



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, January 28, 2 P.M.

Zilker Botanical Garden Center
2022 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746

AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY OFFICERS

- President – Stephen Maciejewski
- Past President – Stephanie Rose
- First Vice President – Brandon Huber
- Second Vice President – Stuart Price
- Secretary – Sally Savelle
- Treasurer – Wendy Corby

A message from Holly Nixon 11-16-2023

Hey there! Saw this huge begonia at the Mitchell Domes Botanical Garden in Milwaukee.



TWO NEW SPECIES DISCOVERED IN THE PHILIPPINES



Begonia masilig, photo by P. Peiser

Despite human habitation, alien temperatures, invasive species, forest fires, clearing and harvesting begonias, two new species have been discovered in Sierra Madre Mountain Range in the Philippines. Raab Bustamante describes them on page 228 in *The Begonian* November/December 2023 edition. Both begonia species are endemic to the Aurora Memorial National Park in Luzon.



Begonia akaw, photo by Yu Pin Ang

Begonia masilig and *Begonia akaw* are products of millions of years

of evolution and show the biodiversity of the Philippines. The article notes that there are 160 species, making begonias the fourth largest plant genus and accounting for 7% of the world's total begonia species being in the Philippines. The area is a rain forest with mountain protection from cyclones.

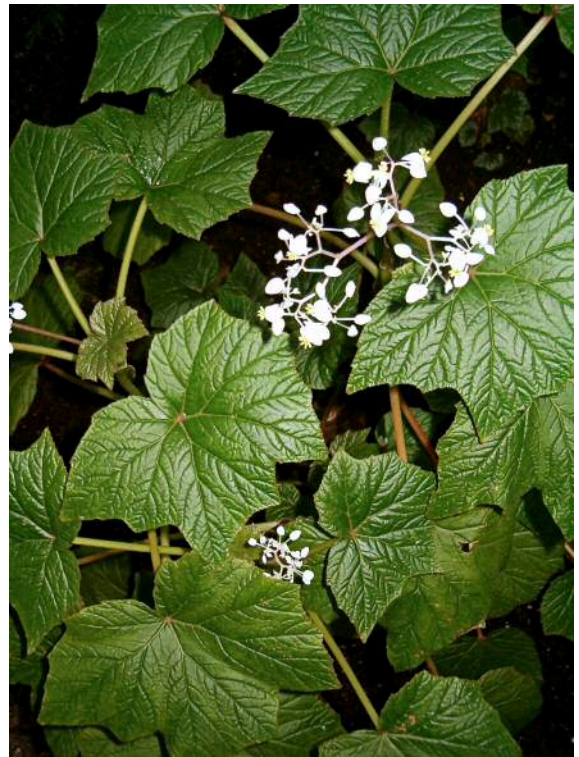


Begonia akaw, photo by Yu Pin Ang

**FROM BLUE NOTEBOOK BY MARY WEINBERG'S
BEGONIAS PART 1: SPECIES**



B. reniformis Dryander was found in Brazil in 1791 and is in the section Pritzella. This thick-stemmed begonia can form a small tree with a base two inches in diameter. Its leaves are grass green, kidney-shaped,



angularly lobed, serrate and terate with stipules ovate-oblong, acute, glabrous. Flowers are small and white on large branching cymes. The staminate flowers have 4 tepals and pistillate flowers have 5 tepals. It blooms winter-spring as a sparse bloomer given the right conditions. Although it loves sunlight in early morning or late afternoon, it can burn if

exposed to midday sun. It grows in clay pots for tall plants, but it should not be over-potted because this thick-stemmed plant grows better if kept pot-bound. It will need a bit more fertilizer to encourage branching. Water only when the potting medium is dry to the touch. Stake the plant.



This plant had a list of names: *longipes*, *elatior*, *huberi*, *palmifolia*. When Schott rediscovered this begonia species in 1817-1818, it was labeled *B. vitifolia* and *reniformis* has also been applied to other begonias including *B. dregei*.

HORTICULTURE

Most of your begonias are protected from the winter weather and the wind that can damage a landscape during a storm. If some of the canes need to be staked because you want them to grow upright and become tall plants, then carefully place a stake to support the plant or to take another part of the same kind of cane and fill a damaged area in the container. Support it by placing the stake where it does not interfere with the growth of the stem. It should also be placed at a natural angle to match the variety. Green ties will blend with its surroundings and plastic ties can be placed at the base of the stem, in the middle, and just below the growing tip. All of them should be looser to allow the stem to grow.

These stakes can be removed after transporting the plant to a show or to an event since all should have been trained to hold their own and fill in the container. These stakes can be cut and tied again if a problem arises. Remember to keep the stakes and ties hidden from the view of a judge's eye during a show.

Pinching and pruning can be done in the spring after a small amount of fertilizer can enable the begonia to grow. Some begonias that have become dormant will come back to life; therefore, careful watering and studying the plants and checking their root system during this period of time are important to keep insects and pests at bay. This is a regular chore at intervals to keep plants healthy, groomed, pinched, staked, and disease free.

Become culture wise to produce beautiful specimens.



B. dregei

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 26, 2023 MEETING OF THE AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

The Austin Area Begonia Society met in the Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium Sunday, November 26, 2023 at 2 P.M. Seventeen ABS Members were surrounded by beautiful begonias, exotic plants such as epicias, peperomias, pipers, and African violets: **Charlotte Boyle, Doug Byrom, Eric and Irma Challain, Vickey Cole, Wesley Donald, Jim and Joan Estes, Rainee Freeman, Freda Holley, Rick Holley, Syria Holley, Jim Landers, Letty Luna, Nelda Moore, Carol Orozco, and Geneva Townsend.**

PROGRAM: PLANTING BEGONIA SEEDS WITH FREDA HOLLEY



Freda Holley, well-known hybridizer who now lives in Austin, delighted the attendees with How To Achieve success in planting begonia seeds that are no larger than specks of dust. Freda uses tiny cups with lids for planting 50 cups at a time and placing them in a larger container such as a plastic box that holds salad greens in the produce section in a grocery store. When the empty container is washed, it becomes a terrarium to begonia growers.

By using an ice pick to punch holes in the bottom of the box from the inside, excess moisture can escape this little world of new life so that the little seedlings are not overwatered.

Seeds are in a tiny sealed package labeled with the name, date, and place of origin. They can be 25 years old if kept in a working refrigerator. Take a white piece of paper and fold it in half. Seeds that roll are usually viable. If someone used a plastic bag for seed storage, the seeds are damaged in this closed

atmosphere and are probably dead.

When the seeds germinate, plant the seedling with 2 good leaves in a pot of Miracle Gro soil that is for root development. Do not use Organic soil since it contains fertilizers that can kill the seedlings. Remember that begonias love to be together and are as sociable as humans.

The treasurer's report was the same as the month before. During this meeting begonias and other plants were sold or won.

The next meeting will take place January 28, 2024.

Doug also discussed meeting places for the future.

The meeting adjourned and the room was cleaned and prepared as the round tables had been set up for another meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelda Moore, Secretary

