



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



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NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2026

Freda Holley, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, August 23 1:30 P.M.

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

Program:

Making Bowl Terrariums

MAKING BOWL TERRARIUMS



Granny Mack is going to do a workshop on making bowl terrariums. He will spend a little bit of time on naming conventions and the relationship between species, cultivars, and trade names. Next, he will briefly touch on making cuttings from cane-like begonias. Lastly he's going to talk about hardening off new plants. Then we'll jump into making our terrariums.

We encourage everyone to bring their plantlets from their leaf cuttings if any are ready. They can also bring terrarium plants/cuttings from home. We will be offering terrarium plants for sale, including a few terrarium begonia companion plants (not begonias). A portion of proceeds will benefit the club. We'll have some very inexpensive starts, but Granny Mack will also bring some rarer stuff for folks who prefer that.

The set of bowls plus substrate will cost \$5 for small, or \$10 for large. Coarse perlite will also be available.

MY FAVORITE BEGONIA

by Freda Holley

This will be the first of a new column featuring a new favorite begonia each month.

I hope you will have a favorite that you would like me to research and write about its features, history, and so forth. Please let me know, and Ken will also hopefully be able to find and show us beautiful photos as usual.

So this month will be my personal favorite which if you know my



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

September Birthdays:

Freda Holley 9-6
Vickey Cole 9-25
Joan Estes 9-26
Rainee Freeman 9-26

email address you will already know: B. 'gehrtii'!



B. 'gehrtii' Rhizomatous

Early in my begonia growing days, I ordered seed from every source I could find. My favorite, however, was Mauro Peixoto at brazilplants.com. He still sells seed and offers an account at an affordable price that comes with seeds of your choice, plus you may order even more. I hope those who seek rare begonias will contact him through his website for more information.

Anyway, I grew out those seeds while I lived in Arkansas on a small mountain farm in a house sitting at an altitude of approximately 2000 ft. At the time I did not have a greenhouse, but overwintered my begonias in an old house located in a small parcel of land some distance from our house under fluorescent lights on a plant stand. This house had no heat other than from those lights. To my amazement my B. 'gehrtii' flourished, not just looking its usually beautiful self, but blooming away. I had its seed for years, but it would not grow well in Louisiana. Although I managed to keep one with much pampering, the original plant was collected by Irmisher in Sao Paulo and first published in 1959. It grows in the southern regions of Brazil.

Evidently it has been cherished by many since there are numerous offspring. Unfortunately, at that time in Arkansas I was focused on getting more species seed and not into real hybridizing, so none of those offspring are mine. But anyway, I've yet to see a hybrid as beautiful as this species itself!

DEAR FRED:

This is the first of a new column to be called Dear Freda which will attempt to answer the questions raised at our last meeting and hopefully other questions you will raise in the future.

Question:

Can you just cross (hybridize) any begonia?

Answer:

No, you need to know the chromosome count of each begonia. For example, all cane-like begonias will have 56 chromosomes, so yes, you should be able to cross any cane — but you shouldn't. Because it is so easy, there are far too many that look so similar that only a few have remained in circulation. But the important thing to know is that you cannot cross a cane with a rhizomatous because the latter will have more chromosomes. Yes, I know that some have claimed such crosses, but unless you have protected the female bloom after pollination, wind or insects or even a hummingbird may have visited carrying cane-like pollen. Even so, it is also possible mutations may have occurred.

This of course is a simplified answer and genetics are complicated involving exceptions, mutations, DNA characteristics such as color, etc. Remember too my admonition that any time you state a rule for begonias, you will almost immediately find an exception! For example, B. 'coccinea', a cane is said to have 42 chromosomes (although I myself think B. 'coccinea' should be labeled a trailing-scandent). A really good hybridizer, producing unique cultivars will either understand these things instinctively or by study.



B. 'coccinea'



B. 'coccinea'

Meeting: Sunday, July 26, 2026

