

# BEGONIA CHATTER



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| <p><b>Astro Branch</b><br/> <b>American Begonia Society</b><br/> <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i><br/> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i><br/> <i>(713) 686-8539</i></p> | <p><i>Next Meeting:</i><br/> <b>DATE:</b> July 12, 2015<br/> <b>TIME:</b> 2:00 PM<br/> <b>PLACE:</b> Judson Robinson Community Cntr<br/> <b>PROGRAM:</b> Spring Picnic Take 2</p> |
| <p><b>JULY 2015 ISSUE</b></p>  | <p><a href="http://www.begoniahouston.org">www.begoniahouston.org</a></p>   |

## SPRING PICNIC TAKE 2 AND MEETING

The July 12, 2015 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at Judson Robinson Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive. The doors will open at 1:00 P.M. for setting up. Please be sure to contact Kathleen Murphy at Telephone:281-890-3323 or E-mail: [kathleemurphy4959@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kathleemurphy4959@sbcglobal.net) to let her know what you are planning to bring. Our entrée will be Rotisserie Chicken, as we had originally planned. **Please remember to bring serving utensils** for what you bring to complete the menu. Water and iced tea will be provided. We will also have an assortment of soft drinks available, but if there is one you especially like to drink, please feel free to bring it with you. We will eat first (once everything is set up and ready). We will have a short business meeting presided over by Vice-President Johnny Williams.

Our program this month will be presented by Tom Keepin. As you know we just had the Southwest Region Get-Together/ABS Meeting.

Our plant sale featured lots of begonias we haven't seen in along time along with begonias that were new to everyone. If you purchased plants please feel free to bring some of them with you and show them off to the other members that were unable to attend, with the understanding that cuttings and babies will come later as the plants mature. This is just a Show and Tell. If you have a begonia or two that needs to be cut back because of all the wonderful rain we have had this Spring; please feel free to bring them (labeled of course). We will have labels and an assortment of baggies available for you to carry them home and put down at your leisure.

We will have our regular Raffle and Name Tag Plants and also some 4 inch plants to sell that were not sold at the Get-Together.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you and chatting about begonias and the Southwest Region Get-Together. Just think: no BUGS!

**SEE YOU THERE!**

## PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

### July

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>                      | Capricorn |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup>                      | Pisces    |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup>                    | Taurus    |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> & 16 <sup>th</sup>                    | Cancer    |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> | Scorpio   |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup>                    | Capricorn |

### August

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>                      | Pisces    |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>    | Taurus    |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup>                    | Cancer    |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup>                    | Scorpio   |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> | Capricorn |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> & 31 <sup>st</sup>                    | Pisces    |

- 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.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

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

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Mel Babb        | July 28 <sup>th</sup> |
| Sara Chumley    | July 26 <sup>th</sup> |
| Paul Downey     | July 9 <sup>th</sup>  |
| Tom Keepin      | July 18 <sup>th</sup> |
| Connie Kelley   | July 2 <sup>nd</sup>  |
| Shirll Manes    | July 25 <sup>th</sup> |
| Valerie Morris  | July 14 <sup>th</sup> |
| Brad Neugebauer | July 13 <sup>th</sup> |

“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 hold for you.”

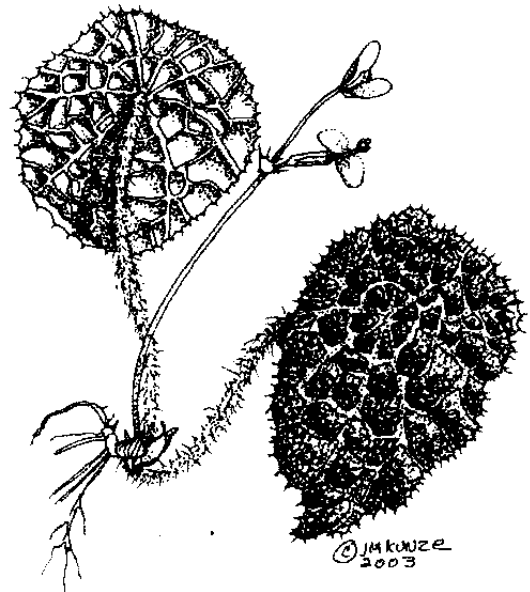


**Happy Birthday!**

## WEATHER FORECAST FOR JULY 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 July.

Our temperatures will be slightly below normal and our precipitation will be near normal. Our temperatures should average 79 degrees in the North to 83 degrees in the South. Our coolest temperatures for the month of July will be July 5<sup>th</sup> thru 9<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> thru 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> thru 31<sup>st</sup>. Our warmest temperatures for the month of July will be July 11<sup>th</sup> thru 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be a minor hurricane potential the first week of July and a low to moderate potential the last week of July. We can expect scattered showers and thunderstorms at 3 to 5 day intervals thru July. Precipitation will be heaviest and most widespread along the Gulf.



*Begonia staudtii*

## WHY BEGONIAS?

By Walter Pease

Shortly after Ruth and I were married in 1952, her mother showed her how to start an African violet leaf in a glass of water. Two and a half years later, the kitchen and dining room window areas of our apartment were filled with violets.

We then moved to Vicksburg Avenue where the backyard had been landscaped with six or seven beautiful fuchsias. One of our neighbors, Bill Kennedy, was an avid fuchsia grower and convinced us to join the Fuchsia Society. We then proceeded to build a lath house and, within two or three years, had accumulated between 200 to 250 fuchsias.

While in the Fuchsia Society we met a gentleman by the name of John Thieben who invited us to his home to see his begonia collection, which we did WOW! At that time his garden was the official identification garden for the A.B.S. and his collection was breathtaking. These we had to try!

We had attended several meetings of the Inglewood Branch of the A.B.S. as guests when John decided he should form his own branch. Hence, the Westchester Branch of the A.B.S. was created. We immediately joined as charter members and have been active begonia addicts ever since.

Most of our original African violets and fuchsias slowly began to disappear as our yard became a show place for begonias, ferns and bromeliads of which we were very proud.

My interest happened to lean more toward the tuberous types while Ruthie took on all the rest, both of us have never ceased to be amazed at the beauty of begonias. There is no other plant family like it. **That's – why Begonias?**

*(This article was taken from the March/April 1997 Issue of the **Begonian**. Volume 64 page 55)*

## THE CHAMELEION BEGONIA

by Thelma O'Reilly

Is It Begonia U093? Or is it Begonia U059?

These puzzling questions have been asked over and over during the past few years.

Comments and inquiries about their strange relationship increases as the two beautiful begonias become more widely distributed. Even the most attentive growers find confusion reigning when B. U059 suddenly begins to take on the appearance of B. U093, It seems that the leaf blades of B. U059 perform subtle transformation in front of one's eyes.

B. U059 was assigned to a begonia collected in the fall of 1980 on the island of Borneo, which is situated in the Malaysian archipelago. Bob Cole of Reseda, California collected it on a hillside in a wild area while visiting a friend in the state of Sabah on the northern coast of Borneo.

Bob reported seeing a similar plant purchased by Martin Johnson in October, 1980 from a lady who lived at the base of Mt. Banahao, Philippines. During a later visit to the Philippines, Martin purchased on Palawan Island the same plant, which he described as a superior form.

To complete the collection records, Pat Christianson of Los Angeles, California, imported a plant purchase in the Philippines in December, 1981 which was assigned number U085. This plant was not widely grown. Mabel Corwin, Martin Johnson and Patrick Worley agreed that it was identical to B. U093.

I am going to share a few specific experiences that have been reported by members who have grown B. U059 and B. U093.

Bob Cole was the first to report that many of the cuttings taken from B. U059 which has silvery green leaves with dark green along the veins, gradually developed leaves like B. U093, which are clear silver covered with fine, red hairs that create a pink blush.

In 1986 Bob and I spent several hours at his nursery where we discussed and examined this phenomenon that was occurring on his bench plants. He reported that for several years he self-pollinated, cross-pollinated and tried every

combination of these two begonias with other species and hybrids. Occasionally, fertilization occurred but the harvested seed that appeared healthy never germinated. It was also puzzling that leaves of B. U093 never reverted to B. U059.

A fascinating story arrived from Roberto Brin, Panama, after he received the MAL newsletter that contained a: "Begonia Profile" by Joan Campbell about B. U093. He writes, "I received newsletter #5 and found it very interesting, I think I also have B. U093. This was one of the first begonias I planted from a cutting my mother gave me. She obtained it here in Panama City from a nursery. At the beginning it was growing as a shrub-like species then, after months one of the branches started changing to "all silver and pink" and growing like a cane. At the beginning I thought it was a mutation. I planted that branch and it started growing like a cane. It bears pink flowers. It does not like hot temperatures and low humidity (male flowers do not open in this condition) but loves the rainy season, even with hot temperatures. Also I propagated this plant from 4 leaf sections and I got the same type of plants. So, you also think this is B. U093?"

It is interesting to note that Roberto's mother found this begonia in Panama. Obviously, Panamanians visiting the Philippines or Malaysia have been intrigued by its beauty, too.

Mabel Corwin gave me a specimen plant of B. U093 in 1987. I immediately put cuttings and leaves to root. About five months later, following an operation, I checked the cuttings and leaves. I was amazed to discover that one of the leaves had produced a few tiny leaves with the coloring of B. U059. It is now over one foot high and is still B. U059. This is the only record I have of B. U093 reverting to B. U059. Flowers are identical to those on B. U-093, including the sweet fragrance.

It has been a challenge to all who grow these begonias to set seed that will germinate when sowed. To date I have two records of success. Several years ago Patrick Worley crossed the two and raised a few seedlings that were exactly like B. U093. The other report came from Martin. A grower in the Solomon Islands reported a successful cross using B. U093 and unknown begonia. He sent Martin several cuttings but all

were rotted on arrival.

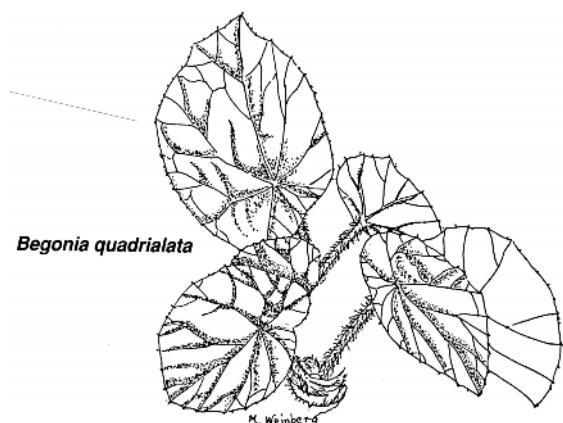
Following Professor Doorenbos' advice. I tried crossing two plants of B. U093 that I obtained from different sources. I was excited when one seed capsule remained on the plant until dry. The seed appeared healthy, rolling and making music when shaken! No germination after six plantings at monthly intervals. Roberto sent me some of his selfed B. U093 seed. No germination.

B. U093 is referred to constantly as "The Mallet Begonia". This is understandable, because it certainly resembles B. "Tingley Mallet" and B. "Arthur Mallet". When I first saw Martin's plant my pulse raced because I thought at last we had found the elusive species that was one of the parents of these beautiful begonia treasures. Then the "let down" when it seemed impossible to self the begonia. Because B. U085 and B. U093 were obtained as cultivated plants their species status is questionable. But, what about field-collected, in a wild area, B. U059 that reverts to B. U093? A chameleon that changes its color!

The objective of this article is to share the information recorded in the unidentified species files, the Members-at-large newsletters, and personal contact with growers in hope of solving the questions surrounding the strange behavior of these two begonias.

Somewhere, Somehow, I hope to reach somebody who can assist with solving the mystery of "The Chameleon Begonia"

*(This article was taken from the May-June 1989 Begonian Volume 56 on pages 85 & 86)*



by Mary Weinberg