

BEGONIA CHATTER



<p>Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i></p>	<p><i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: February 4, 2018 TIME: 2:00 PM PLACE: West Gray Multi-Service Center PROGRAM: Propagation Japanese Method</p>
<p>FEBRUARY 2018 ISSUE</p>	<p>www.begoniahouston.org</p>

“THE FUKUMI METHOD” FOR PROPAGATING RHIZOMATOUS AND REX BEGONIAS

The February 4, 2018 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center, located at 1475 West Gray Street in Activity Room. Our Refreshment Hostesses for this meeting will be **Kathleen Murphy**, and **Janet Carpenter**.

The doors will open at 12:30 for us to set up our meeting room. If you can help us with set-up it would be greatly appreciated. Between 1:00 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. members can have refreshments and socialize. The meeting will be called to order at 2:00 P.M. Please remember to wear your Name Tag, so you can participate in the Name Tag Drawing. If you can't locate your name tag please contact Tom as soon as possible before meeting day, so he can have a replacement for you at the meeting.

Our program this month will be “**The Fukumi Method**” for Propagating Rhizomatous and Rex Begonias. Bill Claybaugh will present this program. The “Fukumi Method” is so called

because, our member Fukumi Smith demonstrated this method several years ago when we still met at the Hermann Park Garden Center located on Hermann Park Drive. The “Fukumi Method” is actually a Japanese Method for propagating Rhizomatous and Rex Begonia leaves for which we do not know the name. So we have called it the “Fukumi Method” ever since.

This method of propagation involves washing your begonia leaf to sterilize it. Then we cut the leaf into small pieces containing a vein (average leaf can yield up to 100 pieces). The pieces are then placed leaf face up on a wet paper towel that is located in a clear plastic shoe box. Lightly mist the contents and place plastic wrap to seal the top. Place on your light stand or in a window facing north, south or east. If all goes well you will have roots and possibly small plantlets in 4 to 6 weeks.

Bill Claybaugh will walk us all through this method step by step answering any questions that may come up along the way, so everyone can have the best results possible.

This will be a member participation program and workshop. Members wishing to participate will need to bring to the meeting the following:
 2 plastic shoe boxes washed and sterilized,

A pair of scissors washed and sterilized
Fresh cut rhizomatous and/or Rex begonia leaves
washed and patted dry then placed in a zip-loc bag
labeled with the plants name.

We look forward to seeing you at this meeting. Our program this month will be a fun and interesting learning session. Our Hostesses will have lots of tasty treats for you to enjoy. We will have our usual drawings. Plus all your begonia friends will be there to chat with.



These leaf parts of B. 'Judy Cook' are an example of cuttings that Bill Claybaugh used the "Fukumi Method" to root.

See you at the meeting!

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 7, 2018 MEETING

The January 7, 2018 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society was held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center located at 1475 West Gray Street in Activity Room1. Members **Brenda Andrews**, **John Cole** along with **Tony & Donna Robert** arrived early to help Tom set up Activity Room 1 for our meeting. Thank-you!

President Janet Carpenter, called the meeting to order at 2:10 P.M. She thanked all for attending and thanked our host/hostess who were: **Donna McGraw**, **Donna Williams** and **Johnny Williams**. February's hostesses will be: **Janet Carpenter**, **Kathleen Murphy**.

The minutes of the December 3, 2018 meeting/Christmas Party were published in the Begonia Chatter and were approved as written.

Treasurer Tom Keepin reported that our bank balance is still healthy.

Janet reminded us about the upcoming ABS/Southwest Region Convention in New Orleans and reminded that it would be a good idea to book a hotel room now as space may be limited. Dates for the convention are April 2 thru April 8, 2018.

Sunshine Lady, Ruby Lewellyn, passed around cards for Cheryl Lenert, Irene and Mike Bragg and Pat Perry. Cheryl, Irene and Mike have been sick with the flu.

Tom Keepin brought in a blooming plant of *B. heracleifolia* which was written about in this month's issue of the Begonia Chatter. It is quite resilient and can be planted in the garden. It is a very pretty plant!

Our program this month was on Rex Begonias given by Tom Keepin. He brought several beautiful plants to show us. Tom suggested Rexes be double-potted during the summer months to help keep their roots cooler. The leaves can take the heat but the roots like to stay cooler. They can be propagated by rhizome divisions, wedges or seeds. Propagating by seed (selfing the parent) will be very interesting, in that the seedlings will never be true to parent. Rex Begonias have a very colorful past history. Many of them can be planted directly in the garden and grow very happily. Winter protection is needed by heavily mulching them with mulch, leaves (cover rhizomes completely so leave are just poking out) then cover with frost cloth or a couple of sheets. They respond well to foliar feeding once a week with something like Medina Hastagro, liquid sea weed (Sea Crop) for fish emulsion. For fertilizer he uses a general one such as Peters 20-10-20 or 20-20-20. Leaching once a month with plain water will help keep the fertilizer salts out. Tom said we don't see a lot of Rexes in the

Houston area very often as people generally believe we can't grow them here-but we can. He said that the growing tip can be removed to force sprouting from the remaining rhizome. These plant are not grown for their flowers, but for their beautiful foliage. They often do have flowers, though, and while they are usually not significant or sometimes "hide" under the foliage, they are still very pretty! He said bright light (morning sun is perfect) and fertilizer are necessary to keep their color strong. Remember they are heavy feeders.

To brought a number of lovely Rexes to show us. Among them were: B. 'Purple Curl' B. 'Escargo', B. 'Firewoman', B. 'Pink Shield', B. 'Harmony's Red robin', B. 'China Curl', B. 'Curly Christmas', B. 'Pink Diamond', B. 'Moonlit Snow', B. 'Ring of fire', B. 'Champagne Bubbles', B. 'Fireworks', B. 'Dutch Pink', B. Jurassic 'Watermelon'. B. 'Betsy', and of course, B. 'Judy Cook' (our challenge plant) and B. 'Lalomie'

Following the program members were able to purchase begonias in 4" pots. This was followed by our drawings. The results were as follows:

Raffle:

- B. U-508 – won by Midge Gorman
- B. 'Cowardly Lion' – won by Donna McGraw

Name Tag:

- B. U-508 – won by Donna Robert

Door Prize:

- Bromeliad Guzmania – won by Donna McGraw
- Bromeliads donated by Malcolm – won by Gail Warren, Janet Carpenter and Kathleen Murphy

The meeting was adjourned and clean-up began.
Respectfully submitted,
Donna Williams, Secretary

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

February

6 th , 7 th & 8 th	Scorpio
11 th , 12 th & 13 th	Capricorn
16 th , 17 th & 18 th	Pisces
21 st & 22 nd	Taurus
25 th & 26 th	Cancer

March

6 th & 7 th	Scorpio
11 th & 12 th	Capricorn
16 th & 17 th	Pisces
20 th , 21 st & 22 nd	Taurus
25 th & 25 th	Cancer

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

Best Pruning for quick growth is \firstTaurus and then Capricorn.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR FEBRUARY 2018

According to the United States Weather Service, Houston and surrounding area fall in Region 7 of the National Weather Service Map. Here is what they predict our weather will be like for the month of February.

Our temperatures will be slightly below normal and our precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our average temperatures should range from 37 degrees in the North to 51 in the South. Our coolest February temperatures will be February 1st & 2nd, 6th thru 11th, 14th thru 18th and 25th thru 29th. Our warmest February temperatures will be February 3rd thru 5th, 13th and 20th thru 24th.

The greatest potential for periods of rain and thunderstorms in the South and rain and snow in the North are about, February 5th thru 8th, 13th thru 16th and 24th thru 26th. A few isolated showers will appear at any time. A few severe thunderstorms may appear in the South. It will be windy at times and there will be extended cloudy periods.



photo by Donna Strand

Begonia 'Midnight Sun'

by Paul Tsamtsis

B. 'Midnight Sun' is one of those great hybrids that comes along about once a decade. It is a shrub-like plant with distinctive foliage hybridized by Byron Martin of Logee's Greenhouses in Danielson, Connecticut.

Its parents are B. 'Jill Adair' X B. *solimutata*. That second plant goes by a host of other names. Before it was identified, it was called B. 'Burl Marx' (after Roberto Burl Marx, a well-known Brazilian plant collector). It was assigned B U003 as part of the ABS unidentified species classification system. It was also incorrectly called B. *glaziovii* for a while.

Byron reports that after the seeds were sown, about one hundred of the most vigorous seedlings were selected to grow on. Three or four of those showed pink edges. As the seedlings grew to maturity, those that exhibited the pink edge started showing white and pink throughout the leaf. As the leaves aged, they darkened to a deeper olive green. The reverse was a bright, medium red. The most vigorous plant was selected for release. It won the Best New Hybrid Introduction in 1980, a well-deserved honor.

Variation in begonias is quite unusual. Some variegated begonias are B. *manicata* var. 'Aureo-

maculata,' B. 'Glynnis Crouch' (a sport of B. 'Essie Hunt'), a variegated form of B. *prismatocarpa*, an unnamed sport of 'Dainty Maid,' and many of the semperflorens hybrids like B. 'Charm.' B. 'Midnight Sun' is even more unusual in that it is pink and white, while most other begonia variegation contains cream, white and yellowish foliage.

The flowers are fluted and variable in size. They are white and flushed with a bright pink to red coloration.

Propagation is done with stem cuttings and can be quite difficult. In fact, I find this plant difficult to grow while in a four-inch pot. As it gets bigger, it gets easier. I have also found that it does like to grow on the drier side.

Logee's Greenhouses still carries it in their catalogue although supplies can be limited because of the previously mentioned difficulty with propagation.

Fortunately pests or diseases usually do not bother this beautiful plant. It is not a common plant, but certainly one that will attract attention in anyone's collection. The plant pictured above was grown by Bob Golden and Iris Bird and won Best in Show at this past August's ABS National Convention, **Back to the Future: Species, Seeds and Beyond**, held in San Diego.



ASTRO'S BRANCH JANUARY 2018 MEETING



Tom Keepin presenting his program on Rex begonias.



B. 'Down Home' after cuttings were taken by Brenda Andrews.



President Janet Carpenter conducting the business meeting.



Plant Sale Table.



Rex begonias for the program.



Snacking before the program begins.



Kathleen Murphy collecting Door Prize
(Bromeliad donated by Malcolm.)



Donna McGraw with her Raffle Plant
B. 'Cowardly Lion'



Gail Warren choosing her
bromeliads Door Prize.



Midge Gorman with her Raffle Plant
B. U-508.



Donna McGraw with her Door Prize
Bromeliad Guzmania



Donna Robert with her Name Tag Plant
B. U-508