



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



VOLUME 20, NUMBER 9

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

Freda Holley, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, October 25 2 P.M.

Jim and Joan Estes' home
7620 South HWY 183
Lockhart, TX 78644

Next Sunday's meeting is at Jim and Joan Estes' home. The club will provide the Barbecue if you will bring a side. They ask that we don't show up before 1pm. If you are going to come, please RSVP by emailing Joan (joan.estes926@gmail.com). This will help her know how much Barbecue to get. Also let her know what side you are bringing.

Directions:

Google Map Estes Preserve will take you right to their house. Take HWY 183 south out of Lockhart for 5 miles. Go past a cylindrical water tower on the right.



When you see FM 671 on your right, turn LEFT on a gravel road. You will immediately go to the right through a cattle guard. Follow it all the way back to their house.



FAVORITE BEGONIA

By Freda Holley



B. maculata - Rhizomatous

For most people it will be a cane-like begonia or for some a rhizomatous begonia. One favorite is the cane-like species *B. maculata*. This is a surprise for me because you almost never see a species begonia for sale even in nurseries, but I have seen this one for sale in grocery stores and at Lowe's as an indoor plant!

It is a truly beautiful plant, however. To preserve that beauty, you must keep it neatly trimmed. I am a careless grower at times. One time I let this one grow to about 4 ft. at which point it had lost all its leaves except on the last foot and the leaves no longer bore their beautiful white spots. It also had few stems. If you keep it trained to a foot or less, however, the leaves with their spots will all be beautiful and blooms will also be prolific. These are the ones I see in grocery stores and at Lowe's. Aside from consistent pruning, they need little care: watering when the pot gets quite dry and only occasionally fertilizing. I use a Miracle Gro liquid fertilizer with a drop or two in a quart of water or a table spoon of dry Miracle Gro in a two gallon watering container. Never get that on its leaves. I find very few insects or diseases on my plants. Just never get careless and bring a plant with mealy bugs or any diseases in contact with your begonias. Also, never use organic potting soil or fertilizer; both can carry diseases.

DEAR FRED:

What would be the easiest begonia with which I may begin growing begonias?



B. 'Erythrophylla' ('Beefsteak' begonia)

Answer:

Most people would believe that to be B. 'Erythrophylla', perhaps better known as the 'Beefsteak' begonia. Sometimes identified as B. 'Feastii', it would be the easiest to grow. This is a very old begonia, dating back to 1845 and its description was provided in 1849 by Warscewicz. After all it has been around for over a century! But aren't Latin names reserved for species names you may ask — a good question. This was one of the oldest most popular cultivars at the time nomenclature rules began, and the decision was made to allow it to retain its Latin name.

It is a rhizomatous begonia, a cultivar from crossing two species: B. *hydrocotylifolia* X B. *manicata*. These offspring, called primary hybrids or

Fs, are noted for being the most hardy. It must be easy to grow. At one time on any drive across Southeast USA you would view the 'Beefsteak' begonia growing on many, many front porches in the summer and in the living room front windows in the winter.



B. *hydrocotylifolia*



B. 'manicata'

I believe Jim Estes in our group grows this one and we might ask him how easy he finds it to grow.

MEETING SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

Frank DiZenno presented a program on building a vivarium.

