

Austin Area Begonia Society Branch • of the American Begonia Society •

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 2

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 2015

FEBRUARY MEETING:

February 22, 2015 2 P.M.
Greene Room
Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746

http://www.kenfuchs42.net/aabs_index.html



Begonia 'Lulu Bower'

From Begonia Portraits

Zilker Garden Festival
March 28 and 29

2015 Southwest Region Get-
Together May 21-23
Sheraton Brookhollow
610 Loop Houston, TX
Room Rate \$89 per night

May 20 Judging School if enough people are
interested in attending and serving as clerks
for Friday morning.

E-mail lenert@flash.net or 281-255-9004

AMERICAN BEGONIA CONVENTION

Begonia Revolution 2015 New England
JULY 29 -- AUGUST 2
Verve Crowne Plaza
1360 Worcester Road
Natick, MA
Hotel: \$115 per night
800-265-0339

Register by May 1 for \$40 per person
\$55 after May 1

To complete the registration forms for the
convention go to the American Begonia
Society Website and click on the American
Begonia Convention.

As a progeny of dark-leaved B. 'Alzasco' and orange-flowered B. *dichroa*, B. 'Lulu Bower' arrived in San Diego, California in 1941, a hybrid by Constance Bower, who named it after her mother.

It has cane-like shoots that are bright green with white flecks. The leaf is one-sided, three inches wide often growing nine inches long, according to Alice M. Clark, who says the wide wing above the sinus is triangular or square and often has a sharp pleat in it. The wavy edge is fluted enough to show the reverse side, which is the color of old redwood.

The foliage is thin and crisp. The pinkish flower stem that emerges from a shining sheath at the leaf axil, grows two or three inches long. The orange-rose flowers are also wrapped in pink tissue. The pistillate blooms develop more slowly into shrimp pink blossoms that are not as decorative.

AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY BRANCH MINUTES

JANUARY 25, 2015 MEETING

The Austin Area Begonia Society Branch of the American Begonia Society met January 25, 2015, at 2 P.M. in the Greene Room of the Austin Area Garden Center, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78746.

Charlotte Boyle, Vicky Cole, Jim Estes, Joan Estes, Carol Lee Fisher, Rainee Freeman, Ken Fuchs, Jackie Johnson, Jim Landers, Joe Moore, Nelda Moore, Valerie Morris, Carol Orozco, Connie Saenz, Verlene Schoen, Johnnie Shepard, Lynn Sissney were present.

Jackie Johnson, president pro tem, called the meeting to order after most of the members ate a variety of snacks. Jackie reviewed the order of begonias and asked Mrs. Shepard, Director of the Southwest Region, whether the Alamo Branch wanted some of these begonias. Since they do want begonias, members of Austin indicated that they will have extra begonias from their collection. Lynn Sissney, Nelda Moore, Jim Estes, and Pat Ross will have plants. The March meeting will be on the 22nd so Vicki Cole will check on getting organic fertilizer for the Adopt the Garden.

Minutes were accepted as printed in the newsletter.

Lynn Sissney reported that the Regular Share Account has \$332.53, Checking Account contains \$305.85, and Money Market shows \$3202.11.

MOTION for the Austin Begonia Group to participate in the Faerie Home and Gardens Display sponsored by Austin Parks and Recreation passed.

Lynn will complete the Faerie House Form and submit \$25 by February 28.

She also reported that she has paid for two booths for the Zilker Garden Festival March 28 and 29.

Ken Fuchs prepared a beautiful educational website that includes begonias hybridized by those in the Southwest Region. Freda Holley told about B. "Holleymoon."

Johnnie Shepard talked to Jim and Joan Estes about becoming Directors of the Southwest Region. Valerie Morris accepted a position on the Nominating Committee.

Jackie Johnson, Vice President Programs, provided an excellent introduction to Edible Begonias with some begonia flowers and leaves to taste. *B. grandis* has been cultivated for 1400 years in China where it is used for tea, medicinal purposes, pot herbs, and food. Usually all parts --roots, tubers, stems, petioles, flowers, leaves are used. Even the sap of some of them are used to curdle milk for cheese making. The Begoniaceae family includes Cucurbitales or gourds and cucumbers. Roots and tubers are used for colds, consumption, fevers, fever sores, stomach aches while other parts of begonias are used for antibacterial properties in treating wounds, anti tumor activity such as cancer treatment, and even for diabetics for glucose levels. They are also used to cure spells placed by sorcerers.

Species reported to be used include *B. cucullata*, *B. annulata* or *hatacoa*, *B. auriculata*, *B. barbata*, *B. gracilis*, *B. hermandioides*, *B. malabarica*, *B. mannii*, *B. picta*, *B. palmate*, *B. plebaja*, *B. Semperflorens*, *B. rex*, *B. roxburghii*, *B. barkeri*, *B. fusca*, *B. heracleifolia*, *B. incarnate*, *B. manacata*, and *B. nelubiaefolia*.

During the next meeting members will bring a begonia for identification.

The meeting adjourned at 4 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Nelda Moore, Secretary

PRAYERS FOR

Rekha Morris as she leaves March 3 for Delhi, India to care for her begonias that will be moved from a shade house that will be renovated after the coffee harvest.

The Nominating Committee as they search for officers for Southwest Region.

Those who have been feeling the effects of cedar trees (junipers that are red with pollen).

SHOWING BEGONIAS

Always study the Show Schedule rules for entering various classes so that there is no confusion or controversy in the entry and classification or judging process. After all, the Show Schedule is the law of the show and the judges' decisions are final.

The show should be competitive, controversy free, and a pleasure for the viewing public who is trying to receive an education concerning growing and showing begonias—all kinds of new plants that dance in their imagination.

CULTURAL PERFECTION (40-50 points) or overall appearance of a plant refers to its shape. Is it symmetrical or as near as possible? The fullness is the amount of foliage in proportion to the size of the plant. The size of the plant should be in proportion to the size of the container—not look too large or too small. It should be shallow for rhizomatous and taller for canes and shrubs. Are there signs of good growth or vigor? Color of the foliage should be healthy and not appear to be washed out or fading because of age. The plant should not have signs of pest or disease attack or mildew or holes or disfiguration from insects. The container must be clean and free from soil and salt.

Artificial materials are not allowed in terrariums.

CONDITION OR FOLIAGE (30-40 points) Pre-show grooming should be improving the appearance of the plant. Examine or “nit-pick” by looking at the leaves—dusty and dirty? Wilted? Insects? Quantity of foliage for the variety? Spiders?

QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF FLOWERS (10 points) If it is off season, no points should be deducted, but if the begonia is known to be a good bloomer and is not in bloom, points can be deducted. Seed pods should be fresh, not brown or wilted. If the stems or blooms appear to be dying, points can be deducted so remove spent flower stems.

DIFFICULTY OF CULTIVATION (10 points) This refers to species in cultivation that do not have much foliage as those in the wild or as floriferous as cultivars. Many species are difficult to grow because it is very hard to duplicate their original habitat.

JUDGES AND HOW THEY WORK

All judges are equal partners in a decision but they should have a mind of their own, should be firm, and stand by their convictions. They should be able to listen, perhaps gain a better understanding about a plant because of a difference of opinion expressed. Judges must be tough, but fair.

All division plants must be point scored. They must score 93 points to win the trophy. All plants scoring 95 points win a Cultural Certificate.

Best in Show judging will not begin until

all divisions are judged. Judges will work in groups and recording clerks will record their scores on special sheets. All Division Trophy winners eligible for Best of Show consideration will be moved by the clerks to a central Court of Honor prior to Best in Show judging. All judges are to point score using the point scoring breakdown.

It is time to think about entering a show since you have enough information to have plants groomed to win a ribbon or a trophy.

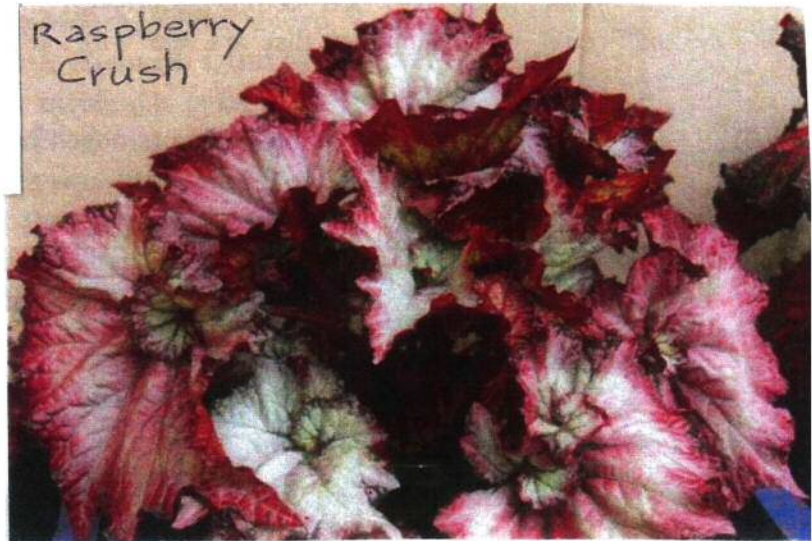
PINCHING REGULARLY; PRUNING OCCASIONALLY

Always water the begonia thoroughly the day before actually pruning the plant the next day so that the stems are rigid. Examine the stems looking for 3 or 4 nodes above the soil level. Cut off each stem at this point, but save the cuttings for planting in a 3-inch pot with moist soil. Sink at least one node into the rooting pot containing one-half vermiculite and one half perlite that has been watered from the bottom. At least 2 or 3 nodes are to remain above the mixture. Then use the tops with leaves, trimming the foliage so that each cutting has no more than 2 or 3 leaves.

Place the pots in good light, not sunlight, and cover as a mini greenhouse. The parent plant will send up shoots from the roots, and send out side shoots or branches. From then on pinch out regularly with your fingernails or a scissors the growing point on the end of each branch or stem, where there is a small dagger-shaped tightly furred new leaf. Take it out. Pinching this growing point causes the plant

to send hormones back down the stem thus bringing more basal shoots and branches.

Cutting and pinching makes the plant fuller and cutting out selective stems creates better air circulation.



Looking Glass



The Begonia Species Bank at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden

The Begonia Species Bank at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden exists to prevent the loss of begonia species. This is accomplished by:

- * Maintaining a living and expanding collection of begonia species.
- * Continuously compiling a cross-referenced library of begonia publications.
- * Exchanging plants and information with institutions and individuals around the world.
- * Educating the public through greenhouse tours, begonia species displays, and outreach programs.



Photos by Jim Landers





Jim Landers visited the Begonia Species Bank on Saturday, February 7 and returned home with these beauties:



B. reneformis from Brazil



B. 'Baby Down'



B. 'Bunny Hugs'



B. phuthoensis



B. 'Red Bluff'