

THE

BEGONIAN

May/June 2016





B. solimutata and bromeliads at
The Crystal Bridge in Oklahoma City, OK
Photo by Jem Wiseman

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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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Cover photo: *B. koksunii*. Article on pg 91. Photo by Robert Hamm

Back cover: A colorful look at the central bench of Brad Thompson's little greenhouse, which is filled with his hybrids and new test plants. It's a makeshift unheated greenhouse in winter. In the summer it turns into a shade house. It is part of the nursery, though it's Brad's own private area where people can look - but there isn't any shopping in there. Nearly all the plants pictured are Brad's most recent rhizomatous hybrids. Some plants are so new they don't have names yet. The 2016 ABS Convention attendees will get the opportunity to tour Brad's greenhouse and the Kartuz Nursery in Los Angeles. See page 86.
Photo by Brad Thompson

Like all of you, I'm very happy to note that the spring season is in full swing and my plants have started the exciting process of growing, steadily becoming more beautiful as each week goes by. Although I can be rather impatient, I oddly don't feel this way in regard to the begonias. I truly enjoy observing a new leaf develop, and seeing a plantlet pop up next to a healthy parent plant. Surely this is a form of meditation.

One plant I added to my collection late last year in the middle of winter was a *B. maculata* var. *wightii*, acquired by mail. Prior to placing my order, I had visited a friend's garden and spotted this kind of begonia growing among many others. Although I should have waited



B. maculata var. *wightii*
Photo by Julie Vanderwilt

President's Message

for the spring season, I soon got it into my mind to have one, and successfully searched online for a mail order nursery that offered it for sale and would ship it in the mid-winter. Like many begonias I've received via mail, it arrived rather beat-up in its 2-inch pot, but I hoped that it would recover from the shock of cross-country travel. Nevertheless, the larger leaves of this plant developed mildew, and two primary growth tips each dropped off at an upper node - perhaps I would lose this plant, but that's the risk I took, like taking it from a greenhouse environment to the outdoor area where I keep all of my plants.

In the light of spring however, reflecting on this seemingly fragile plant, I could see unmistakable signs of hope. New growth had appeared from below the damaged areas, since pruned in early spring. If events continued to develop according to nature's evident plan, in time my plant would grow more leaves and eventually even more stems if I continued to properly care for it. I could see that if I'm patient and treat it well, the *B. maculata* var. *wightii* will become more beautiful than ever by midsummer. As with many other things in the world, beauty will overcome imperfection if given nourishment and opportunity.

We who grow begonias know the potential of this beautiful, very unusual plant. Bear in mind that as we continue to nurture and grow our plants in this growing season, it's also an opportunity to illuminate to the general public - and each other - the potential that is within the reach of anyone who tries.

In Friendly Contact,
Martin E. Delgado
President, ABS

Welcome to the ABS 2016 Convention in California!



On behalf of the Southern California Branches of the American Begonia Society (ABS), we want to welcome one and all to the 2016 ABS Convention in Southern California.

Beautiful Southern California has long been known for its incomparable climate, amazing cities, cultural and natural treasures, and yes, begonias — The Cradle of the ABS and home to many famed hybridizers and growers, including Eva Kenworthy Gray, Rudolph Ziesenne, and Irene Nuss, “SoCal” is truly a begonia-lover's paradise. No matter what you might want to see and do on your vacation, Southern California has it. But here's the best part: Your Convention Planning Committee has carefully planned events that will automatically give you, our friends, a wonderful and authentic experience of begonias and the California lifestyle. These programs include diverse tours of the highest quality, speakers covering all aspects of begonias and begonia growing, and a National Show and Sale that will you'll never forget. Stay up-to-date with any changes on our website, Begonias.org.

We hope and expect that you'll greatly enjoy your time with us in SoCal, and it's with great pride that we invite you to experience some “Begonia Magic.”
Best Wishes, Convention Planning Committee
Southern California Branches, ABS

Begonia Magic
American Begonia Society
Convention - 2016
September 6–11, 2016



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Call the Ayres Hotel toll-free line (800) 675-3550 for your reservations.

Begonia Magic 2016 ABS Convention Tours

Tour #1 “Members’ Gardens” Tuesday, September 6 (\$65.00 per person, lunch included)

On this first tour of our 2016 Convention we will visit: The garden of Arlene and Jack Hoskins in Yorba Linda, CA. This is the “crown jewel” of the private Southern California begonia world. Not only are there fabulous begonias, but this garden also contains rare cacti, succulents, cycads, crotons, palms and many more exotic and beautifully grown plants.

Next is the garden of Sol and Al Schaffer in Buena Park, CA. Theirs is a diverse and interesting selection of begonias, orchids, succulents and various unusual plants. Immediately afterward, will be having a catered Mexican luncheon at the home of the Schaffers, followed by some browsing at the many neighboring shops.

We will then proceed to Norm and Candy Nakanishi’s garden and greenhouses, in Anaheim, CA. They are avid begonia growers but don’t stop there - they just plain love plants! Norm has a large bromeliad collection and is really into propagating. Though they aren’t retailers, perhaps you might convince them to sell you something...

Finally, we’ll visit the garden of Carol Knight in San Pedro, CA. She is a “cane” girl but loves all begonias. Succulents are her second love and she has some unusual ones. There will be wine and cheese to relax everyone after a very pleasant, long day of touring.

Everyone says they want to visit their fellow members’ gardens – in that case, you won’t want to miss this pre-tour!

Tour #2 “The Huntington” Wednesday, September 7 (\$50.00 per person)

A private, non-profit institution, the world-famous Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens was founded in 1919 by Henry E. Huntington, an exceptional businessman who built a financial empire that included railroad companies, utilities, and real estate holdings in Southern California. Huntington was also a man of vision with a special interest in books, art, and gardens. During his lifetime, he amassed the core of one of the finest research libraries in the world, established a splendid art collection, and created an array of botanical gardens with plants from around the globe. The Botanical Gardens are an ever-changing exhibition of color and a constant delight. Covering 120 acres, more than a dozen specialized gardens are arranged within a Park-like landscape of rolling lawns, including the Desert, Japanese, Rose, and Chinese Gardens. Other important botanical attractions include the Subtropical, Herb, Jungle, and Palm gardens. We will be given a special tour in the morning and lunch will be on your own. The beautiful complex has a coffee shop and cafe, a rose garden patio cafe, a Chinese tea house and the Famous Rose Garden Tea Room - The Tea Room requires reservations, so call (626) 683-8131. After lunch you will have plenty of time to explore this huge, extraordinary place.

Tour #3 “Old California” Thursday, September 8 (\$70.00 per person, lunch included)

This tour takes us south to beautiful San Juan Capistrano, CA. The Hispanic presence in California has existed since the earliest European exploration of the region, and when we arrive we will have time to visit the Los Rios Historic District, established in 1794 and the oldest continually occupied neighborhood in the state. This area consists of 31 historic structures of various architectural styles spanning two centuries, now converted into unique shops and restaurants. Afterward, we will gather for lunch at the Cedar Creek Inn, followed by a docent-guided tour of Mission San Juan Capistrano, known as the “Jewel of the California Missions.” After the tour, we’ll visit the Plant Depot, a fabulous nursery sure to please everyone.

Tour #4 “Friends Down South”

Sunday, September 11 (\$65.00 per person, lunch included)

As the convention winds down, we have one more tour to offer, and it’s a good one. We’ll head south to the famous Kartuz Nursery in Vista, CA. Everyone has at least heard about Mike Kartuz and knows his plants are super and rare – the begonia world is lucky to have him. And we’d be remiss if we didn’t include famed hybridiz-

continued on next page



A benchful of beautiful hybrids in famed hybridizer Brad Thompson’s growing area. Brad will be conducting a special workshop for the tour attendees. Photo by Brad Thompson

2016 Holiday Greeting Donations Request

Holiday season, already?? No, you can relax. Although the holidays are many months away, it is NOT too early to consider making a donation to Holiday Greetings for 2016! 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 in 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. Thank you.

Convention tours ...continued from page 87

er Brad Thompson in this visit, as he's based at this nursery as well. His plants are in many gardens around the country and we owe him much for his beautiful begonia hybrids. And, a bonus - Brad will be doing a special workshop. Both Mike and Brad are a fountain of begonia knowledge, and you'll get to meet them. A visit to remember! Next, we will stop at the special and unusual garden of Dean Turney in Encinitas, CA. He is a begonia "nut" and also specializes in terrariums. There's so much to see at his place, you'll be amazed. And we will lunch there! Lastly, we will make a stop at the famous Roger's Gardens nursery in Costa Mesa, CA. This gem is famous throughout California for its amazing plant selection and fabulous gift shops. There is something for everyone at this nursery, so you won't be disappointed!



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Begonia aridicaulis

Article and photo by Randy Montes Kerr, West Hollywood, CA



Tucked in the back of a terrarium, surrounded by bigger plants, *B. aridicaulis*, a Mexican species, is blooming.

My only counsel regarding this species is a suggestion to grow it on the dry side, whether in a peat based potting mix or Sphagnum moss. The plant shown may be doing well in no small part because, due to its location, it is generally ignored.

My research has not turned up many sources of information about this species. But one excellent source is a 1952 *Begonian* article by Rudy Ziesenhenné:

"The name *aridicaulis* means "dried stem" as the stem actually appears to be shriveled up. When the cuttings arrived from Mr. MacDougall, I was tempted to throw them out as seemingly lifeless stems. Reconsidering this drastic action, I put the stems into the cutting bed and - behold! This lovely little plant sprang forth. The leaves are light green with lighter, some what silvery-appearing, veins. Some plants have leaves with the underside red. In these plants the silver-like veins are more prominent, as the red accentuates the silver."

Rudy Ziesenhenné, *Begonia aridicaulis* Zies, *The Begonian* 1952:19, 105-106.

I really love having those back issues on DVD.

Peltate or Pinnate?



Begonia bipinnatifida, with its crimson-colored stems and dark green foliage and red undersides, is a very unique and attractive begonia. When it chooses to bloom, it has dark pink blossoms. The un-begonia-like foliage leads it to sometimes be mistaken for a fern. This New Guinea species needs high humidity and careful watering. It can be a bit challenging to grow.

Is the leaf peltate or pinnate?

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

Last month's answer to Picture Quiz
March/April 2016 issue, page 64.

Perianth v. Peduncle?

ANSWER: *Peduncle*, the main flower stalk, supporting the flower cluster.
See *The Begonian*, Vol. 79, September/October 2012, p. 173.

Growing *B. koksunii*

Article and photos by
Bob Hamm, Sacramento, CA

I received this *B. koksunii* (see cover photo) about a year ago, and it is the dark form of the species, the lighter green form being far less colorful. The only information I have about it, is it's Malaysian.

I have been growing it in a 12" bowl, and it seems to want to outgrow it. The medium is long fibered New Zealand Sphagnum moss with a bit of my regular soil mix added. It lives under lights in my bedroom where the temperatures range from around 68°F in winter to around 80°F in summer. The lights are on a long day cycle. I haven't seen it bloom yet.

B. koksunii roots easily from leaves, with new growth from the base of the leaf (as shown in photo). I plan on trying a plant in the greenhouse this year to see if it can be grown with somewhat less humidity. All the real tropicals I had on trial in the greenhouse this past winter died when an electrical problem cut out the heater and it dropped into the 30's.



B. koksunii with a leaf sprouting from it.

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Begonia dregei

Article and photos by Linda Tamblyn, Merriam, KS

About 15 years ago I saw my first *Begonia dregei*. It was a fabulous specimen that was sporting a big blue and gold rosette for Best in Show. But, it wasn't at a begonia show; it was at the Cactus and Succulent Convention. I knew I had to have one.

The grower was kind enough to give me a small start (plant people are so generous!) and I've grown it ever since. I will admit, I've nearly killed it more than once, and then find

continued on next page

A young *Begonia dregei* (Fig 1), sometimes called the Maple-leaved Begonia. This variation has leaves with silver spots and less deeply-lobed leaves than some other forms of this semi-tuberous begonia. Photo by Craig Boyajian.

The spectacular silver and green leaf markings, and the gnarled caudex, make this *Begonia dregei* 'Tweedle Dum' (Fig 2) a perfect candidate to be trained as a bonsai.

Photo by Linda Tamblyn



As this *Begonia dregei* 'Tweedle Dum' grows, the caudex (Fig 3) will be progressively raised with each repotting to create a bonsai appearance. In habitat most of the tuber would be hidden underground. Photo by Linda Tamblin

Another variation of *Begonia dregei* with plain green leaves. Photo by C. T. Johansson (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

myself frantically pinching a start from the collapsing plant at the last minute. Holding my breath, I quickly re-propagate - with fingers crossed that I won't lose it. At other times, I've grown it up to a gorgeous plant; covered with blossoms, and winning its own ribbons at both begonia shows and cactus and succulent shows.

Part of the charm of this plant is the strange, swollen caudex, which, by the way, is what qualifies it to be a succulent as well as a begonia. I like to train it as a bonsai to capitalize on the sculptural look of the fat base and its tree like growth. Judicious pruning and a nice pot can transform a *Begonia dregei* into a piece of living art.

One of my plant buddies heard about a little antique and plant shop about three hours south, so we loaded up the car and made the journey. I came back with several nice cane begonias, an otherworldly fern named ET, and a little *Begonia dregei* 'Tweedle Dee'. I loved its compact size and the silver and green leaves that reminded me of a turtle shell. And, what a nice little caudex!

I've been growing this form of *Begonia dregei* for about 3 years now. At times, the attractive little



leaves cover every branch. At other times, every leaf falls and I'm left with bare branches. It has gone through a bout (or two) of powdery mildew and then rallied, sprouting a new and beautiful flush of leaves. It has even given me the pleasure of a bloom or two.

I'm careful about the water, especially in the winter. The succulent caudex stores some water so I let it go dry - but not too dry for too long. During the cold, dark winter days I grow it with my succulents and cactus under a bank of fluorescent lights.

In the summer, I give my *Begonia dregei* plenty of water when the weather is warm and sunny, however should it turn gray, rainy, or cool, water is withheld. I keep it in a bright spot that gets gentle morning sun. Too much sun scorches the leaves and seems to stress the plant. I use an orchid bloom fertilizer on it in the spring - yes, I'm always trying to coax it into flowering. It's quite lovely in full bloom.

Mark Tebbitt's book, *Begonias*, offers more fascinating information on this unique and odd species, including detailed growing suggestions. What I find most interesting is the number of synonyms that are found for this plant, which, as Tebbitts points out, are based "almost entirely on differences in the size and shape of their leaves." Interestingly, the species has shown increasing variation as the forests on South Africa's east coast are broken up and the populations become isolated and specialized. Tebbitts entry on *Begonia dregei* is quite an interesting read and highly recommended.

I like to groom *Begonia dregei* into a small bonsai that can be enjoyed on the windowsill in my kitchen - it never fails to catch the eye of visitors. The diversity in the size and shape of the leaves also attracts me, as well as the curious forms the caudex can take. *Begonia dregei* is prominently on my top ten favorite plant list.

A Word with You: *karst*

By Claudia Goodridge, New Haven, CT

“...’discovered’ in a flower shop.” Really! That line grabbed my attention. *B. kui* was the discovery, *karst* the vocabulary word. I had never seen *karst* before finding it in Randy Montes Kerr’s article in the March/April issue of *The Begonian*, p. 69, so off to my dictionary. I’m branching out a bit from Botanispeak with this one.

The article about *B. kui*, the newly identified species found in a flower shop in Taiwan, said it was native to the *karsts* of northern Vietnam, a hitchhiker in Vietnamese imports! So those odd things that sprout in an otherwise pristine potted plant could be a new species (or something invasive). I’m glad I saw *karst* as it explains a lot of otherworldly landscapes I’ve personally seen over the years, and others seen only in photographs. We drove through the Minerve, Hérault region of France a few years ago and I remember being dozzled by the landscape, but lacking knowledge, vocabulary, and Google, never found out what caused it. Now I know.

Karst landscapes are usually in limestone. Acidic rainwater seeping through corrodes, erodes, or dissolves the limestone on its way to subterranean drainage, leaving sinkholes and caves. Seawater creates strange shoreline shapes.

Karst derivation is unclear. My Webster doesn’t even have it. But internet sources indicate it comes from Latin or Indo-European roots. Is that general enough?



Fantastic limestone formations in Madagascar (Fig 1) are locally known as “tsinghy”. Near the Island of Phuket in Thailand, limestone “towers” (Fig 2) dot the waters. Photo courtesy of wikipedia. As the limestone erodes, the tops collapse and sea caves, known as hongs, are created. Photo by Emily Tamblyn

According to Wikipedia, “mature *karst* landscapes, where more bedrock has been removed than remains, may result in karst towers, or haystack/eggbox landscapes.” Those are in the Google images if you search in “limestone *karst* region of N. Vietnam” or “tsingy Madagascar.” *B. kui* seems to have come from the Thai Nguyen Province, a more interior section of Vietnam with distinct karstified landscapes. What a bold move by our begonias.

Exploring for Begonias in Florida Part III

By Freda Holley, Choudrant, LA

On Tuesday October 6, we headed north for our last stop in Florida, a visit with Charles Jaros in DeBary, which is almost 200 miles north of Palm Beach. We arrived at his new home in mid afternoon. We settled in; then took a quick tour of his yard, which he has just begun to convert to the begonia paradise we know it will become.

The front yard and a strip near the house in back has little shade other than that provided by the house itself and Charles takes full advantage of that. Beyond this strip in the back is a natural wooded area already holding begonias both in pots and in the ground.

But the star of the afternoon is what I have designated “Charles Begonia Art Museum.” I collect china and could only be jealous of his collection dedicated to begonias. China fills cabinets, shelves, and even spills over to the floor in all his rooms from entry to kitchen, all of it beautiful. The majolica in particular was impressive. Framed begonia watercolors and prints took up the open wall space. We’ve all admired the begonia fabric that always adorns Charles’ shirts, but here the cushions, bed coverings, and drapes were of begonia fabric. My camera was clicking continuously; I took so many photos of this collection that I could fill this entire issue to showcase his collection so what you see here is just a tiny selection. These photos alone made the trip worthwhile!

That evening Charles took us for a visit to the Swamp House Riverside Grill. The rustic building sits in a setting of Spanish moss draped live oaks sited on the St. John’s River noted not only because it is the longest river in Florida, but because it is the only river in the U.S. that flows north – all that and gorgeous too! The food was excellent as well.

The next morning, I took photos of the begonias outside. The begonias bordering the back of the house were getting enough light that they all were blooming beautifully. Since DeBary is so far north of Palm Beach, it does sometimes get cold in winter, even on occasion freezing; for this, there was a glassed in garden room at the rear into which Charles can move the pots of begonias in the event of a freeze.

Mary Bucholtz came from Jacksonville to the north to join us for our planned trip to see Harmony Foliage in Sorrento, a short distance south again. Mary co-chairs the Unidentified Species Committee with Charles and has long been one of the best of ABS growers. She also takes beautiful photos, which help make the Unidentified Species listing so useful. Mary manages to grow her own begonias in her high-rise condo. I am her long-time admirer and friend and it was wonderful to see her. Unfortunately her husband’s illness has kept her from conventions for a few years now.

At Harmony we found the ultimate in begonia propagation from leaf cuttings to 6” baskets or pots. The amazing thing to me was the size of the leaves the plants achieved. I later found out that they have a feeding schedule of once weekly with half-strength 20-20-20 in summer and every other week in winter. This plus the perfect conditions of their greenhouse produces very large plants and in many those huge leaves I love. With Charles’ contributions Harmony is particularly helpful in raising so many of the rare unidentified and newly discovered species. Although they are wholesale only, Charles secures begonias and brings a carload to supply ABS and SWR plant sales. So I was prepared to see beautiful plants, but to see their procedures and products in mass was just overwhelming. I wandered the greenhouse aisles in amazement. I was also surprised to find that co-owner Deb Cox and her partner and 2 person staff were able to do all this. I watched Deb slice leaves, dip them in their magic solution, and plant trays with an economy of motion. She has a lesson for hybridizers when she says that they might as well not grow plants with plain leaves; they just don’t sell. Customers want color and pattern. The begonia world is

Continued on page 102



1



2



3



4



- A shelf of begonia china in Charles Jaros’ collection. (Fig 1)
- Coffee or chocolate sets of various begonia patterns plus a few plates. Some of these appear to be hand painted. (Fig 2)
- Even the coasters had begonias! (Fig 3)
- Majolica and other amazing pieces occupied many shelves. (Fig 4)
- More majolica.(Fig 5)
- The walls contained framed photos of begonias. (Fig 6)
- Even the cushions, bed covers, and drapes were filled with begonia depictions. (Fig 7)



Here is a typical tray of leaf cuttings planted by Deb at Harmony. (Fig 8) Look at the color and texture of these leaves and note the baskets in the background. Deb is just to the left, mostly out of the photo. (Fig 9) *B. U442*, 444 in Charles' yard. One of many large thick stem begonias he grows under a canopy of trees. (Fig 10) Charles Jaros stands in the path through the forested area at the rear of his house. Note the begonias already beginning to line the path. (Fig 11) Charles and RL enjoy the rocking chairs on the front porch of the historic Lakeside Inn. (Fig 12) Many of the begonias along the back in Charles' yard were in bloom since they received late afternoon sun. Here is my favorite, blooms on a female *B. roxburghii*. (Fig 13) *B. 'Harmony's Stormy Sunset'* growing in Charles' border. (Fig 14)

Propagating Begonias

by Greg Sytch, Horticultural Correspondent, New Port Richey, FL

In the Mailbox

The warm season is upon us, and our begonias are growing fast. This is the best time to take cuttings and make more, share at a meeting, or share with friends. Begonia cuttings thrive in the warm, often moist conditions of late spring and summer, so to be successful, here are a few tips to make the job easier.

Cane Cuttings: Canes propagate easily by stem cuttings. Prepare a light mix that drains well. Equal parts of peat moss and perlite is the standard mix. I also throw in about 1/10 vermiculite to keep the mix open. Take a cutting between 4 and 6 inches long, remove the lower leaves, and insert into the mix a few inches. I use two cuttings per 3" or 4" pots. Moisten thoroughly. When inserting a cutting, do not insert a bloom crevice (dark brown recessed area) but instead, look for the point where a new stem would emerge. Bloom crevices will never send out new shoots. In 4-6 weeks rooting should occur and it will be time to transplant.

Rhizomatous Leaves: Leaves usually require a bit more perlite to ensure the mix is not sopping wet. I use 2/3 perlite and 1/3 peat moss if I can. Use a smaller pot so the leaf is not in a large pot that holds excess moisture. Take a fresh leaf, preferably not too old, and leave about an inch of stem. I sometimes reduce the size of the leaf so it does not cover the soil, Insert to the petiole. Using Rootone may help.

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Exploring for Begonias in Florida

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fortunate to have their expertise at work for us.

After our visit to Harmony, we continued to the small historic city of Mt. Dora so named because it is on a plateau a full 184 ft. above sea level, as near to a mountain as it gets in Florida. There we stopped for lunch at the elegant restaurant in the Lakeside Inn located on Lake Dora. As I shared with Mary and Charles, when you live in North Central Louisiana any restaurant with tablecloths – if only we had one - has to be declared ultra elegant! We had a great lunch and enjoyed the scenery from their front porch. The Lakeside Inn itself is on the U.S. Department of the Interior National Registry of Historic Places with a bronze marker prominently displayed. After a short tour of the small town with many other historic buildings and shops of all types, we called it a day and headed back to Charles' for a little relaxation before Mary went back to Jacksonville. I took a few more photos of Charles' forested area and we settled in for a comfortable evening of begonia talk with Charles.

The next morning we took our leave of Charles and his hospitality, loaded our pickup and headed home across Florida on the same route we had traveled in. We reached Hattiesburg, MS and decided to spend the night there. We finished the short distance home Thursday morning well satisfied. What a wonderful voyage of discovery we had made!

Leaves take 3-6 weeks to show new growth. Rexes often pup faster than rhizomatous. Wait until new babies have emerged and are several inches tall before transplanting.

Rhizome Cuttings: Sometimes, rhizomatous or rexes have longer rhizomes growing out the sides of the pot. These can easily be propagated. However, the resulting plant can be off center. If possible, use two rhizomes per pot, facing in opposite directions so the plant is fuller. Leave a few inches of rhizome without the leaf and insert on an angle in the same mix as above. Insert as deep as possible for stability, and you may need to stake them until rooted. Rhizomes generally root fast.

Light: Cuttings require shade for best rooting. There should not be any sun, and covering to make the conditions more moist helps in the first few weeks. Once rooting has occurred, the cuttings can gradually be exposed to more light.

Fertilizer: A weak solution at half strength after a week or two will aid rooting. After 4-6 weeks, stronger fertilizing can begin.

Moisture: Keep cuttings moist and try to avoid wet soil. Cuttings can rot easily in wet soil. Misting will also help. Using a dome over them, or covering an area with plastic sheeting creates ideal conditions.

We will cover sowing seeds in the next issue. Until then, Good Growing!



A look at begonia roots. Many begonia roots!

Mimi's Atrium

Article and photos by Bill Schramm, Monterey, CA

Mimi and Bill Schramm live in a valley called Corral de Tierra just 10 miles inland from Monterey, California and the Pacific ocean. John Steinbeck wrote a book about life in that valley and titled it "The Pastures of Heaven". It is truly a wonderful place to live and grow begonias, ferns, and just about anything else. Bill is a retired Navy Captain, but when he was on active duty and stationed in Monterey he and Mimi visited a plant sale put on by the Monterey Bay Chapter of the ABS. They liked the people they met there and joined the Chapter. That was back in 1973 and they have been members ever since.

When they built their home in 1976 Bill, who designed the house, included an atrium because Mimi was and is a very committed gardner and plant lover. The atrium is about 20' by 20' and faces the entry way with a wall of windows opposite the front doors. On one side of the atrium there are windows providing views from the dining room and on the other side windows with views from the study and the living room. The back wall has windows looking out to native oaks. Lighting provides great viewing of the plants at night. The purpose of the atrium was to be a showcase where the Schramms and their guests can view

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The Schramm's grow their begonias in the atrium, but bring them into the house on occasion to display on a table in the entry hall. One of the begonias currently on display is unidentified rex (Fig 1). *B.* "Red Fred" (Fig 2) also makes a impressive presentation when it comes inside.

A view from the entry hall, looking through the window, into the Schramm's atrium. This is where Mimi grows ferns and begonias - BIG ferns and begonias. Just behind the potted fern there is a large plate with pink flowers and a blue bird. Mimi won this plate as an award when the Begonia Convention was held in San Francisco, CA. (Fig 3).

B. 'Red Fred' and *B.* 'Freddie' side by side on a table (Fig 4) in the entry hall where we sometimes display them. The largest leaves on both of the begonias measure 14".

Mimi's large *B.* 'Marmaduke' (Fig 5) is one of the favorites in the atrium.

and enjoy the plants that Mimi grows. Mostly the plants in the atrium are ferns and begonias as can be seen in the photos.

Initially the overhead was fiberglass panels, but they were replaced by glass and most recently the glass was replaced by polycarbonate panels like those used to cover greenhouses.



Bill Schramm designed their house with Mimi's love for plants in mind. The house features an atrium which faces the entry hall. Windows also look into the atrium from the dining room on one side and a study on the other. The atrium is about 20' by 20'. Mimi grows mainly ferns and begonias (Fig 6) creating a jungle-like feeling which can be especially appreciated through the view from the dining room (Fig 7).

It has been interesting and informative to observe how different plants respond to the different roof coverings. The reason is that plants respond in different ways to different wavelengths of light and each different kind of overhead covering allows different wavelengths of light to pass or to be filtered. To our eyes light is light, but it does not work that way for plants and a plant that does well under regular glass may do better or worse under polycarbonate.

To control temperature a shade cloth covering is installed in the summer and there is also an attic exhaust fan built into the overhead and controlled by a thermostat. Homes such as ours that are built on a foundation with crawl space under the home have screened openings around the foundation to allow for air circulation and some of these openings are along the walls facing the atrium. When the exhaust fan pushes hot air out of the atrium, cool air is drawn into the atrium from under the house which helps to keep the space cool. In the winter the shade cloth is removed, the

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exhaust fan opening as well as the screened openings from under the home are sealed, and a portable heater provides heat on cold evenings. The begonias and ferns love their home and many have grown really large.

Although it is great to have a place to display and admire your best plants, it is also helpful to have a work place for potting and growing. Mimi has a 40' greenhouse for that purpose and there is also a large lath/shade structure adjacent to the swimming pool which is home to more ferns, cane begonias and tuberous begonias. (Perhaps the lath structure and greenhouse can be the subject for another article in the future.)

At last count Mimi had in excess of 1000 potted plants in the atrium, lath area, greenhouse and elsewhere around the home plus the normal assortment of plants in the ground. She loves her plants and they love her.

Companion Plant: *Neomarica gracilis*

Article and photos by Linda Tambllyn, Merriam, KS

One of the best things about my plant hobby is the memory of who gave me a plant. A friend's 94-year-old grandmother heard I liked plants and extended an invitation to come see her collection. Of course, I made a date to go.

She turned out to be a quite a plant lover. I recall she had the largest *Begonia* 'Erythrophylla' I ever saw. The rhizomes snaked around what must have been at least a 14' pot, which was totally hidden by its huge leaves and rhizomes. Every window was packed with gesneriads, begonias, succulents, ferns, and lots of other interesting plants. But one plant in particular caught my eye. It looked like an iris with a few extra long leaves that were tipped with baby plants. She called it a Walking Iris and I was lucky to find one in the box of plants she sent home with me.

After a little research, I discovered this plant was *Neomarica gracilis*, a native to South and Central America. It got the common name, Walking Iris, from its unique propagation method. The blooms pop out of the leaves and, as the short-lived blooms fade, the leaf continues to elongate until it drops to the ground and forms a new plant, which takes root.

The blooms appear from late winter to early spring. They are quite iris-like and hypnotically fragrant. A single bloom only lasts about 18 hours, but each bloom stalk produces about three flowers. Every time a flowering stem bloomed and produced a baby

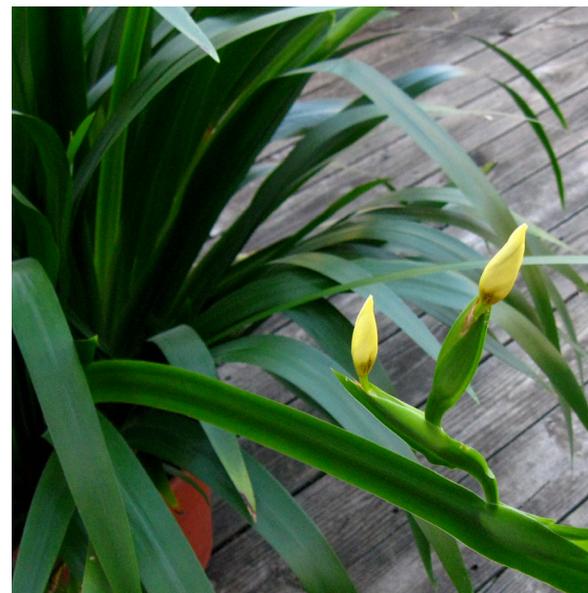
I tucked it back into the pot until, after a couple of years I had a large beautiful plant. And then I begin to have extras and I was the one giving them away.

My *Neomarica* is a very good companion for my begonias. The care is quite similar, though I find the Walking Iris to be quite robust. The plain green leaves offer a nice backdrop for colorful begonia leaves. I fertilize and water the plant the same as I do my canes. I also give it the same light and temperature as my cane begonias

And when I take care of it, I fondly remember a lovely afternoon spent in the company of a fellow plant lover.



Neomarica gracilis enjoys the same conditions as many begonias (Fig 1). Buds are lemon yellow (Fig 2). Flower buds pop right out of the leaf (Fig 3). The flowers are short-lived, but quite beautiful and fragrant (Fig 4).





Flower Show Fun

Priscilla Purinton, West Kingston, RI

What's better than an ABS branch creating a flower show exhibit? When two branches work together to create the exhibit!

For the Rhode Island Spring Flower and Garden Show in February 2016, the Buxton Branch of Massachusetts joined the RI Branch in creating a prize-winning garden. Working with a theme of "It's Always Springtime Somewhere - Around the World with Begonias", the two branches pooled their artistic talents as well as plants to create a stunning display. There were some unexpected challenges; at set-up, the show management requested that we 'grow' the exhibit to almost four times the floor space! Our talented designer and vice-president, David Harrington, was able to incorporate large stones and additional plants into the design to achieve the new size.

The biggest challenge was convincing show attendees that all of the plants in the exhibit were actually begonias! From the *B. loranthoides* ssp. *rhopalocarpa* (mistaken for a hoyo) to the rhizomatous *B. 'Plum Gorgeous'* (considered by many to be a heuchera), it became obvious that more begonia education is needed by the general public. Luckily, our members have demonstrated that they are up to the challenge! The begonia display generated much discussion with attendees and we hope to increase our membership through this outreach.



Priscilla Purinton (on the right) and Sharon Rosenzweig (on the left) (Fig 1) after the cooperative display was set up.

Photo by Rick McFadden
This unknown begonia (Fig 2) was one that attendees kept insisting was a geranium. So a sign was made and propped up on *B. loranthoides* ssp. *rhopalocarpa* (Fig 3)
B. 'Plum Gorgeous' (Fig 4)
Photos by Priscilla Purinton

Remembering Jeanne Jones 1926–2016

We lost a true begonia legend early in February. I met Jeanne shortly after I joined Westchester and the ABS in 1991. One of my first memories was a program she did for Westchester about her trip to London and the Chelsea Flower Show. It was incredible. Jeanne first joined Westchester and met Irene Nuss who became her mentor. They were dearest friends and colleagues for many years and Irene encouraged her to start the Palos Verdes Branch with Brad Thompson.

Jeanne was very active in the ABS and served, not very happily, for many years as Historian and attended almost every Convention, very happily. She was one of the participants of our famous tour to Scotland and the Ayr Flower Show in 2007 as guests of the Scottish Begonia Society.

Jeanne was a marvelous grower not only of begonias but bromeliads, epiphyllums, hoyas and fruit trees. She was famous for her homegrown apple pies. She was very generous with her plants and I think that every hoya and epi I have in my garden came from Jeanne. Even in the years of failing health she kept on growing and thanks to a very helpful & thoughtful gardener she was able to bring a spectacular, 8 ft. tall *B. 'Sophie Cecile'* to the PV show every year. Jeanne was Westchester's honoree in 2006 when she celebrated her 80th birthday. And it was Jeanne who started our annual tradition of choosing an honoree for the show. The first one was Irene Nuss and it was one of our best with Jeanne collecting a stage-filling collection of Irene's famous hybrids.



We will never forget this amazing woman who enriched our lives with her beautiful begonias and her great spirit.

Rest in Peace, dear Jeanne.
from Janet Brown

When I think of Jeanne it is hard to think of as gone, though it wasn't unexpected. The last time she visited she insisted on giving me a big hug though she knew I wasn't big on hugging. She said she wanted to give me a hug because it was the last time I was going to see her. I wish this had been one time when she changed her mind.

She was always either the instigator behind many causes such as getting the Palos Verdes Branch started, or helping in any capacity asked of her. Often if no one volunteered for a duty, she would, even if she already had other duties. She was instrumental in arranging for free buses for Branch trips and national conventions. She was the National Director for several

clubs for many years. I think she must have written that line in the Aims and Purposes about bringing friendly contact all who love and grow begonias. It was her specialty.

She was generous to a fault if that counts as a fault. Jeanne was one of a kind for sure, a dear friend and supporter of all my efforts, and will be greatly missed once I've accepted that she won't be dropping in to talk me into a project anymore. I'm sad to not have her here but she is back with Wally, the love of her life, and it makes me happy to know that at least they are together again. She was a little lost without him though it didn't stop her from contributing as much as she was able. She had a long and fruitful life and the fruits of her labor will continue for a long time to come, and I for one will try to keep that in mind and pay it forward.

from Brad Thompson

Jeanne Jones, was a friend through good and difficult times

Jeanne and Wally Jones gave me many of my fondest memories of ABS, but over the years the one we never failed to recall when we talked was one of the least pleasant for both of us.

At an ABS Board Meeting in California to which RL for once had not accompanied me, Jeanne invited me and Tim Anderson to visit her in order to attend a meeting of the Palos Verdes Branch. We had a pleasant visit, but soon after we arrived they had a plumbing emergency when the outside drain stopped up. Nevertheless, we enjoyed her begonias lining her front yard and in the shade house she was proud of in the back yard as well as those wonderful citrus and apple trees. In typical California fashion, all the begonias were beautifully grown. It was September 10, 2001. Tim headed home to

Florida but my plane reservation was not scheduled until early the next day, September 11. We were halfway to LAX when we heard what had happened. All air travel was grounded and there was nothing to do but return to Jeanne's to watch endless television of those planes flying into the towers. This was followed by days – I can't even remember how many now – of trying to find a way home. Who can forget the frantic worry of those days, all accompanied by a worsening plumbing problem for which no plumber would respond!

In the years to come, Jeanne and I laughingly remembered those awful days, however, and often talked by phone on the anniversaries. Always, I will remember Jeanne smiling or laughing regardless of the circumstances. No friend can miss her more than I.

from Freda Holley

Jeanne Jones was one of the founding members of the Palos Verdes Branch of the American Begonia Society along with Brad Thompson and Eric Seel. She was dedicated to bringing members into the group so they could become addicted just as she was. And, boy, was she ever! She had so many begonias. She wasn't just a collector, she was a grower extraordinaire. Big, bigger and biggest. She obviously knew how to make begonias very happy.

Jeanne supported all begonia clubs and was always happy to help. I will remember her as being a true begonia devotee and she will always be tops on my begonia list.

Our club owes much to Jeanne. She laid the foundation for all of us who came after. We will miss her enthusiasm and spirit. Cheers, Jeanne

from Carol Knight

In Memoriam: Mary Elizabeth Shannon

By Mary Moultrie, Atlanta, GA

A beautiful lady went to her heavenly home early on the morning of March 14, 2016. Mary Elizabeth Shannon had spent most of her life in Atlanta, but she was born in Detroit, Michigan on September 24, 1928. Her father was a life long garden designer. After creating many beautiful gardens in the Detroit area for the automobile tycoons, he came to Atlanta where he designed gardens such as Spring Hill, the Peacock House and Hills and Dales, the Callaway estate in La Grange. All of her life, Mary Elizabeth had been surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers; so it was no wonder that she too had a great love for all growing things.

One of her favorite plants was the begonia. She and her dad were long time members of the American Begonia Society. Some favorite memories were of going on flower buying trips with her dad--even all the way to Canada and California. Mary Elizabeth was a founding member of the Greater Atlanta Branch of the American Begonia Society, and she served as the treasurer for over 20 years. She was ever ready to share her plants and her growing knowledge with others. All you had to do was to mention that you wanted a certain plant; and if she didn't have it, she would surely find it for you. She attended her last American Begonia Society Convention in Boston in 2015. In addition to enjoying all of the tours and seminars, one of her goals was to find a certain begonia for one of her friends back in Atlanta. Ever the generous heart, she rejoiced at finding that particular plant, not because she wanted it, but because someone she loved wanted it.

In addition to being an avid gardener, Mary Elizabeth spent 50 years as a nurse at Emory University Hospital. The last 25 years, she worked in the heart catharization lab along with some of Emory's most outstanding heart surgeons.

Besides being a devoted friend, energetic gardener, loving daughter and dedicated worker, Mary Elizabeth loved to travel. There were not many corners of the world that she had not visited. Even in her last years, she was dreaming about places that she wanted to visit. When she was in Boston last summer, she said "Why don't we do New York City next?"

Even though she loved to travel, her home and garden and her little dogs always called her home.

No one loved life, her family, friends, plants or birds more than Mary Elizabeth No one had a larger heart. Rest in peace dear friend. We all love you so much.



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NEW: *Begonias Of The Month*

Written by ABS members. Compiled by Wendy Corby, 2015, 116 color pages sponsored by the Sacramento Branch and published through the ABS's Thelma O'Reilly Reprint Fund.

This booklet is a compilation of monthly write-ups by ABS members from 2000 through 2010. *Begonias Of The Month* includes a variety of begonias with information on the plant's origin and growing tips from that grower's experiences and locale.

Domestic: \$20.00 International: \$30.00

The first new ABS pin in many years is now available just in time for your holiday giving. It was designed and produced by Cheryl Lenert. Surprise and delight begonia lovers on your list with this beautiful pin (pictured on page 231).
\$10.00

NEW: *Brad's Begonia World*

by Brad Thompson. Edited & Compiled by Wendy Corby, 2015.

A compendium of Brad Thompson's web page with 189 color pages of photographs, published through the ABS's Thelma O'Reilly Reprint Fund. The first section is on the different types of begonias. The second section is on the growing and care of begonias. The book is a wonderful set of articles to provide begonia enthusiasts with information and delight them with incredible full color photographs of your favorite begonias.

Domestic: \$35; International: \$45

NEW: *Understanding Begonia*

by Samuel Kennedy, Photographs & Art Work by Elizabeth Kennedy

Published in the United Kingdom, 2015, ISBN #978-0-9932897, 95 pages, full color photographs. First half of the book covers begonia history, types, sections, growing, fertilizing. Second half is devoted to growing tuberous begonias. A glorious book containing valuable information from the Jack Golding archives.

Domestic: \$20.00; International: \$30.00

NEW: *Begonia Note Cards*

featuring Begonias of Borneo found in the new Ruth Kiew book. **\$15.00**

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. The pictures are many and stunning.

Domestic: \$21.00;

International \$26.00 (Includes postage)

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
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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; International: \$42.00

B. U604-621 to add to the August, 2010 Unidentified Species Listing **\$7.00**

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

\$55.00

Seeing Begonia

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

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Begonia Hybridizing: A Primer

by Freda M. Holley, 2007

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by Rudolf Ziesenhenn

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

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by Mildred L. Thompson

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B. rajah

B. rajah grown from a small piece of rhizome. Despite the plant growing in a 1" propagation cube, its largest leaf measured nearly 4" wide at the time this photo was taken. After planting the rhizome, and tucking it away into a propagation box, it was promptly forgotten until three months later. What a surprise when it was discovered.

None of the other pieces of rhizome grew, but this one made up for it.

Photo by Jem Wiseman

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