

Austin Area Begonia Society Branch • of the American Begonia Society •

Volume 8, Number 3

Nelda Moore, Editor

March, 2014

OUTDOOR WORK DAY March 23
(Please bring tools for planting begonias)
NO FOOD IN THE GARDEN

MARCH 29 AND 30
57th Zilker Garden Festival and Flower
Show 10 A.M.—5 P.M.

IN MEMORIAM

The Austin Area Begonia Society Branch extends its sympathy to Rosa Godfrey on the death of her daughter-in-law Betty Godfrey and to Betty's husband George. Betty and Rosa have been important volunteers, begonia growers, and charter members of this society. Betty passed away on Tuesday, February 25, as a result of a stroke. 1934 - 2014



B. 'Robert Blais' large-leaved, non-spiral

Rex by Thompsons

In 1856 the species *B. rex Putzeys* was accidentally discovered by Jean Linden, a Belgian commercial horticulturist, who noticed this plant in the sheath of an orchid that J. Simon brought to the Stevens' auction room in London from Assam, India. Linden purchased the species for 10,000 francs and in May, 1858, *B. rex* was introduced commercially when it was crossed with some outstanding Asiatic species such as *B. griffithii*, *B. laciniata*, *B. robusta*, *B. xanthina* to further improve this group and increase the diversity of colors, textures, and forms. In 1863, *B. evansiana* was used to get taller and hardier types. In 1875, *B. imperialis*, an outstanding Mexican species with a pustular surface, was used for types with smaller leaves. In 1884 *B. diadema* was used only 3 years after it was introduced from Borneo by Linden. From these crosses came lobed Rex leaves. Toward the end of the 19th Century *B. decora*, a species discovered in Penang in 1892, was used to give new hybrids red leaves and metallic sheens and tones. *B. cathayana*, a species found in 1904 by A. Henry in Yunnan, was used to introduce velvet texture to the group. Then in 1931 came miniature Rexes developed from semituberous begonias, *B. dregei* and *B. 'Weltonensis.'* Before the end of the 19th Century, the bulbous species *B. socotrana* was used to develop this group. Around 1940 Tuberhybrida begonias were crossed with Rex Cultorum to form new outstanding hybrids.

B. 'Fireflush' is the earliest Rex cultivar that still remains a favorite today. *B. 'Comtesse Louise Erdody'* is the first spiral-leaved Rex.

AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY BRANCH MEETING OF FEBRUARY 23, 2014

MINUTES

President Doug Byrom called the Austin Area Begonia Society Branch of the American Begonia Society to order at 2:15 P.M. after refreshments. The following members were present: Charlotte Boyle, Liz Caskey, Vickey Cole, Jim Estes, Joan Estes, Rainee Freeman, Ken Fuchs, Jackie Johnson, Jim Landers, Arlene Lantz, Valerie Morris, Nelda Moore, Verlene Schoen, and Lynn Sissney. Betty Dunn was a welcome visitor.

Vickey Cole, the council representative, presented parking passes for volunteers who will be working during the Zilker Garden Festival March 29 and 30. Tickets were distributed by Lynn Sissney. During the snow and ice the city offices were closed either all day or for the morning hours. Zilker Botanical Garden follows the same schedule, which is announced on television. Construction on the ADA trail around the Rose Pond has been completed and work should begin on the foundation of the cabin soon. March 15 and 16 the First African Violet Show will be held in the auditorium. Discussion about the Fall Festival did not bring a definite date in mind, but October would be the best month for this to happen.

Lynn Sissney, the treasurer, reported that she had written a check for \$25, entry fee for the Faerie House and Garden that will be placed on the trail for March 10.

Jim Estes will purchase 20 dragon wing begonias while Tom Keepin will provide 40 baskets for Zilker.

MOTION: Nelda Moore made a motion to spend \$100 for KLRU advertising for the festival and Zilker Botanical Garden. The motion passed.

MOTION: Lynn Sissney made a motion to donate \$100 to Austin Area Garden Council for festival activities such as music. Verlene Schoen provided a second and the motion passed.

Doug discussed ways of getting and keeping new members in this branch. He also encouraged the building of a demonstration greenhouse for begonias, violets, and orchids, shade loving plants.

Jim Estes reminded the members to donated money for trophies for the National as well as the Southwest Region Conventions. Doug will find which ones are still available and purchase one huge one or two smaller trophies.

The September meeting will be held at Jim and Joan Estes' home in Lockhart.

The next meeting will be March 23, when the members will plant begonias in the garden. No food.

Program: Doug brought begonias, soil, pots, and garden tools to demonstrate how to groom, prune, repot, and plant show plants. He also used baby oil to clean and shine the pots since it is important to plant the begonia properly using the right size container.

Doug Byrom adjourned the meeting at 4 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelda Moore, Secretary

FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS

MARCH 28, 29, 30

Friday Set Up Booths 1 P.M.

Doug Byrom

Jim Estes

Valerie Morris

Liz Caskey

Rainee Freeman

Jackie Johnson

Nelda Moore

Joe Moore

SATURDAY

Jim Estes all day

Joan Estes all day

Valerie Morris all day

Vickey Cole

Doug Byrom

Rainee Freeman after 2 P.M.

Jackie Johnson morning only

SUNDAY

Doug Byrom

Valerie Morris

Liz Caskey

Arlene Lantz

Rainee Freeman after 2 P.M.

Verlene Schoen

Joe Moore cleaning/tear down

Nelda Moore cleaning

CULTURAL BOOKLETS BY BRAD THOMPSON

Doug Byrom issued two cultural booklets written by Brad Thompson before he presented his program. The following are highlights.

According to Brad growers find it difficult to know how to stake and when to stake begonias. The stake goes in early so that the plant is trained in an upright pattern as it grows. Often a long green stake that has been bleached by the sun for a few days is placed next to the tuber, cane, or shrub. Then by show time the stake can be cut off after the begonia

has been transported even on a windy day to keep branches from breaking. Stakes are not overly obvious and should be pushed into the soil on the back side of the stems to be staked so that it does not interfere with the growth of the plant. Some stakes need to angle slightly outward to allow room for the inner stems to grow. Tie the stake firmly at the base of the stem close to the soil line, then work upward, pulling it to the stake and tying it every few inches until you have the entire stem tied up. Extra green twist or raffia ties can be removed later. These three ties per stem should be as invisible as possible: one at the base, one in the middle, and one below the tip that should be looser, leaving room for the stem to grow.

PINCHING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Pinching is the removal of the plant's growing tips, the unopened bud at the very tip of each stem, to put out side shoots and branches. It involves removing the very tip of each stem as long as it has three nodes. Upright canes, larger flowered tuberous and thick stemmed begonias should not be pinched. The type of begonia that responds the best to pinching are small to medium leaved canes and shrubs especially if they are in a basket. Also pinch rhizomatous after they have bloomed to prevent them from crawling over the edge.

REQUIREMENTS OF A SHOW PLANT: A. B. S. RULES

1. You have an obligation to participate in club activities and help promote begonias.
2. The show plant should be characteristic of that variety, having proper color and size, healthy and full, as symmetrical as possible.
3. The pot should be the appropriate size and type. No black nursery pots, cans, or decorator pots. Pots can be wood, moss, clay, or plastic. White are discouraged.
4. The begonia must be groomed and cleaned of dead leaves, flowers, and dried stipules except *B. venosa*, where the bracts should be left on since it grows that way. Its relatives also have stipules.
5. Clean the leaves with a makeup brush or rinse them a week before the show with water. Do not place the plant in the sun.
6. Fertilize about 6 weeks in advance for bloom with 15-30-15.

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7. Clean the pot or place the plant in a new pot. Use baby oil, vegetable oil, or hand lotion to shine the surface of the container.
8. Trim off brown edges of leaves, following the contour of the leaf or match any serration.
9. Carefully transport the show plant cushioned in a box that will ride upright during the move.

For terrariums clean the inside and outside of the glass. No leaves should touch the sides or top of the glass. Then carefully place these in a box.

For best pruning use **Taurus April 2 and 3**
Capricorn 21 and 22

For planting and transplanting in **April**
Cancer April 6, 7, and 8
Scorpio April 16 and 17
Pisces April 25 and 26

TO WHOMEVER :

*Thank you for the
begonia fabric.
Nelda*



Below: Verlene Schoen, Jackie Johnson, Bety Dunn, Doug Byrom,
Jim Landers, Ken Fuchs, and Arlene Lantz

