

BEGONIA CHATTER



Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i>	<i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: September 6, 2020 TIME: PLACE: Canceled PROGRAM:
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MEETING CANCELED

Here we are heading into fall, spring is behind us and summer is coming to a close very quickly. We hope that your begonias are still growing well for you and tolerating our very hot days with a bit of occasional misting. Our September meeting is once again canceled. Covid-19 is still with us, getting better but still with us nonetheless. West Gray Multi-Service Center is closed and we have limits on gathering size in effect. Let us not forget social distancing.

Let us look forward to November or perhaps December and cross our fingers we can meet. We all miss seeing and chatting with each other and above all talking about begonias.

Please continue to stay safe and well. Please pick up the phone and call your begonia friends or send them an email and tell them how you are and brag on how well your begonias are doing. Even make someone jealous by including a picture.

Happy Growing!
Tom



Photo of *B. heracleifolia*
submitted by Darlene Morris

WEATHER FORECAST FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

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 the month of September

Our temperatures will be slightly above normal and our precipitation will be near normal. Our average temperature should range from 74 degrees in the North to 80 degrees in the South. Our coolest temperatures for September will be September 5th thru 9th, 18th thru 21st and 29th & 30th. Our warmest temperatures for September will be September 1st thru 4th, 11th thru 16th and 23rd thru 27th. There will be a moderate hurricane threat early in the month becoming high at mid-month. There will only be a few showers and thunderstorms over the region, otherwise, at about 4 day intervals Precipitation will be most wide spread along the Gulf.

(The weather forecast above is taken from the Harris Farmer's Almanac for 2020)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Happy Birthday wishes to all our members born in September. We hope your special day is truly a special one.

Marce Ace Pamisa	September 30 th
Pat Perry	September 1 st
Kenny Wilkerson	September 8 th
Susan Willis	September 30 th

“Take a few moments to remember all the good things you’ve seen and done, ways you’ve grown and things you’ve learned. Celebrate your memories and your dreams...everything that has made you the wonderful person you are.”

“Happy Birthday”



B. henryi

@ Galloway Garden, N.C.

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

September

2 nd & 3 rd	Pisces
7 th & 8 th	Taurus
12 th & 13 th	Cancer
20 th & 21 st	Scorpio
24 th , 25 th & 26 th	Capricorn
29 th & 30 th	Pisces

October

2 nd & 3 rd	Pisces
7 th & 8 th	Taurus
12 th & 13 th	Cancer
20 th & 21 st	Scorpio
24 th , 25 th & 26 th	Capricorn
29 th & 30 th	Pisces

*** 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.

(The pruning, planting and transplanting dates above have been taken from the **Harris Farmer's Almanac for 2020**)



No Vacancy: The Necessary Art of Culling Or What to do when your Begonia Collection Explodes

By Dianna Wilkerson, Fred A. Barkley Branch

Don't be too hard on yourself. It happens to everyone at some point. You tell yourself that it's just one cross. Just one! But it doesn't end there does it? Why no. Just one more, then another. Like an addiction be it potato chips or stiletto heels, you always need one more. Before you know it, you're awash in tiny green babies created by your own hand. You have 8,349 begonia babies vying for the same four square feet of space you can actually dedicate to them. Obviously they all can't stay. But how do you decide who lives and who dies? How can you make decisions like this without finding yourself in therapy for the next three years? Never fear. There is a way that doesn't involve psychoactive medication.

The first principle is to make haste slowly. A frightening number of plants will look exactly the same until the first real leaves come in. This usually doesn't happen until about 5 or 6 months along. Don't start culling too soon lest you pitch a plant that is truly unique and worth keeping. The best plant you have may be the last one to show its individuality. Give them a chance to show you what they are.

One of the most important personality characteristics in plants is the ability (or not) to resist disease. Mildew is a prime concern. Your fellow growers and the buying public will curse your name forever if you bring them a stunningly beautiful plant that drops its leaves every other week due to mildew damage. A regular regime of spraying might mitigate some problems, but consider that not all people are comfortable spraying their plants. A lovely plant that remains perpetually damaged from disease is not so lovely after all.

Keep in mind what you are looking for from the cross to begin with. Are you looking something radically different from either plant? Are you looking for something similar, but with a different bloom color? As you see plant that fail to meet your morphological criteria in one way or another, cull them.

After disease resistance and morphological characteristics consider overall vigor. As you look at the overall group, there will be those who are growing like mad, that are middling along and those that are alive, but aren't happy about it. The ones who are merely existing should be culled.

Once you have whittled your rag tag band down to the ones you think may be worth keeping, inflict them on your friends by propagating enough of them to parcel out around the country. After about six months, call them up and see if your friends will still speak to you. Ask for feedback. Did it die? Take over the greenhouse? Stare at them sullenly? Whine and demand special treatment? Are their friends laughing at them or stealing cuttings of it? It's not an easy process. No one said it would be. Don't give up. If you're having a hard time making the tough choices, call a fellow begonia obsessed friend and lean on them when it gets rough. Keep your wits about you and remember that throwing out plant material does NOT make you a bad person, even though you may feel like scum on the bottom of the ocean. Keep the faith and keep growing.

*(This article was taken from Volume 75 September/October 2008 issue of the **Begonian** page165)*



photo by Paul Tsamtsis

Begonia 'Deco Darkness'

by Paul Tsamtsis

B. 'Deco Darkness' is a great rhizomatous hybrid by Tim Anderson of Palm Hammock Orchid Estates in Miami Florida.

Begonia growers in Miami have a hard time dealing with their USDA Zone 10 tropical growing conditions for certain type begonias like rexes and tuberhybrida. Tim Anderson starting a breeding program using some species from tropical Asia and parts of China. The resulting plants are rex-like, but owe nothing in their genetics to the original B. *rex* Putz from the Himalayan foothills.

B. 'Deco Darkness' is a cross of B. *deliciosa* X B. 'Midnight Magic.' Tim has a whole series of 'Deco' plants bred to do well in Miami's heat. I have grown a few of these in the Sacramento

Valley and they perform marvelously in our summer heat.

B. 'Deco Darkness' color is variable with pink, silver, and dark olive brown in various combinations. During the winter leaves grow out much more solidly pink than in summer. An interesting result is that during early spring and late fall the plant will have leaves with all sorts of color and marking variations.

The only insect problem I have experienced is an occasional mealy bug. It doesn't seem to be a plant that mealy bugs colonize and thrive on. Powdery mildew has not been a problem for me, either.

With its performance and looks this is a plant that I heartily recommend for growing in summer heat conditions that challenge rex-type hybrids.

