

# BEGONIA CHATTER



<p><b>Astro Branch</b>  <b>American Begonia Society</b>  <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i>  <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i>  <i>(713) 686-8539</i></p>	<p><i>Next Meeting:</i>  <b>DATE:</b> February 7, 2021  <b>TIME:</b> 2:00 P.M.  <b>PLACE:</b> Plants For All Seasons  <b>PROGRAM:</b> My Beautiful Begonia</p>
<p>February 2021 Issue</p>	<p><a href="http://www.begoniahouston.org">www.begoniahouston.org</a></p>

## MY BEAUTIFUL BEGONIA

The February 7, 2021 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be our first meeting of 2021 at **Plants For All Seasons Nursery** located at 21328 State Highway 249 (on the feeder road). Their telephone number is 281-376-1646. We have the Meeting Room from 12 to 4 P.M. The meeting will start promptly a 2:00 P.M. All are welcome to come early to help set up for the meeting or shop for some more beautiful plants for your home or garden.

Our Program for this meeting is “**My Beautiful Begonia**”. Since Covid-19 came to visit Houston we have been very restricted in what activities we could engage in...so we have been stuck at home. Our gardens are weedless or nearly so, our begonias and other tropicals have benefited from all the attention we have been able to give them. We would like for each member attending to bring one, perhaps two begonias that are showing off due to the extra attention and the wonderful mild winter we have been experiencing. When it's your turn to show off your begonia(s) we

would like you to tell us the name of your begonia, about how long you've had it, and what you have done to make it look so beautiful. At the end of the program, you are free to share cuttings if you wish. Along with the begonia(s) you bring for the program you are welcome to bring named begonia cuttings to share...should you have some begonias that need trimming.

We will have our usual Raffle, Name Tag, and Door Prize drawings. So be sure to wear your name tag.

As for refreshments for this meeting, we don't have any scheduled Hosts or Hostesses. So we are asking each member to bring their own snacks and drinks. If someone would like to make a batch of Chocolate Chip Cookies I'm absolutely positive that no one will object.

Directions to Plants For All Seasons Nursery will follow on the next page. Feel free to Google directions from your home.

We will be practicing social distancing and be sure to bring your mask.

**Until Then Happy Growing and stay safe!**

## DIRECTIONS TO PLANTS FOR ALL SEASONS

### FROM THE SOUTH:

Go north on Highway 290 and take the Jones Road exit. Turn right on Jones Road and continue to Louetta Road (past Matzke Park and up to several lights).

Turn right on Louetta, go under 249 and turn left on the frontage road. Plants For All Seasons is about ½ block up on your right. Take the 2<sup>nd</sup> driveway and go to the back. You will see the meeting building directly ahead.

### FROM THE NORTH:

Make your way South to the 249 frontage road down to the Louetta exit. Turn left on Louetta, go under 249 and turn left on the northbound frontage road. Plants For All Seasons is about ½ block up on your right. Take the 2<sup>nd</sup> driveway and go to the back. You will see the meeting building directly ahead.

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## WEATHER FORECAST FOR FEBRUARY 2021

According to the United States Weather Service, Houston and the surrounding areas fall in Region 7 of the National Weather Map. Here is what they predict for February.

Our temperatures will be near normal and our precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our average temperature should average 39 degrees in the North and 52 degrees in the South.

Our coolest temperatures for February will be February 1<sup>st</sup> thru 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> thru 10<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> thru 20<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> thru 28<sup>th</sup>. Our warmest February temperatures will be February 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> thru 15<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>.

There will be mainly rain in the South and rain and snow in the North most likely around February 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> thru 18<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> thru 27<sup>th</sup>. There will be locally heavy precipitation and an isolated shower at any time.

*(This weather forecast was taken from the Harris Farmer's Almanac 2021)*

## PRUNING PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

### February

4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup>	Scorpio
8 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Capricorn
13 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup>	Pisces
17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup>	Taurus
22 <sup>nd</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup>	Cancer

### March

3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	Scorpio
7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup>	Capricorn
12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup>	Pisces
17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup>	Taurus
22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Cancer
31 <sup>st</sup>	Scorpio

**Planting and Transplanting** are best done in Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces with Cancer being the best.

**Best Pruning** for quick growth is first in Taurus and then in Capricorn.

*(This Pruning, Planting and Transplanting guide was taken from the Harris Farmer's Almanac 2021)*



Begonia 'Decker's Select' from Begonia Portraits by Alice M. Clark



photo by Charles Henthorne

## Begonia U012

by Charles Henthorne  
Plano, Texas

Over the years my wife Leora and I have grown many unusual and rare begonias. We, like others in the begonia world, have our favorites. One of our all time favorites is B. U012. Leora obtained this begonia over 10 years ago, and we have grown it in our terrarium environment ever since. At times it has been a challenge, as, like all other begonias it has its own growing requirements.

These include such things as lighting, humidity, moisture, and temperature. Until we found the right conditions, it was a struggle to keep it alive and thriving. As a matter of fact, at some times, it was just a small leaf that held on.

Now, for the last several months, we have had success growing this. Indeed, we have even been able to take cuttings and to pass them to others to try. Those that we have passed it along to have, like us, encountered difficulties in getting it to survive. However we are now passing along the information we have discovered in hopes of allowing others to also have success with this great and colorful plant.

We have found that it likes very high humidity. We have it in a very tightly sealed container, which allows it to be in 100 percent humidity. We very rarely open the container and when we do, it is just to check the moisture content of the growing medium. There is constant condensation on the glass and we do not worry about it, as the plant is thriving.

The added moisture content of the condensation does not seem to affect the leaves, and the dampness also has no visual effect on the stems. Contrary to some problems with other begonias in this high percentage of moisture, this begonia is multiplying. We also keep it on the bottom shelf

of our growing racks, where the temperature is approximately 10 degrees lower than on the higher shelves. Our lighting is artificial warm fluorescent and we keep the lights on for about 8 hours a day.

Until 2003, there were around 12 related species endemic to New Guinea, which were put into the separate genus of *Symbegonia*. For scientific reasons, taxonomists decided to take those dozen plants and move them into the genus *Begonia* under a new section named *Symbegonia*.

Mark Tebbitt in his book, *Begonias Cultivation, Identification, and Natural History*, discusses these in some detail. He also states that "another 12 species remain undescribed, one of which is in cultivation." This one is probably our U012, as he mentions on page 222 of his book. We have yet to see it flower. It has green leaves with pink margins. Our photo does not do justice to the beauty of this coloration.

The plants in this section all require greenhouse or terrarium care and are a big challenge to grow. No members of the section *Symbegonia* have ever been common in cultivation, and are rarely found or even seen in other than specialist collections. We do not advise the amateur, or even the more experienced grower, to try this one, if they could even find it available. It is really one of the most difficult plants either of us have grown. It does not take well to transplanting or the taking of large numbers of cuttings at the same time.

Now that we have gained some expertise on its growing habits, we hope to be able to continue with our successful cultivation of this beautiful and challenging plant.





U C Davis collection - photo by Laurie Gray Bounsall

## *Begonia aridicaulis* Zies.

by Paul Tsamtsis

*B. aridicaulis* is a striking and beautiful rhizomatous begonia from tropical Mexico. It was published by Rudy Ziesenhenné of Santa Barbara in 1952. It is in Section *Weilbachia*, which also includes another very beautiful begonia, *B. turrialbae* (Plant of the Month - June 2005). This Section includes about 25 species that grow in the states of Veracruz, Puebla, and Jalisco southward through Central America to Panama.

The Thompsons, in their book ***BEGONIAS; The Complete Reference Guide***, classify this as 'rhizomatous, small leaved, entire/subentire.'

The foliage of this plant shines as if it had been dunked in leaf shine. The leaves are pointed and are a deep hunter green. The veins stand out as they are nearly a neon lime green. It blooms in the late winter with profuse white flowers down near the base of the leaves.



Joan Coulat - Sacramento Branch, American Begonia Society, September 2007

The culture of this plant requires high humidity either in a greenhouse or preferably a terrarium. Too bright a light bleaches the foliage to a washed out yellow green.

Propagation is as for other rhizomatous plants. They can either be started from leaves or rhizome cuttings.

There are at least a dozen hybrids that have been done with this plant. Rudy alone created eight when he crossed *B. 'MacIntyre's Daedalea'* x *B. aridicaulis*. He named and registered them with the ABS: *B. 'Agulis'* (ABS R#617), *B. 'Cami'* (ABS #606), *B. 'Chucu'* (ABS #620), *B. 'Enech'* (ABS #604), *B. 'Helo'* (ABS #618), *B. 'Tomol'* (ABS #603), *B. 'Tuptup'* (ABS #605), and *B. 'Yutum'* (ABS #619). Very few of these remain in general cultivation today.

It is rarely bothered by insects although I have lost one plant to mildew when I tried growing out of a terrarium. This is a plant well worth the efforts to grow it.