begonia Society Board Meeting

Houston, Texas

May 23, 2015

President Virginia Jens called the meeting to order.

The minutes of the August 2014 Annual Meeting held in Shreveport, LA were approved as published in the Sept/Oct 2014 *The Begonian* and thus were upgraded to minutes.

Treasurer, Carol Notaras, presented the financial report for August 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015. The beginning balance in the checking account was \$8113.59 and ended with \$4004.21. The proceeds from the Tampa Convention were \$2900 with over \$1000 in expenditures. The summary from the seed fund was not available. The General Fund had an opening balance of \$39,588.50 with disbursements and expenditures of \$43,697.88. The savings account opening balance was \$258,280.07 with \$175.17 in interest. Ending balance for both checking and savings accounts was \$251,725.24. The report will be filed for audit. The audit will be conducted by Paul Tsamtsis in July 2015.

President Jens reported there are still accounting irregularities with the financial reports submitted for the 2014 Tampa convention, which garnered a very small profit for the ABS. It will be necessary to increase the amount of profit to the ABS at upcoming Conventions, as these events are the primary method of raising funds for regular ABS operating expenses. President Jens further added as a reminder that the Morris Mueller Foundation, generously bequeathed to the ABS by Morris Mueller, may expressly be used only for education, research and conserva-

tion. It cannot be used for regular operating expenses, such as maintaining the website, publishing *The Begonian*, and diverse other expenditures.

## Reports of Officers and Branch Directors

Tom Keepin, Branch Relations Director, reported that he is in contact with a group from upstate New York, who are interested in forming an ABS branch. Tom also reminded Branch Directors to submit annual branch reports prior to the Annual Meeting in July, preferably by July 1, 2015.

Fort Worth Botanical Gardens will receive its annual allotment of \$2,000 from the ABS for the begonia collection.

## Report of the Executive Board

The Executive Committee recommends that serving as chair of the Morris Mueller Scholarship Fund be added to the duties of the Second Vice President. This proposal will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

The Executive Board announced that Malcolm McCorquodale, ABS member from the Houston Astros Branch, was appointed Internet Editor (webmaster) for the ABS. He will succeed Julie Vanderwilt who resigned last year. Miss Vanderwilt's past work as Internet Editor has been deeply appreciated, and contact will soon be established between her and Mr. McCorquodale for an easy transition.

## New Business

The Begonia Society of Tampa Bay submitted a question regarding advice about

continued on next page

## Request for 2015 Holiday Greetings Donations

Although it seems to be too early to be thinking about the holiday season, it is really NOT too early to consider making a donation to Holiday Greetings for 2015! This is especially true for branches that have limited meetings during the summer months. Individuals and branches are able to offer their holiday greetings while also supporting ABS when they donate to this fund. The money raised helps with the expense of printing *The Begonian* and in turn helps to keep the cost of dues down. The listing of all donors by category of donation on a single page of the November/December issue is also very cost effective. **Categories are: Bronze, \$1-\$50; Silver, \$51-\$100; Gold, \$101-\$150; and Platinum, \$151, plus.** The contributions, which are tax-deductible, should be made out to **ABS Holiday Greetings. Please send to Frances Drescher, 11529 Riverchase Run, West Palm Beach, FL 33412. The deadline for donations is September 15th.** Please help spread the word about this annual program and request that it be added to the agenda of your next meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Frances by email at [fkdrescher1@comcast.net](mailto:fkdrescher1@comcast.net). Thank you.



## Proceedings continued

combining their constitution and bylaws that was referred to Parliamentarian, Linda Lawson for response.

Freda Holley reported that new begonia books would soon be released by Samuel Kennedy and Ruth Kiew. Immediate Past President Charles Jaros stated the probability that the Kiew book should be out in time for the ABS Convention in July 2015. These books should eventually become available to the ABS Bookstore inventory, managed by Bookstore Chair, Janet Brown.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, the May 23, 2015 Board Meeting of the American Begonia Society stands adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Connie Saenz, Secretary



# Begonia Revolution 2015



New England

July 29th - August 2

Hope to see you SOON! Be sure to book your hotel rooms today; reservations are filling up quickly. For more information, visit the ABS website or [www.BuxtonBegonia.org](http://www.BuxtonBegonia.org), email [BegoniaRevolution2015@gmail.com](mailto:BegoniaRevolution2015@gmail.com), or call 401-484-8854.

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## Southwest Region "Challenge" Fund Drive

### Greetings from the Southwest Region!

We just wrapped up another great Get-Together in Houston, Texas. Sorry that a lot of you missed it, but I know you're resting up for a big time at the "Begonia Revolution". This article is to let everyone know about the Southwest Region "Challenge" Fund Drive that was approved at the business meeting.

There are two very important reasons we have started this fund drive, the first being to strengthen the ABS financially. We need to understand that the ABS has very little operating capital. All the money from Morris Muller is designated to be used for specific items and cannot be spent on anything else. Just like your living expenses, the operating cost for the ABS continues to increase with no increase in revenues. Most members are adamantly opposed to increasing the cost of membership to generate income, but many ask why ABS doesn't do more. Well, it's mostly because we have little disposable income.

The second reason, and no less important, will be to support the "accredited by the North American Plant Collections Consortium" collection at the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens. A committee will be appointed to determine the best use of these funds. The most talked about use is to jump-start a fund thru the FWBG Society to build a new greenhouse for the collection.

The SWR has agreed to match dollar-for-dollar all money donated up to \$10,000. The money will be evenly split between these two causes. We hope to raise well in excess of \$20,000 with this drive. Already from donations and a plant auction at the G-T we have raised over \$1800. We will break down donations similar to the Holiday Ad and you

will be recognized in the Begonian and the SWR Leaflet.

**Categories are:**  
**Bronze, \$1-\$150; Silver, \$151-\$300; Gold, \$301-\$499; and Platinum \$500 plus.** We already have one Platinum contribution. The contributions are tax deductible and should be made out to ABS with SWR Fund Drive in memo area and

mailed to Carol Notaras. The drive will run for a period of one year but let's getting it growing now.

Remember it's a "Challenge" Fund Drive so be the one in your branch to make a donation and challenge members in your branch to do the same. Get your branch to make a generous donation and challenge another branch to beat it. If we all contribute a little just imagine how much 1,000 people could raise. Please feel free to call or email with any questions.


Let's do it for the Begonias,  
 Doug Byrom  
[douglasbyrom@gmail.com](mailto:douglasbyrom@gmail.com)  
 512.237.0390

**GET YOUR BRANCH  
 TO MAKE A GENEROUS  
 DONATION AND  
 CHALLENGE ANOTHER  
 BRANCH TO BEAT IT. IF  
 WE ALL CONTRIBUTE A  
 LITTLE, JUST IMAGINE  
 HOW MUCH 1,000  
 PEOPLE COULD RAISE!**



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## Cordate v. Cuneate



Is the feature indicated by the arrow cordate or cuneate on this *B. grandis* ssp. *sinensis*?  
 Photo by Dan Heim

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

**Last month's answer to Picture Quiz**  
 May/June issue, page 105

### **Peduncle v. Petiole?**

ANSWER: We're so glad Bob Stewart was paying attention. It's actually a *pedicel*. A *petiole* is the stalk that attaches the leaf/blade to the stem. A *peduncle* is the main flower stalk, supporting the flower cluster. The *pedicel* supports just one flower. See *The Begonian* September/October 2012.





This beautiful *B. 'Bobbie Price'* (top) is a vigorous cane with pretty pink highlights. The delicate pink blossoms (bottom) compliment the pink undersides of the leaf.

## New Cultivar: *B. 'Bobbie Price'*

From Priscilla Purinton, Hybrid Registrar

### Official International Registration 1013

#### *Begonia 'Bobbie Price'*

Seed parent: *B. 'Benigo'*

Pollen parent: *B. 'Nancy Cummins'*

Propagated more than 100 times. Originator is Bobbie Price, 1504 Ciene-gas Circle, Ft. Worth, TX, 76112.

Developed in 2000 and first distributed in 2003. Mentioned in the September 2013 *Sharecropper*, a publication of the Tarrant County Master Gardener Association.

Registration applied for March 5, 2015. Approved May 21, 2015.

*Begonia 'Bobbie Price'* is a medium size, cane-like begonia. It can reach almost 2 feet in height and about 1 foot in width at maturity. The deep green, lobed, serrulate leaves are liberally splashed with small, silvery pink dots and streaks. They can reach up to 4" by 7" with a velvety sheen and 5 with main veins in each leaf. The red tone of the glabrous 2" to 4" petiole continues onto the back of each leaf. Stipules are red, early falling and ½" in length by ⅜" wide.

The ovate tepals (males have 2, females 4) are pink. The ovaries are a darker pink. *B. 'Bobbie Price'* has many flower clusters, with male flowers in clusters of 4, females in clusters of 3, held on a 1" peduncle. This begonia will flower all year and is extremely heat tolerant - thriving when grown in a pot on a concrete driveway in Texas! Easy to propagate, it is part of the collection at the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden and is available from Steve's Leaves, Lewisville, TX.

This striking plant was the result of Bobbie's first attempt at hybridizing. As a volunteer at the Ft. Worth Botanic Garden since 1997, she was encouraged to try something new. She saw that two of her favorite plants had flowers at the correct stage of development. Helping Mother Nature along, she sowed the resulting seeds. As the young plants grew, she culled the average ones, ending up with 26 plants that showed promise. It broke her heart to choose just one to register as her eponymous hybrid, but all who see the plant agree that she chose a beauty!



A begonia as lovely as its namesake, Bobbie Price





*B. 'Casey Corwin'*, exhibited by Jane Anderson  
Photo by Tom Anderson

## SWR Get-Together Show Results

“From the Ground Up”

May 21-23, 2015

Houston, Texas

**Best Of Show** – *B. prismatocarpa*  
Exhibitor – Doug Byrom

**Sweepstakes** – 11 Blue Ribbons  
Charles Jaros

**Thompson’s Showing is Sharing**  
– 18 Entries, Charles Jaros

**People’s Choice** – *Rex Cultorum*  
Hybrid, Exhibitor – Jane Anderson

**Best Species in Show** – *B. prismatocarpa*  
Exhibitor – Doug Bryom

**SWR Best Artistic Display** –  
Driftwood Beach Begonias  
Exhibitor – Lynn Sissney

**Best Southwest Region Hybrid** –  
*B. 'Kevin Whitecotton'*  
Exhibitor – Steves’s Leaves

### Division Winners:

**Division E,  
Rhizomatous** – *B. 'Red Umbo'*  
Exhibitor – Charles Jaros

**Division G, Rex  
Cultorum** – *Rex Cultorum Hybrid*  
Exhibitor – Jane Anderson

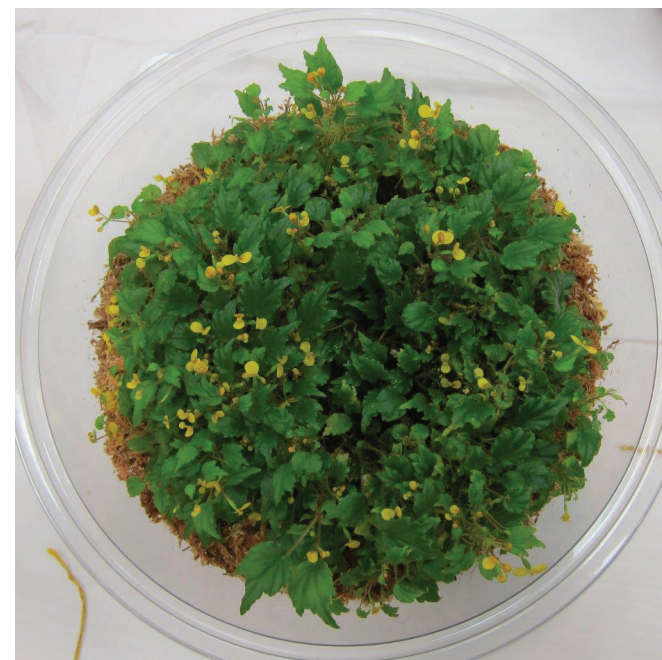
**Division I –  
Contained  
Atmosphere** – *B. prismatocarpa*  
Exhibitor – Doug Bryom

**Division J, Species** –  
*B. hemsleyana* spotted  
Exhibitor – Charles Jaros

**Division R, Heritage  
Begonias** – *B. 'Charles Jaros'*  
Exhibitor – Charles Jaros

**Division T,  
Commercial  
Growers** – *B. 'Kevin Whitecotton'*  
Exhibitor – Steves’s Leaves

**Division VV, New Introductions  
Commercial Grower** –  
*B. 'Almost Heaven'*  
Exhibitor – Ft. Worth Botanic Garden



*B. prismatocarpa* (top) winner of Best Species in Show and Division 1 - Contained Atmosphere, exhibited by Doug Byrom.  
*B. hemsleyana* spotted (bottom), exhibited by Charles Jaros, winner of Division J, Species.  
Photos by Johanna Zinn





**Division W,  
Photographs Judged  
Horticulturally –**

*B. chlorosticta*  
Exhibitor – Johanna  
Zinn

**Division WW,  
Photographs Judged  
Artistically – *B.*  
‘Splotches’**

Exhibitor – Johanna  
Zinn

**Division Y, Special  
Exhibits – “Begonias  
from Brazil”**

Exhibitor – Ft. Worth  
Botanic Garden

**Cultural Certificates**

**Charles Jaros**

*B. hemsleyana* spotted –  
95 points

**Steve’s Leaves**

*B.* ‘Kevin Whitecotton’  
– 95 points

Ft. Worth Botanic  
Garden

*B.* ‘Almost Heaven’ – 95  
points

**Jane Anderson**

*B.* ‘Queen Olympus’ –  
98.2 points

*B. amphioxus* – 96  
points

*Rex Cultorum* Hybrid –  
95 points

*Rex Cultorum* Hybrid –  
95 points



*B. chlorosticta* (brown form), exhibited by Leora Fuentes.

Photo by JohannaZinn

*B. chlorosticta* photograph (bottom), exhibited by Johanna Zinn.

Photo by Tom Anderson



**Doug Byrom**

*B. prismatocarpa* – 98.2 points

*B. bipinnatifida* – 96.5 points

*B. bogneri* – 96.5 points

*B. quadrialata* – 95 points

**Leora Fuentes**

*B. chlorosticta* (brown form) –  
97.2 points

*B. burkillii* – 96.5 points

*B. luzonensis* – 96.5 points

*B. squarosa* – 96 points

*B. lyallii* ssp *masoalensis* – 96  
points

*B. crispula* – 95.5 points

*B.* ‘Millie Thompson’ – 95.3  
points

*B. bogneri* – 95 points

*B. lanceolata* (top), shown by Fort Worth  
Species Bank. Photo by Tom Anderson

*B.* ‘Amigo Pink’ variegated (center), exhibited  
by Charles Jaros. Photo by Johanna Zinn

*B.* ‘Wood Nymph’ (bottom), shown by Leora  
Fuentes. Photo by Tom Anderson







*B. 'Judy Cook'* (top, left), with SWR Get-Together Show Sweepstakes awards, exhibited by Charles Jaros. *B. dregei* var. *partita* (top, right), shown by Johnny Williams. Photos by Johanna Zinn

Winner Educational Display, Begonias from Brazil, Fort Worth Botanic Garden (center). Closeup of Educational Display, Begonias of Brazil (bottom). Photos by Tom Anderson



## What's Behind [or under] My *B. bogneri*?

Article and photos by Gloria Utzig, Princeton, MA

Over three years ago I was attending my second meeting of our local ABS chapter, Buxton Begonia Society, when someone brought in several leaf cuttings of *Begonia bogneri* and gave them away to members.

I was just getting my bearings on the many types of begonias there are, and was startled when taking a close look at this begonia plant as it in no way resembled any other begonia I was just learning about in this new hobby.

In Mark C. Tebbitt's book "*Begonias Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*", he mentions how limited *Begonia bogneri*'s native habitat is. When Rudolf Ziesenhenné discovered it in 1969, it was growing in deep shade on moss covered granite cliffs in a remote area of Madagascar. Tebbitt goes on to suggest that this tuberous plant prefers a terrarium for its high humidity requirements, staying on the cooler side, and that if given natural light will tend to go dormant and drop its leaves.

At the time I acquired the cutting and until the middle of last year, I did not use artificial lights on it, except to photograph it. It was grown on a windowsill in successively larger covered glass fish bowls, and I hoped for the best. While in natural light the plant never lost its leaves and



Fig 1. *B. bogneri* growing among the moss





Fig 2. *B. bogneri* with an overabundance of female flowers and needing repotting. Fig 3. Male and female flowers. Fig 4. Plant out of terrarium with ruler. Fig 5. Fuzzy, red tubers.

kept growing. As to temperature, indoors most of the year it has been in roughly the high sixties, with summer spikes into the 80's (no central air).

Through a few required re-pottings, I learned about sterilizing soilless mix with boiling water before introducing a plant or seed into a terrarium. A sterile soil, plus using distilled water to water the plant instead of using well water, I later found out, helps prevent growing unknown mosses along with the plant. But the *bogneri* never failed to keep on growing even alongside a healthy moss crop (Fig 1).

I have not sampled the pH levels of the soil, but did notice that using Pro-Mix HP (High Porosity) over other different brands of violet/plant soilless mixes from the local home centers, made the plant grow bigger and healthier, and it bloomed with many more buds (Fig 2).

As to fertilizer, I've used 10-10-10 at half strength during very rare waterings, since the terrarium is tightly sealed and goes months without additional water. The strap leaves have been a shiny dark green and the flowers, both male and female (Fig 3), are a healthy size as well.

So I stuck with what seemed to work for me. Three years later, I still have the plant, and for this past year and a half it has bloomed non-stop. It has provided me with a good source of babies from leaves that have touched the top of the soil and rooted, or from cuttings.





This last time I repotted the plant because it outgrew its container, as I was scooping the rootball out with my hand, I felt the hard lumpy tuber tying this main plant and all of the plant side shoots together. As I teased away a little soil (and new plantlets) I noticed many tuber eyes plus other tiny shoots all coming out of one main big and bright red tuber!

Now, I love my plant very much, but curiosity won over circumspection in my mind. I decided I needed to see how big this tuber was that had been growing for over three years. With the plant out of its container, I tried to wash away as much of the soilless mix as possible, measured the tuber (Fig 4), and of course, took some photos to share.

To get a quick idea of the size without exposing the roots to too much dryness, I put the tuber on grid paper made up of ¼ inch squares. The tuber before being washed was about four inches (with soil ball tightly clinging to it). After washing, it was roughly 2 x 2 x 3 inches and the main roots were about seven inches long (Fig 5).

The tuber was pretty tough, felt just like squeezing a new red potato—and, where



Fig 6. *Begonia bogneri* plant before soil washed off and with some plantlets removed

Fig 7. Tiny green smooth tubers and a big, red fuzzy tuber with roots. Fig 8. Long, straight tuber/stem with leaves and a flower

there were no roots and permanent soil stuck to it, was smooth and shiny. There were also many round tuber eyes growing off it that were fuzzy and red (Fig 6). Some of these were from a ¼ inch to ¾ inch in diameter and were sending out roots, a few had baby leaves sprouting out. There were a few other smooth, shiny, green round tubers (about an eighth of an inch) popping on the surface from the main tuber as well, but these displayed no root or leaf off of them. I suspect these small green ones would turn



into smooth tuber/stems that stretch out and later sprout leaves and flowers.

I can see why this plant would not do well confined to a pot, and now I am speculating that I have to try to mound the soilless mix up over the top of the plant to keep the tubers covered and multiplying (Fig 7), much as is done when growing potatoes in a container.

I was able to pinch off about thirty plantlets, each with parts of a tuber with roots and leaves (and some with flower buds). After doing this, the much-downsized plant (Fig 8) was put back into its new home — and so far, so good.

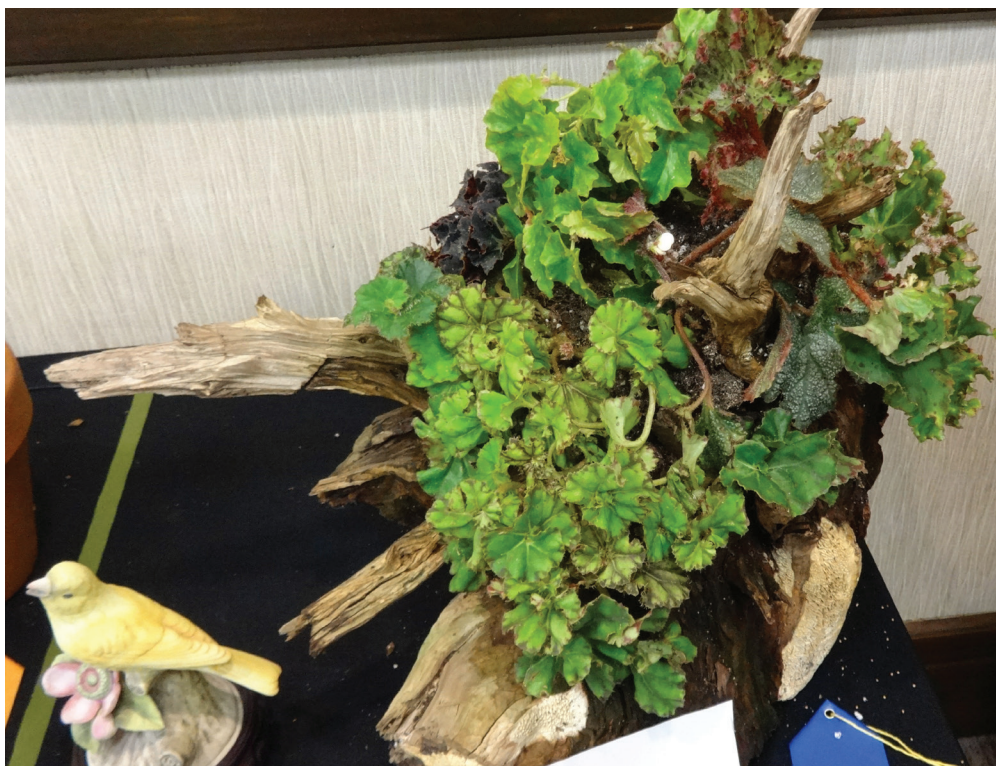
Baby plants will be available at the upcoming ABS Convention!







Inside of the Florida shadehouse (above and opposite page) of In The Mailbox correspondent, Greg Sytch.



Winner of the award for Novel Container - Driftwood at the recent SWR Get-Together show.  
Created and grown by Lynn Sissney. Photo by Tom Anderson

## Aggregates and Drainage in Potting Mixes

Article and photos by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent

Aggregates are the loose, porous materials that make potting mixes drain well. Examples of aggregates are perlite, sponge rock (extra large coarse perlite), charcoal, pine bark mulch, or fines, small seedling pine bark, and even styrofoam pieces. Placing aggregates in your potting mix can have huge benefits:

- Allows the potting mix to drain well.
- Prevents the soil from caking or binding.
- Allows water and moisture to flow through.
- Helps with air flow and this keeps the quality of the potting mix higher.
- Can absorb and release unwanted minerals.

### *In the Mailbox*

All potting mixes should have aggregates in them, even the “professional” mixes sold in big box stores. However, not all aggregates are made the same and Perlite is the perfect example. We all use it in our mixes, but sponge rock does a better job at draining the mix and keeping moisture flowing through. This extra-large perlite costs a little more, but you only use half of what the perlite may be. I mix both in.

There is no “formula” for using aggregates, but be aware that too much is not always a good thing. The mix should hold moisture without being soggy. Pine bark mulch, or fines, also allow water to flow through, and is inexpensive here in Florida. I suspect different parts of the country have similar products that are small and easy to mix in.



Charcoal, most often used in orchid mixes, works well, but can be difficult to find and is expensive. I was lucky enough to purchase a huge, 4 cubic foot bag a few years back that I still use. Again, you only use a small amount, perhaps 5%, to aid drainage. Charcoal added to the mix also can help rid harmful minerals as a bonus.

Keep an eye out for these potting mix additions at plant sales, orchid shows, bromeliad shows, and specialty stores. You can often peruse the internet and find deals, and if the shipper is close by, the shipping may not be all that expensive. Horticultural supply stores are also an alternative.

If you ever have any questions about growing begonias, feel free to email me at [gsytch@cs.com](mailto:gsytch@cs.com) or call (727) 841-9618. Have a great growing year!





## The Road to Manú National Park

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

Peru's Manú National Park is one of the largest national parks in South America. It covers over 5,900 square miles plus a large amount of surrounding, preserved buffer-land. This vast area straddles the border between the Andean Mountains and the Amazonian lowlands and thus conserves a great diversity of habitats. This habitat diversity is part of the reason this park is thought to contain the largest number of plant species within a protected area anywhere on earth. Nevertheless, much of the core area of the national park conserves Amazonian rainforest, which, although diverse in plants, is home to few begonias. Most begonias prefer areas with rockier soils than those typical of the Amazon. The park's access road does, however, cut through prime begonia habitat as it twists its way down from the Andean mountains to the park's main entrance in the

Amazon. Because this road is located close to both the city of Cusco and the archaeological site of Machu Picchu, the part of the park's buffer zone through which it passes is a popular destination for eco-tourists. As a result, the road to Manú National Park is today one of the safest and most convenient places in Peru for a visitor to see a wide range of begonias.

To access this begonia wonderland our group of two botanists and a driver left Cusco around 8am. Cusco sits on a rugged high altitude plateau dotted with spectacular archaeological sites. We caught glimpses of several of these sites as we sped by in our rental car. Particularly memorable were the 13<sup>th</sup> Century chullpas perched high on a hillside at Ninamarca (Fig 1). At one time these

Fig 1. The Chullpas of Ninamarca.  
Fig 2. The road from Paucartambo to Manú National Park.

adobe towers held the mummified bodies of members of the Lupaca culture. In contrast, most of the other archeological sites we saw that morning were constructed by the Inca civilization, whose capital was Cusco. After travelling for one hour across this otherwise rather barren landscape we arrived at the small town of Paucartambo, just in time for a breakfast of rice, meat and potatoes. Fortified by this very typical Andean meal we set off in search of begonias. What we found

was the largest number of begonia species that I have ever seen during a single day of fieldwork.

Part of the reason so many begonias occur along the short stretch of road from Paucartambo to Manú National Park is because just beyond Paucartambo the road drops about 10,000 feet in elevation in a little over 25 aerial miles. Due to the winding nature of the road (Fig 2) the driving distance is, however, about twice this and, factoring in







Fig 3. Tuberous *B. clarkei* growing at high altitude.

Fig 4. A beautiful wild ginger found along the roadside.

Fig 5. Peltate leaves of *B. erythrocarpa*.

Fig 6. A wild fuchsia.

stops to photograph plants, can easily take much of a day to complete. The steep altitudinal gradient of the road also makes readily apparent how each species of begonia in a particular area usually occupies its own distinct altitudinal range. As we descended, we encountered a succession of different begonia species. Each species was usually restricted to its own narrow altitudinal band of the mountain. Only towards the base of the mountain did we see multiple species overlapping in their ranges.

As we drove down the mountain from Paucartambo we encountered our first begonia at 11,300 ft. It was *B. clarkei* (Fig 3), one of the tuberous species adapted to survive at relatively high altitudes in full sun. *Begonia clarkei* commonly occurs around this altitude throughout the Andean mountains of southern Peru and neighboring Bolivia. It is a highly variable species composed of a large number of local races. The plants we saw at 11,300 ft inhabited open grassland and had pink flowers and green leaves. About one thousand feet lower down the mountain we encountered it again. Here it was growing on rocky cliffs within the stunted cloud forest that had begun a short distance above. All these plants had white flowers, blue-tinged leaves and more pointed fruit wings. These were minor distinctions, but which nevertheless suggest that these two populations of *B. clarkei* have become genetically distinct to some degree.

As we drove further down the road the surrounding forest became

increasingly dense and the individual trees larger, a response to the warmer temperature and more plentiful moisture found at lower elevations. As we were driving along this particular stretch of road I noticed a small colony of a beautiful native ginger (Fig 4). It was a rare occasion when we stopped to photograph something other than a begonia but this *Costus* species' spiraled leaves and exquisitely colored flowers made it irresistible. The next begonia species that we encountered was *B. erythrocarpa* (Fig 5). This thick-stemmed begonia is common throughout the Andes and is found in Ecuador and Bolivia as well as in Peru. At the time of our visit, in January, none of the plants were flowering but hundreds of individuals covered the rocky cliffs. They must provide quite a spectacle later in the year when their large, pale pink flowers are produced. But for now only the leaves were visible, each resembling a small, oddly shaped, fur-covered umbrella. In addition to these begonias the cliffs were home to scarlet-flowered fuchsias, and these were in full flower (Fig 6).

Further down the road we found *B. bracteosa*, a locally common species that also grows in the vicinity of Machu Picchu. It was not in flower but its long arching stems were covered in the previous season's mature brown seed capsules and a smaller number of unripe capsules that were a vivid pink and quite at-







tractive. Below this we found *B. lophoptera* (Fig 7). I had seen this species earlier in the week about 50 miles to the southeast, and noticed that the plants here differed slightly by having pale pink rather than bright red flowers. This species was nevertheless instantly recognizable; it has distinct fruits that turn upside down in a manner similar to those of *B. rex*. Like that distantly related species, *B. lophoptera* grows in areas with dripping water and its seeds are probably splashed out of the fruit by falling water droplets. Although, in the case of *B. lophoptera*, this is just speculation because as far as I know no one has actually witnessed this occurring. I very much wanted to watch to see if this was indeed the case but by now it was late afternoon and we had to keep moving. There were several more miles to travel before we would reach the first of the hotels at the road's end, and it would soon be dark. This road was safe to travel in the daylight but at night it would obviously be treacherous since it was narrow, muddy, and in several places bordered by a precipitous drop to the river below (Fig 2). So we drove on.

As we continued our descent towards the base of the mountain we encountered in quick

succession three interesting begonias: *B. brevicordata*, *B. peruviana*, and *B. altoperuviana*. These three species each had their own distinct altitudinal ranges but in all cases their distributions overlapped with those of both *B. parviflora* (Fig 8) and *B. glabra*. The latter two species are very common throughout the foothills of Andean South America and here in southern Peru they were obviously happiest at lower elevations where it was particularly warm and humid. I'm always pleased to see *B. parviflora* in the wild because young plants of this species have curiously shaped leaves. Its leaves start off as simple ovals, pass through a stage where they resemble mittens, and gradually, as they get older, become multi-fingered gloves. Such a situation reminds me of the leaves of the North American sassafras trees, which grow in my garden. That day, however, *B. brevicordata* (Fig 9) and *B. altoperuviana* (Fig 10) were for me the stars of the show. I had not encountered either of these species before. Both are poorly known, and the latter had previously only been recorded from much further south near the border between Peru and Bolivia. *Begonia altoperuviana* is a very attractive species being short in stature with brilliant red nodding flowers. It superficially looks like the popular cultivated dragon wing begonias but is a much more refined plant.

As the light faded towards the end of the day I reluctantly left these wonderful plants and we drove the remainder of the distance down to the Amazonian village of Pilcopata. As we did so, I continuously caught glimpses of exciting plants such as

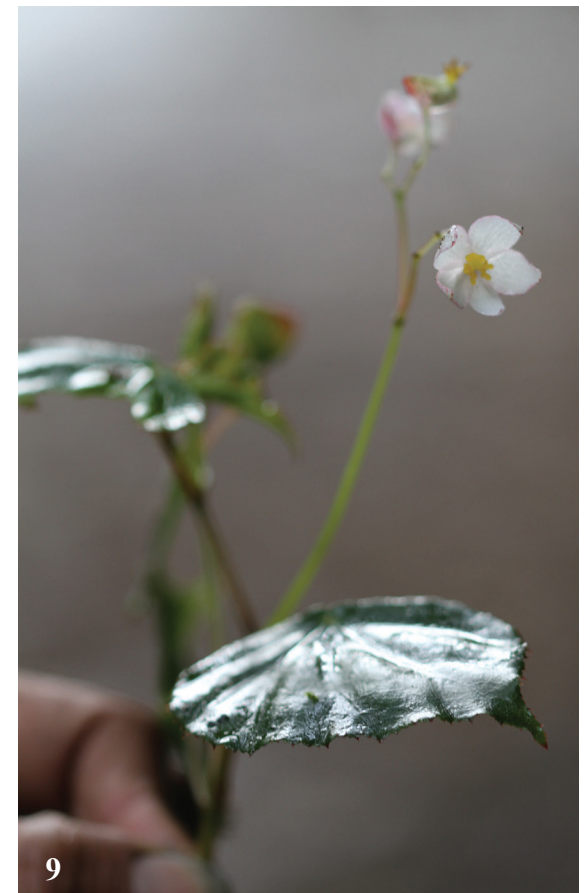


Fig 7. *Begonia lophoptera* showing its upside down fruits.

Fig 8. The shrubby *B. parviflora*.

Fig 9. *Begonia brevicordata* was found at relatively low altitudes.

scarlet flowered *Passiflora coccinea* and a gesneriad with equally bright red flowers. However, at this point we didn't have enough daylight left to stop for anything other than a begonia, and we saw no additional species of these. Even with our haste, we arrived in Pilcopata an hour and a half after complete darkness had enveloped the forest. We soon found a hostel in which to stay and then set out on foot for our second meal of the day, the local Amazonian specialty of fish with rice and peppers. With nightfall an amazing chorus





Fig 10. The rarely collected *B. altoperviana*.

of toads had started up from the surrounding rainforest and after dinner, while we processed the many begonia specimens that we had collected, we listened to them singing to us; a perfect end to what had been an amazing day.

#### Acknowledgments:

This expedition was made possible by the generous financial support of the ABS, as well as several ABS members and branches. I also wish to thank Mr. Aniceto Daza Yomona of the Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina, Lima for joining me on the fieldwork and Mr. Peter Moonlight of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh for helping me identify some of the begonias that I encountered.

## A Word with You: Moniliform

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

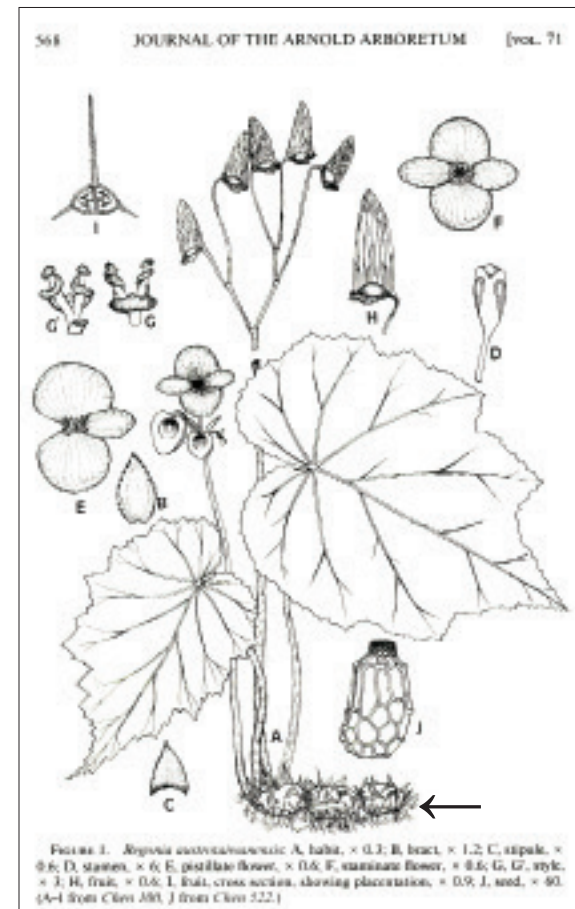
One thing leads to another, doesn't it. Research on one word led to <http://flora.huh.harvard.edu/china/PDF/PDF13/Begonia.pdf> and in that document, which I could actually read reasonably well, I found *moniliform* used to describe the creeping rhizomes of some Chinese begonias. "Herbs, deciduous; rhizomes elongate, *moniliform*." I hadn't seen that word, ever, so here we are.

Mr. Webster says *moniliform* means "jointed at intervals so as to resemble beads on a string; specifically, in botany and zoology, consisting of, or having, a series of alternating swellings and constrictions, as some stems and roots; as, the *moniliform* root of *Pelargonium*." It comes from the Latin *monile*, a necklace or collar for horses or other animals, and *forma*, form. I can see the necklace, the classic string of pearls; that's a stunning visual to associate with a begonia rhizome. Collar doesn't paint as good a picture, but is adequate when one considers "constrictions." One has to wonder what survival function these swellings and constrictions serve in begonia rhizomes. My research didn't even hint at an answer.

Insect antennae can be *moniliform* too, as can the roots of many grasses. Termites have *moniliform* antennae. In fact that's one way to distinguish them from ants which don't. I'll be checking some ornamental grasses that insist on self sowing where not wanted.

Tebbitt and Thompson don't list *moniliform* in their glossaries, and Golding doesn't cover it either.

Begonias with *moniliform* rhizomes don't constitute a huge group, but there are some. *B. austrotaiwanensis*, *B. forrestii*, *B. gungshanensis*. Mnemosyne, please step in here. I'll know *moniliform* when I read it, but can I find it in my memory bank when I need to write or speak it?



Notice the beadlike, or moniliform, rhizomes (see arrow) on this *B. austrotaiwanensis*.

Illustration courtesy of *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum* 71: 567-574 (1990) from *Begonia austrotaiwanensis* (Begoniaceae), a new species from southern Taiwan by Y. K. Chen and C. I. Peng. (online at <http://biostor.org/reference/3627>)



**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.

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**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

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

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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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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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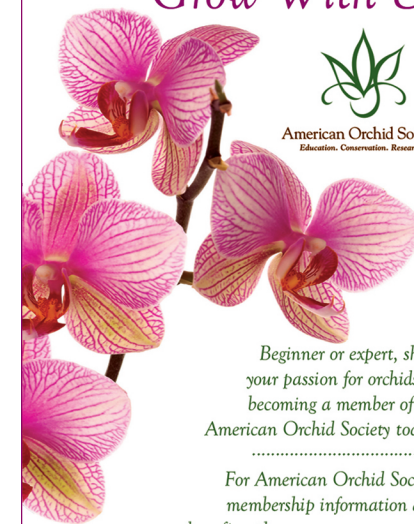
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# Begonias as Food and Medicine

By Joseph E. Laferrière

Excerpts reprinted from Economic Botany Vol. 46, No. 1 (Jan–Mar. 1992), pp. 114–116

In recent years there has been an increased interest in food uses of plants commonly grown as ornamentals. Begonias (natives of the tropics but commonly used as houseplants in temperate regions have been regarded as edible although oxalates, curcubitacins, and other compounds limit their use in large quantities. These same chemicals do render the plants useful for medicinal purposes.

Begonias have been used as potherbs in several countries, including Japan, India,

Indonesia, and Myanmar (Burma). In Sikkim and in the Moluccas of Indonesia, begonias have been used to make a sauce with meat and fish. In China, Indonesia, and Brazil begonias are used in salads. *Begonia auriculata* Hook. and *B. mannii* Hook. are used in Gabon as a substitute for sorrel. Other species are used in South America and the Caribbean.

In the West Indies begonias are used for colds, and in Java, the Philippines, and Brazil they are used as flavoring ingredi-

ents. Mountain Pima children in Northern Mexico chew on the stems of *B. gracilis* H.B.K. specifically for the sour taste which they find refreshing. Children in China have been reported to use *B. grandis* Dryander ssp. *evansiana* (Andr.) Irmsch. in a similar manner, although it is recognized as potentially toxic. Because begonias are high in fructose they may taste somewhat sweet as well as sour. The Tarahuma of northern Mexico used the sap of *B. gracilis* as well as that from *Oxalis* spp. to curdle milk in cheese-making. In Paraguay, the leaves of *B. cucullata* Willd. are eaten fried or in soups or salads, while the sap is used to treat sore throats.

The sour taste of begonia sap is largely due to the presence of oxalic acid. *Begonia cucullata* contains 4.8 meq (milliequivalent) oxalate per dry gram weight, representing about 96% of the total acidity present in the sap. Fifty-five percent of total acidity in *B. ulmifolia* Willd. is due to oxalate...

In small quantities oxalic acid is harmless, but in larger quantities it can be toxic as a result of it binding to calcium and other minerals to form insoluble salts which cannot be absorbed by the body. This is not usually a problem if the amount of calcium in the diet greatly exceeds the amount of oxalate...

Roots and tubers of begonias have also been used extensively in folk medicine. Roots of *B. gracilis* have been used as emetics, purgatives, and cathartics. Curcubitacins isolated from the tubers have been shown to have antitumor properties,



*Begonia depauperata* (opposite page) showing numerous oxalic acid crystals on the underside of the leaves. Photo by Jem Wiseman

*Begonia auriculata* (above) is sometimes used as a substitute for sorrel - another plant with a higher oxalic acid content. Photo by Jacky Duruisseau

but their toxicity precludes wider therapeutic usefulness. Overuse of the roots has been reported to cause anemia.

... Sap of *B. fuscarpa* Irmsch. is applied to wounds in Sierra Leone. *Begonia humilis* Dryander in Ait. is used in Trinidad for colds, cough, consumption, and fever, and contains oxalate, rutin, quercetin, and cyanidin. Shoots of several species in Southeast Asia are used to treat sick stomachs and enlarged spleens. Leaves of *B. oxyloba* Welwitsch ex Hook. in Oliver are used in East Africa as an anthelmintic (anti-parasitic). The Mountain Pima use begonia sap to treat toothaches and gum ailments. Leaves of *B. oblongata* Merrill are eaten in the Philippines as an antidote for poisoning by *Dioscorea hispida* Dennst. ... Begonias have been used in the West Indies to treat cancer. Antibacterial properties have also been reported from *B. glabra*.

Read complete article, with full Literature Cited information, at [http://www.jstor.org/stable/4255414?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4255414?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)





# Westchester Begonia Society

## 56th Annual Begonia Show & Sale

The Westchester Branch of the American Begonia Society is proud to present its 56th Annual Begonia Show and Sale this coming summer on Saturday, July 18, 2015. The exciting Westchester event is the only judged begonia show in Southern California and will not only showcase begonias but ferns, orchids, bromeliads, aroids and other shade loving plants.

The Show Honoree for 2015 will be dedicated, long-time member James "Jim" Jaeger. His many years of diverse and ongoing contributions to the Southern California Branches of the ABS, as well as diverse other horticultural societies, make this a well-deserved recognition for Mr. Jaeger.

An excellent selection of rare and beautiful begonias - species, hybrids, and other plants and gifts - will be available for purchase.

Special feature this year will be a display of lovely gesneriads by the Culver City Gesneriad Society.

Admission is free, and free parking is widely available. Always a good time and everyone is welcome!

Event: Westchester Begonia Society 55th Annual Begonia Show & Sale

Date: Saturday, July 18, 2015

Hours: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Place: Covenant Presbyterian Church, 6323 W. 80th Street (north-west corner of Sepulveda & 80th), Los Angeles, CA 90045

Contact: Martin E. Delgado, Show Chairman, (562) 310-8380,  
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Please note that all membership and renewals go to a new address. Make sure you use this address and do not use an older *The Begonian* to get the address.

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If you continue to use the old address your membership may not be received.

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