BEGONIA CHATTER

Astro Branch **American Begonia Society** *4513 Randwick Drive* *Houston, Texas 77092-8343* *(713) 686-8539*	*Next Meeting:* **DATE:** February 2, 2014 **TIME:** 2:00 PM **PLACE:** W. Gray Multi-Purpose Cntr **PROGRAM:** Turning Over A New Leaf
FEBRUARY 2014 ISSUE	**www.begoniahouston.org**

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

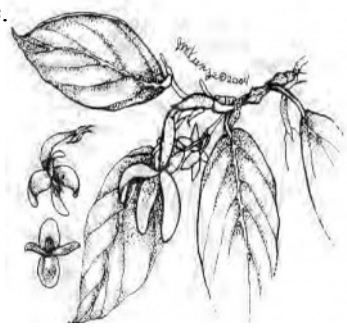
The February 2, 2014 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at the West Gray Multi-Purpose Center, 1475 West Gray Street. The doors will open at 1:00 P.M. President Susan Daugherty will preside over this meeting. There will be a short business meeting to keep us all up to date on what is going on with the Astros, Southwest Region and National.

Our refreshment Hostesses for this meeting are **Noreen Tolman**, **Janet Carpenter** and **Susan Daugherty.**

Our Program this month will be **Turning Over A New Leaf.** I get several newsletters from other branches around the country and I share our newsletter with them. Turning Over A New Leaf was a program given to the Buxton Branch by Claudia Goodridge of New Haven, CT late last year. When I read the reviews on her program I thought this was something we could do at an Astro Branch meeting. It is the study of begonia leaves (rhizomatous). It involves the make-up of the leaves such as blades, shape, cutouts, edge and surface. We will have examples of as many of the leaf types as we possibly can. If you are growing rhizomatous types in your collection please feel free to bring some leaves and we can discuss them. We know this may sound stuffy and dry, but it will be interesting and you will learn a lot about your plants. Also you are in for a treat when you examine the entire leaf or entire plant through a magnifying glass or a jeweler's loupe.

You are asked to bring with you to the meeting a magnifying glass or a jeweler's loupe 10x or higher for leaf examination. You are also asked to bring your loose leaf notebook, as there will be handouts for you to take home. Also if you have rhizomatous leaves you would like to bring please feel free.

See you there!



PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

February

2nd & 3rd	Pisces
6th & 7th	Taurus
11th & 12th	Cancer
21st 22nd	Scorpio
25th & 26th	Capricorn

March

1st & 2nd	Pisces
5th, 6th & 7th	Taurus
10th, 11th & 12th	Cancer
20th & 21st	Capricorn
24th & 25th	Scorpio
29th & 30th	Pisces

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

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

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

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

"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 your."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 5, 2014 MEETING

The January 5, 2014 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society was held at The West Gray Multi-Purpose Center. The meeting was called to order by Vice President Janet Carpenter in the absence of President Susan Daugherty. Janet thanked our refreshment Host **Paul Downey** and Hostess' **Jo DeLeon** and **Gail MacGregor** for the wonderful array of goodies they had provided for the meeting. They definitely gave our taste buds a work out.

Members were reminded of the dates for the National Convention in Tampa, Florida, March 19-23, 2014 being held at the Marriott/West-shore. Also the Southwest Region Get-together to be held in Shreveport, LA May 22-24, 2014 at the Holiday Inn Airport West. Tom Keepin brought up the fact that we were in need of a Refreshment Chair. New member Caroline Skelly volunteered to take on the job. Caroline will officially take over the position at the February 2, 2014 meeting. Caroline was advised that she can have a co-chair or a committee of her choosing to help her in her duties. Sunshine Lady Ruby Lewellyn passed a get well soon card for Jacob Robert (son of Tony & Donna Robert) who was in the hospital in Dallas. There was no more business so Janet called a short break before the cutting party began. After the short break members got to work putting down the cuttings that were brought. Everyone took home the cuttings they put down. The Drawings were held and here are the results.

Raffle:

B. 'Dotsy' won by Midge Gorman
B. 'Match Maker' won by Joe DeLeon

Name Tag Plants:

B. 'Catalina' won by Midge Gorman
B. 'Kristy' won by Ruby Lewellyn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Keepin
(for Deborah Norris, Secretary)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our Christmas Party was a great success, thanks to all that participated. I am looking forward to the New Year and lots of fun and learning at our Begonia Meetings. The visit from the Polar Vortex has dampened my growing, as some of my rhizomatous have melted. I believe they will recover, but they were so pretty. I hope that no one experienced a lot of damage or loss in their collections from those 20 degree plus temperatures. I am anxious to know how everyone's plants are coming along for the Annual Fund Raiser. As for me this is a big challenge, and I really need to get started now. I am looking forward to seeing you all at the February meeting. I am looking forward to our program this month. It sounds like it will be a fun way to learn about rhizomatous leaves. Don't forget to bring your binders.

See you same time, same place.

Regards,
Susan Daugherty, President

WEATHER FORECAST FOR FEBRUARY 2014

(Taken from the **Harris Farmer's Almanac 2014**)

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 2014.

Our temperatures will be near normal and our precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our temperatures should average 39 degrees in the north and 52 degrees in the south. Our coolest February temperatures will be February 5th thru 10th, 17th thru 22nd and 25th thru 28th. Our warmest February temperatures will be February 2nd thru 4th, 12th thru 16th and 24th. There will be mainly rain and locally severe thunderstorms in the south and snow and rain in the north about February 3rd thru 7th, 16th thru 19th and 24th thru 27th. There will be a few showers at other times. It will be windy with the precipitation.

Propagation
The art of proper cuttings

By Brad Thompson

This issue we want to go through the different types of cuttings you can take for specific types of begonias and also the different rooting methods for each.

Canes and Shrubs: Canes and shrubs are usually started using stem cuttings (a tip cutting is a stem cutting also). Any part of the stem that has growth buds will make a good cutting but the easiest part to use is the tip cutting with a couple of leaves. These can be rooted the easiest in plain water in small jars. My theory on using the small jars, and the reason they seem to work better, is that the cuttings produce a hormone into the water to cause roots to form and a larger jar dilutes that hormone to much because of the larger amount of water (this is only my theory, but seems to be true).

If you root in water, pot the cuttings when the roots are about a half inch long. Tip cuttings can also be rooted directly into regular mix or a peat/perlite mix with relatively good success. Bury at least one good growth node under the mix and water as you would a growing plant but don't allow to dry completely out (don't go overboard the other way either and keep soggy wet all the time). Enclosing in a container under lights with warmth will cause them to root faster but make sure to use a sterilized mix to avoid fungal diseases. You can also root in plain moist perlite in a covered container. If the weather is warm the cuttings should be rooted in 3 weeks to a month.

Old canes or stems that you would ordinarily throw away because they are woody and don't have any leaves can also be rooted but take a lot longer to root and produce plants. Cut the stems so that each as two or three good growth buds and stick them into burying one node. I use a flat full of mix and stick them in rows. Some cuttings will not

make it, but since you would have thrown them away anyway, you don't have anything to lose and the flat can be stuck under the bench to root. Most canes and shrubs as a general rule will not grow from a leaf cutting. They will root but they won't send up a new plant. There are only a couple of exceptions to that rule.

I've found that hairy leaved/stemmed shrubs don't always root well in water so those types I usually root in mix.

Rhizomatous (and Rexes): Rhizomatous begonias will form plants from cuttings taken from any part of the plant. The easiest way is to root rhizome cuttings (stem cuttings) taken from the tips. You can also cut long rhizomes into one or two inch long chunks to root. These are best rooted by pressing into moist mix such a peat moss/perlite mix leaving the top half of the rhizome exposed. Put into a covered container under lights or in a warm shady spot.

Rhizomatous begonias can also be started from leaf cuttings or even pieces of leaves. Smaller leaves or cut down larger leaves can be rooted in water. Leave two or so inches of stem on each leaf and put in small jars of water to root. When you see small plantlets start to form or at least some roots, they can be potted into mix to continue growing. Bury the roots about half an inch to an inch deep whether little plantlets have started to form or not and within two or three weeks little plantlets will push up around the leaf. Don't worry about burying the little plantlets but make sure to use a soilless mix such as a peat/perlite mix or they will rot and will have to reform. They can be separated later and put into regular mix or they can be left together to make a larger plant faster.

The leaf cuttings can also be rooted directly into peat or perlite in a covered container. Rhizomatous leaves can also be cut into triangular wedges with a vein in the center and rooted in peat or perlite. These will take a little longer to root but will produce more plants per leaf. Whenever rooting in an enclosed container make sure not to over wet the mix and make sure everything is as sterile as possible. I sterilize my containers with a dilute bleach solution and the mix with boiling water.

Trailing/scandents: Trailing begonias can be rooted exactly like the cane or shrub begonias but wait until after blooming if you want blooms on your plants. Removing tips in spring may prohibit blooms as they are seasonal bloomers as a general rule. They make better plants if, after rooting you put 3 cuttings into each pot to grow and pinch the tips to make them branch.

Tuberous, semi-tuberous: Tuberous begonias can be rooted either like canes and shrubs or like rhizomatous. They will grow from leaves. Make sure to start cuttings early because they need enough time to form a new bulb before they go dormant in the fall. You can try rooting them under lights later in the year and growing them through the winter indoors. This will work with some varieties. Semi tuberous do not have to form a bulb and don't go dormant so you don't have to worry about starting them so early. These are usually only started from stem cuttings because they have so many stems that leaf cuttings are necessary. There are more complicated ways of taking cuttings of tuberous involving taking cuttings with the eyes attached, etc., but I'm only sharing methods I have personally tried.

Thick-stemmed: Thick-stemmed begonias usually start best rooting directly in mix. The stems are so thick and hold so much water that they usually rot when you try to root them in water unless you're using small tip cuttings. Those root fine in water.

There are items I left out of this article such as removing hair from stems and scraping the bottoms of rhizomes, etc., because I have never found those things to be necessary and I do so much propagating that I don't really want to waste the time to use those methods. You can test these methods for yourself if you have rooting or rotting problems with hairy stemmed plants.

(Taken from **The Begonian***, Volume 63, July-August 1996, pages 132-133)*

2014 AB.S. AWARDS

All of these awards recognize the outstanding service and achievements that have been done for the national organization by its members. You, the membership, are responsible for making the nominations. Please take the time now to write your nominations. The nomination must contain the name of the award, the recipient's name, and reasons that make them or the plant eligible for the award. There are many worthy members who are possible winners for these awards. If you have nominated someone in the past and they have not won, please nominate them again.

I must receive the nominations by Feb. 15, 2014. Remember the Board has approved e-mail nominations, however, by mail or e-mail, one nomination per page. Please mail all nominations to:

Cheryl Lenert
21744 F.M. 2920 Road
Hockley, TX 77447

lenert@flash.net

AWARD CRITERIA

The **Herbert P. Dyckman Award** for Service is presented to a member who has rendered long-term or very outstanding service for the American Begonia Society above and beyond the normal duties of a member or an officer.

The **Eva Kenworthy Gray Award** is given for contributing original material toward helping the rank and file members further their study of begonias.

The **Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor** is for a begonia cultivar that has been released for al least five years and no more than fifteen. This hybrid must be registered with the Nomenclature Department and widely distributed, and the originator of the begonia must be a member of the American Begonia Society.

The **Rudolph Ziesenhenne Award** is presented to an Editor who collects and edits the works of others for a publication either U.S. or International and:

a. who encourages a broad array of writers both scientific and practical to write and contribute articles.

b. who issues a publication on begonias that is both excellent in design and content and which contributes to our knowledge and appreciation of begonias.

The **Marge Lee Award** is given to a person who contributes something of a spiritual value toward cementing goodwill and harmony among members.

The **Gene Salisbury Award** is given to a grower who exemplifies the very best in cultural practice, but also brings to us by their careful work the new species and hybrids. These are growers who contribute to our society simply through their excellence in growing begonias.

These awards may be received only once. The Alfred D. Robinson Medal of Honor is presented to a cultivar and may be won more than once by a hybridizer.

Astro Branch's January 5, 2014
Annual Cutting Party

Trays being planted and cuttings waiting.

Everything ready for planting!

Completed tray.

Left to right: Caroline Skelly, Carolyn Holland, Imelda Gott and Midge Gorman.

Name Tag Plant & Raffle Drawing Winners

Ruby Lewellyn & B. ‘Krisrty’

Jo DeLeon & B. ‘Match Maker’

Midge Gorman & B. ‘Catalina’

Imelda Gott & Fred Bones