

# BEGONIA CHATTER



<b>Astro Branch</b> American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i>	<b>Next Meeting:</b> <b>DATE:</b> January 3, 2021 <b>TIME:</b> <b>PLACE:</b> CANCELED <b>PROGRAM:</b>
<b>JANUARY 2021 ISSUE</b>	<b><a href="http://www.begoniahouston.org">www.begoniahouston.org</a></b>

## MEETING CANCELED

The January 3, 2021 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society has been canceled. On December 26th Tom Keepin sent an email to Charles French PRD of the West Gray Multi-Service Center inquiring the status of the West Gray Multi-Service Center for groups to hold meetings there. Mr. French replied that the facility remains closed. "The Mayor will not open city facilities until the positivity rate is under 5% and remains under 5 % for an extended time." This has been the metric so far. It was decided by the executive board that the meeting will be canceled for January and arrangements will be made to have our regular February meeting on Sunday, February 7, 2021, in another location if West Gray is still unavailable.

We are sorry to have disappointed members this month by not having a meeting. Details for the February 7, 2021 meeting will be published closer to the meeting date.

We look forward to seeing everyone in February.

Until then...Happy Growing!



Begonia luxurians from  
*Begonia Portraits* by Alice M. Clark

## PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

### January 2021

8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup>	Scorpio
12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup>	Capricorn
16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup>	Pisces
21 <sup>st</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Taurus
27 <sup>th</sup> & 28 <sup>th</sup>	Cancer

### February

4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup>	Scorpio
8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup>	Capricorn
13 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup>	Pisces
17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup>	Taurus
22 <sup>nd</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup>	Cancer

\*\*\*\***Planting and Transplanting** are best done in Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces with Cancer being the best.

\*\*\*\***Best Pruning** for quick growth is first in Taurus and then in Capricorn.

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## WEATHER FORECAST FOR JANUARY 2021

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 for January.

Our temperatures will be slightly below normal and our precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our average temperature should average from 33 degrees in the North to 47 degrees in the South. Our coolest temperatures for January will be January 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> thru 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> thru 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> thru 31<sup>st</sup>. Our warmest January temperatures will be January 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup>. The best chance for mainly rain in the South and rain freezing rain and snow in the North will on or about January 4<sup>th</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> thru 13<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> thru 21<sup>st</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> thru 28<sup>th</sup>. There will be spotty rain showers at other times; also severe weather may be possible near the Gulf. It will also be windy.

## CHRISTMAS PICNIC IN THE PARK

The year was coming to a close and we, the Astro Branch had not been able to have a meeting or visit with our begonia friends since the first Sunday in February. The year 2020 just couldn't go out like this. Members Janet Carpenter and Kathleen Murphy are members of a garden club that had a couple of meetings in Matzke Park that was near their homes. Their garden club also maintains 'the Butterfly Garden' there. One phone call to Janet was all it took to get things going. Janet got in touch with park officials to make sure

we could have a Christmas Picnic there. The officials agreed and all was set into motion. The date of Sunday, December 6, 2020, was set. There was to be no formal meeting...members would bring a picnic lunch and drinks for themselves and a plant no larger than a 6-inch pot to use as raffle plants. December 6<sup>th</sup> came as a beautiful sunny day and 13 members showed up at Matzke Park with a plant and lunch in hand. The only business conducted was to have members sign Thinking of You cards for some members unable to be with us due to health problems. The plants brought for the drawing were very nice including 2 beautiful baskets (6") of *B. lorenthoides* donated by our friend Mike Lowery owner of Another Place In Time. There was also a very nice showing of homemade cookies that added a nice touch to the occasion. The event ended early about 3 P.M. due to a very strong & chilly wind that kept blowing things off the tables and the raffle tickets out of the basket.

Other than the wind it was a beautiful day and it was wonderful to see and chat with our begonia friends. Everyone present enjoyed themselves so much not one of us remembered to take pictures to share with members unable to attend. We are *soooo* sorry and we did miss you.



B. juliana, oil on board by Paul Harwood, courtesy of Brooklyn Botanic Garden

## UPDATE ON MEMBER JOHNNY WILLIAMS

Johnny is in a skilled nursing home near their home in Missouri City. In a recent conversation via telephone with Donna...Donna said that Johnny is improving ever so slowly but improving none the less. Small steps do add up in the long run. Donna is holding up well and visits Johnny as the nursing home allows.

Donna sends her love and many heartfelt thanks for the cards and notes from everyone. Donna takes them to Johnny on her visits and he is so very happy to get them.

So let's keep them going to him...he still has a very long road ahead of him and also to Donna. Donna is holding up well and looking forward to the day she can take Johnny home.

Donna said she is home on Sundays and can receive short phone calls if members would like to chat with her. Donna's telephone number is 281-438-1483. A fun email would also brighten her day. Her email address is:  
[williams.johnny@att.net](mailto:williams.johnny@att.net).

Prayers are always welcome and they do work!

## NEW CULTIVAR

### Begonia 'Haruna' Registration 994

B. 'Barbara Hamilton' x B. 'Hanagasumi'

This cane-like cultivar has a stem with a mature height of 1.5 m. Its leaves have small silver dots on olive green with a red reverse. Leaf margin is undulate. Leaves have 9 to 10 main veins with a petiole of 2 to 3 cm that is reddish yellow green. Stipules are 2.5 cm long. Flowers are bicolor with white and pink in a compound cyme. Male flowers have 4 tepals of 0.8 cm. This cultivar is ever blooming.

This plant resembles B. 'Hanagasumi' but this one has white dots on the surface of its leaves. It is compact, easy to grow and profuse in bloom.

This cultivar has been inspected and recommended for registration by Naruhito Hoshino, 480-1 Nehara, Fujinomiya-shi Shizuokaken 418-0101 Japan. It was developed and described by Keiko Sano, 480-1 Nehara Fujinomiya-shi, Shizuokaken 418-0101. It is available from Fuji Kokusai Kaen at 480-1 Nehara, Fujinomiya-shi, Shizuokaken 418-0101 Japan.

It was registered on January 10, 2006



Begonia 'Haruna'



photo by Julie Vanderwilt

## *Begonia mannii* Hooker f.

by Morris Mueller

*Begonia mannii* was described by J D Hooker in 1864. It was discovered in 1862 by Gustav Mann on the peak of the island of Bioko (Fernando Po) in the Indian Ocean. Its range is from Guinea to Gabon in Africa.

It is contained in the section Tetraphila. The Thompsons, in their **BEGONIAS: The Complete Reference Guide** classify it as a trailing scandent, species. They also list it as 'For the Collector' although I think any grower with some experience can have success with it.

*B. mannii*, like many others included in Section Tetraphila, is a trailing plant of which about 45 species are included. Some of the cultivated species are *B. eminii*, *B. kisuluana*, *B. komoensis*, *B. loranthoides*, *B. molleri* and *B. polygonoides*, all of which I have grown along with *B. mannii*.

This plant is epiphytic, with fleshy smooth leaves on short petioles and fairly close

internodes. It blooms fairly readily with red or dark pink flowers close to the stem. Unlike most begonias where the seed pod has wings and when ripe contains dry, round loose seeds, the seed pod for *B. mannii* is elongated without wings and has seeds contained in a pulp when ripe.

Its natural range gives strong clues as to its care. While it prefers humidity, it is not a terrarium plant. Culturally, *B. mannii* must be grown as a hanging plant in semi-shade. It grows best in a moss-lined basket, but I have also grown it in a plastic container. Water and fertilize regularly, but water less often in plastic as it likes to dry out somewhat between waterings. It grows well in my standard loose potting mix. Another member in the Branch has success growing it in New Zealand sphagnum moss that is dredged while wet in his soilless mix.

There are no listed hybrids using *B. mannii*. This plant or others from this Section are a great way for a moderately experienced grower to start growing begonias of a more unusual and more challenging nature.

