ASTRO BRANCH 2018
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The 2018 Astro Branch Annual Christmas Party will be held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center, located at 1475 West Gray Street. The doors will open at 12:00 P.M. and we will begin setting up at that time. We will need as much help as we can get to have everything set up so the festivities can begin at 1:00 P.M. give or take.

Our menu for this event will be:

- Appetizers
- Baked Ham
- Suitable sides
- Salads
- Dinner Rolls
- Desserts
- Beverages

Please give our Refreshment Chair Kathleen Murphy a call or an email to let her know if you are coming and what you would like to bring or what she may need to complete the menu.

Kathleen can be reached at:
Telephone: 281-855-7402
Email: Kathleemurphy4959@sbcglobal.net

We will have our annual gift exchange and door prize exchange. These need to be plant or plant related. Remember! Both the gifts and door prizes must be wrapped. Participation in the exchanges are optional, you can participate in one, both or neither... When you arrive and have your exchange gift and/or door prize you will be given a ticket for each. If you bring more than one door prize you will be given only one ticket, this also applies so gifts. Members voted on a $15.00 limit. Should you wish to spend a bit more that is perfectly fine.

Dress is “Christmas Casual” since we will be indoors.

We are looking forward to seeing each and every one of you on Sunday, December 2, 2018.

SEE YOU THERE!
MINUTES OF THE 
NOVEMBER 4, 2018 MEETING

The November 4, 2018 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. President Janet Carpenter presided over this meeting that was called to order at 2:00 P.M. She thanked all for attending and thanked the hostesses who were Sandra Rigsby, Glenda Perry and Kathleen Murphy (brought a delicious a cake). Minutes from the October 7, 2018 meeting were published in the Begonia Chatter and approved as written. Treasurer Tom Keepin reported that we had $35.72 in expenses for the month and the account balance is still healthy. Sunshine Lady Ruby Lewellyn passed around cards for Cheryl Lenert (Get Well), Brenda Andrews (Get Well) and Bobbie Price (Thinking of You). Donna Robert showed us a plant that they had purchased from Another Place In Time labeled “Rare”. It was determined to be B. dregei. Mel Babb brought a plant she described as a companion plant to begonias. The plant was Plectranthus ‘Mona Lavender’. This plant grows in full sun to part-shade has lavender flowers and is in the Swedish Ivy Family.

New Business:
Annual Christmas Party – Ham will be provided by the club. A sign-up sheet was sent around for members to sign up to bring sides, desserts etc. There also was a sign-up sheet for members to sign up for Hostess duties. The Annual Christmas Party will be on December 2nd and will be held here at West Gray Multi-Service Center. Gift Exchange was voted upon to be $15.00, Door Prizes and Gifts must be plant or plant related and wrapped.

To Think About!
Tom told us that the Astro Branch has been asked to take over operation of the ABS Seed Fund. Tom told us that we would receive donated seed, process (clean) the seed, test for viability, receive and fill and mail the seed orders. Accurate records of seed available and publish in the Begonian. Tom volunteered his home address to receive donated seed and seed fund orders. It was stressed that this must be a branch project. Tom told us that he will not be at the Annual Christmas Party, as he will be out of the country. Members will be emailed a complete description as to what taking over the Seed Fund will involve. then a discussion and vote will take place at the Christmas Party.
Johnny Williams presented the program on Strange and Unusual Begonias. Johnny and Donna brought several plants from their own collection to show us. Johnny discussed each plant and where and how they grow them. Tom Keepin also brought a couple of plants to show the membership. One was a hybrid by Bobbie Price, a volunteer at the Fort Worth Begonia Species Bank called B. ‘Priceless’. This is a cross between B. sizemoreae and B. xanthina that produces yellow flowers. If B. ‘Priceless’ is grown in a terrarium it will produce the signature white hairs of B. sizemoreae and if grown in the open it will not produce the white hairs. Tom also brought B. blancii and referred to the August 2018 Begonia Chatter where it was described and a link to a video was given of it growing in the wild.

We then had our drawings. The winners were:
Raffle:
B. U-508 – won by Midge Gorman
B. U-578 – won by Corrie-Ten-Have
Name Tag:
B. ‘Orpha C. Fox’ – won by Ann Stifel
B. ‘Lana’ – won by Dehlia Mullins
Door Prize:
There were several plants so we will just list the winner’s names. Glenda Perry, Johnny Williams, Sandra Rigsby, Tony Robert, Bill Claybaugh and Kathleen Murphy.

President Janet Carpenter adjourned the meeting at 3:45.

Members gathered their things and tidied up the area around where they were sitting and left with their treasurers.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Hunter
Gloria Hunter, Secretary

PRUNING, PLANTING AND
TRANSPLANTING

December

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Sign</th>
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<tr>
<td>4th &amp; 5th</td>
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<td>9th &amp; 10th</td>
<td>Capricorn</td>
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<td>14th &amp; 15th</td>
<td>Pisces</td>
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<td>19th &amp; 20th</td>
<td>Taurus</td>
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<td>23rd &amp; 24th</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
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- 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.

I am sorry this is all I can give you this month. My 2018 Harris Farmer’s Almanac has run out. I have visited every store that I ever found it and was unable to secure a copy. Today I found a source on line, but we will not receive it before this needs to be sent to you. The January 2019 Begonia Chatter will once again have the zodiac signs like above for two months as usual and also the regional weather prediction. Thank-you for your patients.

2019 MEMBERSHIP DUES

For some members the annual membership dues for the American Begonia Society, the Astro Branch and Southwest Region (some members) are due in the month of December. These members usually pay their dues at the Annual Christmas Party. I will not be attending the Annual Christmas Party as I will be out of town from November 27th thru December 11, 2018. If your dues are due in December please mail them to me and I will get them in the mail as soon as I return. Waiting until January 2019 could cause a delay in receiving your Begonian, and will change your renewal date.

Please make your check out to the Astro Branch. Mail your check to:

Tom Keepin
4513 Randwick Drive
Houston, TX 77092-8343

Astro Branch dues: $5.00
American Begonia Society dues: $25.00
Southwest Region dues: $10.00 single / $15.00 family

Thank-you!
Tom
Begonia ‘Splotches’

by Paul Tsamsis

Begonia ‘Splotches’ is classified as a trailing-scandent cultivar. This defines it as part of a group of plants which either trail or climb. Some varieties can do both if the growing conditions are right. The cross is B. solanthera X B. limmingheana done by the late Leslie Woodriff who lived in McKinleyville in Northern California. He released the plant in 1978 and has ABS registration number 701.

Its female parent B. solanthera is a commonly grown species from Brazil that has very fragrant cream-white flowers with red centers.

The male parent B. limmingheana, also from Brazil, was described and published by Moren in 1866. Later it was determined that the same plant had been first published by Vellozo as B. procumbens in 1831. That means that B. procumbens is its real name and that B. limmingheana is taxonomically a synonym. The flower color is described as deep coral. Both parents bloom profusely during winter-spring.

The flowers of B. ‘Splotches’ are pink, edged white and the ovaries are white with pink wings. Interestingly, the plant blooms profusely in the spring and summer, unlike either of its parents. The flowers are not fragrant.

Its most striking feature, however, is its variegated foliage. When grown in the shade, its foliage is medium green with light green splotching. Grown in very strong light the splotching takes on flecks of pink and light red along with the light green. All in all, it is a very striking plant.

There are very few other variegated begonias that we can grow. Ones I am familiar with are B. manicata ‘Aureo-maculata’ and B. manicata ‘Aureo-maculata Crispa’ from Mexico. They are plants with erect rhizomes.

Another plant is the fabulous B. ‘Midnight Sun’ (B. ‘Jill Adair’ X B. unidentifed species [mk#3]) hybridized by Byron Martin of Logee’s Greenhouses in 1980. It won Best New Introduction in a national show shortly after its release. It has dark-green leaves with pinkish variegation that fades to white and then dark green as the leaves mature.

The last I am familiar with is B. ‘Templini.’ It is a mutant of B. ‘Phyllomaniaca’ introduced in 1901 by H. G. Wolfgang of the Templin Company nursery of Calla, Ohio. The outstanding feature of B. ‘Templini’ is that it has a combination of variegated foliage and adventitious growths on its leaves.

B. ‘Splotches’ is most commonly grown in hanging baskets. People report its stems can hang five to six feet. It can also be grown on trellises and totem poles if you are willing to take the effort to tie it or pin it. In hanging baskets the one cultural problem that needs to be anticipated is that previous year’s stem will lose their leaves and a two- or three-year-old plant can be very leggy with all the growth two feet below the pot hanging from brown, woody stems. It is important to pinch the plant vigorously when young to make many branches so that it can be kept full when older. That is done by pinching about a quarter of the branch tips every couple months during the growing season. This plant is relatively pest-free and mildew resistant.
Astro’s Branch
November 2018 Meeting

(Photographs by Mel Babb)
Sandra Rigsby placing home grown kumquats on the refreshment table.

Janet Carpenter calling the numbers of the luck winners.

Members viewing Johnny Williams plants.

Bill Claybaugh examining Donna Roberts “Rare Begonia”.

Gloria Hunter looking at B. blancii

Donna Robert talking about her “Rare Begonia” B. dregii
B. dregii

Begonias from Johnny William’s collection.

B. gogoensis

B. rajah

B. bogneri

Begonias from Johnny William’s collection
Sandra Rigsby with her Door Prize.

Glenda Perry with her door prize.

Midge Gorman with her Raffle Plant B. U-508.

Guest Corrie Ten-have with her Raffle Plant B. U-578.

Ann Stifel with her Name Tag Plant: B. ‘Orpha C. Fox’

Mel Babb with her Door Prize.