BEGONIA CHATTER

Astro Branch **American Begonia Society** *4513 Randwick Drive* *Houston, Texas 77092-8343* *(713) 686-8539*	***Next Meeting:*** **DATE: April 7, 2018** **TIME: 2:00 PM** **PLACE: West Gray Multi-Service Center** **PROGRAM: Pots & Potting Soil**
APRIL 2019 ISSUE	**www.begoniahouston.org**

POTS & POTTING SOIL

The April 7, 2019 meeting of the Astro Branch of The American Begonia Society will be held at the West Gray Multi-Service Center, located at 1475 W. Gray Steeet, in Activity Room. Our Hostesses for this meeting will be **Ruby Lewellyn**, **Mel Babb** and **Kay Hoss.**

The doors will open at 12:30 P.M. for us to set up our meeting room. If you can help us with set up it would be greatly appreciated. Between 1:00 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. members can enjoy refreshments and socialize with members and friends we only see at meetings. President Janet Carpenter will preside over this meeting. Please remember to wear your name tag. If you are unable to locate your nametag, please contact Tom as soon as possible before the day of the meeting so he can have a replacement for you at the meeting.

Our Program for this meeting will be **POTS AND POTTING SOIL.** Gail Warren and Gloria Hunter will present this program. Along with Gail and Gloria members are asked to bring in samples of the potting soil they use and if possible, samples of what kind of pots they like as well and share with us the good points of why you like them.

We are looking forward to seeing you at this meeting. The Hostesses will have lots of tasty treats and cool drinks for you to enjoy. Above all Your begonia friends will be there to chat with.

See you there!

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2019 MEETING OF THE ASTROS

President, Janet Carpenter, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. She thanked all for attending and thanked our hostesses who were Midge Gorman, Eddie Litchfield, and Gail Warren.

There were no guests at this meeting.

Minutes from the February meeting were emailed and were approved as written. However, Bill Claybaugh had a question about a term used in the minutes, which was "proofing." Cheryl explained that this refers to making sure the seed is true to the species by growing it out from the planted seeds. This also includes "rolling" to be sure the seeds are viable. Ruby showed us how to do this at the last meeting.

Treasurer, Tom Keepin, said our balance is still healthy. Very soon he will be sending our club's dues for federation, state, and division.

Sunshine Lady, Ruby Lewellyn, asked who needed cards this month. The following were suggested for "thinking of you" cards as these members have not been able to attend and we all miss them very much. They were Genie Riggs, Pat Hiscock, and Anna Belle Hicks. We also want to send a card to Peter Lloyd who is not a member but has done so much to help our club. Janet asked for someone to take over the duties of Sunshine Lady from Ruby as she is ready to take a break from that responsibility. By the end of the meeting Donna Williams volunteered to do this.

Janet asked members when they would like to have our annual picnic. Tom will not be able to host it this year due to his and Peter's illness, so Malcolm McCorquodale offered his home. Several months were suggested but the month that works best for Malcolm is June so that is when we will have it.

Last month's meeting was about the seed fund and about our club's taking over the management of it. Janet has found two articles online from our Houston ASTROS website that were written by Freda Holley and that talk about seeds. She had copies for anyone who would not be able to access it from their own computers. Cheryl then talked about the seed fund. She said she and Tom have looked at the seeds that have come in and there appear to be about eight species groups that have not been proofed. They plan to place the list in the Begonian, then fill orders for them, offering to replace the seeds if they do not come true. She asked for members who are willing to proof them; i.e., plant them to be sure they grow true to description. Several members indicated a willingness to do this.

Janet reminded everyone that SW Region will be in Austin this year from May 1-5 and we would like as many members as possible to plan to go and to enter at least one plant. The national ABS convention will be in Sacramento September 3-8.

The Begonia of the Month was brought by Bill Claybaugh and was B. wallichiana. It was so cute and puts out groups of three flowers, 2 males to 1 female. The pollen falls onto the female flower and then the seeds fall into the pot. He walked it around for all to see and noticed that one of the babies already had a tiny flower blossom on it. Tom said it can get bushy and it grows well.

PROGRAM:
This month's program was about thick-stemmed begonias and was given by Tom Keepin. He told us that thick-stems grow upright with long, bare stems no matter how hard we try to make them branch. They have false nodes. The babies usually come from the bottom. All of them have tiny white flowers. They can be propagated by stem cuttings. He suggested making the cut, then hardening it off before planting (much like we do with succulents).

He brought several nice specimens to show us and discussed each one of them. They are not cold-hardy and may be more tender than other begonias. They like to get somewhat dry before being watered and do not do well if kept wet. They come in all different kinds of leaves and different plant heights.

This was another very interesting program and was very informative.

We then had our name tag and raffle drawings with the following results:

Raffle
B. 'Lois Burke' - won by Diana Bukey
B. 'Lalomie' – won by Midge Gorman
B. 'Pink Shade' – won by Eddie Litchfield
Name Tag
B. 'Catalina' – won by Glenda Perry
B. 'Laguna' – won by Dehlia Mullins

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 by President Janet Carpenter.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Williams, Secretary

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

April	
2nd & 3rd	Pisces
7th & 8th	Taurus
11th, 12th & 13th	Cancer
20 & 21st	Scorpio
25th, 26th & 27th	Capricorn
29th & 30th	Pisces
May	
1st	Pisces
4th & 5th	Taurus
9th & 10th	Cancer
17th & 18th	Scorpio
22nd & 23rd	Capricorn
28th & 29th	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.

(The pruning, planting and transplant dates above are taken from the **Harris Farmer's Almanac** *for 2019.)*

WEATHER FORECAST FOR APRIL 2019

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 April.

Our temperatures will be near normal and precipitation will be near normal. Our temperatures should average from 59 degrees in the North to 67 degrees in the South. Our coolest April temperatures will be April 1st thru 3rd, 8th thru 10th, 16th thru19th, 22nd thru 26th and 30th. Our warmest April temperatures will be April 5th thru 7th, 12th thru 15th and 26th & 29th. There is the likely possibility of bands of showers and thunderstorms about5 April 1st, 7th thru 9th. 15th thru 18th, 21st thru 25th and 29th & 30th. Some severs storms are likely for some parts of the area plus isolated showers and thunderstorms at other times.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Happy Birthday wishes go out to our members born during this month of April. We hope your special is a truly special one.

Tom Anderson	April 28th
Irene Bragg	April 5th
Lucy Melara	April 2nd
Glenda Perry	April 19th
Jeff Stagg	April 25th
Faye Stansberry	April 23rd

"Take a few moments today to remember all the good things you've seen and done, ways you've grown things you've learned. Celebrate your memories and your dreams…everything that's made you the wonderful person your are"

photo by Paul Tsamtsis

Begonia turrialbae Burt-Utley

by Morris Mueller

Begonia *turrialbae* was discovered in Central America by Dr. Kathleen Burt-Utley, quite recently by begonia discovery standards. It is so new that it is not even included in the 1986 edition of ***Begoniaceae*** published by the Smithsonian. ***Begoniaceae*** is known as the "last word" on known begonia species.

Dr. Burt-Utley made a presentation at the 2003 Oklahoma City ABS Convention and showed slides of the plant in its habitat. It covered a sizeable portion of a steep hillside. At that time she verified it as being a new species and published it as B. *turrialbae*. When I had received my plant of it just a few years before, it still had her collection number on it.

B. *turrialbae* has proven to be a very easy-to-grow plant with the exception that it needs the higher humidity of a terrarium or greenhouse for optimum growth. The amount of light it receives changes its leaf color. Very high light will result in pale leaves with some brown in the markings. In low light the colors intensify and the leaves are marked with a dark vibrant green with lighter medium green areas.

It grows as a creeping, thin-stemmed rhizomatous plant and appears to have pustular foliage. The leaves are about two inches wide to about three inches long.

Propagation is quite easy by rhizome cuttings and may also be started from leaf cuttings, although I have not yet tried this method for this plant.

It seems tolerant of both warm and cool growing temperature. It has never bloomed for me, although other Branch members report the flowers to be white with a pale pink flush. Overall, it is a very easy plant to grow.

Astro's March 2019 Meeting
"Thick-stemmed Begonias"

Bill Claybaugh telling about his B. willichiana.

Thick-stemmed begonias

B. wallichiana with seedlings.

Dehlia Mullins showing Thick-stemmed begonia to members.

Tom Keepin discussing Thick-stemmed begonias.

Cheryl Lenert talking about the Seed Fund.

Bill Claybough talking about
B. williciana with Cheryl Lenert.

Dehlia Mullins showing
Thick-stemmed begonias.

Glenda Perry with Name Tag
plant B. ‘Catalina’.

Dahlia Mullins with Name Tag
plant B. “Laguna’

Diana Bukey with Raffle
plant B. ‘Lois Burke’

Midge Gorman with Raffle
plant B ‘Lalomie’