

BEGONIA CHATTER



<p>Astro Branch American Begonia Society <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i></p>	<p><i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: June 6, 2021 TIME: 2:00 PM PLACE: Plants For All Seasons PROGRAM: Begonias From Seed</p>
<p>June 2021 Issue</p>	<p>www.begoniahouston.org</p>

BEGONIAS FROM SEED

The June 6, 2021 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at **Plants For All Seasons**, located at **21328 State Highway 249** (on the feeder road). Their telephone number is **281-376-1646**. We have the meeting room from 12:00 to 4:00 P.M. The meeting will start promptly at 2:00 P.M. All are welcome to come early to help set-up for the meeting or to shop for some more beautiful plants for your home or garden.

Our Program this meeting is “**Begonias From Seed**” presented by Cheryl Lenert. Cheryl will tell you all about growing from seed and also demonstrate how to sow your begonia seeds for best results. We will have a limited amount of seeds and supplies for anyone that would like to try growing begonias from seed. You will need to supply a clear plastic container such as the container your slice of cake came in from the grocery store. The container can be completely clear or have a black bottom if that’s all that is available from the bakery department at your

grocery store. If you have one please bring your misting bottle filled with distilled or spring water. Growing begonias from seed is very exciting. First, you sow the seed (like dust). Then you place them under lights or on a windowsill and wait for the magic to begin. It’s very exciting when you see the first little plant or two emerge after sowing the seed. Then to watch it/them grow into a mature plant(s) is fun to watch and the many changes they go through.

Our refreshment hostesses for this meeting are **Gloria Hunter** and **Gail Warren**. Members are requested to bring their liquid refreshments to quench their thirst during the meeting.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the meeting. Please bring your mask. Even though the mask order has been lifted some places still require they be worn. **Oh! Don’t forget your name tag.**

Until Then Happy Growing!



photo by Julie Vanderwilt

Begonia crassicaulis LINDL

by Paul Tsamtsis

B. crassicaulis was first published by John Lindley in 1842. It is native to Central America, more specifically Guatemala. It is in the Section *Gireoudia*.

Its habit of growth would make it a thick-stem, most likely non-ramified. I say 'most likely' because juvenile plants will grow for a year or two without showing any branching. But very mature plants can occasionally branch.

It exhibits a couple interesting growth habits. The first is that the stems develop what really looks like bark. Most begonias will retain the pattern of where the leaves attached to the stems. In this plant it is very difficult to discern where those attachments were.

The second is much more spectacular. It is the only begonia that I know of that defoliates in the short light days of winter and as spring approaches blooms profusely from the leafless stems. It is quite a sight. The flowers are white and in enough light may show some traces of pink. If the plant is grown under lights this defoliation

may not take place and it will bloom with the foliage present.

The only hybrid done with it that is in the ABS database is *B. 'Bayberry Lane'* hybridized by Joy Porter and released in 1987. The cross as shown in the database was *B. U067 (B. bakeri) X B. crassicaulis*. She classified the hybrid as rhizomatous. It was registered with the ABS as #946.

Culture is quite easy. The important thing is not to overwater it. If the stem becomes long enough, it can tip over so staking is a consideration. It is not particularly susceptible to any pests.

Morris Mueller reports that it does not start from leaves. The only propagation success he has had is in rooting tip cuttings. Side branches readily grow below the cuts. This is unlike *B. kenworthyae* which slowly dies back along the stem if a tip cutting is taken.

For further information *the Begonian* has an article titled *Begonia crassicaulis: fantasy or fact* in the January-February 1985 issue written by Thelma O'Reilly.



Joan Coulat - Sacramento Branch, American Begonia Society, August 2006