



# AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

Website: [http://www.kenfuchs42.net/aabs\\_index.html](http://www.kenfuchs42.net/aabs_index.html)



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NEWSLETTER

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*Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors*

**NO MEETING IN FEBRUARY** due  
to a scheduling conflict with  
another AAGC club

## FUTURE MEETINGS:

March 26

April 26

September 24

October 22

November 26.

**NO May meeting**

Auditorium

Austin Area Garden Center

Zilker Botanical Garden

2220 Barton Springs

Austin, Texas 78746

**May 24-27, 2023:**

American Begonia Society/

Southwest Region Convention

Holiday Inn Convention

Center

5701 Broadway

Tyler, TX

Tyler is the largest city in  
Northeast Texas. It is the county  
seat of Smith County as well as  
the Rose Capital of Texas.



## DOUG BYROM – TERRARIUMS FOR SPECIES AT JANUARY MEETING



Doug Byrom brought several different kinds of begonias for sale including species that were purchased to plant in a closed container, where they could survive in humid conditions.



Containers were glass, plastic bowls put together, and other decorative items from home. For the terrarium mix he brought several boxes of prepared sterile soil, perlite, horticultural charcoal, and long fiber, which he boiled, cooled, and squeezed until most of the liquid was gone and it was like a damp sponge. Doug discussed the importance of using a clean bowl and using about a handful of charcoal in the bowl, keeping it away from the side of the container. Then he placed some perlite over it. After this he cut some of the long fiber in smaller pieces to place in the bowl. Then he created a space for the species in the



middle of the container. Doug also uses rain water to provide moisture to the plant if the material becomes dry to the touch. Since there are no holes punched in the bottom of the bowl, the first layer of the mix should catch the excess water. The depth of the mix depends on the size of the container and the amount of the growing mix, the average depth being about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.

This little world needs light twelve to fourteen hours per day, but no direct sunlight since the plant could be too warm and burn.

For cleaning the bowl during the plant's growth, take a paper towel and wipe the sides of the container. Remove any dead leaves and add a handful of sphagnum peat moss to make the world more beautiful.



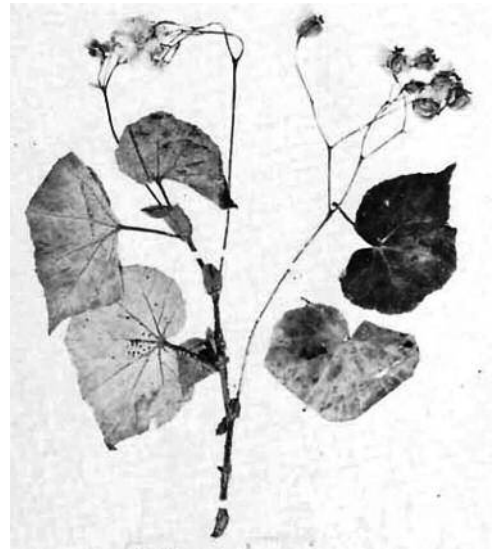
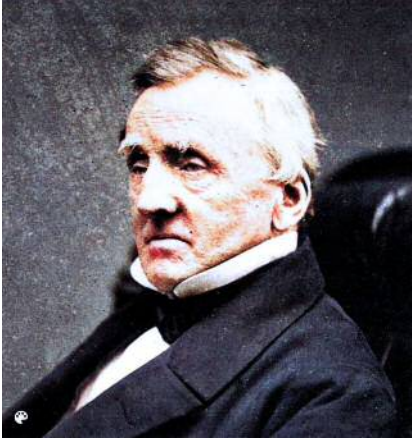
Perlite





## CONTAINED ATMOSPHERE

What is the advantage of growing plants in a contained atmosphere? After Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward used a wide-mouthed jar and covered it, he watched moisture accumulate inside thus keeping humus moist enough to support grass and ferns to emerge.



*B. stipulacea*



These plants grew for four years. He decided to design his Wardian case to hold many rare plants from all over the world. Nurseries could import hundreds of plants successfully even if it took several weeks to get to their destination. Even thousands of tea plants from China to India flourished the tea industry. Then rubber trees from Brazil to Ceylon grew for another venture. Even quinine to fight malaria was transported from South America to British India. This seemed to work so long ago and it still works today with begonia species that are endangered.

## CANE-LIKE BEGONIAS

Over 200 different species and cultivars make up cane-like begonias. Most of these originated in Brazil, where they were found in 1850. C.L. Willdenow described *B. stipulacea* in 1805; Giuseppe Raddi discovered 7 species and described them in 1820. Two of these were cane-like *B. angularis*



*B. angularis*



*B. maculata*



and *B. maculata*, the first begonia with silver spots. In 1827 William Schott, director of Schoenbrunn Gardens described *B. undulata*, a tall-growing species. He also mentioned *B. platanifolia* that was introduced by Robert Barclay. *B. coccinea* came to England in 1841 when William Lobb of Veitch and Sons found it on the Organ Mountains. These latter species were used to develop hybrids after 1900.



*B. undulata*



*B. coccinea*



*B. platanifolia*



*B. aconitifolia*



*B. sceptrum*

When Ludwig Riedel discovered *B. aconitifolia* in 1859, its palmately-lobed leaves with silver splashes enabled the Superba type of begonias originated by Eva Gray of California in 1926. *B. sceptrum* also was used when William Bull introduced the species in England in 1884. In 1880 *B. lubbersii*, a fragrant species, was found by Louis Lubbers in Brussels on an



imported tree fern. In 1957 the species was introduced and became important in developing hybrids. In 1890 B. 'President Carnot' from France produced large pendulous flower clusters. Even today B. 'Arthur Mallet' and B. 'Tingley Mallet' are major contributions to hybridizers who introduce begonias of various types and sizes.



B. *lubbersii*



B. 'President Carnot'

Cane-like begonias have erect or semi-erect smooth bamboo-like stems with swollen nodes. Internodes are long and fairly long. Most do not branch readily. Instead they send up shoots. Leaf shapes can be ovate, obovate, orbicular, and

elliptical. Leaf color can be dark to pale green except for Mallet types, which have mahogany red foliage. Leaf surfaces are sparsely hairy with silver or white dots. Some have dull surfaces and some have papery to leathery textures.



B. 'Arthur Mallet'



B. 'Tingley Mallet'

Most of these begonias thrive with at least 6 hours of sun a day if they do not have direct sunshine. They also grow best between 58-72 degrees with humidity of 40% to 60%.

While most younger cane-like begonias do not need pruning during the first two years, the majority benefit from pinching and pruning that encourages branching and formation of basal shoots. Pinching prevents the plant from becoming leggy while pruning can shape and keep its height. Pruning can be done in late winter or early spring.

## MINUTES OF THE AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY BRANCH MEETING JANUARY 22, 2023

The Austin Area Begonia Society Branch of the American Begonia Society met at 2 P.M. in the Austin Area Garden Center Auditorium January 22, 2023, with Doug Byrom presenting an interesting step-by-step method of creating a growing mix for planting a species that enjoys the atmosphere of a closed container which provides humid conditions.

The following members attended the meeting: **Curtis Aman, Charlotte Boyle, Doug Byrom, Vickey Cole, Betty Dunn, Emily Dunn, Jim Estes, Joan Estes, Raine Freeman, Jackie Johnson, Jim Landers, Nelda Moore, Valerie Morris, Carol Orozco, and Genieve Townsend.**

Vickey Cole, treasurer, reported that the balance is \$2743.58. She announced that the meetings will be March 26, April 23, no May meeting. Please attend the ABS/Southwest Convention in Tyler, Texas. Fall meetings are September 24, October 22, and November 26.

Doug Byrom, Vice President, presented the program about planting begonia species in a terrarium, caring for the terrarium, and showing it properly.

During the drawing Vickey Cole won B. 'Brazilian Lady.' It is also known as B. 'Withlacoochee.' and Begonia coccinea.

Dues were collected, and if anyone wants to continue with membership in ABS, digital is \$20, Print plus digital \$35, lifetime digital \$400, Print and lifetime membership \$700. Southwest dues are \$10.

The next meeting will be on grooming begonias; therefore, bring a begonia that you want to take to Tyler for the show.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M. after the sale of begonias.

Respectfully submitted,

Nelda Moore, Secretary

## PRAYERS FOR R.L. HOLLEY AND FREDA HOLLEY



R.L. has had issues with his heart and eyes. Both of these important Begonia Society members need our prayers for speedy recovery. Freda is a well-loved hybridizer and author, who recently moved to Ozark, Missouri to be near Springfield, where there are many doctors that provide care for them. She also is near her family.