



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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Austin Area Begonia Society

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NEWSLETTER

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Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING:

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Look for an e-mail informing you of the next meeting.

BEGONIA MEETING OF JUNE 27, 2021

Valerie Morris arranged for the Austin Area Begonia Society to have a meeting in her backyard to exchange cuttings, begonias, and enjoy seeing those in attendance as well as celebrate Doug Byrom's birthday with a piece of delicious cake. This was a wonderful time with no rain coming down on Great Britain Boulevard during the meeting. Doug spoke about ordering begonias especially canes with no Rexes or very few of them this time. During the next meeting we will welcome the new begonias.

The members who attended were **Charolette Boyle, Doug Byrom, Vicki and John Cole, Jim and Joan Estes, Ken Fuchs, Raine Freeman, Jackie Johnson, Jim Landers, Andrew Leigh, Jules Mandel, Moira Manning, Nelda Moore, Valerie Morris, Carol Orozco, Erica Rorlin, and Geneva Townsend**

CANE-LIKE BEGONIAS

Cane-like begonias are among eight groups in the *Begoniaceae Family*, and there are 215 different species and cultivars in this beautiful group with long-lasting pendulous inflorescences enjoyed by so many. Most of these originated in Brazil. Raddi had discovered 7 species of begonias including two that were cane-like that he described in 1820 — *B. angularis* and *B. maculata*, the first begonia discovered that had silver



B. angularis



B. maculata



B. undulata



B. aconitifolia

spotted foliage. In 1827 *B. undulata* was discovered in Brazil. It was described by William Schott, the director of Schoenbrunn Gardens near Vienna. Around 1859 Ludwig Riedel discovered *B. aconitifolia* near Rio de Janeiro. Its palmately lobed leaves with silver splashes provided the characteristics that were important in the development of the Superba type originated by Eva Gray in California in 1926 by crossing *B. aconitifolia* and *B. 'Lucerna.'* When William Bull introduced *B. sceptrum* in England in 1884, this species also played a big part in Superba development. In 1880 the low-growing *B. lubbersii*, a fragrant



B. 'Lucerna'



B. *sceptrum*



B. *lubbersii*



B. 'President Carnot'



B. 'Arthur Mallet'



B. 'Tingley Mallet'

species, was found by Louis Lubbers, a Brussels curator, on an imported tree fern. In 1957 it appeared in the United States and it has been used to introduce new hybrids. In 1890 B. 'President Carnot' was developed in Lyons, France. Its cluster of flowers was over 9 inches in diameter. The best known cultivar in 1892 was the fragrant B. 'Lucerna' developed by Wettstein in Lucerne, Switzerland and introduced by Lorenze, a florist.



B. 'Lucerna'



B. 'Lobata Variegata'



B. 'Otto Hacker'

In the Gause and Bissell catalogs in Indiana two of the earlier cane-like cultivars include B. 'Lobata Variegata' in 1894 and B. 'Otto Hacker' in 1896.

Of the older Mallet types B. 'Arthur Mallet' and B. 'Tingley Mallet' were developed in France in 1884 and listed in an American catalogs in 1890.

Mrs. T.B. Shepherd started hybridizing at the turn of the century and continued through 1920s and 1930s.

The cane-like begonias are divided into 3 main groups: *Superba-type*; *Mallet-type*—most have mahogany-red foliage with red hairs, and all others that are in turn subdivided according to average height at maturity, low-growing, intermediate; and *tall growing*.

These are some characteristics of the cane-like begonias: they can grow up to 15 feet; they can thrive with 6 hours of filtered sun a day; if they have darker foliage, they can tolerate more sun; they benefit from pinching and pruning; overwatering causes them to lose their lower leaves; fertilizer should be a well balanced kind although growers use higher phosphorus and potassium content about 4 weeks before peak blooming time; fertilize them when they are actively growing; propagation by leaf cuttings usually are not successful; plant seeds and plants need space; these begonias have many leaf shapes and textures ranging from chartaceous (papery) to coriaceous (leathery).

MORE ON CANES

Raising Cane: Experiences in Growing the Species Cane Begonias is an excellent well written study by Freda M. Holley. The index includes species, pronunciation, origin, and page number with reference to the additional pronunciation guide in the March/April 1998 *The Begonian*.

HORTICULTURE

Using a tiny bit of fertilizer in a gallon of water will assist your begonias to produce new leaves and growth during these days of rain and darkness with some sunshine. Make sure that the begonias are damp before watering them with the fertilizer solution. Some of the canes can be pinched and groomed so that new shoots can increase the size of the plant.

Clean pots and sterilize them for the new begonias that you have ordered.



THREE SCORE AND ONE



Congratulations to Jim and Joan Estes! They celebrated their 61st Anniversary on August 20.

ADOPTING BEGONIAS

The Begonia Collection Volunteers at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden held an "Adoption Program" on Friday, August 20, in preparation for their Fall Sale. Taddie Hamilton and Don Miller helped AABS members Valerie Morris, Vickie Cole, Jim Landers, Ken Fuchs, and Andrew Leigh pick out their new adopted plants.



OUTDOOR BEGONIA GATHERING AT VALERIE'S



