



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



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NEWSLETTER

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Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, April 28 2 - 4 P.M.
Zilker Botanical Garden Center
2022 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746

Some of Doug Byrom's
Terrariums:



DOUG BYROM GUIDES IN APRIL 2024



After a sale on April 27th at Tillery Street Plant Co., 801 Tillery Street in Austin, Doug Byrom will preside as president of the Austin Area Begonia Society in the auditorium of the Austin Area Garden Center in Zilker Botanical Garden on Sunday, April 28.

Doug has taken a wonderful subject to teach: TERRARIUMS. He will guide each person as they create a special world for a begonia that requires high humidity. With the lid or cover on top of the opening, droplets will accumulate on the container to moisten the tiny plant in that closed environment with temperature changes. Usually the temperature surrounding the terrarium ranges in the 60-72 degrees F.



While the Begonia Society did not have a meeting in March, most of the group assisted with the successful sale at West Gate on March 30. Doug Byrom, Nelda Moore, Jim Estes, Joan Estes, Jim Landers, Vicky Cole, and Charlotte Boyle had fun selling, talking to interested customers, and then buying new begonias for themselves.

Come to the meeting, snack on food, and then work on a terrarium with Doug. Begonias will be for sale.

BEGONIA *staudtii* Gilo var. *dispersipilosa*



This begonia was described by Edgar Irmscher when it was found in 1954 in tropical Africa where yellow or gold rhizomatous begonias grow in the Guinea forest of West Africa. This begonia has 34 chromosomes, light green peltate leaves that are asymmetrically ovate, with deeply sunken veins. *B. staudtii* must be grown in a terrarium.



THE BEGINNING OF ROT

Terrarium plants have a small system of their own. The roots take up moisture from the soil and moisture is given off by the leaves; this moisture condenses on the sides of the terrarium and runs down into the growing medium to start the process over again. When it drips on the petiole or the soil stays too wet, this causes the petiole to develop rot beginning at the base.

CONDITIONS FOR GROWING

This begonia world needs reduced light conditions. Water only when no moisture appears in dots on the sides of the terrarium.

WHAT CAN TAKE THE PLACE OF PEAT MOSS

Donald DeLano found that coco coir, a natural and renewable growing medium made from the husk of coconuts, rice hulls, leaf molds, pine needles, food waste and city green waste could be used in the mixes for begonias? It takes much water to clean coco coir and some workers have gotten health problems from processing it for horticultural use. Some states have already banned the use of peat moss and sphagnum moss and products made from them. Like peat moss, cellulose has no nutritional benefit to humans or plants.

With climate change resulting from levels of greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide and methane, the bogs will be closed, but how will Coco coir work in the mixes for begonias? Mr. DeLano has found the perfect substitute — Cellulose, which is found in plant material that comes from trash, yard trimmings, tree leaves, and food waste. It can become compost within a week. Peat and cellulose can absorb mineral nutrients when applied to the soil via fertilizers. Then release of those captured nutrients go to the plant roots later on. This seems to take the place of peat moss better than any other substitute since it is plentiful.



Jim Landers' terrariums

