



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

Website: http://www.kenfuchs42.net/aabs_index.html



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NEWSLETTER

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2023

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, September 24, 2 P.M.
Zilker Botanical Garden Center
2022 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746

VALERIE MORRIS LEAVES VACANCY



Valerie Morris has moved to Arkansas to be near her mother since the death of Valerie's stepfather.



Valerie and Clarice James organized the Austin Area Begonia Society Branch of the American Begonia Society and has served as president, vice president of programs and membership and has worked with organizing sales of begonias. Her expert knowledge of these plants has brought excitement to friends, family, and members.

BEGONIA ACONITIFOLIA



Ludwig Riedel discovered *Begonia aconitifolia* near Rio de Janeiro in the mid 1800s, but Alphonse de Candolle gave the name *B. aconitifolia* in reference to the palmate-lobed leaves that resembled monkshood or *Aconitum*. In 1884 William Bull's nursery grew it as *B. sceptrum*.



B. sceptrum

This tall cane-like species flowers in autumn and played an important role in developing the Superba group of hybrids. Eva Gray crossed *B. aconitifolia* with *B. 'Lucerna.'* Now the cultivars include *B. 'Irene Nuss,' B. 'Lana,' B. 'Pink Jade,'* and *B. 'Sophie Cecile.'* These have



B. 'Lucerna.'



B. 'Irene Nuss'



B. 'Lana'



B. 'Pink Jade'

the silver-splashed palmate-lobed leaves. To grow these water only when the surface of the plant's growing medium is dry or the plant will drop its leaves. Stop fertilizing and reduce watering while the plants are dormant.

Some of the related species are cultivated as cane-like species such as *B. leathermaniae* and *B. platanifolia* while *B. acerifolia* and *B. ludwigii* are



B. 'Sophie Cecile'



B. acerifolia

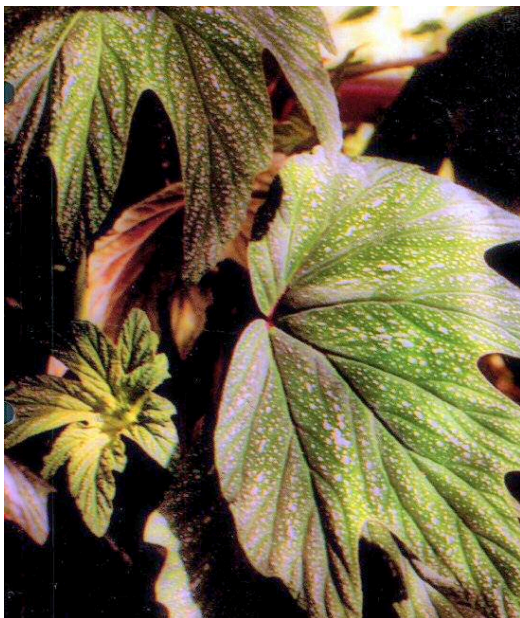
thick-stemmed species. *B. leathermaniae* has a ruff-like collar of flattened hairs at the top of the petiole while *B. platanifolia* has shorter ovate leaf lobes without silver markings.



B. leathermaniae



B. ludwigii



B. platanifolia



B. aconitifolia

B. aconitifolia needs space and special maintenance as it can grow tall and become leafless. In late winter prune to keep its size and pinch its

growing points to keep it compact. Place the plant in a bright well-lit area and water only when the surface of the medium becomes dry.

BEGONIA ROTUNDIFOLIA



BEGONIA rotundifolia is a creeping rhizomatous perennial that is native to Haiti, where it grows on steep slopes and clay cliffs in the mountains at 3000 feet. It has small circular leaves with crenate margins. In 1690 it was discovered by Charles Plumier, who named it *Begonia roseo flore, folio orbiculari* after its pink flowers and circular leaves.



B. 'Kirinomegami'

This species was first introduced by seeds from Mr. Nash, who had collected them on Mount Maleuvre in 1903. *Begonia* 'Kirinomegami' is a hybrid of *B. rotundifolia* and an unknown parent.

HORTICULTURE

Look over all of your begonia cuttings and check to see about repotting a few in a next size larger container. The weather had been cooler with showers so some have really grown during your vacation in Tyler among roses and exotic foliage in formal gardens and well-stocked nurseries. You can add a tiny bit of fertilizer to a gallon of water when you

water your plants. Do this until October when your outdoor plants need to be prepared for winter. Spraying for mildew and bugs is an important task since the begonias have been damp. It is something that can come again when you try to keep the plants alive and well during the winter. For mealy bugs use a Q-tip soaked in alcohol to dab each one and kill the few that you have. Always keep old and torn leaves off the begonias. Pick up any leaves that have fallen off to prevent diseases such as mildew and botrytis from spreading. Use Neem oil or sulfur sprays.

SEED PLANTING

October, November, and December are good times to plant seeds that you have gathered during the summer months so that they will be the perfect size to move or sell in the spring when the weather is warm.

HARVESTING SEED

Most varieties of begonias will take a month for the seed pods to ripen. The flower stems dry or shrivel. When this happens, the pods can be removed. These are matured to their full potential. If you leave them longer, watch the pod. When it starts to split, you can lose the seed. Then finish drying by placing the pods in a plastic container without a cover for at least a week or more. Label the container with the cross to keep track of what kind of seed is in each of the containers.

When you open the seed pod, allow the seeds to fall on a blank sheet of paper. To separate the good seed from the chaff, tilt the paper to roll the good seed off on another piece of paper. If nothing rolls, the seed may not be good. You can examine this under a microscope to look for something like popcorn kernels that are not shriveled, cracked, or distorted. Fold the cleaned seed in a small piece of paper. Tape it closed and write the information on the outside with the date. Then keep the seeds in a can or box until planting time. Any seeds left over should be stored in the refrigerator, where they can last for as much as 10 years.

Janet Carpenter, who captured the Southwest Region Mae Blanton Service Award 2023, serves well the American Begonia Society Seed Fund. Her address is in ***The Begonian***, and you must be a member of ABS to receive the seeds. Payments are mailed to the ABS treasurer—Wendy Corby, 2533 Warrego Way, Sacramento, CA 95826-2433. Checks are made payable to the American Begonia Society.