



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



VOLUME 17, NUMBER 1

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING:

JANUARY 22, 2023 2 P.M.

Auditorium

Austin Area Garden Center

Zilker Botanical Garden

2220 Barton Springs

Austin, Texas 78746

Nelda will bring a tray of food and tea or juice.

Valerie will bring cookies and cheese tray.

Plates and napkins will be furnished.

Finger foods

Program: Terrariums

CRINKLE LEAF BEGONIAS



B. gehrtii, Rhizomatous

Begonia gehrtii probably entered cultivation in Europe before 1959, when German taxonomist Edgar Irmischer received the new species from Brazil, but this new material had been cultivated at the Sao Paulo Botanical Garden. Since Dr. Gehrt was a botanist who had sent the dried specimens to him, Edgar Irmischer named it after him.



B. lubbersii



B. paulensis Cane-like

Note: The finger indicates the size of this leaf.



B. crispula, Rhizomatous

The leaf blades have a crinkled appearance like crunched-up and spread-out wax paper. These are few in number and a challenge to grow, but all are related to *B. gehrtii* and come from Brazil. *B. crispula* has

finely textured leaves with raised veins while *B. paulensis* and *B. moyesii* all require 65-75 degrees F and relative humidity of 50-60 per cent. Bright sunlight will burn these delicate leaves. The growing medium should be well drained and allowed to dry out slightly between waterings. In fact, *B. crispula* is best grown in a terrarium. All of these can be dry and wilted when it is time to repot them since their leaves are brittle and easily damaged.



B. paulensis 1859 Rhizomatous



B. moyesii

Hybrids include *B. 'Alhambra'* and *B. 'Jabberwocky.'*



B. 'Jabberwocky'

BEGONIA *lubbersii* SECTION GAERDTIA CANE-LIKE GROUP



B. Lubbersii Cane-like

Louis Lubbers, a curator of the Brussels Botanic Garden, carefully worked with a species in 1880 that he found on a trunk of a tree fern from Brazil by Pedro Binot, the plant collector. When the species flowered, he gave the fragrant begonia to Edouar Morren, who gave the name, *B. lubbersii* in honor of the discoverer. In 1956 seed was offered by the American Begonia Society and this species became widely grown. It is tricky to cultivate and susceptible to over-watering. In a hanging basket where the humidity is 40-60 per cent the plant can survive. This begonia will probably survive if it is grown in a pot slightly larger than the root mass in well-drained potting soil. Regular pinching of the young stems will result in an attractive well-shaped plant that has fragrant blossoms.

HORTICULTURE

Please believe the weather report when fifteen degrees is predicted. Not only did I empty the water out of my Louisiana irises, but I turned over the containers and placed a tarp over plant and pot. All of the begonias were placed in a lighted basement that even has a grow light. I have lost some leaves, but they are looking good. Even some new plants are still surviving. With the American Begonia Society joining the Tyler ABS/Southwest Region for one super convention there should be many begonias, leaves, books, and species to purchase. With this freeze even roses are frost bitten and crinkled black. Wait until

spring to feed these plants that will begin growing again. Even now some shrubs are bringing up new greenery with this summer weather and fog and some rain. The tuberous begonias are becoming popular again and I have had some beautiful ones. I do not save them when they are dormant. I forget what was in those empty pots. They do not emerge from the compost pile so to the store I must go to buy another beauty.

Happy growing and have a safe and wonderful time showing begonias in the New Year.

Bring a friend to the next meeting.

Minutes of the Austin Area Begonia Society Meeting of November 27, 2022

The Austin Area Begonia Society Branch of the American Begonia Society met at 2 P.M. in the Austin Area Garden Council Auditorium in Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Road, Austin, Texas 78746. Present were Charlotte Boyle, Doug Byrom, Vickey Cole, Bettie Dunn, Rainee Freeman, Jim Landers, Nelda Moore, Joe Moore, Valerie Morris, and Geneva Townsend.

Doug Pridgen's "Hybridizing Begonias – One Hybridizer's View" was a detailed careful study giving the desire to preserve begonia species for registration, and showing how to hybridize giving the timeline from seed to germination and the effects of chromosomes. As a hybridizer Doug Pridgen's desire was to achieve big plants with interesting leaves that have landscape use. He tried rex with rhizomatous varieties of begonias. He discovered that it took 20 days from pollination to seed harvest and 30 days for seed germination with at least 12 hours of bright light and 70-80 F. If refrigerated, his pollen was good for 1-2 years. He did use bags to cover the pollinated flowers. His crosses appeared and he evaluated the results. He found that some just die, genetics get in the way, not enough branching on the plant, leaves were not thick enough, the plant was not worthy to grow out because it was prone to virus and disease and too sensitive to heat and cold.

Doug Byrom and Jim Landers brought many beautiful begonias for members to take home to grow.

Doug Byrom then encouraged all of us to attend the ABS/Southwest Region Get Together May 24-27, 2023, in Tyler, Texas. The hotel will be the Holiday Inn that has rooms at \$104.99 per night with a free breakfast. The address of the hotel is 5701 South Broadway where there are plenty of restaurants and shops. Among the highlights of the trip will be the Master Gardeners Botanical Garden, plant nurseries, and the Rose Center Gardens. Flights arrive in this rose capital from Ft Worth Dallas Airport to the Tyler Pounds Regional Airport. A shuttle takes attendees to the hotel.

Pot luck for all of us was excellent. A pitcher of water was plenty.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M. and we cleaned the room.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelda Moore, Secretary



