



AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY

A Branch of the American Begonia Society

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



Austin Area Begonia Society

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NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

NEXT MEETING:

FEBRUARY 27, 2022

2 P.M.

Auditorium

Austin Area Garden Center

Zilker Botanical Garden

2220 Barton Springs Road

Austin, Texas 78746

AUSTIN AREA BEGONIA SOCIETY MEMBERS CREATE KOKEDAMA



Potluck (bring our own food).

Valerie is going to do a program on grooming your begonia plant for the show in April at 2022 Southwest Region Get-Together in Ft. Worth. She suggests everyone bring a plant to groom and a nice clean pot to show the groomed plant.

The Southwest Region Get-Together is April 27-30.

It was the best of times when the Austin Area Begonia Society met Sunday, December 5, 2021 in the auditorium of the Garden Center in Zilker Botanical Garden for a very informative meeting that began with a video about the centuries-old Japanese form of garden art **kokedama** — a ball of soil, covered with moss, on which an ornamental plant grows — and ended with the moss ball art held by the members as Ken Fuchs took pictures of all who attended. Valerie Morris taught the group to make their own kokedama as she provided trays of potting soil and moss covering as well as twine for this Japanese arrangement that could be hung or presented as a gift at Christmas.

First, Valerie removed most of the soil from the plant and packed new rich potting mix to form the moss ball around the roots. The damp ball was covered by the green moss purchased for the covering that was tied with twine in such a way that extra twine at the top could be used to hang the arrangement. After this the kokedama could be placed in water for a few minutes. Then it could be held in a bath with plant fertilizer. The damp ball might be ready for watering after a week.

Doug Byrom brought tiny poinsettias in a moss ball that could be hung from the ceiling while others used a hanger from a flower pot all tied together kokedama style. Valerie brought a snake plant that could have been named rattlesnake with another plant that made an awesome Japanese art form that she could use on a piece of wood as a table arrangement.

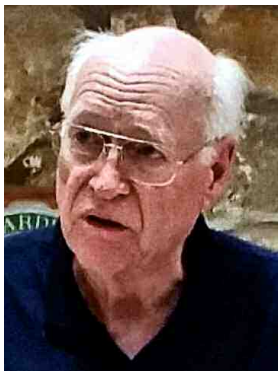


During the business meeting President Vickey Cole informed all of us that Austin Area Garden Council had raised the dues to \$15. Members voted to pay \$12 and the \$3 could come from the society. Vickey also mentioned that we need new officers; therefore, please volunteer to select one of the positions and enjoy this wonderful exciting group that provides an educational experience and a full agenda.

We left much happier with a new gift to enjoy and each person possessed a refreshed Christmas spirit. We also had new begonias to grow for the New Year as a result of Doug Byrom's part of this program. Thank you so much to all who participated in bringing supplies and then removing items before 4 P.M. We thank Valerie for the catered meal from Olive Garden that gave us all of the energy that we needed without cutting the cake.

DON FREEMAN HONORED IN ROSE GARDEN DEC. 14

Don Freeman, a member of several clubs throughout the years, was honored December 14 with his name added to the Memorial Arch in the Rose Garden of Zilker Botanical Garden, 2022 Barton Springs Road. As a member of the Iris Society of Austin he and his wife won best of show in 1993, 1995, 2003, 2010, and 2013. They even won when they entered the Belton Iris Show in 2012 and 2017. Not only did the husband and wife team gain awards in Iris Shows, they also received awards in many flower shows as they worked during the Zilker Garden Festival. Don and Pat joined the AABS, the Rose



Society, Master Gardeners, the Bulb Society, and both worked diligently in each club as officers and members. Don even taught classes to help many gardeners as he worked along side of them often on hands and knees.



Don Freeman was one of the best horticulturists in Zilker Botanical Gardens. He presented detailed designs to the council, and then worked in the gardens, where he made sure that soil conditions were correct for the plants, that water was available to keep them growing, and he would weed the beds. He was a genuine farmer.

NEW SPECIES AND REGISTRATIONS



Begonia cabnillasii. Photo by Yu Pin Ang

The Begonian for January/February 2022 introduces a new species found in Palawan, Philippines that is classified as critically endangered.

Researchers named it after Palawan conservationist and field guide William Cabanillas. *Begonia cabanillasii* also belongs to section *Baryandra* that includes 20 other Palawan endemic species. This begonia grows in humid shaded forests in El Nido. It is distinct from other begonia species in that it has orbicular leaves, compact rosette growth with shorter flower stalks and larger flowers with 5 winged ovary, and varying in coverage of black patches.

The same issue introduces 11 begonia registrations: 'Botanicaz 1,' 'Magiya,' 'Moona,' 'Brandon Strull,' 'Madame Rachel,' 'Margaret Heppel,' 'C. Wunder,' 'Dark Lord,' 'Matalic Dragon,' 'Queen Constellation,' and 'Seraph.'

The ABS Branch Directory is found on page 36 with Colorado and Ohio included. Tom Keepin is the ABS Branch Relations Chair.

HORTICULTURE

It is time to take cuttings from the *semperflorens* — especially the double flowered ones if you want to see them in abundance in the spring.

If you decide to cover some of the shrubs, use a thick cover, but not plastic. When using lighting for warmth, use the bigger bulbs provided by Christmas lights. Check the wiring so that the tent covering will not catch on fire and burn your treasures. To keep warm in your home, prepare for the worst winter early by cutting wood for the fireplace. Check your power unit and get it ready to use in case there is no electricity for days like last February.

Many plants growing in containers did not survive even with protection from a cover. The cold temperatures for a week and the snow and ice crust froze the plants to the roots. Those plants that were planted in the soil in the garden eventually recovered. Some trees are still trying to grow, but they are struggling. Dead branches or the whole tree may not make another Arctic Express. This is the time to decide what to do with the huge tree before it falls on your home or car.

GROWING RHIZOMATOUS BEGONIAS

A rhizomatous begonia grows as a compact plant with petioles of appropriate length and leaf coloring good, not pale. With an even temperature throughout the growing season, the plant will bloom when it is expected to bloom in late winter and early

spring.



B. 'Dark Surprise' Photo by Jim Landers



B. 'Needham' Photo by Jim Landers

If outdoors this begonia grows in filtered sunlight without direct sunlight under a tree or in a lath house as long as it is protected from the midday sun. Even during the winter proper light is important and the plant can be moved where the light is bright or where there is good sunlight. Even the tubes of fluorescent lights can provide essential controlled lighting if the plant is under the center area of the tubes.



B. 'Positively Peridot' Photo by Jim Landers

Rhizomatous begonias enjoy cool temperatures 62 to 65 degrees F. They are not demanding as far as humidity is concerned. If the distinctive foliage requires additional humidity so that the leaves do not drop, use a tray with some water in pea gravel

beneath the plant. If there is excessive humidity, there is a risk of rotting especially if the variety of begonia has dense foliage. Shallow clay pots are ideal for growing these shallow-rooted plants that grow in sparse shallow soil. Moss-lined wire containers with flat bottoms are excellent because they provide porosity. Plants in plastic containers can rot due to overwatering. Repot only when the root system fills the container and water only when the surface of the soil is dry to the touch. Never fertilize this type of begonia when it is dormant.

If this begonia is kept at an even temperature, there will seldom be a dormant period.

Mature creeping rhizomatous begonias are best grown in hanging containers.

KOKEDAMA DRAMA

Photos by Ken Fuchs



B. 'Silver Jewel' Photo by Jim Landers



B. 'Summer Illusion' Photo by Jim Landers

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