



# AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

Website: [http://www.kenfuchs42.net/aabs\\_index.html](http://www.kenfuchs42.net/aabs_index.html)



Austin Area Begonia Society

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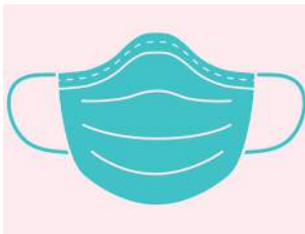
NEWSLETTER

August/September 2020

*Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors*

## NEXT MEETING:

?????



**WEAR A MASK!**



## BEGONIAS AVAILABLE FROM MEMBERS

Doug Byrom, Vickey Cole, Valerie Morris, and Elizabeth Crepeau have many begonias for sale as a result of our not being able to have the big sale with other clubs in the Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium in March. There are no plans even now of opening the area for meetings, sales, or programs due to COVID-19.

## ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN CLOSED FOR MEETINGS AND SALES



According to the Austin Area Garden Conservancy meeting on Tuesday, July 14, 2020, Zilker Botanical Garden will reopen probably after the first of the year if it will be possible for each person to come together safely.

All meetings meanwhile will be virtual. Members and representatives who wish to be included as speakers for their clubs will make reservations to appear on the agenda.

A membership chairman is needed.

During this time there will be no club meetings, no sales, and no indoor restrooms.

The road is being torn up to connect the outdoor restroom to a new sewer system.

The clubs who work in specific gardens can contact Mr. Jiles who will make arrangements for at least two people to be in their garden at one time. Wear a mask and work at least six feet apart during this very serious pandemic.





### GROWING BEGONIA FROM SEED

Some begonias can have male and female flowers that can self pollinate, but hand pollination is a way of creating hybrids and an economical method of creating many seedlings — even of rare begonias.

The male flower is made up of an inner and an outer tepal with stamens holding pollen. The female flower has tepals below the wing-like structure holding the ovary, where seeds are produced. The female reproductive organs (styles, stigmas, and ovaries) in begonias can be varied, but most species have 3 styles, some 2, but rarely up to 7. Most species with dry, winged capsules have wind-dispersed seed. Some Asian species like *B. rex* and *B. hatacoa* have



two small wings on the back of the inverted trap that can accumulate enough rainwater to nod up and down to shake out the seeds. Birds and mammals that eat ripe fruits can disperse the seeds in their droppings while other seeds can cling to fur, clothing, and feathers and travel. Even a hybridizer can scatter the tiny seeds by sneezing or allowing the wind to blow the paper holding the seeds.

### PROPAGATION OF SEEDS

In order to grow a rare species economically order from ABS Seed Fund (<https://www.begonias.org/seedfund/seedfund.htm>) or purchase them from a

grower. Semperflorens are easily grown from seed, but seedlings from hybrids will usually produce new varieties — some of which might be interesting and fascinating, worthy of naming.

### CONTAINER

Use various sizes of clear plastic containers or shallow trays with clear plastic covers. Rare seeds can be planted in 3-inch x 4-inch x 2-inch containers.



Use a hot pointed ice pick to punch holes in the bottom for draining the container and the lid to prevent excessive moisture from collecting on the cover.



### MEDIUM AND METHOD

Use whatever medium that has given you success in the past. It must be sterile! Or you can use 2 parts vermiculite, 2 parts perlite, and one part soilless mix like Jiffy Mix. Place  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches of wetted medium in the container. It must be thoroughly drained of excess water, which should be distilled water.

### SOWING SEEDS

Empty the seed packet into the inside of a small piece of paper that has been folded in half. Carefully tap the piece of paper so that the tiny seeds can fall slowly over the entire container and be evenly distributed. Do not cover with the medium.

Instead use distilled water in a bottle and mist the

surface. Place a label with the name of the begonia and the date it was planted on the container. Cover with a lid and set the container under fluorescent lights, about 6 inches from the tubes. Seeds usually germinate best at temperatures of 72-76 degrees F. Be patient! They may germinate in a week or 3 months or a year.



#### TRANSPLANTING SEEDLINGS

When the seeds sprout, the seedlings will have 2 tiny leaves. The true leaves will develop as the plant grows. When the seedling is ½ inch high, (4 weeks old) then take the cover or lid off the container for a short time each day until a time when the lid should be off completely. The plant is hardened. Using a toothpick, take seedling and some medium and plant in a pot of wet medium such as 4 parts Jiffy and 1 part perlite. After a month use a pot with a mix of 2 parts of sterile soil, 1 part perlite, 1 part Jiffy Mix and 1 part sphagnum peat moss.

**DO NOT FERTILIZE!**



#### BEGONIA 'RICHMONDENSIS'

B. 'Richmondensis' according to Brad Thompson is "the most versatile begonia ever created." It was introduced in 1939, and it is as easy to grow as

semperflorens. It easily blooms and grows in full sun or full shade in many regions. It does not get mildew. Shape it and grow it in the ground.

Other easy to grow begonias are *B. acuminata* (*B. acutifolia*, which is called 'White Richmondensis Begonia' and 'White Rhubarb Begonia,' and *B. 'Catalina,'* with green leaves and white or pink flowers.



*B. acuminata* (White Richmondensis)



Another begonia called *B. 'Concord'* possesses the same traits. Its color ranges from black to brown depending on the amount of sunlight. Also the ancestor of these begonias — *B. 'Digswelliana'* — has red flowers and grows better in a hanging basket. Water these begonias when they become dry.



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White Rhubarb Begonia (*B. acutifolia*)



B. 'Catalina'



B. 'Concord'



B. 'Digswelliana'