



VOLUME 9, NUMBER 10

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2015

MEETING:

November 22 2 P.M.
Zilker Botanical Garden
(2220 Barton Springs Road, 78746)

Greene Room 2 P.M.
Pot Luck no turkey

No December Meeting

**Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year 2016**

Future meeting dates:

January 24, 2016
March 20
March 25-26 – Zilker Garden
Festival

*May 1
June 26
July 24
August 28
September 25
October 23
November 27



*May 1 is on hold for Zilker Botanical Garden (usually have convention in May)



The Austin Area Begonia Society toured It's About Thyme located on Manchaca Road near Marbridge Farm, where, if all works out, the nursery will re-locate.

Charlotte Boyle, Vickey Cole, Betty Dunn, Ken Fuchs, Jackie Johnson, Jim Landers, Julie Marcus, Nelda Moore, Valerie Morris, Carol Orozco, Adela Rojas, and Lynn Sisney listened intently to Chris talk about propagation of begonias, especially of Begonia 'Charm,' which was introduced to him by a gardener over 43 years ago. Through cuttings taken from a huge basket of B. 'Charm' Chris produces trays of the begonia for sale. He uses a special mix that he purchased as a growing medium and waters when the plants are almost dry. All of the begonias were doing well in the huge greenhouse. We also entered two other greenhouses featuring herbs and succulents for the plant sale mentioned in their newsletter that was sent to members earlier.





B. 'Crispula'



B. 'Looking Glass'



Begonia pinetorum

Begonia chlorosticta

Begonia chlorosticta is an erect nonrhizomatous perennial with mottled green leaves that make its foliage unique and the most beautiful in the begonia family. It is an uncommon species restricted in the wild to the forested hills at the southeastern end of the Hose Mountains in Sarawak, Malaysia. Here it grows on moist rocky slopes and damp cliffs. In 1967 Bill Burt and Peter Martin collected the begonia and introduced it to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, where the species is grown in very humid conditions in semi-shade with a temperature slightly above 70 degrees. The porous soil mix is kept moist at all times. Even though this species should not be allowed to dry out between waterings, stem cuttings can be rooted in a rather dry medium since over watering causes rot.

This uncommon species has contributed to the parentage of B. 'Aluminum,' B. 'Moon Maid.' and B. 'Calico Kew.' The last begonia mentioned was first bred at Logee's Greenhouses. Although these are easier to grow, they lack the bold spotted leaf markings of *B. chlorosticta*, which is in the section *Petermannia*--one of the largest in the genus with 200 described species and even more that have not been named yet.



Begonia chlorosticta

OVERWINTERING BEGONIAS

The local begonia society has planted many begonias in the Zilker Botanical Garden and some of them will be taken home for the winter by the individuals who planted them there for the November celebration when the Japanese will tour the gardens on the fourteenth as they visit their sister city Austin. The delegation from Oieta City will also have a concert in the Westlake High School.

On November 22 after the meeting members will take cuttings and remove some of the varieties to their greenhouses.

When the nights become colder (50's), the begonias can be placed in plastic trays with pebbles on the bottom or large perlite or gravel and a little water for humidity and then kept near a north window so that they get natural light. Moving the begonias into the home will keep them from going dormant, but some that go dormant can be saved by leaving them alone and keeping them on the dry side until spring when they might revive. Make sure the plants are free from insects and disease so that you will not have to use chemicals in the home.

A fluorescent tube light on a stand is another way of providing a source of good light for growing begonias.

If you tent your light stand to keep the humidity in, you will not have to water very often, but make sure to use non flammable plastic film that does not touch the light fixture. The clear plastic will allow you to see the plants and enjoy them throughout the winter. Of course, you may want to do this even if your plants stay in your home all year.

Remember that begonias can stand cold temperature much better than they can stand wet feet.

If you protect the begonias from a pouring winter rain, you can enclose a shadehouse with plastic, including the sides, but be sure that you can leave one side open if it gets too hot during

the winter or if the plants need rain water that you have stored in a watering can overnight.

When leaving the plants outdoors here in Austin, you can protect the begonias with a large cardboard box with a sheet or blanket and a brick over it during the frost. There is also a covering with microscopic holes in it so that air, heat, and water can pass through it, but it still provides protection from frost. This covering can remain over the plants for a couple of weeks.

Another way of overwintering your begonias is to trim them or take cuttings to root in your greenhouse and then heavily mulch the plants to protect their roots so that they will produce foliage in the spring.

Nevertheless, whatever you choose, it will be an experiment for the weather is very unpredictable. This year we have had rain, then the drought continued, and the Halloween floods returned a bit earlier. It is predicted that rains will come this week over the floodwaters of last week.



B. 'Betsy'





IT'S ABOUT THYME



