

BEGONIA CHATTER



<p>Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i></p>	<p><i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: January 8, 2012 TIME: 1:00 PM PLACE: Houston Garden Center PROGRAM: Annual Cutting Party</p>
<p>JANUARY 2012 ISSUE</p>	<p>absastro.net</p>



ANNUAL CUTTING PARTY

The January 8, 2012 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia will be held at the Houston Garden Center 1500 Hermann Park Drive (Herman Park). The doors will open at 1:00 P.M. and the meeting will be called to order at 2:00 P.M. This meeting will be held in the Main Hall.

Our refreshment Hostess' for this meeting will be **Millie Garrett, Janet Carpenter and Gail MacGregor.**

President Donna Robert 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 Program this month will be our Annual Cutting Party. Members are requested to bring named cuttings and a pair of scissors or pruners, whichever you prefer to do cuttings with. The pots, trays, potting soil, labels and pencils will be provided. The cuttings will be used for our Annual Fund Raiser in April, the Collection Enhancement Table at meetings and the Southwest Region Get-Together in San Antonio May 16-20. Once again we want named cuttings only. They can be Cane-like, Shrub-like, Rhizomatous, Trailing/Scandent, Thick-stemmed or Species and U numbers.

If you normally pay your dues in the month of December or January or if you have received a notice from Membership Chair Paul Rothstein; Tom will be on hand to collect your payment and mail them in for you.

Please make plans to join us for our first meeting of 2012. Dress comfortably and be prepared to get your hands dirty. All of your Begonia friends will be there to talk begonias

with and besides we will be having a lot of fun.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone in the New Year.

PRUNING, PLANTING & TRANSPLANTING

January

3 rd 4 th & 5 th	Taurus
8 th 9 th & 10 th	Cancer
17 th & 18 th	Scorpio
21 st 22 nd & 23 rd	Capricorn
26 th & 27 th	Pisces
31 st	Taurus

February

1 st	Taurus
5 th & 6 th	Cancer
13 th 14 th & 15 th	Scorpio
18 th & 19 th	Capricorn
22 nd 23 rd & 24 th	Pisces
27 th 28 th & 29 th	Taurus

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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Happy Birthday wishes go out to all our members born in this month of January.

Leigh Boyer	January 21 st
Marilyn Chapman	January 30 th
Susan Daugherty	January 27 th
Charles Jaros	January 26 th
Cheryl Lenert	January 24 th
Ruby Lenert	January 2 nd
Malcolm McCorquodale	January 17 th
Emma Payne	January 31 st
Debbie Perillo	January 23 rd

“Every age, every stage of life has its own beauty.”

Wishing you a beautiful Birthday and a year full of dreams come true.

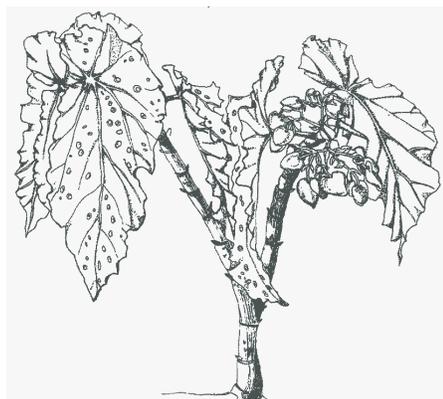
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY 2011

Sunday, December 4, 2011 was an overcast day with rain in the forecast. Our Christmas Party this year was held at the Houston Garden Center in the Main Hall. The doors opened a 12 noon for us to set up the food and put table cloths on all our tables. The table decorations started arriving shortly after the doors opened, there were 7 in all and were all very nice. The club provided roast Turkey and Ham with stuffing and gravy from Luby's and members provided lots of wonderful sides and desserts to go with it. After we ate we had a very short business meeting called to order by President Donna Robert. There was a request by Dr. Mark Tebbitt for a donation for his expedition to Bolivia, after some

discussion a motion was made by Jean Keiser to donate \$200.00 and was seconded by Allen Manes. Guests Darrin Duling, Director of Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Garden and Mike Lowery were introduced. Also our Judges for the Table Decorations were introduced and they were Mary Hughes, Director of the Houston Garden Center, Ebony (Mary's assistant) and Mike Lowery. The winners of the Table Decoration Contest were announced by Mary Hughes and they were 1st Place - Debbie Norris, 2nd Place - Irene Bragg, 3rd Place - Gail MacGregor and 4th Place - Tom Keepin. We took a short break then had our Gift and Door Prize drawings. The Gifts and Door Prizes were very nice this year. After the final drawing for the last Door Prize we had an additional drawing for two door Prizes. Bill Claybaugh was the first ticket drawn and he chose the new introduction Bird's-nest Fern donated by Another Place In Time, Cheryl Lenert had the second ticket drawn and won the flat of Strawberry Cream Pansies donated by Keepin' Green.

Everyone had a wonderful time. There was a lot of begonia chatter and laughter. We missed everyone that was not able to join in the fun.

Respectfully submitted
Betsy Ginsburg, Secretary



Meet Darrin Duling Director of Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Garden

Darrin Duling knows what a rare gem looks like. While a student at the Royal Botanic Gardens - Kew and the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, the new director of Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens spent days exploring the peaks and plateaus of a 6,000-foot mountain range in northern Oman to discover the quassum tree (*Ziziphus hajarensis*), a relic of the Ice Age found only on a few mountaintops in that country.

When he first visited Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens three years ago, Duling also knew he had found something special. “Everyone refers to Mercer as a wonderful little garden—a hidden gem. I think it's time for us to come out of hiding and show everyone how special this garden is!” he says.

A frequent visitor to Houston, Duling has been a guest speaker at the American Begonia Society's national convention and the Houston Federation of Garden Clubs. “The American Begonia Society actually helped fund my very first trip to a rainforest in 1992, and I've kept ties with them over the years,” he relates. With a master's degree in botany from the University of Reading, Duling has traveled all over the world as a botanical researcher, including Brazil, the Canary Islands, Tunisia, Crete, Thailand, Peru, and Borneo. “While at Kew, the world opened up for me. I was drawn to the science of plants and fell in love with studying the interrelationship between plants and their ecosystem. It's a beautiful mechanism that is complex and fascinating.”

Duling has served as curator of the glass house collections at The New York Botanical Garden, director of horticulture for the American Orchid Society in Delray Beach, Florida, and gardens coordinator for the Preservation Foundation in Palm Beach, Florida. He most recently served as director of The Native Plant

Center at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, New York, and owned his own landscape design firm, Duling Designs in Greenwich, Connecticut. “Landscape architecture was my first love before botany,” he offers.

While in Houston in early April, Duling visited with Mercer Director Linda Gay, who was retiring in June. “We spent the better part of an afternoon touring the gardens,” he relates. When he got a call this summer asking if he had any interest in coming to Mercer after Gay retired, Duling jumped at the chance. “The volunteers and staff are totally in love with Mercer, and it shows. I wanted to be a part of this.”

Duling hopes to build on Mercer's educational programs, providing opportunities for young gardeners. “If you get kids interested in gardening at an early age, they'll be garden lovers for life,” he says. With a background in native plants and conservation, Duling is impressed by Mercer's Endangered Species Garden and hopes to strengthen ties with other conservation-based organizations, like the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. “I love the gardens here at Mercer. The diversity of plants suited for this climate is off the charts, and the latest addition, Storey Lake, is breathtakingly beautiful.” Duling will also look for ways to build Mercer's membership and is heartened that its volunteer group. The Mercer Society (TMS), is thrilled to have him at the helm. “TMS is made up of a bunch of ‘can-do’ people, and I look forward to working with them to expand on projects and programs that will make Mercer an even better garden than it is now,” concludes Duling.

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