



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



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NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026

Freda Holley, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, May 24 2 P.M.

Zilker Botanical Garden Center
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746

Rhiannon Spaw with Nest Tropicals located outside of Austin will give a talk on Hoyas. She said that she would have cuttings for people to take home and root.

NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK

National Garden Week is celebrated in the United States June 7-13, 2026. This week is dedicated to honoring the art of gardening, featuring various celebrations, workshops, and educational events for all skill levels. It is organized by the National Garden Clubs, which promotes gardening and environmental responsibility. This week provides an opportunity to encourage community pride and engage new members in gardening activities.

The Kickoff once again is hosted by The Garden Club of Austin as part of its two-day Homegrown Austin Sale. The Austin Area Begonia Society (AABS) will have a sale table Saturday June 6 and Sunday June 7. We need people for our table 9:30 – 3:30. If you can help sometime during that time frame, please contact Doug Byrom or Vickie Cole. We will set up the table at 9:00 Saturday morning.



B. 'Copper Sunset' - Don Miller, Rhizomatous



B. 'Smokey Eyes' - Don Miller, Rex Cultorum

REMEMBERING BOBBIE PRICE

by Freda Holley



Bobbie Price in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden greenhouse (2019)

At our Sunday April 26 meeting, Syria Holley brought and gave away 10 cuttings of Begonia 'Bobbie Price'. The most important thing to know about this Cane begonia is that it bears the name of the person who gave the most volunteer hours of anyone ever to the begonia collection at the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens' Begonia collection and the greenhouse in which they are sheltered. She hybridized only three begonias: this Cane 'Bobbie Price', a Rex called 'Freda' named for me, and a rhizomatous named for her deceased husband Maurice Price. She was my dear friend for many years and I visited her often at the Gardens. She died a few years ago in her late 90's and deserves to be remembered.



Bobbie Price and Freda Holley (2019)



B. 'Maurice Price' - Rhizomatous



B. 'Bobbie Price' - Cane-like



B. 'Freda' - Rex Cultorum

HYBRIDIZER DON MILLER

By Freda Holley



Don Miller, who currently volunteers to care for begonias at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Begonia collection, is one of the best hybridizers today. Over the years he has hybridized many begonias, not always recognized as his. I first knew him as a member of the Dallas/Ft. Worth begonia Branch and worked there for North Haven Nursery and later for Steves Leaves, who advertised his hybrids under their name. Some of those that have been shown at SWR and ABS shows include 'Kevin Whitecotton', 'Moonlit Snow', and 'Old Blue', but there are 29 in all!



B. 'Kevin Whitecotton' - Rhizomatous



Bobbie Price and Don Miller (2014)



B. 'Moonlit Snow' -- Rhizomatous

SEMI-TUBERIOUS BEGONIAS

By Freda Holley



B. *dregei* - Semi-Tuberous



B. 'Old Blue' - Rhizomatous

I always thought *B. dregei* and a few look-alikes and hybrids were about all this group consisted of, but I was very wrong. The IDB lists 75 begonias in this group and quite a few species are in there, not just *B. dregei*, mostly unknown to me. Too many of these species named are simply synonyms of *dregei* or each other. Others I thought were in other groups and as you know the problem with divisions is that all do not agree. Even botanists disagree and we become frustrated with changes. I also thought the very defining of the term semi-tuberous involved the plant's eventual development of a caudex, a sizable roundish growth at the base of the stem, but I am no

longer sure of that.

However this group is defined, I believe the begonias in it are mostly quite small with small flowers and leaves as well. Looking at photos as I write this, all I see are white flowers as well and no caudex. Whether this is because they do not exist, exist just underground, or have not formed, I cannot say. Google AI defines this group as a distinct group of begonias defined by having a swollen, caudex-like base or thickened stem rather than a true underground tuber.

AABS MEETING, April 26, 2026



B. bufoforma - Semi-Tuberous



B. bogneri - Semi-Tuberous

"Rivers do not drink their own water, trees do not eat their own fruit, and the sun does not shine on itself. Living for others is a rule of nature." — Pope Francis