



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



Austin Area Begonia Society

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NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NO MEETING IN MARCH

NEXT MEETING:

April 26, 2020

2 P.M.

Greene Room

Austin Area Garden Center

Zilker Botanical Garden

2220 Barton Springs Road

Austin, Texas 78746

ABS/SWR GET TOGETHER

APRIL 29-MAY 2

Holiday Inn Express and

Suites Downtown

1111 West Lancaster Ave

Fort Worth, TX 76102



ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN CENTER EVENTS

CANCELED UNTIL APRIL 5

To AAGC members:

Please know that your health and safety are always our first concern.

As of today I have canceled all AAGC events at the garden center, 2220 Barton Springs. Club meetings, board meetings, shows and sales day and night are canceled until Sunday April 5, 2020. Back to normal Monday April 6, 2020. I have discussed this with several people in many areas of concern and I feel this is best. Please take care of yourselves and I will work extra hard on rescheduling events that have been affected.

Please forward this to all your club members. You can check Facebook and/or the website for updates on your volunteer opportunities in the garden with city activities.

Best...

Jeannie Ferrier

AAGC President



Vickey Cole and her Challenge
Plant, *B. neocomensium*



**AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY BRANCH
OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2020**

The Austin Area Begonia Society Branch of ABS met in the Greene Room of the Austin Area Garden Center in Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX 78746 at 2 P. M. Present were **Doug Byrom, Charlotte Boyle, Vickey Cole, Elizabeth Crepeau, Betty Dunn, Joan Estes, Ken Fuchs, Jim Landers, Nelda Moore, Valerie Morris, Lynn Sissney, and Geneva Townsend.**

Snacks were consumed.

Vickey Cole called the meeting to order at 2:15 P.M. Dues for the local society are \$10, while the American Begonia Society dues are \$25. Anyone attending the SWR/ABS Get Together must be a member of ABS. The Plant Sale is a major attraction with many rare begonias that may be sold before it is opened on Friday to the public.

The local begonia society will join the Austin Herb Society for a sale April 25 in the auditorium. Slightly used garden art and tools will be included in the sale. On April 22 Vickey, Valerie, and Nelda will meet with the manager of Zilker Botanical Garden to discuss involvement in planting begonias and ferns in the raised beds that once were used for herbs so that the blind could enjoy identifying the herbs by touch and smell. Planting will begin after Easter when perhaps the weather will not change from 70 degrees to 32 degrees in a day.

PROGRAM:

Vickey, Betty, Valerie, Lynn, Jim, Ken, and Nelda returned **B. neocomensium, the Challenge Begonia** and reported on their cultivation methods. Some repotted the begonia, but Betty let hers grow in the same container, allowing the plant to be small in height but thick and beautiful in growth. She wisely took a leaf and allowed it to send long roots downward as the tiny seedlings emerged in great numbers in the plastic bag. Betty purchased the special soil and used Super Thrive. Valerie added orchid food to her begonia to bring one of exceptional size and beauty. Nelda repotted the Challenge Plant in Green Frog soil, watered with rain water, and used Super Thrive about twice. It stayed in the lighted basement near a window for outdoor light, but most often the weather was cloudy, cold, and misty.

Doug brought many healthy baskets of begonias, some air plants, and other 4-inch pots of begonias. These begonias disappeared and even a customer from the garden entered the room to purchase begonias.

The meeting adjourned early as members carried the begonias out of the garden center.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelda Moore, secretary







FORT WORTH—CITY OF COWBOYS, CULTURE, AND BEGONIAS APRIL 29—MAY 2

Registration for the Southwest Region/American Begonia Society Get Together must be completed before March 27. Complete the forms from "Begonia Leaflet" as soon as possible.

The Mae Blanton/Dallas Branch will celebrate in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden and the Holiday Express and Suites Downtown, 1111 West Lancaster Avenue in Fort Worth 76102. A free breakfast, free parking, and a shuttle are all available to attendees at a rate of \$119 plus tax and fees.

Tours are Wednesday 1:30-5:30 to Steve's Leaves and Thursday 9-5 to Chandor Gardens in Weatherford, Nancy Hallman's Garden, Dottie Woodson's Orchid Greenhouse and lunch on your own on Weatherford Square.

The show and sale will be held in the Garden Center Building in Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

Attendees will be admitted with their registration tag. The Show and Sale will be open to members only Thursday night. Show Plants can be entered Wednesday, April 29, at 9A.M.—Noon or 6—8 P.M. The Entry Sheet must be completed.

Horticulture:

During March begonias need protection from wind and freezes. It is February 26 and it is 32 degrees in Amarillo. A freeze in Central Texas comes on the 27th. Then the weather improves until another norther reaches this area. It will probably be safe to plant seeds after Easter. Then the seedlings will come through the soil as a result of the sunshine, warmth, and moisture.

April is also time to begin fertilizing begonias with a quarter strength once a week. Any balanced fertilizer can be used. Once again examine the plants for aphids, white flies, and mealy bugs. Control them

now. Wash them off or use a soap spray. For mildew and disease spray with fungicide.

Clean any dead leaves and debris from the pots. Get the begonias ready for repotting except those that you already pruned. If the plant is old, the less often it needs repotting. Young plants 6 inches tall or those that should be moved up to larger pots should be repotted. You can check the plant by taking it out of the pot to check the root system to see whether the roots have filled the pot. Use a clean pot, new soil, and replant the begonia in the middle of the container that is filled with soil to about one inch off the rim. Older begonias in 10 inch-12 inch pots need repotting every two to three years. Again, use fresh soil and some Osmocote fertilizer that will slowly be released if you forget to take care of these plants.

Most—not rhizomatous types—need to be repotted deeper in the new pot.

PRUNING:

It is time to start cuttings from your plants to either keep the variety or share with a good grower who will give you a cutting if you lose your plant. Pruning and pinching should be done in April without die back. Pinch the tips and allow the shoots to grow. Not every begonia needs pinching, especially if it is a young plant.

Do not prune and repot at the same time. Stop pinching about six weeks before show time.

Water the begonias more often if the weather is warm. Check them often. Remember that sometimes you may need to water them three times in a day.



B. 'Black Jack'



B. 'Matchmaker'



B. 'Torch'



B. 'White Ice'