

BEGONIA CHATTER



<p>Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>713 686-8539 713-299-2661</i></p>	<p><i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: May 3, 2020 TIME: Meeting PLACE: Canceled PROGRAM:</p>
<p>MAY 2020 ISSUE</p>	<p>www.begoniahouston.org</p>

MAY MEETING CANCELED

The May 3, 2020 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society has been canceled again this month due to the Coronavirus-19 still being active in the Houston area. Inquiries have been made and West Gray Multi-Service Center is still closed. We were told that even the swimming pool is closed at this time.

There is no information as to when it may open again. We are hoping things will be better and we will be able to have our Sunday, June 7, 2020 meeting.

Until then please keep yourself safe and healthy. Your begonias and their companion plants will certainly enjoy the extra attention you are still able to lavish upon them.

Perhaps you might like to take a photograph or two showing us how wonderful your begonias are doing and we can have a photo gallery for the June Begonia Chatter. If you send photographs please properly identify the plant or plants you have photographed.

Until we meet together again,
Happy Growing!



Begonia 'Gilsoni'
 from *Begonia Portraits* by Alice M Clark

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Happy Birthday wishes to all our members born in May. We hope your special day is truly a special one.

Sue Botts	May 5 th
Janet Carpenter	May 2 nd
Midge Gorman	May 8 th
Darlene Morris	May 27 th

“Take a few moments to remember all the good things you’ve seen and done, ways you’ve grown and things you’ve learned. Celebrate your memories and your dreams....everything that has made you the wonderful person you are today.”

“Happy Birthday”

WEATHER FORECAST FOR MAY 2020

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

Our temperatures will be slightly above normal and precipitation will be near normal. Our average temperatures should range from 69 degrees in the North to 76 degrees in the South. Our coolest May temperatures will be May 5th through 7th, 16th through 18th, 24th through 26th and 29th thru 31st. Our warmest May temperatures for May will be May 2nd through 4th, 9th through 14th, 20th through 22nd and 28th. There will be widely scattered showers and thunderstorms most likely about May 4th & 5th, 15th through 17th, 23rd through 25th, and 28th thru 30th. Severe storms are possible on May 4th, 15th, and 23rd.

(The weather Forecast above is taken from the Harris Farmer’s Almanac for 2020)

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

May

7 th & 8 th	Scorpio
11 th & 12 th	Capricorn
15 th , 16 th & 17 th	Pisces
20 th , 21 st & 22 nd	Taurus
25 th , 26 th & 27 th	Cancer

June

3 rd & 4 th	Scorpio
7 th & 8 th	Capricorn
12 th & 13 th	Pisces
17 th & 18 th	Taurus
22 nd & 23 rd	Cancer
30 th	Scorpio

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

(The pruning, planting and transplanting dates above are taken from the Harris Farmer’s Almanac for 2020)



Begonia lobulata from
Begonia Portraits by Alice M. Clark



'DRAGON WING' BEGONIA STORY

BY LYNNE KNOSHER, PAN AMERICAN SEED

A question was raised in the July/August Issue of the Begonian as to the origin of 'Dragon Win' Begonia. I was involved in the resurrection of the hybrid and wanted to pass on the history of how it all began.

The original 'Dragon wing' hybrid was created in the late seventies at the Pan American research station then in Florida. An unnamed wild species acquired by **Bruce Christensen** seed production manager and a breed for Pan American Seed was crossed with a semperflorens selection to produce a unique, vigorous, large-flowered hybrid later named 'Dragon Wing Red'. 'Dragon Wing' did not fit the ideal compact type of the time, so after initial trialing production was stopped.

There were still a few growers that wanted all the characteristics that 'Dragon Wing' offered, so they began to take cuttings from the plants they had

and trialed and named the cutting variety 'Sunbrite'.

In the early 1990s, a Wisconsin grower asked if Pan American seed would revisit producing 'Dragon Wing' as a seed product as 'Sunbrite' could not be produced in sufficient quantities to satisfy his market.

Parent line material was grown out and reselected and 'Dragon Wing' was reborn.

Because of the popularity of the red, a pink was added later.

Both have proven to be showy and durable bedding and container plants.

*(This article was taken from **The Begonian**, Volume 73 November/December 2006 Issue Page 215*



photo by Marvin Vipond

Begonia 'Looking Glass'

by Joan Coulat

Begonia 'Looking Glass' is an extremely distinctive cane-like hybrid created by noted hybridizer and Branch member, Patrick Worley. It has been around for approximately 15 years and was awarded the Best New Introduction at a national convention and show.

It is classified as a Superba. Its leaves can measure nearly a foot by 7" or 8". The obverse of the leaves is solid silver only broken by dark green bands following the veins. The reverse is a rich oxblood-red. The flowers are a medium pink. It is a shy bloomer and is really grown for its attractive and eye-catching foliage. A well-grown specimen can easily reach six feet in height.

There is no doubt that this plant is a hybrid that was planned. It was bred specifically to create a silver-leaved cane that consistently produced those silver leaves. All too often a plant with a silver pattern to its leaves only shows it in juvenile leaves or on leaves that grow under certain temperature or light conditions.

Classic selective breeding techniques used two unnamed canes with complex

backgrounds created by Worley. He used other plants with the potential to produce silver-leaved progeny to make these two parents, including the attractive, but somewhat difficult B. 'Orpha C. Fox.' Careful selection and back-crossing resulted in a generation that contained four with nearly solid silver leaves. Only one of those was selected and named B. 'Looking Glass.'

Culture is basically the same as for other canes. The soil mix should be loose and well-draining. Fertilizing should be done according to package directions during the growing season.

If grown in conditions that become cool as the days grow short, the plant will tend toward dormancy as reflected in some degree of leaf drop. Stop fertilizing and reduce watering. If it is being grown in the house or a heated green house, this dormancy will be barely noticed. This plant also experiences attacks of powdery mildew, particularly toward the end of the summer and early fall. Preventative spraying with a product like Bayleton works wonders. Mealy bugs tend to like this plant a little more than others, so vigilance and an effective pest management program are recommended if mealy bugs are spotted.

