



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



VOLUME 17, NUMBER 8

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, October 29, 2023

2 P.M.

Jim and Joan Estes' home
7620 South HWY 183
Lockhart, TX 78644

Directions:

From Austin travel to Lockhart, go through town and watch for Walmart on the left. About 3 miles south down the highway there is a cylindrical water tower on the right. A red sign on the left side of the highway just past the water tower has the address. Drive through the gate that will be open, then on the gravel road until you see the barn on the left, and then their beautiful home.

Please bring a vegetable dish, a salad, or dessert to share for this event.



Joan and Jim Estes

BEGONIAS IN A CONTAINED ATMOSPHERE



B. 'Luxumberg'

Terrariums are enclosed glass or plastic containers for growing plants that require humid conditions. Ever since 1829 when Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward buried a chrysalis of a Sphinx moth in humus in a covered jar and watched moisture accumulate inside during the warmer part of the day and then return to the humus at night, did he, as a naturalist, recognize the potential of Wardian cases for plants to grow and survive temperature changes, for adorning Victorian homes, for transporting 20,000 tea plants from China to India, and even transporting quinine to fight malaria from South America to British India.



B. *rajah* - Rhizomatous

Usually the temperature surrounding the terrarium should be 60-72 degrees F. More difficult to grow begonias such as B. *rajah*, B. *ficicola*, B. *versicolor*, and B. 'Wanda' prefer 62-65 degrees F. Some that prefer the 72 degrees F are B. 'Winter Jewel,' B. *acaulis*, B. *bogneri*, B. *brevirimsa*, B. *cathayana*, B. *crispula*, and B. *picta*.



B. ficicola - Rhizomatous



B. versicolor - Rhizomatous

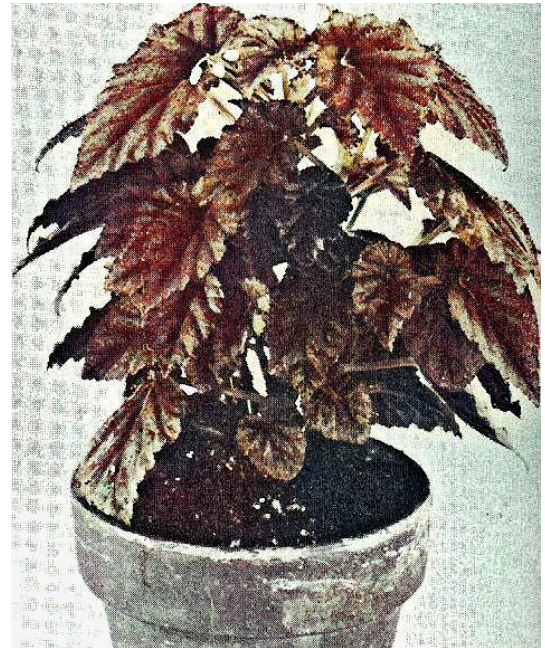


B. 'Wanda' - Rhizomatous

Watering is seldom needed because the leaves give off moisture during the cycle of condensation returning to the growing medium to be taken up by the roots.

If the growing medium becomes dry to the touch, water can be added, but do not allow the drops to touch the leaves. The cover can be partially opened until conditions are corrected.

Fertilizing should not be done as often, but a complete water soluble fertilizer in diluted amounts can be used after watering the begonia.



B. 'Winter Jewel' - Shrub-like



B. acaulis - Tuberous

Cleanliness is important. Wash the empty containers in warm soapy water with a small amount of chlorine laundry bleach and dry them before adding medium or mix. It should not adhere to the sides of the container. Keep it clean and free from

dead flowers and leaves to prevent disease. Leaves that touch the sides of the terrarium must be removed. Pinch and prune cane-like and shrub-like begonias to restrict size of the begonia to the size of the container. When the begonia becomes rootbound, move the plant to a new larger size container.

Check the pH factor of the growing medium. If the pH is below 6.5, add 1 teaspoon of dolomitic lime to one quart of water. Use this in small amounts, but change the medium if the pH is over 7.0.



B. cathayana - Rhizomatous



B. bogneri - Semi-tuberous



B. crispula - Rhizomatous

This little world is ideal for growing species begonias.

BEGONIAS IN HANGING CONTAINERS

Begonias can be grown in hanging containers that can be attached to any flat surface on fences, buildings, verandas, or posts. Even a basket tree constructed by welding hayrakes to a piece of galvanized pipe set at least 3 feet below the surface can hold many small baskets. Hanging gardens can be created with baskets of begonias that require slight filtering of sunlight with Rex begonias planted underneath in the soil.

Containers for hanging begonias can be made of wire, clay, redwood, plastic or ceramic that can be



B. brevirimosa - Shrub-like

used with hanging devices such as “S” hooks, swivels, wire hangers, chain hangers, pot hangers, or decorative ropes .It is wise to use a swivel to the hook at the top so that begonias can be easily revolved without removing from their places. They must be rotated so that begonias can be grown in symmetrical shape and not one-sided. These containers will need frequent watering, sometimes twice a day.



For a naturalistic growing container, since begonias can be found on old tree trunks, climbing on trees, or even in crevices of rocks and wood, use some driftwood from a lake area. Wash it in hot soapy water containing a small amount of chlorine bleach. If it was found near an ocean, it must go through this process and several washings to remove the salt so that the plants will grow. Then it must dry for 24 hours.



HORTICULTURE

It is time to move begonias from the outdoors to the safety of a basement or greenhouse since windy cooler weather is coming to our area. Inspect them for insects and pests and treat accordingly. Keep some potting soil handy so you can work with begonias when you want to feel like a gardener.



Since this is fall, plant outdoors bulbs and cool weather flowers such as pansies, carnations, stocks, violas or johnny-jump-ups. Hopefully you will enjoy the landscape that survived the long drought and extremely hot climate. We still do not water often due to rationing of that cool water that we treat as liquid gold, the most important resource for all of life on this planet.

MINUTES OF THE AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY MEETING ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

We met in the auditorium of Zilker Botanical Garden. **Doug Byrom, Nelda Moore, Vickey Cole, N. Cole, Arlene Lantz** were present, and **Jim Landers, Ken Fuchs, and Valerie Morris** participated via ZOOM. We had one motion concerning raising dues for the botanical garden from \$13 to \$15. We all departed to find new members.

Jim reported success and Nelda attended a Western Trails meeting and invited everyone to join the Austin Area Begonia Society since our Plant Exchange included some beautiful begonias, ferns, herbs, and bulbs that all of us brought home and worked all day Saturday.