



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



VOLUME 20, NUMBER 6

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026

Freda Holley, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, July 26 1:30 P.M.

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

Program:

How to Prop Begonias from Leaf
Cuts



July Birthdays:

Arlene Lantz 7-1
Jim Estes 7-3
Nelda Moore 7-12
Jen Cavazos 7-24

August Birthdays

Cassandra Vasquez 8-4
Susan Cotham 8-7
Alicia Bowens 8-8
Sean Grandt 8-14
Momo Sae-Lee 8-19
Sue Hern 8-23
Judy Schwartz 8-31

HOW TO PROP BEGONIAS FROM LEAF CUTS



FWBG, with the help of the crew from the Mae Blanton branch, sent us the cuttings they let us request from their collection.

Granny Mack is going to do a workshop on how he props begonias from leaf cuts. He'll start by going over the supplies he uses, then talk about labeling plants, then finish up with the technique he uses to make the cuttings. He recommends that people bring their own scissors, and they are welcome to bring their own plants from home to propagate if they prefer that to using ones AABS provides.

Mack will bring deli cups with lids, and a few begonias to take leaf cuts from. Doug mentioned the club could supply the sphag moss and also the club's 'left over' begonias for folks to take leaves from. If the club has extra pairs of scissors, pencils, etc to loan out, that would be great, too.

TEXAS HYBRIDIZER — JOHN HOWELL

By Freda Holley

Recently I was searching for the name of the person who had introduced us to the Shrub-like B. 'U402' and found from the IDB (International Database of Begoniaceae (<https://ibegonias.clientportal.cloud/#/>)) that it was John Howell, whom I instantly recognized as a member of the San Antonio Branch of ABS. I had once met him at an ABS Convention in San Antonio on a tour to his house. I remember a giant oak tree in his front yard which had a large berm around it planted in begonias, and a back yard where there was a swimming pool. Somehow he had erected a large plastic structure around the pool where he then also planted begonias. There the begonias benefited from the pool's

humidity while a fan kept the surroundings from getting too hot.



B. 'U402' - John Howell & Yumiko Yamaguchi, Shrub-like

I later learned that he was also a hybridizer. Since San Antonio is a neighboring branch of ABS, it seems to me that we should be aware of his hybrids even though they are small in number. He did not hybridize a lot of begonias, in fact few enough to list them all here. Several of them were once widely grown in our area such as B. 'Joy Porter', named after a keeper of ABS's seed fund for many years.



B. 'Joy Porter' - Howell, Cane-like

Most of his hybrids are Cane-like begonias. Among them is an Alamo series. Others include B. 'Barbara Hamilton', 'Snowfall', and 'John's White'. His B. 'Pink Diamonds', a Rex Cultorum, is one of his most recognized begonias and has multiple listings on the Internet.



B. 'Pink Diamonds' - John Howell Rex Cultorum



B. 'Alamo Melba' - Howell, Cane-like



B. 'Alamo Ole' - Howell, Cane-like



B. 'Alamo Soli' - Howell, Shrub-like



B. 'Barbara Hamilton' - Howell, Cane-like



B. 'Snowfall' - Howell, Cane-like



B. 'John's White' - Howell, Cane-like

"DEAR FREDa"

By Freda Holley

Some of you have heard of the old "Dear Abbey" advice column, after which I will label this new begonia advice column for our newsletter: the "Dear Freda" column. At our last meeting I had you pose questions to get this column going. I am choosing this question for the first column because we are facing the most difficult weather for our begonias.

"Do you have any tips for begonia survival during the summer?"

The answer: I wish I knew the perfect answer, but I too have lost begonias when the dry heat soars above 100!

But there are steps you can take to save many of your begonias:

1. First, try to choose the most hardy begonias you can. I have found the cane begonias and a few thick stems to be the best survivors. As a hybridizer I chose to use newly discovered species from Thailand such as U484 to create several begonias that are well adapted to our Texas climate such as B. 'Summer Illusion' and B. 'Palm Beach Moon'.
2. Locate your begonias for the summer on the building side that provides the most shade especially from the evening sun. If you live in an apartment, your best hope will be terrariums under a flourescent light.
3. I have seen mist systems set up to provide a misty fog frequently to cool the begonias. The equipment can be found at such stores as Lowes or Ace Hardware.
4. Mulch your begonias even in pots.
5. Do not prune your plants in the summer.
6. Do not fertilize your plants in the summer.

If you have any ideas on this subject let me know and we will pass them on.

2026 ABS NATIONAL CONVENTION/ SW REGION GET-TOGETHER FORT WORTH



Convention Show - Photo by Momo Sae-Lee



Photos by Momo Sae-Lee

FORT WORTH BOTANICAL GARDEN





Photos by Jen Cabazos



AABS Meeting June 28, 2026



Photos by Jim Landers



