



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



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NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, February 25, 2 P.M.

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

AABS Officers

President: Doug Byrom

Vice President: Jackie Johnson

Secretary: Nelda Moore

Treasurer: Vickey Cole

National Director: Joan Estes

SWR Officers

Director: Linda Lawson

Vice Director:

Malcolm McCorquodale

Secretary: Rachel Davidson

Treasurer: Doug Byrom

National Director: Don Miller

Membership Chair: Karen Eiland



Plants for sale at the January 28 meeting

SOUTHWEST REGION GET-TOGETHER 2024

This year the SWR GT will be in Austin, Texas. The event will be at the Holiday Inn Town Lake.

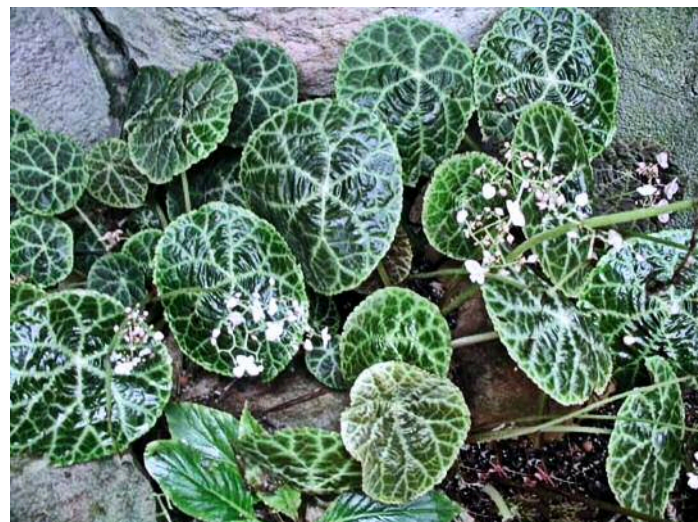
If that sounds familiar it's because we had the 2013 convention there.

The date will be Thursday May 2nd – Saturday May the 4th. The room rate is \$129 + taxes per night.

You are cordially invited to join the festivities. Make plans now to join other enthusiastic begonia members and find begonias that you have wanted for your collection.



B. GOEGOENSIS N. E. BROWN



Discovered in Goego, Sumatra and first described in 1882 by N.E Brown, this rhizomatous begonia with distinctive foliage is in section Reichenheimia and has 34 chromosomes. The leaves are egg shaped, tapering to a point, peltate, and silky, dark green-bronze while the undersides and edges of the leaves are dull red, with sparse red hairs on the edges and on the veins that give the leaves a quilted appearance.

The main stem is short, with very short internodes. Petioles are 4 sided light green tinted with red. The rose-pink flowers are small with staminate flowers having 4 tepals and pistillate flowers having 5. Although Sumatra has an annual rainfall of 80-120 inches and a temperature between 57 F and 60 F, this begonia can drown with too much drenching, according to Mary Weinberg.



This begonia likes bright light but not mid-day sun. If it gets too cool, it will lose leaves in winter. The growing medium is light porous rich humusy with some peat moss or leaf mold with a pinch of bone meal.

B. NIGRITARUM STENDEL

B. nigritarum Stendel was discovered in the Phillipines in 1821 and placed in the section *Diplaclinium*. Some of the various names which refer to its dark colored leaves include *acetosa*, *nigrillum*, *capensis*, *rhombicarpa*, *rhombicarpa* var, *merrilli*, and *nurii*.



This rhizomatous begonia is definitely *B. nigritarum* with distinctive foliage and unusual



surface coloring. The leaves are medium sized, ovate with acute tip, olive green with light greenish silver blotches between the veins. The leaf edge is slightly crenulate and undulate with a short sparse eyelash. The sinus is deeply set, radiating into indented veins. The underside of the leaf is patterned in rose over protruding veins base tapering to a point. White flowers blushed with pink rise on short peduncles that are half the length of the leaf petioles. Mary Weinberg also explains that this begonia needs to grow in a terrarium to prevent this plant from going droopy. It does well in 60 degrees F. Water when the soil feels slightly dry.

HYBRIDIZING

How does one test for uniqueness when hybridizing begonias? One way is to send cuttings to friends throughout the country. With a wide distribution you can have evaluations from others thus giving you valuable feedback about how the plant grows, blooms, and stays alive. Some may even offer advice about creating a unique begonia and crossing siblings or introducing a new parent and starting over.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 28, 2024 MEETING OF AABS

The Austin Area Begonia Society met at 2 P.M. January 28, 2024 in the auditorium of the Austin Area Garden Center in Zilker Botanical Garden with eleven members present: **Charlotte Boyle, Doug Byrom, Vickey Cole, Jim and Joan Estes, Freda Holley, Jim Landers, Nelda Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Rick Holley, and Geneva Townsend.**

Doug Byrom had worked with several hotels concerning Austin hosting the Get Together in Austin, but prices were not satisfactory at this time. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and certain nurseries seemed like places to visit for tours.

Today many plants were for sale. Since some tickets were sold for a raffle, the following were winners: B. Nelda Moore went to Charlotte Boyle. Others who won were Jim Landers, Geneva Townsend, Freda Holley, and Joan Estes, who received a "Z" plant.

Program:



Freda Holley discussed "Begonia Hybridizing: A Primer." The helpful guide presented the chromosomes in each begonia species. *B. acutifolia* with 156 chromosomes and *B. guaduensis* with 104 would likely provide many crosses, but they may not contain characteristics that one desires in a begonia. Sometimes it is better to find a begonia with fewer chromosomes having dark green leaves with undersides that are red because this is what you are striving for in your new species with other qualities that you want. After working with the new plant and getting it to bloom so that you can use the pollen, you will want to grow these and observe them carefully.



B. Acutifolia (above) and *B. guaduensis*



You may see some desirable characteristics in the new plant, but you can do better when you take the primary cross known as F1 and hybridize it to get F2 plant. Study this creation and observe its growth. Is it different from other begonias? Do you need to try another parent? This process is long, but stay with it to succeed. This is hybridization.

The next meeting will be March 24.

Respectfully submitted,
Nelda Moore, Secretary

CONDOLENCES to Valerie Morris, whose mother Ramona Scott, age 93, of Greenbrier, Arkansas, died peacefully on January 8, 2024.

