



Begonia; Wax Bego- nia

Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum
(buh-go-nya sem-per-flor-enz - kull-tor-um)



What about it?

The Begonia is head of the Begoniaceae Family which has over a thousand species of mostly perennial, tropical plants. Begonias are named after M. Begon, (1638-1710), the Governor of French Canada and a patron of botany. The Wax Begonia is an annual with glossy, ovate leaves that are 24" long. The flowers have four rose-red to whitish petals.

What is it used for?

Because of its glossy green to reddish-brown foliage, the Begonia is considered a showy plant. It is a compact plant and does well as bedding, border, edging, or in containers or boxes. Potted Begonias can be taken indoors for the winter months.

Where does it grow? How do we grow it?

Begonias like moist, fertile, well-drained soil that is *high* in organic matter. (Use your compost in Begonia beds.) They prefer partial shade but will tolerate more sun if there is plenty of moisture in the soil. They should be spaced 6" apart.

What are its primary problems?

Begonia is susceptible to botrytis blight, so watch out for that gray mold. Also, bacterial spot and root rot could become a problem.

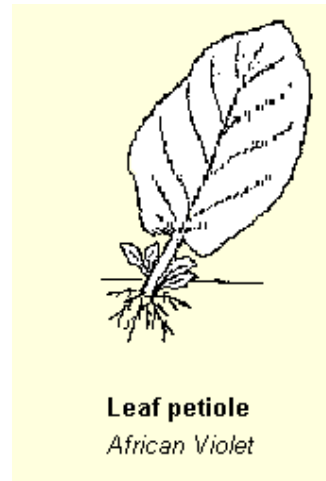
How do we propagate it?

Sow begonia seeds 4-6 weeks before the last frost. Begonia cuttings can be planted outside in the spring.

Information for this fact sheet was obtained from the NY State Horticulture Study Guide for youth at www.hort.cornell.edu/4hplants/flowers.html

For more information about begonias you may want to visit the American Begonia Society website at <http://www.begonias.org/>

Sedum, *Echeveria* and *Sansevieria* are commonly propagated by rooting an entire leaf from which new plants will develop. *Sansevieria* and palm-leaf begonia leaves can be cut into sections, each of which produces a new plant. A leaf with its stem or petiole is required for rooting African violet, gloxinia, and Rex begonia. For Rex begonia, a leaf is pinned flat on the soil surface and the leaf stem inserted in the rooting medium.



OVER-WINTERING TUBEROUS BEGONIAS

From
Cooperative Extension Service
University of Alaska

Begonia originated in the rain forest in South America. The name Begonia comes from Michel Begon (1638-1710) an amateur French botanist who first collected them. These flowers are grown from tuberous roots. New growth buds appear on the base of the old stem, at the point where it joins the tuberous root. Begonia like cool, moist, lightly shaded places where the soil is rich and well supplied with humus. Flower heads have one large double male flower in the center, with two single female flowers at the sides. Flowering is stimulated by long day lengths.

Must be dug up and stored before a hard frost. After the weather has turned cool and lightly frosted, lift the tubers. Dig the roots with care, being sure not to cut the roots. A Spading fork is the best tool because it is less likely to damage the roots. Clean the tubers of soil and let them dry in a dark well-ventilated place. Do not remove the stems and foliage from the tubers; allow them to dry and fall off.

After a week or two, the stems have withered enough to be removed. The next step is to put the roots in a container with packing material. It performs several functions: to insulate against fluctuating temperatures, moisture retention, and reduction of disease transmission. Store the tubers in dry, clean peat moss, sawdust or vermiculite and place in a root cellar or similar cool, dark dry place (40-45 Degrees F) until next spring. A minimum– Maximum Thermometer can help you locate a good spot. The box should be covered to prevent drying out and to keep voles from getting in and eating the bulbs.

By late March some of the tubers will be sprouting. If not, place them in a warm room and keep them moist and let the sprouts appear. Plant the tubers when buds or eyes appear on the tubers in the early spring. Begin the roots indoors 7-8 weeks before the last frost. Plant in a loose mixture, placing the tubers deep enough to cover the sprouting tip. After shoots begin to stretch above the soil prominently, add an additional 2 inches of soil to cover the tubers. Give as much light as possible and cool growing conditions (55-65 degrees F) to avoid spindliness.

Plants grown indoors need to be hardened off slowly to adjust them to cooler temperatures, ultra violet light, and wind. Do this by placing the growing plants outside during the day. The first day put the plants out one to two hours and increase by an hour each day until they are ready to be transplanted outside. After the last frost, move the containers outside or plant in the garden

BEGONIA

Also known as Wax Begonia, Bedding Begonia

Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum

Begoniaceae Family

Synonym: *B. semperflorens*

Prized for their shade-tolerance and attractive foliage and flowers, begonias are a timeless garden favorite. Some varieties have bronze-maroon leaves, but all are very sensitive to frost.



Site Characteristics

Sunlight:

- full sun
- part shade
- full shade

Dislikes high temperatures so shield from direct sun in warm areas.

Soil conditions:

- requires well-drained soil
- tolerates damp soil

Special locations:

- outdoor containers
- indoors as a houseplant - Plants may be brought in from the garden in the fall if they are cut back severely to regrow indoors. Will often get spider mites indoors if air is too dry. Keep by sunny window and keep moist.

Plant Traits

Lifecycle: annual

Ease-of-care: easy

Height: 0.5 to 1.5 feet

Spread: 0.5 to 1 feet

Bloom time:

- late spring
- early summer
- mid-summer
- late summer
- early fall

Flower color:

- red
- white
- pink

Begonias have separate male and female flowers, which are borne on the same plant. Female flowers have a seed capsule below their petals, male flowers do not.

Foliage color:

- medium green
- Some have bronze/maroon foliage.

Foliage texture: medium

Shape: cushion, mound or clump

Shape in flower: same as above

Special Considerations

Special characteristics:

- deer resistant
- non-aggressive
- non-invasive
- not native to North America - Brazil

Growing Information

How to plant:

Propagate by seed, cuttings, division or separation; germination is difficult. It is easier to purchase plants or grow from cuttings.

Start seeds indoors in January or February. Sprinkle on soil surface, and then cover with plastic or glass to keep moist. Do not cover seeds with soil. Double flowering cultivators do not come true from seed.

Cuttings can be taken at any time. Division is best done in early spring from plants overwintered indoors.

Germination temperature: 70° F to 75° F

Days to emergence: 14 to 21

Maintenance and care:

Pinch to keep plants bushy.

Diseases:

Botrytis blight
Spider mites in dry air

Varieties

'Super Olympia' Series: early flowering plants with white, pink or red flowers and green leaves. Larger flowers than traditional begonias.

'Queen' Series: double flowering , green-leaved varieties with flowers in shades of pink, white and red.

'Coco' mix: glossy bronze/maroon foliage with showy flowers. Rounded and compact.

'Cocktail' Series: early flowering, dwarf 5-6" tall. Bronze/maroon foliage. Flowers in shades of white, red or pink.

'Ambassador' Series: green foliage. Flowers in shades of white, red or pink. Tend to stay more compact than other varieties. Early flowering.

'Varsity' Series: early flowering, large flowers in shades of red, white and pink. Green foliage. Especially good for container growing.

'Victory' Series: early flowering, large flowers in shades of red, white and pink. Green foliage.

'Paint Splash Pink': green foliage is mottled and dotted with cream colored spots and splashes. Flowers are pale pink and delicate looking. Showy and unique.

This publication may contain pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold, and/or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist or your regional DEC office. **READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.**

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