

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: May 3, 2015 TIME: 2:00 PM PLACE: TO BE ANNOUNCED PROGRAM: Semperflorens</p>
<p>MAY 2015 ISSUE</p>	<p>http://www.begoniahouston.org/</p>

REDISCOVERING SEMPERFLORENS

The May 3, 2015 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will **not** be held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray Street. The doors will not open at 1:00 P.M. President Janet Carpenter will preside over this meeting. There will be a short business meeting to keep us up to date on what is going on with the Astros, Southwest Region and National. We will also have discussion on what is needed for the upcoming Get-Together 'Begonias From The Ground Up'.

Our Refreshment Hostess' for this meeting will be **Brenda Andrews, Irene Bragg** and **Pat Hiscock**.

Our Program this month will be on Semperflorens given by Tom Keepin. This is a continuation of our study of the different types of Begonias. Please bring your loose leaf notebook to put your hand-out information in. Semperflorens are an under-appreciated and an under-grown member of the Begonia family in our collections.

Most people who grow begonias look

at Semperflorens as those plants you use for borders in your garden. It is time that we take another look at this group of plants. They now come in all kinds of sizes (leaf & plant), flowers range from white to orange, single and double. Leaves are normal size and also huge, variegated, light green, dark green or bronze. There are so many choices now. They have come a very long way from the choice of just a few for the shade. Perhaps more will start showing up in our Shows. Hopefully you will see Semperflorens in a whole new way and let them join your collection alongside your beautiful Cane-like, Shrub-like, Rhizomatous etc. and not just as a lowly border plant.

We will have our usual drawings. Please remember to bring your name tag. If you can't locate it please contact Tom prior to the meeting.

We are looking forward to seeing you at this meeting.

See You There!

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 12, 2015 MEETING

The April 12, 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. This meeting was one week later than usual because of Easter Sunday being on our regular meeting day.

Janet thanked our refreshment hostesses who were **Anna Belle Hicks, Janice McPhee** and **Donna Williams**. Hospitality hostesses for next month's meeting will be **Brenda Andrews, Irene Bragg** and **Pat Hiscock**.

Minutes from the March meeting were published in the *Begonia Chatter* and were approved with one change. Donna McGraw was the actual winner of B. 'Flamingo Queen'.

In the Treasurer's Report Tom Keepin said we still have a healthy balance.

Ruby Lewellyn, Sunshine Chair, passed around sympathy and get well cards for three of our members. Get Well to Pat Perry, Elaine Riquelmy and Sympathy to Debra Norris for the loss of her Mother.

The "Begonia Of The Month" was brought in by Johnny Williams and was B. 'Challenger' which will get very large approximately 6 feet tall and wide. He had acquired this plant at the meeting in Ft. Worth last year.

Next meeting we will be talking more about the Southwest Region Get-Together which is May 21st thru 23rd here in Houston.

Vice President, Johnny Williams, next introduced our speaker for this meeting who was Darla Harris. Darla gave a show and discussion of some of the 400 varieties of ferns she has collected over the years. These were also for sale and many found happy new owners after our meeting. Darla is the owner of Fern Plantation Nursery, which will open later this year. Darla is also Vice President of The Texas Gulf coast Fern Society and was previously President for many years. Ferns are one of the best companion plants for our begonias.

The meeting was then adjourned for food and

drawings for the Name Tag Plants, Door Prizes and Raffle Plants.

Winners are as follows:

Door Prize:

Nephrolepis exaltata "Fishtail" – won by Kathleen Murphy

Fern Donated by Darla Harris – Won by Sandra Rigsby

Raffle:

B. 'Catalina' - was won by Janice McPhee

B. 'Laguna' – was won by Janice McPhee

Name Tag:

B. 'My Special Angel' – was won by Connie Kelly

B. coccinea 'Red' – was won by Fukumi Smith

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Williams, Secretary

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

May

3 rd , 4 th & 5 th	Scorpio
8 th & 9 th	Capricorn
12 th , 13 th & 14 th	Pisces 17 th
& 18 th	Taurus 21 st
& 22 nd	Cancer 31 st
	Scorpio

June

1 st	Scorpio
4 th , 5 th & 6 th	Capricorn
9 th & 10 th	Pisces 13 th
& 14 th	Taurus 17 th ,
18 th & 19 th	Cancer
27 th & 28 th	Scorpio

- 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 MAY 2015

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

Our temperatures will be near normal and our precipitation will be slightly below normal. Our temperatures should average 68 degrees in the North and 74 degrees in the South. Our coolest temperatures for May will be May 1st & 2nd, 7th thru 12th, 17th thru 20th and 27th & 28th.

Our warmest temperatures for May will be May 4th thru 6th, 14th thru 16th and 22nd thru 25th. There will be scattered to widely scattered showers and thunderstorms most likely about May 6th thru 9th, 16 thru 18th and 26th & 27th. There will be locally severe storms May 6th thru 8th and 16th & 17th especially in the North. It will become very humid by mid-month.

WEST GRAY MULTI-SERVICE CENTER CLOSED DUE TO FLOODING

The West Gray Multi-Service Center located at 1475 West Gray has been our monthly meeting location since the Houston Garden Center located in Hermann Park was closed and torn down. Early last week the Center had a water main break inside the main lobby and flooded the entire building with a little over 2 feet of water. They do not know when the facility will reopen as they are still assessing the damage. They know for sure that the floor in the gymnasium is destroyed and will have to be replaced. We are working with Charles French of West Gray Multi-Service Center to locate a new location that we can use until such time that the Center will reopen. **We will have our meeting somewhere.** We have asked for Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, but as of this writing have not heard back from him. As soon as we have a location you will be notified immediately.
Tom

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Birthday wished go out to all our members born in this month of May.

Francis bones	May 5 th
Janet Carpenter	May 2 nd
Midge Gorman	May 8 th
Darlene Morris	May 27 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!

In Ventura, B. “Hazel’s Front Porch”

When Hazel Snodgrass moved into her home on Walnut Drive in Ventura, Calif., in 1945, a huge cane-type begonia graced the front porch. But nobody knew its name.

Eight feet tall and four feet wide this pink flowered monster bloomed year-round, garnering much attention from visitors, neighbors, and passers-by

Hazel, a member of the Theodosia Burr Shepherd Branch, was asked for cuttings continuously, and she was generous with them.

The cutting-grown plants emigrated far and wide. When people would ask about the plant, the owners knew only that it came from “Hazel’s front porch.” And so it came to be known, especially in Southern California.

For years, people grew and talked about Begonia ‘Hazel’s Front Porch’. One day, Hazel’s friends Dorothy Behrends and Ora Wilson came to visit and were amazed at the size of the begonia, Hazel recalls.

“What do you call that?” one asked, “I don’t know,” Hazel had to reply. So Dorothy and Ora took cuttings and set to work trying to identify the cultivar.

They found that “Hazel’s Front Porch” B. ‘Rose’, an early hybrid of San Diego begonia pioneer Alfred D. Robinson, which apparently found its way to Ventura, grew robustly, and lost its identity.

Hazel reports that her B. ‘Rose’ isn’t as vigorous these days, perhaps because the house was fumigated for termites in recent years.

“I have never been able to get it to grow like it used to,” she said, “I keep trying, though, hoping it will get large again.”

(This article was taken from **the Begonian Volume 49 March 1981 page 61**)

Aglaomorpha myenianum **Bears-paw Fern**

Strong dimorphic. Leaves oblong-lanceolate, deep green, 12 to 24 inches long 6 inches wide, pinnatifid, sessile. Rhizome stout, covered with rust colored, elongate scales.

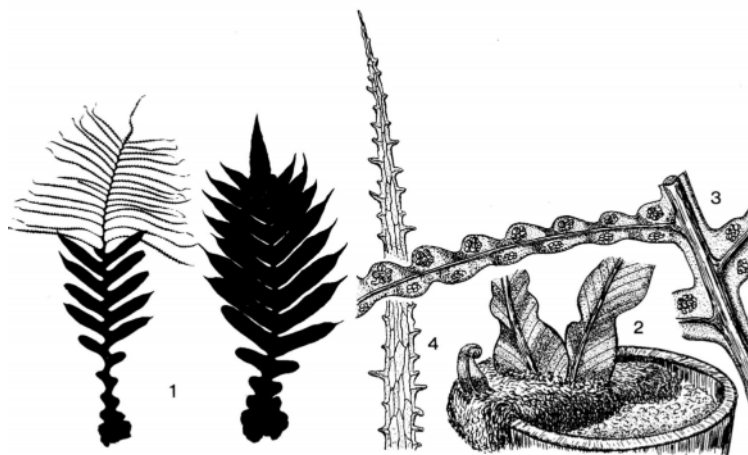
This is an epiphytic fern which grows as high as 36 inches in its native habitat. It has an unusually large, creeping, fleshy rhizome covered with slender rust-colored scales. Scales, which may grow ½ inch long, have straight or curved tooth-like projections.

Both fertile and sterile leaves are without petioles; the joining of the leaves to the rhizomes is completely obscured by the dense scale covering. A heavy costa, visible on both sides, gives stiffness to the leaves. Lower segments of both leaves are extremely short and blunt. On the sterile leaf the upper segments are opposite a larger than those of the fertile leaf, each ending in a sharp pointed apex. The lower segments of the fertile leaf are similar but smaller than those of the sterile leaf and are without sori. Upper fertile pinnae are ribbon-like and about twice as long as the lower sterile segments. Each pinna consists of a firm midrib with alternately spaced, rounded lobes on each side, each lobe being nearly covered with a sorus. Broad-based leaves serve to catch and retain moisture and humus. Sterile segments of both types of leaves are leathery and marked with well-defined veins.

Sori: round, exindusiate, numerous, on each lobe of pinna.

Culture: rich, damp humus. Plant in porous clay pot or log-cabin basket lined with osmundine to insure good drainage and ventilation. Requires humid atmosphere or mist-spray at regular intervals.

Range: Philippines



Aglaomorpha meyenianum—Bear's-paw Fern

1. Leaf silhouettes (left) fertile (right) sterile.
2. Base of leaves and crosier growing from heavily scale covered rhizome.
3. Section of fertile leaf showing fore occupying center of small, rounded segments.
4. Rhizome scale with dentate edge.

Astro's April 2015 Meeting & Fern Program



Darla Harris with Australian tree fern
Cyathea cooperi Brentwood



A wide variety of ferns for
Darla Harris' presentation.



Darla Harris during her presentation.



Landscaping with begonias



More ferns for Darla's program.



Raffle plant: Janice McPhee
with B. 'Catalina'



Name tag plant: Fukumi Smith
with B. red coccinea



Raffle plant: Janice McPhee
with B. 'Laguna'



Name tag plant: Connie Kelley
with B. "My Special Angel"



Door Prize: Kathleen Murphy
with "Fishtail Fern"
nephrolepis exalta