

BEGONIA CHATTER



Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i>	Next Meeting: DATE: February 1, 2015 TIME: 2:00 PM PLACE: West Gray Multi-Service Center PROGRAM: Preparing For Show
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PREPARING OUR PLANTS FOR SHOW

The February 1, 2015 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray Street. The doors will open at 1:00 P.M. President Janet Carpenter will preside over this meeting. There will be a short business meeting to keep us all up to date on what is going on with the Astros, Southwest Region and National.

Our Refreshment Host and Hostesses for this meeting will be **Johnny Williams, Donna Williams** and **Donna McGraw**.

Our Program this month will be on **Preparing Our Plants For Show**. As everyone is aware the Astro Branch is hosting the 2015 Southwest Region Get-together on May 21st thru 23rd at the Sheraton Brookhollow. Time is moving very quickly now and we need to be watching our begonias to see who has the potential of going to the Show. Members are encouraged to bring plants that they think they might like to show and let Tom Keepin and Cheryl Lenert take a look at

them with a judges' eyes and advise members on what they think you can do to make the plant(s) a blue ribbon winner. Member Jane Anderson will also refresh us on little things she has learned to do when she has entered plants in past shows and won ribbons and awards. In a lot of cases it's the attention to little details that can make the biggest difference in presenting your plant for judging.

We would really like to see a good turnout of show plants from our members. On too many occasions I have been viewing a show and overhear a member of the host branch telling another member that his/her plant at home looked so much better than the same one another member had entered. Entering is exciting whether you win or not.

We will have our usual drawings at this meeting. Please remember to bring your name tag. Can't find it? Let Tom know ASAP prior to the meeting day.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the meeting.

See You There!

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 4, 2015 MEETING

The January 4, 2015 meeting of the Astro Branch of The American Begonia Society was held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center located at 1475 West Gray Street in Activity Room 1.

The meeting was called to order by President, Janet Carpenter, at 2:00 P.M. Janet thanked our refreshment hostesses who were **Fay Stansberry, Kathleen Murphy and Janet Carpenter.**

We had no guests or new members at this meeting.

The minutes of the December Christmas Party were published in the Begonia Chatter and were approved with no changes.

Ruby Lewellyn, Sunshine Chair, passed around a get well card for Fukumi Smith. In the Treasurer's Report Tom Keepin reported that our checking account was still healthy. Jane Anderson brought a Begonia of the Month which was *B. lanceolata*, a beautiful little plant that she had brought back from the ABS Annual Meeting in Ft. Worth. It had two kinds of blooms and is epiphytic in the wild. Susan Daugherty brought a very nice *B. polilloensis* that she has been growing in a bubble bowl. Janice McPhee brought a *B. 'Withlacoochee'*.

Under Old Business: Tom said he talked to the head of the West Gray Center. In lieu of paying rent we have the option of giving three programs a year. Mr. French told Tom that he would e-mail him the list of dates. Tom brought this before the club previously but will e-mail the list to member when he receives it. The programs can be on anything. They don't have to be on begonias.

Under New Business: Cheryl Lenert announced that the SW Region Get-Together for 2015 will be May 21st thru 23rd and will be held here in Houston. She has toured a garden with two greenhouses, one for cacti and one for tropical, and this garden will be open for tours during the get-together. She is looking for other places and for ideas for the goodie bags. Ruby and her husband have donated nice pens for the bags. Those who approach businesses for items could emphasize that attendees are from Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and even states farther away.

This would be an opportunity for good advertising. Cheryl also said we could have a judging school if enough people are interested. A show of hands indicated that enough are interested from our own club so she will begin working on setting that up. She said that students will serve as clerks for the judges so it will be an even greater opportunity to learn.

Hostess Chair, Kathleen Murphy passed around the sign-up sheet for meeting hostesses as several slots needed additional people.

Members were given the option to get something more from the Refreshment Table before we had our drawings but declined. The drawings were held and the results are as follows:

Door Prize:

Aphelandra (Zebra Plant) was won Pat Hiscock
Raffle:

B. 'Pink Dianna' won by Janet Carpenter

B. 'Laguna' won by Kathleen Murphy

Name Tag Plant:

B. 'Jean Pernot' won by Connie Kelley

B. 'Withlacoochee' won by Anna Belle Hicks

The meeting was then adjourned for our program which was our annual January cutting party and was led by Cheryl Lenert. She demonstrated how to take cuttings of cane-like, shrub-like and thick-stemmed begonias and how to "stick" them into the pots. These will be taken home by Tom and nurtured for the Plant Sale at the SW Get-together.

Respectfully submitted
Donna Williams, Secretary



PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

February

1 st & 2 nd	Cancer
11 th & 12 th	Scorpio
15 th & 16 th	Capricorn
19 th & 20 th	Pisces
23 rd & 24 th	Taurus
28 th	Cancer

March

1 st	Cancer
10 th & 11 th	Scorpio
15 th & 16 th	Capricorn
19 th & 20 th	Pisces
23 rd & 24 th	Taurus
27 th , 28 th & 29 th	Cancer

- Planting and Transplanting are best done in Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces with Cancer being the best.
- Best Pruning for quick growth is first Taurus and then Capricorn.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR FEBRUARY 2015

According to the United States Weather Service Houston and surrounding area fall in Region 7 of the National Weather Map. Here is what they predict our weather will be like for the month of February 2015.

Our temperatures will be slightly below normal and our precipitation will be above normal. Our temperatures should average 38 degrees in the North to 49 degrees in the South. Our coolest temperatures for February will be February 1st, 6th thru 12th, 15th thru 19th, 21st thru 24th and 28th. Our warmest February temperatures will be February 3rd thru 5th, 14th thru 20th and 26th & 27th. There will be rain and snow in the North and periods of rain and thunderstorms in the South most likely about February 5th thru 10th, 14th thru 17th, 20th thru 22nd and 27th and 28th. There will be a shower or two at other times. February will be a cloudy and breezy month.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Birthday wishes go out to our members born in this month of February.

Jane Anderson	February 23 rd
Orval Love	February 28 th
Molly Reed	February 9 th
Ken Gardner	February 28 th

“Today is a day to enjoy being with friends. To look back on where you’ve been and to look forward to the special times the future holds for you.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Spring Branch African Violet Club Show and Sale

The Spring Branch African Violet Club will be having their Show and Sale Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, located at 2020 Herman Drive.

The Dates and Times are as follows:

Saturday, March 7, 2015

Show: 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Sale: 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Sunday, March 8, 2015

Show & Sale: 10:00 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Please mark your calendars. If you have time please go by and see them, their show is always beautiful and they have beautiful plants for sale also. There is no problem parking.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Begonia subscutata

By Mary Weinberg

B. subscutata is placed in section *Tetrophila*. It was discovered by De Wildman in the Congo of tropical Africa in 1908. It has always been collected in primary and secondary forests in Gabon.

B. subscutata does not seem to have been grown in the United States until 1983 when Dr. Jan Doorenbos of the Netherlands sent seed to Mildred Thompson. She subsequently shared plants with members of ABS.

B. subscutata is a trailing-scandent species. Leaves at maturity measure 1 ½ to 2" long and ¾ - 7/8" wide, leaf shape is obtuse, acute, obovate, with slightly undulate margins that tend to curl under, the fleshy leaves have a dark green smooth shiny upper surface, with light green pinnate veins. The undersides of the leaves are light green and adult leaves having short sparse brown felted wool-like hairs. Stems are long and branching. Mature stems are woody, while newer stems have short brown felt-like hair. Stem nodes often produce roots. Both male and female flowers have 4 tepals each. The ovary of the female flowers is spindle-shaped, 4 celled, and wingless. Stipules are small, brown, and lanceolate. Female flowers do not open at all times. My experience has been that they only open when there are male flowers on the plant. Flowers are creamy-white color with reddish pink margins on the tepals. *B. subscutata* is almost ever-blooming.

Physical Geography of the Congo

The climate of the Congo is tropical, with heavy rainfall and high temperatures and humidity. Temperatures vary little between seasons and between day and night. The annual average temperature is between 68 and 81 degrees F., although in the south currents may produce temperatures as low as 54 degrees F. The average daily humidity is 80%. Precipitation averages more than 48 inches annually, and often is over 80".

Most of the Congo is covered with tropical rain forest, with much of the soil being coarse grained, containing sand and gravel; because of the hot, humid climate organic matter is destroyed before it can decompose into humus and top soil is washed away by heavy rains.

CULTURE

Humidity: *B. subscutata* requires high humidity but can be grown outside a terrarium. The humidity in my light garden averages 50% in winter and about 60% in summer. When making cuttings or growing young just-rooted plants; it is best to keep them in a terrarium for the additional humidity.

Light: I do not place *B. subscutata* directly under the light but off at the edge where light is less intense.

Water: Keep moist.

Temperature: *B. subscutata* grows well in warm temperatures. My winter temperature in the house is in the mid to upper sixties. I think that is why my plant goes into semi-dormancy.

Growing Medium: I use a porous mix, one that retain moisture as well. I include a pinch of bone meal and limestone in the mix.

For cuttings and young plants in terrariums use 2 parts long-grain sphagnum moss (soak squeeze the excess moisture and cut into small pieces) and 1 part perlite.

B. subscutata tends to go semi-dormant for me during the winter months, losing a good number of leaves. Stems will be quite bare except for a few stubborn leaves; an occasional bloom will appear.

When I repot *B. subscutata* I wind a stem or two around in the pot and pin them down to the soil where they sometimes root from the nodes and send out new growth.

(This article was taken from the Begonian Volume 58 November-December 1991 Pages 225 & 226)

(Illustration of B. Subscutata on Page 2 of this newsletter.)

Astro Branch's January 2015 Meeting Cutting Party



Molly Reed, Cheryl Lenert, Anna Belle Hicks & Sandra Rigsby putting down cuttings



Jane Anderson preparing B. 'Ginny' cuttings to be put down



Janice McPhee, Doona McGraw & Ruby Lewellyn busy sticking cuttings



(Same as above)



Everyone busy sticking cuttings!



Bagged and labeled cuttings.



...more bagged and labeled cuttings!



Lots of cuttings to be put down!



Begonia plantlets growing from plugs from the Annual Board Meeting



Members enjoying refreshments before the cutting party begins.

... more pictures from the
January Meeting.



Susan Daugherty talking about her
B. polilloenis



President Janet Carpenter buying her
Raffle tickets from Pat Hiscock.



Jane Anderson & Faye Stansberry



Gail Warren & Connie Kelley filling
4'' pots with potting soil.



Cheryl Lenert explaining how to
prepare a cutting.



Jane Anderson won the centerpiece from the refreshment table.



Connie Kelley's ticket was the very first to be drawn!



Pat Hiscock won the Door Prize Zebra Plant (Aphelandra).



Faye Stansberry drawing tickets for the drawings.



(L) Anna Belle Hicks with B. 'Withlacoochee'
Connie Kelley with B. 'Jean Pernot'



(L) Janet Carpenter with B. 'Pink Dianna'
Kathleen Murphy with B. 'Laguna'