



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



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NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

Freda Holley, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, September 27 2 P.M.

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

Program:

Frank DiZenzo is going to give us a program on building a **vivarium**. So if you want more out of your terrarium than just a plant, you don't want to miss his program.

NOTE: A vivarium (Latin for 'place of life') is an area, usually enclosed, for keeping and raising animals or plants for observation or research.

Our sale table will have some 6" hanging baskets, mostly rexes and will cost \$16 each.



September Birthdays:

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

October Birthdays:

Art O'Connell 10-17

FAVORITE BEGONIAS

By Freda Holley

One of our members asked me to identify the begonia in her photo that had lost its tag. I knew it had to be one of her favorites. Although it is usually difficult, if not impossible, to know the name of a photo of a cane begonia, I knew immediately that it was B. 'Corrallina de Lucerna'. I could recognize it so quickly because I could never forget a dramatic 6 ft. one I saw in a public garden display in Georgia. That one was so tall and perfectly shaped I can still see it in my memory.



B. 'Corrallina de Lucerna' - Cane-like

This begonia is quite famous and often called either just 'Corralina' or 'Lucerna'. It has been around since 1892 when it was created by Wittstein in Lucerna, Switzerland. It is a cross of B. *coccinea* and B. *teuscheri*.

B. 'Corralina' is a vigorous grower in most environments requiring little care. Its leaves are wing shaped with a deep green topside and a deep red underside. Its bloom clusters are large and a deep pink with reddish touches.

You will love it when you try one!



B. 'Lucerna' - Cane-like



B. *teuscheri* - Shrub-like



B. *coccinea* - Cane-like

Dear Freda:

(Please remember to send me a question and if I cannot answer it, I will find someone or something that can.)

"Many people ask 'How can I care for Begonia ferox to keep it from dying as mine always does?'"



Begonia ferox

This is difficult to answer for me as I have never been able to keep it alive even in a terrarium! So, I asked Google's AI and that led me to an article from Longfield Gardens on 'How to propagate Begonia

ferox' that first has a section on how to care for the mother plant which I have in part used in formulating my answer below. This is an excellent article to read that you will find on their website. (<https://www.longfield-gardens.com/blogs/begonia-care/how-to-grow-begonia-plant-for-a-stunning-garden>)

Begonia ferox was discovered in China in 2011 by C. Peng and Yan Liu.



Begonia ferox

It is suggested, first that you always take a cutting of a leaf — properly divided — such that you will have many new starts should your plant pass away! Also, remember this is a rhizomatous plant whose rhizome creeps across on top of the soil with shallow roots.

Next, be sure your begonia is in the correct type of soil mix such as Pro-Mix for plants (It uses Canadian peat which is preferred for house plants.) or Miracle Grow for container plants (neither should be organic — it may contain diseases — or moisturized which would keep its roots too wet). Then add perlite until the soil is just porous enough to keep its roots moisturized but not overly wet.

Fertilize not more than once a month except as it reaches its growing season, then weekly. I would use a liquid Miracle Grow fertilizer for blooming house plants: drop 1/2 teaspoon (1 drop) into a quart of prepared water. That means either rainwater or faucet water that has been left a day or so to let any Clorox or other additives evaporate. If you use a dry

fertilizer such as Miracle Grow Water Soluble for Blooming Plants: I would drop a tablespoon into a gallon of prepared water.

Place your plant in deep shade under a big tree on the side away from the evening sun. For ferox however, I would strongly suggest you place it inside a terrarium in the house either in a shaded window or preferably under a fluorescent light.

I hope this lets your plant stay healthy and growing, but if not, I suggest you try *B. melanobullata* which looks very much like ferox, but is possible to keep alive in our climate, perhaps because the same crew discovered it a bit earlier in Vietnam, with a climate somewhat like ours.



B. melanobullata - Rhizomatous



AABS MEETING August 23, 2026



