

BEGONIA CHATTER



Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i>	Next Meeting: DATE: March 7, 2021 TIME: 2:00 P.M. PLACE: Plants For All Seasons PROGRAM: Propagating Our Begonias
March 2021 Issue	www.begoniahouston.org

PROPAGATING OUR BEGONIAS

The March 7, 2021 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at **Plants For All Seasons Nursery** located at 21328 State Highway 249 (on the feeder road). Their telephone number is **281-376-1646**. We have the meeting room from 12:00 to 4:00 P.M. The meeting will start promptly at 2:00 P.M. All are welcome to come early to help set up for the meeting or to shop for some more beautiful plants for your home or garden.

Our Program for this meeting is "**Propagating Our Begonias**". We are in the official best time to propagate our begonias be it by stem cuttings from our cane-like and shrub-like and tuberous if you are fortunate enough to have gotten your tuberous through the summer. Also, it is a great time to propagate our rhizomatous via the whole leaves or wedges. You can also propagate rhizomatous using the rhizome. Cheryl Lenert will give us valuable information and lead us through members that would like to share their

method for propagating their begonias. Members are welcome to bring a few cuttings to practice.

If you would like to put down a few rhizomatous cuttings for practice please bring a sealable container along with your cuttings and we will provide the medium. Perhaps you would like to practice stem cuttings. You can bring a few cane-like or shrub-like cuttings and we will provide the medium and the pots. Most importantly please be sure to bring plant labels along with your cuttings.

As for refreshments for this meeting, we don't have any scheduled Hosts or Hostesses. So we are asking each member to bring their own snacks and drink (if you want something other than the water we will provide).

If someone would like to make a batch of chocolate chip cookies, I am absolutely positive that no one will object.

Don't forget your mask and your name tag.

Until Then Happy Growing!

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

March

3 rd & 4 th	Scorpio
7 th , 8 th & 9 th	Capricorn
12 th & 13 th	Pisces
17 th & 18 th	Taurus
22 nd & 23 rd	Cancer
31 st	Scorpio

April

1 st	Scorpio
4 th & 5 th	Capricorn
8 th , 9 th & 10 th	Pisces
13 th , 14 th & 15 th	Taurus
18 th , 19 th & 20 th	Cancer
27 th & 28 th	Scorpio

******Planting and Transplanting** are best done in Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces with Cancer being the best.

******Best Pruning** for quick growth is first in Taurus and then in Capricorn.

(This Pruning, Planting and Transplanting guide was taken from the Harris Farmer's Almanac 2021)



Begonia 'Rosea Gigantea'
from *Begonia Portraits* by Alice M. Clark



Begonia barkeri
from *Begonia Portraits* by Alice M. Clark

WEATHER FORECAST FOR MARCH 2021

According to the United States Weather Service, Houston, and the surrounding areas fall in Region 7 of the National Weather Map. Here is what they predict for March.

Our temperatures will be near normal and our precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our average temperature should average 47 degrees in the North and 58 degrees in the South. Our coolest March temperatures will be March 3rd, 4th, 7th thru 9th, 13th thru 15th, 18th thru 21st, and 28 thru 31st. Our warmest March temperatures will be March 2nd thru 6th, 11th & 12th, 17th, and 23rd thru 26th. There will be scattered showers and thunderstorms about March 3rd, 6th thru 8th, 12th thru 14th, 17th thru 19th, and 27th thru 30th. Rain could mix with or change to snow in the north. There will be locally heavy rain. The severe weather threat is higher than normal.

(This weather forecast was taken from the Harris Farmer's Almanac 2021)

B. ‘Little Brother Montgomery’



Photo and Text by Mildred Swyka

B. ‘Little Brother Montgomery’ is a shrub-like cross by Martin Johnson. It is the most colorful I’ve ever grown. I was informed that this was a chance seedling and would like to know more about the parentage of this beautiful begonia.

The flowers are pink. I’ve been informed. You can see the buds in the photo-however, I have much work to do to see if I can get them to stay on, as they dropped before opening.

My plant has grown to about 16” tall and is constantly sending up new shoots. It is in a 6-inch plastic pot and likes to be kept quite moist or it will droop badly. Cuttings root quickly in water.

It has been grown all winter in a north window. Perhaps when I move it into the greenhouse for the summer it will be able to hold on to its blossoms - but maybe not. I did move it once, to make room for our Christmas tree, and it was then that every bud and blossom fell off – so that means it doesn’t want to be moved around.

*(This article is taken from the **Begonian** Volume 60 September-October 1993 page 158)*

Unknown, Unnamed, but Loved



By Mildred Swyka

The rhizomatous begonia pictured is one of my hybrids. It is perhaps six years old, from an unknown cross – but way back it has some *B. bowerae*, as you can see.

The mature leaves are 5” long and 7 “wide, with the undersides green with a red edge. Stems are hairy. Blooms are profuse pink sprays on very tall stalks. It pollinates well.

It is being grown in a 3” x 10” clay saucer on a 1” layer of coarse vermiculite. Two wicks bring water to the plant. It is beautiful as long as it is kept moist. If I fail to keep the vermiculite wet, it droops, but quickly revives when water is supplied.

At the beginning of bloom time, it is given a feeding of Peters’ Bloom Booster. It is also putting out new growth.

What is remarkable to me about this begonia is that such a large plant grows in such a shallow dish.

I am very pleased with the rhizomatous begonias I have been growing with wicks, and wish I had them all wicked. Even some of my small “angel-wings” are wicked and they are doing great!

*(This article is taken from the **Begonian** Volume 60 May-June 1993 page 85)*



photo by Marvin Vipond

Begonia 'Looking Glass'

by Joan Coulat

Begonia 'Looking Glass' is an extremely distinctive cane-like hybrid created by noted hybridizer and Branch member, Patrick Worley. It has been around for approximately 15 years and was awarded the Best New Introduction at a national convention and show.

It is classified as a Superba. Its leaves can measure nearly a foot by 7" or 8". The obverse of the leaves is solid silver only broken by dark green bands following the veins. The reverse is a rich oxblood-red. The flowers are a medium pink. It is a shy bloomer and is really grown for its attractive and eye-catching foliage. A well-grown specimen can easily reach six feet in height.

There is no doubt that this plant is a hybrid that was planned. It was bred specifically to create a silver-leaved cane that consistently produced those silver leaves. All too often a plant with a silver pattern to its leaves only shows it in juvenile leaves or on leaves that grow under certain temperature or light conditions.

Classic selective breeding techniques used two unnamed canes with complex

backgrounds created by Worley. He used other plants with the potential to produce silver-leaved progeny to make these two parents, including the attractive, but somewhat difficult B. 'Orpha C. Fox.' Careful selection and back-crossing resulted in a generation that contained four with nearly solid silver leaves. Only one of those was selected and named B. 'Looking Glass.'

Culture is basically the same as for other canes. The soil mix should be loose and well-draining. Fertilizing should be done according to package directions during the growing season.

If grown in conditions that become cool as the days grow short, the plant will tend toward dormancy as reflected in some degree of leaf drop. Stop fertilizing and reduce watering. If it is being grown in the house or a heated green house, this dormancy will be barely noticed. This plant also experiences attacks of powdery mildew, particularly toward the end of the summer and early fall. Preventative spraying with a product like Bayleton works wonders. Mealy bugs tend to like this plant a little more than others, so vigilance and an effective pest management program are recommended if mealy bugs are spotted.



Sacramento Branch, American Begonia Society, August 2000

ASTRO'S FEBRUARY 2021 MEETING



Tom Keepin with *B. cristobatenis*



Plants for discussion



Gloria Hunter with *B. 'Cracklin Rose'*



Kathleen Murphy



Janet Carpenter with *B. panasoffkee*



Tony Robert with Neem Oil



Lucky guest won
B. 'Cowardly Lion'



Janet Carpenter won Neem Oil



Rachel & Arron with their
B. masoniana & begonia cuttings.



Malcolm McCorquidale
won B. 'Lalomie'



Rosa Brennan
new member