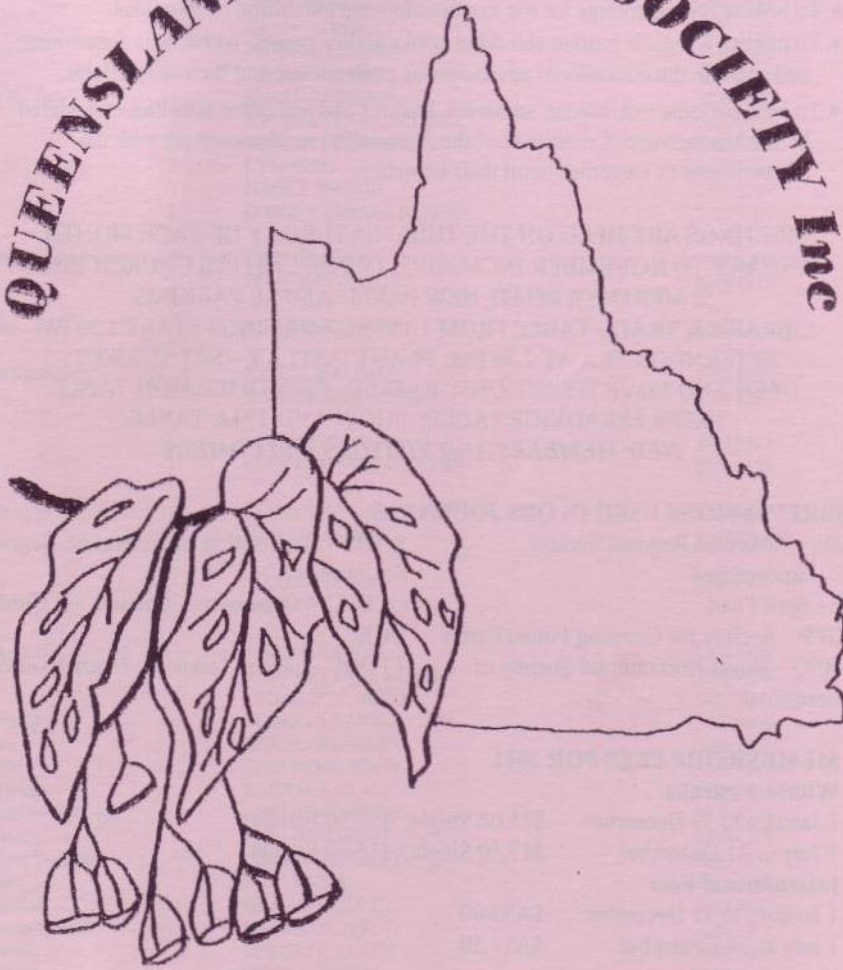


The

QUEENSLAND BEGONIA SOCIETY Inc



JOURNAL

Vol. No. 91

Winter 2011

THE QUEENSLAND BEGONIA SOCIETY INC

The objects for which the Association is established are:

- To promote good fellowship amongst all people interested in Begonias and in horticulture generally.
- To hold regular meetings for the examination and exhibition of Begonias.
- To publish a regular journal and other books and/or papers, which will disseminate and assist in the educational advancement of Begonias, and their allied fields.
- To hold periodic exhibitions, seminars, lectures and any other activities considered by the Management Committee of the Association to be consistent with the advancement of Begonias in all their branches.

MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE THIRD SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, JANUARY TO NOVEMBER INCLUSIVE, IN THE UNITING CHURCH HALL 52 MERTHYR ROAD, NEW FARM. AMPLE PARKING.

LIBRARY & TRADE TABLE FROM 1.15 PM. MEETINGS START 1.30 PM. AFTERNOON TEA AT 2.30 PM. PLANT DISPLAY – SET SUBJECT; OPEN AND NOVICE SECTIONS; RAFFLE; IDENTIFICATION TABLE; PROBLEM/ADVICE TABLE; SHOW AND TELL TABLE.

NEW MEMBERS AND VISITORS WELCOME!!!

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN QBS JOURNALS

ABS - American Begonia Society

U. – unidentified

SF - Seed Fund

SGPP – Society for Growing Potted Plants

RHSQ – Royal Horticultural Society of Queensland

AABS - Association of Australian Begonia Societies Inc

QCGC – Queensland Council of Garden Clubs

TTDGC – Twin Towns & District Garden Club

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2011

Within Australia

1 January to 31 December \$25.00 Single; \$30.00 Family

1 July to 31 December \$12.50 Single; \$15.00 Family

International Fees

1 January to 31 December \$A35.00

1 July to 31 December \$A17.50

Secretary: Mr Peter Henderson, 79 Chuter Street, Stafford, Brisbane, Qld.
Australia. 4053. Telephone (07) 3359 4319

The QBS wishes to thank the American Begonia Society for allowing it to reprint material from various issues of its magazine, *The Begonian*.

THE QUEENSLAND BEGONIA SOCIETY OFFICERS

Patron

ROSS McKINNON AM

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with renewed energy and enthusiasm that I take the position of President of our Begonia Society. During my term as President, I will endeavour to hold interesting and educational meetings with a balance of subjects and demonstrations to suit both new and experienced growers. The Committee is open to suggestions that will keep our Society moving forward. I would like to extend an invitation to all members to come along to our monthly meetings to enjoy good friendly company who share ideas and experiences, beautiful begonias, delicious afternoon tea and the opportunity to purchase quality plants from the trade table. There is a great selection and often includes some of the rare and sought after begonias. Since the purchase of our computer, we often have power point presentations.

Winter is not far away and as our begonias do not make much growth at this time, those jobs that have been held over can now be attended to. Cut off old and damaged leaves and flower stems from your plants, and clean benches and floors. Repotting and heavy pruning is not recommended but a little tidy up won't hurt. I continue to spray with Fish & Kelp as it keeps begonias clean and free from pest and disease while it still works as a foliar fertiliser. The one exception to the rule is Elatior begonias. These are winter flowering plants and to flower well, they must be fed. Tuber-hybrida are dormant at this time so put them safely away from an area that is regularly watered. Do not let them dry out – just rest them in just moist sphagnum moss and look for new growth towards the end of August. Because we experience frosty winters in my area, I will move some to more protected situations. With having had such extreme weather conditions this last summer and autumn, who knows what winter will bring?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members who regularly bring their begonias for the open and set subject displays and would like to encourage everyone to be active members and to participate in the meetings. It does make an interesting and exciting difference. Novice growers exhibit separately so need not feel intimidated by some of the large, beautiful begonias on the open bench.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead our Society and I look forward to your support. Enjoy your begonias. Kind regards. **Carmel Browne**

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Cover For Journal

We print our journals at OfficeWorks and until recently, the cover was printed on 125gsm light board. OfficeWorks are currently unable to supply this weight and so we have reverted to 80gsm for the time being.

Friendship Day

Di Schulz will again be co-ordinator of arrangements for our Friendship Day in October. We would like to have good quality plants on the competition benches, trade table and raffle to show our guests from other garden clubs the wide variety of begonias and how well they can be grown.

Rekha Morris

Rekha is again off to India looking for begonias from November 2011 to February 2012. We wish her every success and a safe trip.

Sausage Sizzle and Field Days

Our next scheduled sausage sizzle will be on 6 November at Jan and Des Hinze's home. We have a few gaps to fill in!! See page 43 for details on what is involved in hosting or attending these great days.

Book on Unidentified Species

We are purchasing from the ABS book store a copy of the above publication which has been recently updated.

Annual Show 2011

We thank Barry Kable for the loan of his 3m x 6m pagoda for use in the sales area. The Treasurer is finalising the financial results as accounts come to hand, and it looks as though we will have a profit of just under \$2500.

Meetings for 2012

The hall has been booked for all day in 2012 as we have found the afternoon bookings with a 1.30pm start and management and show committee meetings in the church after the horticultural meeting present some difficulties. We will revert to 1.00pm starts in 2012.

Annual Show 2012

The Brisbane City Council confirmed our requested dates for 2012. Setup is Friday, 24 February, with the show, Saturday and Sunday, 25-26 February.

Meetings

The Management Committee on 16 April agreed to continue with practical demonstrations. Propagating, potting mixes, fertilisers, etc., will be repeated again.

We are investigating possible benefits and the financial results if plant sales commission is reduced from 20%.

Congratulations

May O'Sullivan and Nancy Waugh have earned promotion from Novice to Open exhibitors.

Special Project for 2011

The project for 2010 was to seek ways to increase our membership and attendance at meetings. This is to be continued in 2011.

Reminder re Raffles

We list in the journals under Lucky Door & Raffle Roster the names of donors for the months ahead. In the case of the Lucky Door, the donor is requested to supply one prize – normally a well grown and named begonia. In the case of the raffle, each donor is requested to supply three prizes – normally well grown, named begonias or suitable horticultural items. Thanks go to all donors.

QCGC newsletters

This newsletter is now available via the internet. Go to the following to obtain your copy. <http://www.qcgc.net/MagazineQCGC2/index.htm>.

Peter Henderson

Secretary

VALE

Members will be sad to learn that June, our much loved and valued Editor, lost her dear husband John on Saturday 2 April.

Although John was not a begonia enthusiast, he supported June in all her plant activities.

We extend to June our sincere sympathy.

THE 10TH AUSTRALIAN BEGONIA CONVENTION SYDNEY, 11-14 MARCH, 2011

Speaking for myself, I thoroughly enjoyed the whole weekend and I feel sure that all the other delegates would agree with me.

There were approximately 80 keen begoniacs participating: 8 from Queensland, 12 from South Australia, 15 from Western Australia, 17 from Victoria, 23 from New South Wales and 7 from USA.

There were official meetings on Friday afternoon for the AABS delegates from the various states followed by a PALS meeting.

Registrations had been happening during the course of the afternoon and the evening program was an informal “getting to know you” meet and greet affair with drinks and refreshments. There was much chatter and renewing of friendships. It was great to meet Dr Rekha Morris, having read so much of her travels and collecting experiences. It was also great to meet Dr Mark Tebbitt, a nice young man, who has such a passion for begonias and who has done so much research and collecting in the wild.

Bruce and Tamsin Boardman, also from the USA, were there, and they have come over for our Conventions on several occasions. Tamsin was one of the speakers on the Sunday.

We also met up with two other young men from USA – Mike Flaherty, whose name often appears in the *American Begonian*, and who grows prize winning plants, and also Gary Hunt, who is a photographer. So, seven representatives from USA is quite impressive.

The Sebel Hotel, where we were all accommodated, was very nice and we were treated to wonderful buffet breakfasts, and the dinners on Saturday and Sunday evenings were much appreciated and very tasty.

Each day, we were taken by coach across to the Botanic Gardens where the program took place in the Maiden Theatre, which is similar to our Auditorium here at Mt Coot-tha.

On Saturday morning, we were officially welcomed by Ross Bolwell, Chairman of the AABS, and several speakers followed with power point presentations – Dr Tim Entwisle, the Executive Director of the Gardens, Peter Sharp, and Paul Nicholson, who spoke about the setting up and maintenance of the begonia gardens within the Royal Botanic Gardens. We were then taken on a conducted tour to view their efforts. The begonias growing in the ground were quite spectacular. Back on to the coaches, and we were taken to Annangrove to Ross' nursery where we all enjoyed a scrumptious BBQ. Next was a tour of his plants and the chance to buy. Then it was back to the hotel.

On Saturday evening, we sat down to a formal dinner with colourful Elatior as the table decorations and these were later distributed to the guests via a lucky number draw.

After dinner, the first ever Ted Williams Award was presented to a very worthy recipient – Peter Sharp – in recognition of all he has done for begonias and for the AABS over the years.

Also, our Queensland contingent drew aside and Isobel presented Rekha with the donation from our Queensland Society towards her next collecting expedition to India.

Sunday was a day packed with great speakers and power point presentations. First of all, was Dr Mark Tebbitt, followed by Marilyn Watson of Melbourne. Marilyn is the PALS Co-ordinator. Tamsin was next telling us about the Fort Worth Begonia Collection. After lunch, Bob Cherry spoke on his collecting experiences in China and he was followed by Rekha Morris with pictures and stories of her expeditions in India. What a lady, and what a feast of begonia information we were treated to!!

A buffet dinner was held on Sunday night and a fun trivia game.

On Monday morning we went on a coach tour to view various gardens – first of all to a public park where begonias were thriving in an open position exposed to all that nature offers. Then to two private gardens, each quite different, and it was great to see how others grow their begonias and other plants.

That was the finale for the Convention. On Monday afternoon we had free time, and we went to Darling Harbour while others returned to their home states.

Enid Henderson

LETTER TO THE SECRETARY FROM REKHA MORRIS

June 11, 2010

Dear Peter,

I am sending you a number of enclosures, among them, notes on the two species discussed in the journal of the Queensland Begonia Society, Autumn 2010, no. 86: *B. roxburghii* and *B. glandulosa*.

Since I am describing my finding *B. roxburghii* and *B. glandulosa* in the Eastern Himalayas of India and in Mexico respectively, I thought these notes may be of interest to the two members who described these species in the autumn issue of the journal of the QBS. If they would like to publish these they are welcome to do so.

I also wanted to respond to another note in the spring issue of the journal of the Queensland Begonia Society. Isobel Crossley writes about the difficulty of distinguishing between *B. imperialis* and *B. pustulata*, p. 7.

I am the one who re-introduced *B. imperialis* into cultivation in 2004/2005, and have also collected several forms of *B. pustulata*. They are easily distinguishable, although what circulates as *B. imperialis* is a hybrid of *imperialis* and *pustulata* with the latter being the dominant species.

Since the same confusion was prevalent here in the USA, I had Dr Patrick McMillan do an article on the two species. See *The Begonian*, Jan/Feb issue for 2006, p. 8, continued on p. 16 and p. 31. The photo showing the differences are mine.

The same issue has an article by Charles Henthorne about the *imperialis* he is growing from the specimens I brought back.

We are heading into our summer – not a time I enjoy!

Take care,

Rekha

***B. roxburghii* A de Candolle (Sphenanthera)**
***B. glandulosa* W J Hooker (Gireoudia)**

I have been very fortunate to have seen a number of begonias in the wild, both in India and in Mexico, among them the two species described in the Autumn 2010 issue of the journal of the Queensland Begonia Society, *B. roxburghii* and *B. glandulosa*.

***B. roxburghii* (Sphenanthera)**

In January 2009, during my trip to document begonias in Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern Himalayas of India, I was walking uphill at the base of a hill at about 300m. From about 10' down to the base of the hillside, large ferns formed such a thick cover that I could see no other plants among or below them. Several times I raised some of the large fronds which swayed on to the path to look for begonias below them, and found only layers of smaller ferns. Since the ferns dripped with moisture I was hesitant to venture among them for fear of finding myself devoured by leeches, especially as I saw no sign of any begonias along this stretch of nearly 500 yards of this fern covered hillside.

Disappointed at not finding any begonias along this long stretch, but enjoying the cool, moist breeze, I continued my slow walk uphill, from time to time raising the fronds to look for begonias. Not only did I not see any begonias but I saw no flowers, which was unusual for this extremely rich and diverse floral area.

However, quite imperceptively, a light fragrance alerted me to the presence of some flower which I could not see. The scent grew stronger as I continued up hill, and then began to fade. Determined to follow my nose to see if I could locate the source of this indescribable fragrance, I turned back, and where the fragrance was strongest, I scanned the shrubs, vines and trees on the hillside, and not seeing any flowers, I began to raise the fronds with my walking stick. On the third attempt, I found three, white, male flowers blooming in the axil of a 3' tall begonia. The glossy, deep green ovate leaves and the strong, fleshy stem tinted red were those of none other than *B. roxburghii*.

In December 2008 I had found large colonies of this species in the Khasia Hills of Meghalaya (formerly in Assam) in north-east India, but none of these had any flowers as they were in the initial stages of their growth cycle. Finding these male flowers whose exquisite scent had permeated the air for nearly 30 yards was intoxicating. I had also read that the female flowers of *B. roxburghii* are more strongly scented, but despite searching among this small colony and another one about 20 yards uphill I found no other flowers in bloom although a number of plants had clusters of buds along their stems.

Unable to bring myself to uproot this plant with the male flowers in bloom, I walked up to the second colony of this species, and just above them was a small land slide which had brought down a number of wild banana trees. Among the debris I caught sight of broken red tinted stems, which on closer examination, proved to be those of *B. roxburghii*. I pulled up several of these, and brought them back to the USA. Fibrous roots are the most difficult to keep alive, especially when they have been subjected to the rigorous cleaning necessary to pass USDA inspection on entry to the USA. Not only did two of these survive, but within six weeks of my return, they began to grow, and before one of these was 18” high, I noticed flower buds at one of the leaf axils. I began visiting this plant almost daily in anticipation of the fragrance which continued to haunt me. Sadly, when the all male flowers opened, there was no scent. Clearly, the growing environment within my small conservatory in Pendleton, SC, was not conducive to elicit any scent from *B. roxburghii*.

Enid Henderson’s description of this plant as being dioecious and producing scented flowers is quite accurate, however, it is **not the only begonia** species “with red, four-locular, fleshy fruits (ovaries) that bear small horn-like structures instead of wings” (p. 9). I have found several species in India which produce similar fleshy, berry-like fruit with the small horn-like structures instead of the familiar winged capsules. *B. aborensis* and *B. burkillii* both produce such baccate fruit instead of winged capsules, and *B. silletensis* produces even larger dark claret coloured fruit which differs from those of *B. aborensis* in several respects. *B. acetosella* var. *acetosella*, a species not recorded for India until I found it in Arunachal in Jan. 2009, also has baccate fruit with four horn-like projections at the tips. There are other species from Arunachal Pradesh, which I have not been able to identify yet, which also have baccate fruit instead of the winged capsules we commonly associate with begonias.

***B. glandulosa* (Gireoudia)**

As striking as *B. glandulosa* is with its dark chocolate veined orbicular leaves and chartreuse flowers, its habitat is quite possibly even more dramatic. Although it has been referred to as *B. hidalgensis*, as it was found in the state of Hidalgo (Mexico) by Mr Day, of the four small colonies of *B. glandulosa* which I documented, only one is in Hidalgo state. Two are along the border of San Luis Potosi with Hidalgo, but clearly in San Luis Potosi, the most well known of these find spots being in the environs of Xilitla and one find spot is towards the border of San Luis Potosi with Queretaro.

B. glandulosa has had a number of synonyms: *hidalgensis*, *dayi*, *nigro-venia*, *pinetorum*, and *multinervia*. As recently as Dr Mark Tebbitt's publication *Begonias* (2005, p. 183), *B. glandulosa* is treated as a synonym of *B. multinervia*. Prof. Burt-Utley has discussed the material on which some of these synonyms for *B. glandulosa* were based in *Studies on Middle American Begonia (Begoniaceae)* 1, *Brittonia*, 36 (3), 1984, pp. 232-235, and made a convincing distinction between some of these species and *B. glandulosa*, which is treated as a distinct species in Section Gireoudia. As Burt-Utley points out, and as I have verified in my documentation of begonias in Mexico, *B. glandulosa* and *B. pinetorum* are not only distinct species, but also have distinct distribution in Mexico. *B. glandulosa* has a restricted range limited to south-eastern San Luis Potosi and northern Hidalgo, whereas *B. pinetorum* has a much wider distribution from central Veracruz to Chiapas in Mexico.

On my most recent trip to Mexico, April 2010, I documented *B. glandulosa* at three sites, two in the state of San Luis Potosi and one in Hidalgo state. Since we had driven into San Luis Potosi from Queretaro, the state directly south of San Luis Potosi, the first small colony of *B. glandulosa* I came across was about 10km after crossing the border between Queretaro and San Luis Potosi. The dozen or so plants were scattered on tiny projections or ledges on a near vertical cliff side. In this colony the small, pale, creamy-chartreuse flowers were tinged orange, possibly as they were far more exposed to sunlight than at any of the other locations where I have documented this species.

The next colony which I documented on this trip was north of Xilitla in north-eastern San Luis Potosi. Here again they seemed quite comfortable clinging to rock ledges or anchored in crevices of steep escarpments. The lower edges of these ridges are often covered with masses of *B. wallichiana*, which in April, were laden with large, red tinged capsules.

The single colony of *B. glandulosa* I documented in Hidalgo state was on the far eastern side of Hidalgo, south of Huajutia del Reyes. Here again they occupied eerie little perches on a steep ridge overlooking a long fertile valley below. On previous trips I have also recorded this same species south of Tamazunchale, San Luis Potosi.

In this dramatic landscape of tall, steep escarpments whose peaks are often lost in clouds where small colonies of *B. wallichiana*, *B. heracleifolia* and *B. nelumbifolia* are scattered in greater numbers than *B. glandulosa*, it is difficult for anyone interested in begonias not to feel exhilarated in this landscape evocative of Chinese paintings enhanced and embellished here by begonias. However, each time I am there I find myself getting uneasy, tense and disquietingly full of foreboding.

The first time I came across *B. glandulosa* in San Luis Potosi in April 2003, they were in bloom and setting seed. However, all these plants with capsules were beyond my reach on a near vertical cliff side. My husband was able to pull himself on to a ledge close enough to pick some of these capsules. Knowing how precarious these cliffs are, I warned him not to stand without one leg around a shrub or small tree, and to hold on to a sturdy tree branch with one hand while reaching for the capsules. Having cautioned him, I had barely walked a few dozen yards uphill to take photos when I heard a crashing sound, and saw part of the ledge with my husband come crashing downhill. I raced down to see him fall and lie still. In my panic, I dropped and damaged both my cameras, and seeing him lie inert, all I could think was that in my obsession with begonias, I had killed him. He was breathing, and in a minute or so opened his eyes and asked me where we were. We were in an extremely isolated location, and in the couple of hours we were there I had not seen anyone. Dazed and suffering from concussion, he managed to walk to the car, where I had my travel pharmacopeia, chocolates and various fruit juices.

With the help of these and the homeopathic preparation, *Rescue Remedy*, used to treat trauma, he was able to gradually return to normal, and after resting for a couple of hours, we drove out of these isolated hills. Now I never allow him to climb up ridges to procure begonia seeds, but do this myself, however, whenever we approach *B. glandulosa*'s habitat, I find myself tensing with apprehension!

Rekha Morris

Baccate: berry-like.

Orbicular: Circular in outline.

Locule: a compartment or cell, usually referring to ovary, fruit or anther.

LETTER TO SECRETARY

1 May 2011

Dear Peter,

This is a thank you note for the generous contribution from the Queensland Begonia Society.

I loved being at the NSW convention and getting to meet so many enthusiastic begoniacs. It was especially good to meet the members of the Queensland Society attending the convention.

Please convey my greetings and thank you to all the members of the Queensland Society for their generous support of my next trip. I am planning to leave in November and return in early February 2012. All the best.

Many thanks again.

Rekha Morris

UNUSUAL USES FOR BEGONIAS

An interesting problem arises when a thinking person considers the economic and aesthetic value of begonias to mankind; an investigation will show that the plants have a more important meaning for humanity than one would realise. The cultural history is no less interesting when one investigates how widespread and deep their adoption has been by mankind and how the plants were named in relation to their uses.

The following outlines for the first time the degree in which the genus *Begonia* was or still is useful to mankind as a healing, seasoning or ornamental plant.

We read in the old literature that the *Begonia empetrum acetosum* was prepared by the natives, the Europeans and Chinese as a kind of salad plant. The natives also cooked the plant, brewing a sauce from it which was served with their fish. The juice of the same begonia was even more frequently used for a sour, refreshing drink working at the same time as a sedative. Balian and Javanese utilise the juice of the same plant to dye their clothing if they can find no lemons. The same juice is used to clean all their iron and steel weapons which have been allowed to become rusty. The Ternat inhabitants are said to prepare a mixture of begonia and lemon juice which, when applied to their weapons, gives them a blue colour.

The rust-stained iron is allowed to lie in this extract overnight and in the morning it is found clean. The juice of the begonia mixed with half its weight in sugar produces a pleasing, cooling jelly tasting like mangoes and currants. A seasoning for fried foods is made by placing the entire plant in water stirring it continuously while cooking after which it is strained through a linen cloth and stored away in a pitcher to be used later.

Concerning *Begonia malabarica*, it is said that the natives of the Tsjeri (who call it narinampuli) cook the leaves with oil, the juice being used as a salve for sores; afterwards the leaves are warmed up with salt and formed into little balls which are found to be an effective remedy for toothache or applications on inflammations.

Begonia geniculate is also used by the natives as a means of removing rust from weapons and iron.

The long known *Begonia semperflorens* has been used as a vegetable plant. We read concerning this, "Because of its constituent parts of oxalic acid the leaves are used like sorrel in stew. In various regions of South America they have been eating it in this form a long time". The South American muleteer drivers chew shoots of *Begonia fuchsioides*, in their effort to prevent thirst; like the German soldiers chew a blade of grass on the march. In *Gardeners Chronicle* of 1871 it said that the Parisian population during the siege of the town used begonias like spinach.

From the year 1650 we learn that a begonia named *Totoncaxoxo coyollin*, which cannot be identified as a fixed species, yielded roots (tuber) which had a peculiar and bitter taste, that tended to cleanse the intestinal tract.

Begonia balmisiana, yields tubers, which are suitable as a remedy against syphilis, according to Klotch in his *Begoniaceen* of 1854. The Archbishop of Mexico was so impressed by this remedy having himself witnessed the success of its cure that he had Dr Balmis send 750 pounds to the King of Spain and asked him to make further experiments with the plant as a remedy. Berthold Seemann in describing his journey, noticed that the rhizome of a begonia in Central America is used as an emetic and in Peru tubers of two begonias are used against dysentery.

Notes from *Die Begonien*.

Bulletin of the American Begonia Society, February 1936.

CULTURE NOTES – APRIL MEETING

I was introduced to the world of begonias when a friend gave me a piece of a gorgeous *B. 'Silver Jewell'* she had in her home. Soon after we went to an open garden at Victoria Point where there was a lovely *B. listada*. The owner very generously gave me a piece of her plant. I was seriously 'hooked' when I went to the annual Begonia Show soon after. My family is surprised that my interest has not waned!

I have over the years tried various growing mediums and have now arrived at putting down my leaves in either washed river sand only or a mix of two parts washed river sand, one part Perlite and one part coir peat. The latter mix I find is excellent for cane cuttings. I find that if I use a root growing hormone powder or pure unadulterated honey to dip the cuttings in, it encourages quicker propagation. Unlike my earlier efforts, I now wait until the plants are really well established before I transplant them.

I now take care not to overpot. I also use small stones to weight the plants down, instead of using sate sticks.

I have lost many begonias by being too generous with feeding. Every so often, I use Confidor to prevent bugs and caterpillars from feeding on them. I use Baycor for mildew and have recently started using a concentrated form of Seasol called Eco-Cweed. This is in powder form. Half a teaspoon is dissolved in a little water and added to a litre of water. This is very good value and does not smell as much. Of course, it also takes up less space and is a lot easier than shaking a large quantity of liquid Seasol.

Happy gardening.

Betty Vander Poorten

WINTER

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth,
For the touch of a friendly hand and a talk beside the fire;
It is the time for home.

Edith Sitwell

SPECIES TALK – APRIL MEETING

B. oxysperma

B. oxysperma is classed as a trailing-scandent, yet it is also an epiphyte, meaning that it requires a host plant to attach itself to in order to survive when growing in the wild. The other reason it is referred to as an epiphyte is that when its flowers are spent, the seeds, which have little air sacks, drift in the breeze and attach themselves to a host.

B. oxysperma was described by A de Candolle in 1859, and discovered in the Philippines. This particular species was first cultivated by Martin Johnson. He had sourced the plant in a location approximately 50 miles southwest of Manilla on Mt Banahai, and it is believed that Johnson was the first to introduce the species into the USA.

The name “*oxysperma*” means “with sharply pointed seeds”.

The leaf surface is glossy green with red hairs and red tinges along the veins. The leaf underside is pale green with red hairs or it can be relatively hairless. The stipules are deciduous (these are the sheathing at the base of the stem where it joins the rhizome).

It is noted that this begonia has quite a thick rhizome which can climb to 60cm. The rhizome does not often branch. The flowers on *B. oxysperma* are quite spectacular and orange in colour.

For *B. oxysperma* to grow successfully it requires quite humid conditions. It must be grown in an open mix and does quite well in a hanging basket. Alternatively, it can be grown by mounting it on a piece of bark, cork or a piece of tree fern trunk. Overwatering will cause the roots to rot.

I would recommend this species as a worthy addition to a garden or to be a part of begonia grower’s collection.

Reference: Mark Tebbitt’s book *Begonias: Cultivation, Identification and Natural History*. **Marcus Clamp**

Footnote: The plant of *B. oxysperma* on display has been growing under two layers of black 70% shade cloth, on a top shelf, 90cm from the roof of the bushhouse. It belongs to Enid Henderson and has been growing in their normal potting mix. When potted, it was fed with Dynamic Lifter and slow release fertiliser. It is watered only when dry.

B.oxysperma



PLUMIER'S HALF DOZEN

In the ABS *The Begonian* of March/April 2010, there is an excellent article by Peter Sharp (NSW Begonia Society) on Plumier's discovery of six begonias in the West Indies in 1690.

One of these begonias was *B. rotundifolia*. We have recently come into possession of *B. rotundifolia* thanks to the generosity of a South Australia Begonia Society member whom Enid met at the 10th Australian Begonia Convention in Sydney in March 2011.

Is it not amazing that a plant found in 1690 is still in our collections today?

A photo of *B. rotundifolia* appears on page 57 of the March/April 2010 *Begonian*.

Peter Henderson

SET SUBJECT – APRIL MEETING RHIZOMATOUS BEGONIAS WITH CILIATE LEAF MARGINS

In Thompson & Thompson's *Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide*, the word – ciliate - means fringed with fine hairs. There is also another word - ciliolate, which means minutely ciliate.

There are lots and lots of begonias with ciliate leaf margins whose origins go back to the two species, *B. bowerae* and *B. bowerae* var. *nigramarga*. These are known affectionately as the eyelash begonias. *B. bowerae* was discovered in 1948 by Thomas MacDougall in Mexico, growing at an altitude of 1220m and it was named and described by Rudolf Ziesenhenné in 1950. It was named after a very keen begonia enthusiast, Constance Bower, who produced many popular hybrids back in the 1920s.

In 1955, MacDougall discovered another similar small begonia, with darker leaf colouring, growing in the same area, and this one was later described and named *B. bowerae* var. *nigramarga* by Ziesenhenné in 1973.

In the December 1981 issue of the *ABS Begonian*, Ziesenhenné lists 583 hybrids (created by various growers) whose origins can be traced back to these two begonias. No doubt there have been hundreds more introduced in the intervening years.

Our own Queensland hybridiser Bernard Yorke produced many new cultivars using these two species in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, and the eye-lash margin appears in many of John Clare's hybrids and also Jane Blundell's.

The plants presented on the bench were:

<i>B.</i> 'Bedford Velvet'	Hybridised by Bernard Yorke
<i>B.</i> 'Nite Satin'	“ “
<i>B.</i> 'Blue Bird'	“ John Clare
<i>B.</i> 'Burgundy Dream'	“ “
<i>B.</i> 'Buderim Beauty'	“ “
<i>B.</i> 'Curly Lush'	“ Mickey Meyer
<i>B.</i> 'Blue Black'	“ Graham Cuthbert
<i>B.</i> 'Wedgewood'	“ Ivy McFarlane
<i>B.</i> 'Cinnamon Sky'	Hybridised by Ross Bolwell
<i>B.</i> unknown	

Daphne Sellwood presented a talk and led the discussion on the benched plants.

Editor's Note: **Enid Henderson** has provided this written information.

Begonia with ciliate leaf margin

MORE ON THE BEGONIA DATABASE

There is still much work to be done for the long-term future of the database, and I intend to continue its development by adding new begonias and photos as well as update information on the plants already listed (about 17,000 of them). I will also improve the look and feel of the database and hope to include more features such as: an extra photo page for more detailed photos; a section to include taxonomist published descriptions of species; a section on endangered species; information on which plants are known in cultivation as well as a glossary of terms so that more technical jargon is quickly explained as you scroll across the data.

I still need much more information and hope to encourage members to be proactive in their support. For instance I need photos of many more begonias and would be happy to accept .jpg files via e-mail so that I can upload them. Members would be credited for this on the web site. I also need information of any new begonias that members are aware of that aren't yet in the database. Members can also help update any missing information on any begonia they grow that does not appear in the database. This can be achieved by using the "wiki" tab in the database. This is set up for anyone to submit data easily. All you need to do is type the data in the various fields on the "wiki" page and scroll right down the bottom and click "save record" and the information you have submitted will automatically be sent to me to review and update after verification. It is so easy.

I encourage members' involvement and look forward to working with you in the future to ensure the long-term viability of this project. I have a number of e-mail addresses but the easy one to remember when you wish to enquire about the database is: update@ibegonias.com

I wish you all good begonia growing.

Ross Bolwell, *The Begonian*, January/February 2011

NEWSLETTERS ON WEBSITES

Newsletters are available to our members at the following websites:

Neutrog (fertilisers): info@neutrog.com.au

subTropical Gardening magazine: www.stgmagazine.com.au

Add your details to the **sign up** section on the left of the website.

A TRIP TO PERTH

As our frequent flier points with QANTAS were building up, and as the Begonia Society of Western Australia was celebrating its 30th anniversary, we decided to fly to Perth to attend their Annual Begonia Show over the weekend of 9-10 April. We allowed a few extra days for sightseeing, and more importantly, to visit some begonia members and view their collections.

As we are members of W.A., we attended the show on Friday to offer to assist with the setting up, but found there was little for us to do as they were all well organised and soon had all in place for the show opening on Saturday. Enid, our QBS Chief Steward, had obtained permission to accompany their Judge on Saturday morning to gather information on their judging procedures. Unfortunately, the Judge failed to appear, and so Enid and I, as impartial members, were invited to carry out the judging.

They have a number of very good growers and there were some excellent specimens on display providing keen competition. A very old plant of *B. dregei* var. 'Glasgow' in full flower was outstanding and won Best Begonia in Show (see coloured image included with this journal).

Although they do not have as many classes as at our show, they do have an interesting segment for their State Championship. The State Championship consists of an exhibitor entering six begonias which must be from at least four distinct horticultural groups. Each exhibitor's six plants are set out on a round table, one table per exhibitor, making for an appealing spectacle for the public.

The display at the entrance was very eye catching with "30 years" balloons and a good variety of begonias. *B.* 'Burning Bush' (which our Carmel Browne brought back from USA in 2005) and a huge plant of *B.* 'Anita' stood out for me.

There was a good variety of sales plants available and Enid found enough to bring back on the plane plus arranging for some cuttings to be posted over later.

The display on the stage by Kim Fletcher and his helpers was based on the theme of "Angel Winged Begonias" and was a most impressive feature of the show.

We thoroughly enjoyed the show and the friendship of the Western Australian members. Many thanks to Jo and others for their hospitality.

Note: Labels on the begonia we grow here as *B.* 'Anita Sharrad' should be changed to show *B.* 'Anita". The correct name of *B.* 'Anita' was confirmed years ago with Merv Sharrad, the hybridiser, of this lovely plant.

Peter Henderson



Begonia dregei var. 'Glasgow'

DEADLINE FOR SPRING 2011 JOURNAL

FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST, 2011

Please forward all items for inclusion in the Spring Journal to:

June McBryde
84 Pateena Street,
Stafford, Qld. Australia 4053

Email : begonia8@tpg.com.au

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MANURE

In these days of plastic products
One must carefully look around
For manure's gifts are lying there
Upon the very ground.

Forget about the bags of lime
And super phosphate too –
Dung's the thing your plants cry for
Horse dung, cow pats, chook poo.

The humble horse, the stolid cow,
And loads of chooks as well
Produce a wondrous food for plants
If you can stand the smell.

So when next you see some cow pats
Don't look at them askance.
Collect them in a great big sack
And bung 'em on your plants.

Ellen (surname unknown)

Western Australian newsletter (date unknown).

BEGONIA SOCIETY SONG

Songs are a feature of the social hour at our monthly meeting. The following begonia song was written by Mr Tom Smith and is sung to the melody of *We've been working for the railroad*.

We're the lovers of begonias, of the USA.
We're the growers of begonias, to brighten up our day.
How we love our Rex and fibrous, love our tuberous too.
Now to spend our nights and Sundays, begonias – just for you.

How we'd love to have a lath house, in some sunny spot,
We could show our Rex in winter, instead of just the pot.
We dislike those slugs and aphids, worms and sow bugs too,
Any yard is made a garden, begonias – just by you.

Bulletin of the American Begonia Society, August, 1936.

HOW I GROW *B. DREGEI* VAR. 'GLASGOW'

My plant of *B. dregei* var. 'Glasgow' has been grown on from a small plant in a 5inch (12.5cm) pot which I obtained in approximately 2004. I initially brought it down to a 4inch (10cm) plastic pot and repotted when needed, each time up into the next size pot and since spring 2010 it has been in a 27.5cm plastic bowl.

The plant is grown under 70% green shadecloth and on a bench that is approximately 120cm from the shadecloth. In summer, on the days of extreme heat, the plant, together with many canes, is placed on the floor mainly to stop burning of the leaves.

My plant is a little pot bound and it appears to deal with that well. I also grow a thick-stemmed *B.* 'Anita' which I also allow to become a bit pot bound. For me it also seems to do well in that condition.

During summer my *B. dregei* generally requires water daily, probably because of the congested root mass and the size of the plant. I fertilise full strength approximately every 10 to 14 days and it often receives a weaker rate when watered, as I use a siphon mixer when I water. I only fertilise in the warmer months and generally use a mix of Phostrogen with some added Seasol.

In winter the plant is placed under cover with good light from overhead white fibreglass and as the shadehouse faces north it does receive sunlight through the shadecloth in the winter months. Generally there is little leaf loss during winter and if there is any sign of mildew I use Yates Rose Shield and that keeps it at bay. During the colder months I water only when required – generally once a week to 10 days. I allow the root mass to become almost dry and water only into the pot, not over the leaves.

The plant receives a good trim at the beginning of the growing season and again approximately eight weeks before our show; that way I have a lot of new growth on the canopy and a good show of flowers for our exhibition.

I find the plant easy to grow. The biggest thing for me is to keep *B. dregei* drier in winter and not over pot.

Geoff Bishop

SAUSAGE SIZZLE – 1 MAY

As well as a few local members, other Society members travelled from as far away as Ravensbourne, Ipswich, Springsure and the suburbs of Brisbane to the lovely country setting of Shevanti and Rohan Seneviratne at Mt Nathan, on a beautiful, sunny day on Sunday 1 May.

After enjoying morning tea, most people headed for the greenhouses where lots of beautiful begonias were happily growing; also many leaves were seen to be striking in the sand under the benches. Another area had lots of colourful bromeliads growing under shadecloth.

All enjoyed a delicious luncheon consisting of hot dishes, salads and mouth watering desserts. Thanks to Rohan who once again showed his culinary skills with the cooking of the BBQ food selections. Recipes of two of the desserts we enjoyed are included below. After lunch, the usual plant raffle was held with some fine plants being exchanged.

These field days are always happy, social occasions where members get to know each other a little better, so please try to attend these gatherings or maybe even host one yourself. On behalf of all present, Enid Henderson thanked our hosts for a wonderful day.

Ardina Ludwig

ARDINA'S STRAWBERRY MOUSSE TART

Base: ½ cup sugar ½ cup coconut ½ cup S R flour
 ½ cup plain flour 90g butter (melted) Pinch salt

Combine all ingredients, mixing thoroughly. Press into a lamington pan or tart plate. Bake in moderate oven for 15 mins.

Filling: 1 large cup sugar 1 large cup water Pinch salt
 1 heaped dessertspoon gelatine 300g thickened cream
 1 punnet strawberries (chopped)

Boil sugar, water, salt and gelatine for 5 minutes. Cool, then beat until thick and white. Add 1 tablespoon cream and beat until smooth. Fold in strawberries. Pour into ready cooked pastry shell and when set, top with whipped remaining cream.

MAY O'SULLIVAN'S TRIFLE

Unfilled plain sponge	Golden Circle pineapple pieces
Goulburn Valley two fruits	Cottee's port wine jelly
Aeroplane mango jelly	Paul's low fat custard
McWilliam's cream sherry	

Make up jellies to 400ml (not 500ml as per instructions on packet) and set in two pie plates. Shave skin off top of sponge. Cut sponge into small chunks (approx. 20mm in size) and dry in oven on a baking tray taking care not to burn. Turn out to cool. Strain pineapple pieces and set aside juice. Strain two fruits – juice not required. Combine one part pineapple juice and two parts cream sherry.

First layer: Place a layer of sponge pieces in base of trifle dish and ladle pineapple/sherry mixture over the top.

Second layer: Spread pineapple pieces over.

Third layer: With a knife cut mango jelly down and across making small cubes (approx. 10mm) and spread over pineapple pieces. Cover with custard.

Fourth layer: Place a layer of sponge pieces and add pineapple/sherry mixture as above.

Fifth layer: Layer of two fruits.

Sixth layer: Prepare port wine jelly same as mango jelly and spread. Cover with custard.

Note:

There are no amounts for ingredients as I make a trifle as a main dessert with ice cream for family gatherings of approximately sixteen people. I use 3 ½ sponges, 850g tin of pineapple pieces, 1 ½ litres Paul's low fat custard and 1 kg of two fruits. Amounts need to be adjusted to suit size of dish being used. I have substituted orange or passionfruit jellies for mango, but always use Cottees port wine jelly, as the flavour is better than other brands.

MY BATTLE WITH MILDEW

When I fell in love with begonias, I started to grow more and more types as they took an increasing amount of the space available in my greenhouse. Life was good. Begonias were good. But then like many begonia growers, sooner or later, (and usually sooner), I had to face the problem of powdery mildew on my begonias. Suddenly life was not so good. Not good at all when your plants are dropping leaves like trees in the autumn. Where I live the cool night time temperature and high humidity favoured by mildew could occur for at least half of the year so controlling mildew was essential if I wished to continue to grow susceptible begonias, like the mallots.

I tried many of the over the counter commercial products in my greenhouse, on begonias infected with powdery mildew, but I had very limited success. Many of the products would tout “works well because it contains sulphur compounds” so I thought, “Heck, I will just try that.”

I read that “dusting sulphur”, “wettable sulphur” or “elemental sulphur” in powdered form has a good efficacy against a wide range of powdery mildew diseases as well as black spot.

Sulphur is one of the oldest pesticides used in agriculture. In organic production, sulphur is the most important fungicide used. Sulphur also has some insecticide effect against mites. Sounded good. And with all the concern about toxic chemicals this appeared less harmful. (Still, avoid breathing in the dust before mixing with water). So I purchased a 5lb (2.25kg) bag for about \$US5 plus shipping. By putting two or three tablespoons in a one gallon (4.5 litre) sprayer, I had a decade long supply.

So, next step a test subject or two. I chose my worst offender, and also one of the most beautiful, *B.* ‘Looking Glass’ and while I was at it, *B.* ‘Don Miller’ and *B.* ‘Frosty’ and a few of those small spotted, red leaved mallot things too! I had almost forgotten what the leaves looked like since I only had bare stems for much of the year. After spraying both the top and underside of any remaining leaves and making sure that I got the stems where the new buds would emerge in the leafless ones, I waited. But not for long. Within an hour, I could tell that the mildew was drying up. All new leaves were blemish free and remained that way.

I had won the battle and the war.

Now, several years later, I am no longer concerned about mildew. I keep a one gallon (4.5 litre) sprayer around with two or three tablespoons of sulphur mixed in. I give the sprayer a good shake to make sure that the sulphur has not settled and give all my plants a once over light coating after I water during the season that mildew is a problem (spring and autumn). The spray dries on the leaves and remains effective until it is washed off with a strong stream of water, hence the spraying after watering. I group my especially susceptible varieties together for added monitoring just in case. Last year, I had a 12 inch (30cm) hanging basket of *B. 'Looking Glass'* in a part of the greenhouse where I kept no other begonias, so it did not get any spraying. At first, I did not recognise the mildew when I saw a severe infection since it had been so long since I had seen it. Out came the sprayer even though I figured that it would lose all its leaves as most were over 50% covered with the white stuff. To my surprise, the infected parts of the leaves dried up and the remaining parts continued to remain healthy and the leaves did not even drop off the plant. It may not have been attractive, but it did illustrate how well the sulphur worked.

Begonia lovers have been struggling with mildew for decades, so maybe my successful experience might not be expected under all conditions. But if you have not had satisfactory control with other treatments, it is worth giving it a try. After all, it has relatively low toxicity, is organically acceptable, is cheap, is easy to apply, and has worked much better than anything I have tried before.

Mike Underwood

The Begonian, September/October 2009

MORE ON MILDEW

It's that time of year when mildew is liable to strike. The mildew spore are always present, just waiting for mild winter days followed by cold nights. Hopefully, these remedies suggested by members at past meetings and in past QBS journals will help. Please remember to test an untried method on one or two leaves first before using on the entire plant.

Milk

Dilute 1 part full cream milk with 8 parts water and spray on plants. Powdered full cream milk may also be used.

Condy's Crystals (permanganate of potash)/Betadine

Mix a very small quantity Condy's Crystals (just enough to colour water pink), 4 drops Betadine (from chemist), 2 drops dishwashing detergent in 2 litres water. Spray on plants, remembering that Condy's Crystals will stain tiles, concrete etc.

Compost Tea

To help protect plants from fungal disease as well as mildew, spray them with liquid compost, also known as compost tea. Mix 1 part mature organic compost with 6 parts water. Stir well and leave to stand for about a week, then filter the liquid through some cloth. Spray resulting liquid on to plants or soak them overnight. Spray every 5 to 7 days if conditions are likely to produce mildew.

Washing Soda

Dissolve 112g washing soda in 5 1/2 litres cold water and stir in 56g soft soap, or use equivalent proportions. Spray plants immediately.

Bicarbonate of Soda

Spray with mixture of 1 teaspoon bicarbonate to 2 litres water.

Citrofresh

I'm not sure if this product is still available (from nurseries). Spray on to plants.

This article was first published in QBS journal 67, Winter 2005.

June McBryde

SPEAKER – MAY MEETING BARRY KABLE, PETER'S GLEN SHADEHOUSES

We were treated to an interesting talk at the May meeting by Barry Kable who then presented his gardening products and plants for sale.

Some interesting items were:

Plastic carry trays for 8 – 30 pot plants (pots will not fall over)

Pens, pencils (label printing lasts 5 years)

Bags of Perlite containing multiple sized particles

Coconut husk planters.

Many other items are available at 151 Railway Parade, Thorneside, 4158, phone 3207 2793, or www.petersglen.com.au

June McBryde

SPECIES TALK – MAY MEETING

B. sparsipila (*B. ‘Oyster’ hort.*)

I’m going to pass around a photo of *B. sparsipila* which I printed off the American Begonia Society website. It is the same photo which Ivy McFarlane showed me last year, when she said she was pretty sure that a begonia we grow and know as *B. ‘Oyster’ hort.* and *B. sparsipila* are one and the same. I must say that I agree with her as my plant of *B. ‘Oyster’* looks exactly like the one in the photo especially when in flower. “Hort.” is used when the correct name of a begonia is not known, but is used to denote the common name used in horticulture.

There is hardly any information to be had on the internet about *B. sparsipila*, except that it was found in Mexico and Central America and described by Baker in 1873. I could not find anything at all about *B. ‘Oyster’ hort.* on the net.

Long before our Society came into being and for as long as I can remember, I have had a large patch of *B. ‘Oyster’* growing on the southern side of the house in the garden bordering a paved area. I never knew its name until I became a member of the Society, and I must admit I didn’t ever take much notice of it until I first saw it in flower.

It flowers prolifically and is truly a sight to behold with its pink blossoms held high above the foliage. I can’t remember where my original plant came from, but it has always been one of my favourite begonias now for many years.

It belongs to the thick-stemmed group. Thick stems are not everyone’s favourite group, as they seldom branch, but send up new growths from the base. Most of them drop their lower leaves, leaving foliage only at the top of the stems, and these stems look bare.

Just a handful of chicken manure pellets each spring seems to be all it needs for its nourishment. Propagation is by cuttings.

This begonia doesn’t seem to be fussy in its light requirements, as it grows well in shade, as well as in a half sunny position.

The leaves of my plant are slightly cupped, as are the ones in the photo, and the leaf edges are very slightly serrated, as they are also in the photo. Ivy reports that *B. sparsipila* has hairs on the stems when young, but these disappear as the stem matures as they do on *B. 'Oyster'*.

Ivy also reports that many growers in other states think that *B. 'Oyster'* hort. should now be known as *B. sparsipila*.

June McBryde

Footnote: Ivy McFarlane reported that she had been speaking to Bernard Yorke recently, and he identified *B. 'Oyster'* as *B. sparsipila*, seed of which he had imported many years ago from USA.

CULTURE HINTS – MAY MEETING

- To keep your plant from reverting back to a dominant parent, remove any plain leaves. For example, plain leaves could occur on *B. 'Monash'*, *B. 'Caloundra Coast'* or any others that have *B. 'Sir Percy'* as a parent plant, because *B. 'Sir Percy'* is a dominant plant.

Another dominant plant is *B. conchifolia* var. *rubrimacula*, which is a parent of *B. 'Fairyland'*, so watch for any plain leaves on it.

Also take the leaves off 'sport' plants if they start looking like the parent plant as this will keep them looking distinctive from the parent plant. A couple of sports to watch are *B. 'Erythrophylla Bunchii'* and *B. 'Silver Jewel'* sport.

- To remove the white sticky sap (which is poisonous) from your hands after pruning Euphorbia plants or any other plants or weeds which exude this sap, wash with methylated spirits, as soap and water will not remove it. This method will also work when peeling a choko.

If you happen to rub your eyes and get the sap in them, go straight to your hospital emergency department.

Ivy McFarlane

SET SUBJECT – MAY MEETING

JOHN CLARE HYBRIDS

When I look at the list of John Clare hybrids, I am surprised at just how many of my plants are actually John Clare hybrids. I have made myself a rule that I will mark the tags with JC so that I know who the hybridiser is. When I buy a plant because it appeals to me, at the time I have no knowledge as to who hybridised it, but when you get a list to check, you can identify what you buy.

On looking through the list I see John's first hybrids were done in 1991, when he named many new hybrids. He has continued this trend with over 200 hybrids to his name. The latest one on his list was in 2008 with one named *B.* 'Elsie Zilm'. John lives in Bundaberg and many of his hybrids bear the names of places around the north coast area, as well as those of Brisbane suburbs. He has also named his hybrids after people that he knew who are lovers of begonias.

About ten years ago, when we were in Bundaberg for a card tournament, I visited John Clare's home. At the time his begonias outside had been hit with a hail storm and were looking sad, but I am sure they would have recovered. Also, he was experimenting with crossing canes with rhizomatous begonias. Needless to say, I did not leave his home without some additional plants for my collection.

I am sure we will all enjoy the many John Clare hybrids that will be on show here today. Ivy McFarlane has very kindly offered to do a Power Point presentation of John Clare hybrids which will add to the collection on show here today.

Pat Lesina

Plants tabled: *B.* 'Helen Clare', *B.* 'Bleeding Heart', *B.* 'Miriam Vale', *B.* 'The Fuzz', *B.* 'Ginger Circles', *B.* 'Norgrove Curl' (2), *B.* 'Lime Painted Lady', *B.* 'Green Island', *B.* 'Bundy Beauty', *B.* 'Roma Glow', *B.* 'Silver Reef' and *B.* unknown.

Footnote: We were treated to a power point presentation of some images of John Clare hybrids, made by Ivy McFarlane. These images were: *B.* 'Doris Harnett', *B.* 'Amber Lea', *B.* 'Fluro Pink', *B.* 'Pebble Pink', *B.* 'Helen Clare', *B.* 'Gladys Schulz', *B.* 'Nelly Clare', *B.* 'Bundy Jewel', *B.* 'Glen Forest', *B.* 'Mrs Pershouse', *B.* 'Pink Gem', *B.* 'Angelic Mist', *B.* 'Brown Pleats', *B.* 'Barbie's Favourite', *B.* 'Paula Clare', *B.* 'Pink Frills', *B.* 'Woongarra Curl', *B.* 'Lota Rose', *B.* 'The Fuzz', *B.* 'Agnes', *B.* 'Black Douglas', *B.* 'Paula Swift', *B.* 'Pink Spider', *B.* 'Humpty Doo', *B.* 'Tarlee', *B.* 'Snowy Star', *B.* 'Madaline', *B.* 'Marble Bar', *B.* 'Rose Tattoo', and *B.* 'Windamere'.

ALTERNATIVE FOR PHOSTROGEN

There have been some concerns expressed that Phostrogen is no longer available. A phone call to Debco has confirmed they are no longer importing Phostrogen from England, but are planning to bring out their own fertiliser.

I received a sample pack of Debco's replacement for Phostrogen, and on examination of the chemical analysis, I see that it is exactly the same as Phostrogen. Chemicals are in the same form and same percentage, and the feeding guide is also the same. The packaging (colour etc) is much the same, so when it comes on the market here, it should be easily recognisable. As yet, Debco does not have a distributor in Queensland but are planning to do so.

If you have run out of Phostrogen and are desperate for the Debco replacement, you may be able to get some from friends down south.

Peter Henderson

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON SHADEHOUSES

I have been asked to write an article on bushhouses/shadehouses and am basing what I've written on the structures I've seen at various members' homes when they've held sausage sizzles or field days.

Sooner or later, if you are a begonia grower, you will need either a large grove of trees to provide dappled shade for your plants, or you will end up with some sort of shadehouse (or an additional shadehouse as your collection grows). Very few begonias can grow well in full sun all day (although *B. venosa* comes to mind), so you will most likely need to build a structure to protect them from too much sun and wind, and to provide them with the humidity they love. A shadehouse modifies the atmosphere, making the sun less strong, the rain softer and the wind, a breeze.

Where you build your shadehouse largely depends on the area you have. If you are on a large block of land, the sky's the limit, and a large, free-standing shadehouse/s will be yours. If your land area is small, you may be able to build out from a wall of the house – a pergola or the like. Perhaps you are in a unit and a balcony is the only area you have.

Many people do not have a choice of where to build, depending on circumstances, so if you do opt for a pergola, the eastern side of the house would be ideal, as would a free standing structure receiving morning sun. Whatever your lot, shadecloth and/or plastic sheeting etc will help to maximise a less than ideal position.

If your choice of framework is timber, and the shade from the roof will be provided by wooden slats, make sure they are positioned north/south, and not east/west. A framework of steel poles would be my choice, using weldmesh for the roof and walls and then covered with appropriate covering. The roof can be flat or pitched, but ensure it is high enough for hanging containers of plants.

Shadecloth to cover walls and roofs comes in 50% to 90% and can be fawn, green, black or even blue. Some growers have part of the roof covered with alsynite or the like under which plants can be grown that must not be overwatered, so not exposed to rain. An extra removable shadecloth layer can be used over a shadecloth roof to provide extra shade in summer for plants that do not like strong summer sun.

Strong plastic sheets from hardware stores can be mounted on the southern and western sides and even roofs to minimise strong winds in winter or help to prevent frost. All these factors depend on the location of your shadehouse.

Inside the shadehouse, shelves can be solid and covered with damp sand for humidity, or they can be of weldmesh. Make sure the weldmesh squares are small enough to support pots and to prevent small pots from toppling over. Floors can be covered with sand or ash (again for humidity).

Shelves should be of a height for easy viewing of your plants as well as allowing for working with your plants. You don't want to stand on tiptoe to see your plants, nor do you want an aching back because the shelves are too low.

Benches should be wide enough to allow for air circulation around plants, as begonias should not be crowded together. Remember to make path/s through the structure that allow optimal viewing of your plants.

If you have the room, you might want to reserve space for propagating and/or potting, so allow for this when determining the size of your shadehouse.

If you have a balcony on which to display your begonias, you may be able to provide a shadecloth cover, depending on which direction your balcony faces. Most cane-like and shrub-like begonias can be grown successfully on an eastern facing balcony without a shadecloth roof. Rhizomatous and other types of begonias will need some sort of sun minimiser.

Automatic watering systems connected to a water tank are handy if you are busy or away, but should not take the place of hand watering. These systems tend to overwater plants with little foliage, and underwater plants with lots of foliage.

However and wherever you decide to build your shadehouse, **please** make it as large as your space allows. Believe me, your begonia collection will grow like Topsy and you will never have enough room. It's a case of bigger is better! We begoniacs can't help ourselves; we just keep on collecting.

June McBryde

WHAT TO DO IN WINTER JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

This is the season when we have lovely sunny days and cold nights, and often cold westerly winds in August. Mildew is often a problem at this time, so I'm spraying the most susceptible plants with Fish and Kelp. Our President swears by it and she says she doesn't have mildew.

The plants won't dry out so much, so watering can be cut back, and with the amount of rain we have had, the begonias will be pleased about that I'm sure.

The sun is moving into the northern sky so you may have to move plants to get more light.

For those in a frosty area, you might try bubble plastic to cover the begonias.

As Percy Shelley said "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Isobel Crossley

THE BAD NEWS AND THE GOOD NEWS FOR BEGONIA HABITATS

David Suzuki, internationally renowned scientist, environmentalist and broadcaster, had this to say in the *Courier Mail* of 8 March 2011:

Forests provide food, clean drinking water, and life-saving medicines like the rainforest-sourced cancer drug vincristine.

They are also home to millions of indigenous peoples and are habitat for over half of all known terrestrial biodiversity on the planet. And because they sequester and store billions of tonnes of carbon in their vegetation, peat, and soils, forests are a critical shield against runaway global warming.

Canada's boreal forest alone stores an estimated 208 billion tonnes of carbon, the equivalent of 26 years worth of global greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning.

It's time we recognised our interdependence with them and treated them as the biological treasures they are.

The Bad News:

Also in the *Courier Mail* of 8 March 2011 the following ten most at risk forested hotspots around the world were listed. These forests have all lost 90% or more of their original habitat and each harbour at least 1500 endemic plant species (species found nowhere else in the world).

Indo-Burma (Asia-Pacific) – remaining habitat – 5%

New Caledonia (Asia-Pacific) – remaining habitat – 5%

Sundaland (SE Asia-Pacific) – remaining habitat – 7%

Philippines (Asia-Pacific) – remaining habitat – 8%

Atlantic Forest (South America) – remaining habitat - 8%

Mountains of Southwest China (Asia-Pacific) – remaining habitat – 8%

California Floristic Province (North America) remaining habitat – 10%

Coastal forests of Eastern Africa (Africa) – remaining habitat – 10%

Madagascar & Indian Ocean islands (Africa) – remaining habitat – 10%

Eastern Afromontane (Africa) – remaining habitat – 11%

The good news:

The same paper reported that many countries are making positive steps towards reversing the damage of deforestation.

India – Approval has just been given by the Indian Prime Minister’s Council for the go ahead on a reforestation plan, dubbed the National Mission for a Green India. The plan will expand forests by five million hectares while improving forest quality on another five million hectares, achieving an annual CO2 sequestration of 50 to 60 million tonnes by 2020. The total cost will be 460 billion rupees (\$10million). The mission will also focus on improving ecosystem services, including biodiversity, and hydrological services and aims to increase forest-based incomes for three million forest-dependent families.

Rwanda – This African country is embarking on a green revolution with a goal of having 30% of the country’s total area covered by trees by 2013. Much of the country’s forests were devastated during the many years of political instability in the 1990s. An aggressive tree-planting campaign has raised forest coverage to about 20% by planting some 116 million trees with a 60% survival rate. The government plans to plant 44 million more trees by the end of 2011. Rwanda has been praised for its success by the United Nations.

Philippines – More than 64,000 trees were planted in 15 minutes, breaking the world record for the most trees planted simultaneously. In the Philippines province of Camrines Sur, 7000 people helped plant saplings as part of a government-backed program aiming to plant 12 million trees in the region’s logged forests. Forests in the Philippines are considered to be one of the ten most threatened forests in the world

CHARCOAL

Fall forward into trying out new things! In the past year, I have discovered a new idea that has helped me to grow better. The use of small charcoal pieces in my mix has increased the drainage of the pots, and the begonias have responded! I also use charcoal in medium pieces for larger plants. Charcoal helps to prevent sour soil, so larger plants that tend to stay in the same pots for years will benefit greatly.

Greg Sytch, *The Begonian*, September/October, 2009

Rex Cultorum Begonia Display

This display was mounted near the entrance to the hall at the last QBS Annual Show – February 2011.

All the plants were grown by our member, Mrs Ardina Ludwig, who lives in the Gold Coast area. Ardina and husband Neville transported all the plants and the stand etc from the Coast to Brisbane and then arranged this spectacular display which was admired by our members and the public.

Ardina grows her Rexes under a clear Alsynite type roof and waters approximately once a week in summer with mistings on extra hot days, and cuts back on watering in winter.



Photograph of Rex Cultorum Begonia Display

***B. dregei* var. 'Glasgow'**

Origin:	South Africa
Horticultural type:	Semi-tuberous
Leaves:	Small (approx. 2cm), spotted silver
Flowers:	White
Propagation:	Seed or cuttings
Grown by:	Geoff Bishop – WA Begonia Society (also member of Qld. Begonia Society)
Photograph:	Enid Henderson. Taken at WA Begonia Society Annual Show, 9-10 April 2011

This plant is approximately 11 years old and won Best Begonia of Show in 2010 and 2011.

The plant grown from a cutting, now exhibits many typical semi-tuberous bulb-like growths above the soil. It originally came into the possession of Mrs Jean Connery who later passed it on to her son, Neil (Secretary of AABS). Neil eventually passed it into the care of Geoff Bishop. Geoff has kindly given details of how he grows this plant. See page 25.



Photograph of *B. dregei* var 'Glasgow'

SAUSAGE SIZZLES AND FIELD DAYS

If you've never been to a sausage sizzle or field day, can I tempt you to come to the next one? These events are usually held on the first Sunday of the month from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm, and are listed in the "Dates to Remember" section at the end of our journals.

Sometimes, it can be really busy at meetings, and some members don't have the chance to socialise, so these occasions are your chance to get to know other members better, and to see how others grow their begonias.

Just remember not to have a big breakfast on the day of a sausage sizzle, or you might not be able to try all the tempting dishes served up for lunch. Foodwise, it's much more than sausages. Think of potato and pasta bakes, salads, delicious desserts – I could go on and on. Just remember to phone your host during the week leading up to the sizzle, register your attendance and discuss your contribution to the food. Then on the day, you just need to bring a chair, \$5 for your meal, a plate of food and a plant or other gardening product for the raffle.

If you plan to come to a field day, it's the same procedure. Phone during the week to register your attendance, only in this instance, bring a chair, your own lunch and a plant for the raffle. What could be easier! I guarantee you will have a wonderful day.

June McBryde

ORIGIN OF *BEGONIA REX* ??

From *Beautiful Leaved Plants*, London, 1865

The begonia family is a numerous genus of stove evergreen shrubs, herbaceous perennials, or tuberous rooted plants. Native of Jamaica, Brazil, the West Indies, East Indies, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Cape of Good Hope, South America, Nepal etc. Varying in height from six to sixty inches (15cm to 150cm). A most lovely tribe of plants, beautiful for both their leaves and flowers. *Begonia Rex* is a native of South America. It was introduced into this country (England) in the year 1857 by Messrs. Rollisson of Tooting who received it from M Linden, a nurseryman at Berlin. *B. Rex* is the most magnificent of the species.

Bulletin of the American Begonia Society April, 1936

MONTHLY DISPLAY RESULTS POPULAR VOTE COMPETITION

MARCH 2011

Set Subject –

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <i>B.</i> ‘Tingley Mallet’ | B. Blacka |
| 2. | <i>B.</i> <i>microsperma</i> | E. Henderson |

Open Display

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | <i>B.</i> ‘ <i>Mikelo</i> ’ | R & L Jeynes |
| 2. | (<i>B.</i> ‘Leather Jacket’ | S. Seneviratne |
| Tie | (<i>B.</i> ‘Jarrah Rose’ | R & L Jeynes |
| | (<i>B.</i> <i>epipsila</i> | B. Blacka |
| | (<i>B.</i> <i>Brazen Miss</i> | R & L Jeynes |

No Novice Entries.

APRIL 2011

Set Subject –

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <i>B.</i> ‘ <i>Curly Lush</i> ’ | C. Browne |
| 2. | (<i>B.</i> ‘Wedgewood’ | E. Henderson |

Open Display

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | <i>B.</i> ‘Abel Carriere’ | B. Blacka |
| 2. | <i>B.</i> ‘Silver Jewel’ | C. Browne |

No Novice Entries.

MAY 2011

Set Subject –

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <i>B.</i> ‘Bleeding Heart’ | R & L Jeynes |
| 2. | (<i>B.</i> ‘The Fuzz’ | R & L Jeynes |
| | (<i>B.</i> ‘Helen Clare’ | R & L Jeynes |

Open Display

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <i>B.</i> ‘Ruth Littlemore’ | R & L Jeynes |
| 2. | (<i>B.</i> ‘Bling’ | B. Blacka |
| | (<i>B.</i> <i>sizemoreae</i> | J. Taylor |
| | (<i>B.</i> ‘Lilac Time’ | K & D Schulz |

No Novice Entries.

PLANTS WANTED

Please let *Pat Lesina* know, phone 07 5534 6188, if you wish to have a Begonia request printed in the Journal.

Your request will be printed in four consecutive Journals. If someone supplies your wanted plant, please inform Pat so your request can be deleted from the list.

Marcus Clamp <i>B.bartonea</i> <i>B.pinnatifida</i>	Pat Lesina <i>B. 'Mystic'</i> <i>B. 'Brown Eyes'</i>	Isobel Crossley <i>B.lyman-smithii</i> <i>B.fernando costae</i>
Carmel Browne <i>B. 'Alice Faye'</i>	Lyn Ampt <i>B. 'Sweet Chilli'</i>	May O'Sullivan <i>B. 'Abel Carriere'</i>
Betty Vander Poorten <i>B. 'Deja Thorus'</i>	Shevanti Seneviratne <i>B. 'Deja Thorus'</i>	Jeanette Hinze <i>B. 'Deja Thorus'</i>

LUCKY DOOR & RAFFLE ROSTER

Date	Raffle (3 Items per Donor)	Lucky Door (1 Item per Donor)
16 July	Graham Ridley Barbara & Don Blacka May O'Sullivan	Graham Ridley
20 August	Shevanti Seneviratne Michael O'Dea Ardina & Neville Ludwig	Barbara & Don Blacka
17 September	Carmel Browne Lyn & Reg Jeynes Jan Hinze	Lyn & Reg Jeynes
15 October	Premime Fonseka Pat Lesina Nancy Waugh	Michael O'Dea
19 November	Lyn & Reg Jeynes Daphne Sellwood June McBryde	Jan Hinze

Thank You.

A WARM WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Applications from the following to join our Society were approved at a recent Management Committee Meeting.

Mrs. K Loader, Mrs J Paynter, Mrs. M Kerr
Mrs M Shay, Mrs B Shinkfield

MEETING PROGRAM 2011

18 June

Set Subject	Shrub-like species	Carmel Browne
Species Talk		Barbara Blacka
Culture Hint		Shevanti Seneviratne
PALS Species Plants		Various Members
Suggestion Box – Discussion on Suggestions		

16 July

Set Subject	Rhizomatous Begonias with cleft leaf incisions	Barbara Blacka
Species Talk		Isobel Crossley
Culture Hint		Lyn Ampt
Demonstration	Artistic Display	Carmel Browne

20 August

Set Subject	Begonias from any classification with predominately Silver Foliage	Shevanti Seneviratne
Species Talk		Carmel Browne
Culture Hint	For Cane-like Begonias	Kevin Heinemann
Demonstration	Pruning Canes	K & M Heinemann & Barbara Blacka
DVD Presentation	Pruning canes & creating a standard cane begonia	Marilyn Watson

17 September

Set Subject	Begonias in Flower	Lyn Ampt
Species Talk		May O'Sullivan
Culture Hint		June McBryde
Papua New Guinea Species	DVD – Janet Gagul	Ivy McFarlane Carmel Browne
Focus on Begonia	<i>B.</i> 'Dale Kramer'	Reg Jeynes

15 October - Friendship Day

Set Subject	Begonias for the Garden	Enid Henderson
Species Talk		Isobel Crossley
Focus on small leaved Rhizomatous Begonias		Carmel Browne
Extra time for welcoming visitors & Special Afternoon Tea		

19 November - Christmas Break-up

Set Subject	Semperflorens Begonias	Carmel Browne
Species Talk		Betty Vander Poorten
Culture Hint		Marcus Clamp
Christmas Celebrations and exchange of Gift Boxes Special Afternoon Tea		

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed by contributors to the Queensland Begonia Society Inc Journal are not necessarily those of the Editor, Executive Officers or the Committee. Whilst every effort is made to publish accurate information, the Society accepts no responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, or mention of commercial products by contributors.

DATES TO REMEMBER

21 June	RHSQ Monthly Meeting - 10am	Auditorium, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt.Coot-tha
8-10 July	Queensland Garden Expo	Nambour Showgrounds
9 July	SGPP Monthly Meeting - 1.15pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
16 July	QBS Monthly Meeting 1.30pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
19 July	RHSQ Monthly Meeting - 10am	Auditorium, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt.Coot-tha
13 August	SGPP Monthly Meeting - 1.15pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
16 August	RHSQ Monthly Meeting 10am	Auditorium Brisbane Botanical Gardens Mt.Coot-tha
20 August	QBS Monthly Meeting 1.30pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
8-10 September	Laidley Garden Club Show	Laidley Cultural Centre
10 September	SGPP Monthly Meeting - 1.15pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
10-11 September	Open Garden	Coucals 3201 0439 8 Belah St, Mt Crosby
17 September	QBS Monthly Meeting 1.30pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
20 September	RHSQ Monthly Meeting - 10am	Auditorium, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt.Coot-tha
30 Sept – 2 October	Springtime on the Mountain	Tamborine Mt. 5545 3334
8 October	SGPP Monthly Meeting - 1.15pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
15 October	Friendship Day - QBS Monthly Mtg 1.30pm	Uniting Church Hall 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm
18 October	RHSQ Monthly Meeting - 10am	Auditorium, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt.Coot-tha
6 November	Sausage Sizzle	Jan & Des Hinze 3208 4399 2 Blue Gum Court, Kingston