

# BEGONIA CHATTER



<b>Astro Branch</b> <b>American Begonia Society</b> <i>4513 Randwick Drive</i> <i>Houston, Texas 77092-8343</i> <i>(713) 686-8539</i>	<b>Next Meeting:</b> <b>DATE:</b> January 9, 2022 <b>TIME:</b> 2:00 P.M. <b>PLACE:</b> Plants For All Seasons <b>PROGRAM:</b> Pruning For Show
<b>January 2022 Issue</b>	<b><a href="http://www.begoniahouston.org">www.begoniahouston.org</a></b>

## PRUNING FOR SHOW

The January 9, 2021 meeting of the Astro Branch 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 P. M. to 4:00 P. M. All are welcome to come early to help set up for the meeting or shop for more beautiful plants for your home or garden.

Our program this month is Pruning For Show presented by Tom Keepin and a cast of extras that have entered begonias in National or Southwest Region Shows.

Tom will demonstrate how to get your plant(s) ready to enter in a judged show or to just look beautiful in your garden.

Members are requested to bring a begonia that they can work on for practice along with pruners and a very soft paintbrush (for cleaning leaves). An old make-up brush will work just fine. We don't want the bristles to be too stiff because they will damage the leaves.

Members are invited to bring a plant or plant-related item for the Door Prize Table. We will also have our usual Raffle drawing

We are looking forward to seeing you at the meeting.



## Pruning, Planting and Transplanting

### January

1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Capricorn
6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup>	Pisces
11 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup>	Taurus
16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup>	Cancer
26 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> & 28 <sup>th</sup>	Scorpio
30 & 31 <sup>st</sup>	Capricorn

### February

3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	Pisces
7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup>	Taurus
12 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup>	Cancer
22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Scorpio
26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup>	Capricorn

\*\*\*\***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.

*(This "Pruning, Planting and Transplanting Guide" was taken from the **Harris Farmer's Almanac 2022***



B. 'Christmas Curl'



B. Holiday  
'New Years Eve'

## Weather Forecast For January 2022

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

Our temperatures will be slightly below normal and precipitation will be slightly above normal. Our average temperatures should range from 33 degrees in the North to 48 degrees in the South.

Our coolest January temperatures will be January 1<sup>st</sup> thru 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> thru 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> thru 16<sup>th</sup>, and 23<sup>rd</sup> thru 26<sup>th</sup>.

Our warmest January temperatures will be January 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> thru 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> thru 31<sup>st</sup>.

The greatest chance for rain in the south end snow and rain in the North is about January 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> thru 15<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> thru 27<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>.

A severe storm or two can be expected in the South and it will be windy at times.

*(This weather forecast for the month of January was taken from the **Harris Farmer's Almanac 2022***



photo by Charles Henthorne

## Begonia U012

by Charles Henthorne  
Plano, Texas

Over the years my wife Leora and I have grown many unusual and rare begonias. We, like others in the begonia world, have our favorites. One of our all time favorites is B. U012. Leora obtained this begonia over 10 years ago, and we have grown it in our terrarium environment ever since. At times it has been a challenge, as, like all other begonias it has its own growing requirements.

These include such things as lighting, humidity, moisture, and temperature. Until we found the right conditions, it was a struggle to keep it alive and thriving. As a matter of fact, at some times, it was just a small leaf that held on.

Now, for the last several months, we have had success growing this. Indeed, we have even been able to take cuttings and to pass them to others to try. Those that we have passed it along to have, like us, encountered difficulties in getting it to survive. However we are now passing along the information we have discovered in hopes of allowing others to also have success with this great and colorful plant.

We have found that it likes very high humidity. We have it in a very tightly sealed container, which allows it to be in 100 percent humidity. We very rarely open the container and when we do, it is just to check the moisture content of the growing medium. There is constant condensation on the glass and we do not worry about it, as the plant is thriving.

The added moisture content of the condensation does not seem to affect the leaves, and the dampness also has no visual effect on the stems. Contrary to some problems with other begonias in this high percentage of moisture, this begonia is multiplying. We also keep it on the bottom shelf

of our growing racks, where the temperature is approximately 10 degrees lower than on the higher shelves. Our lighting is artificial warm fluorescent and we keep the lights on for about 8 hours a day.

Until 2003, there were around 12 related species endemic to New Guinea, which were put into the separate genus of *Symbegonia*. For scientific reasons, taxonomists decided to take those dozen plants and move them into the genus *Begonia* under a new section named *Symbegonia*.

Mark Tebbitt in his book, *Begonias Cultivation, Identification, and Natural History*, discusses these in some detail. He also states that "another 12 species remain undescribed, one of which is in cultivation." This one is probably our U012, as he mentions on page 222 of his book. We have yet to see it flower. It has green leaves with pink margins. Our photo does not do justice to the beauty of this coloration.

The plants in this section all require greenhouse or terrarium care and are a big challenge to grow. No members of the section *Symbegonia* have ever been common in cultivation, and are rarely found or even seen in other than specialist collections. We do not advise the amateur, or even the more experienced grower, to try this one, if they could even find it available. It is really one of the most difficult plants either of us have grown. It does not take well to transplanting or the taking of large numbers of cuttings at the same time.

Now that we have gained some expertise on its growing habits, we hope to be able to continue with our successful cultivation of this beautiful and challenging plant.





photo by Julie Vanderwilt

## *Begonia deliciosa* Linden

by Paul Tsamtsis

*B. deliciosa* was published in 1881 by Jean Linden after having been discovered on the island of Borneo.

*B. deliciosa* is horticulturally classified by Ed and Millie Thompson in their book ***BEGONIAS: The Complete Reference Guide*** as rhizomatous, jointed at or below the soil with erect stems. It blooms with light pink fragrant flowers in the spring. It is in the Section *Platycentrum* along with more familiar begonias like *B. rex*, *B. hatacoa*, and *B. diadema*.

The growth characteristic of this plant makes it a little confusing, particularly to new growers. Just when one thinks that they have mastered the difference between the major growing groups like canes (they grow on upright stems and look like a bush or shrub) and rhizomatous (they grow on stems that crawl along the surface of the soil and have leaves along those stems, and look like a mound of leaves on the ground), plants from this group appear.

At first glance, they look like shrubby plants because they have upright stems and look like a bush. Closer examination reveals that

those upright stems shoot up from a rhizome that creeps along the surface of the soil. Overall, they do resemble rhizomatous plants more than canes. Their leaf shape and color and flowering patterns place them clearly with rhizomatous group

One insect pest that should be guarded against for *B. deliciosa* and related plants including their hybrids is the mealy bug. Certain begonia groups seem to attract them more than others. Semi-tuberous types from South Africa and their hybrids are a similar group. Rubbing alcohol as a spray or on a Q-tip works wonders for the occasional pest. A good systemic should be used for a major infestation.

Here in Sacramento begonias in this group tend to be hardy for use as landscape plants. As fall approaches the upright stems tend to start falling apart at the joints until only the rhizomes are left. When the days lengthen in spring and the temperatures rise, they send up new stems for another season of growth. Only for hard freezes should some sort of mulch be provided for protection.

This group is now the subject of extensive hybridization by growers like Brad Thompson of Southern California and Freda Holley of Louisiana.



# ASTRO BRANCH'S



## Annual Christmas Gift Exchange 2021



Aaron Stone



Rachel Davidson



Thomas Keepin



Cheryl Lenert



Mel Babb



Janet Carpenter



Mike Bragg



Tony Robert



Kathleen Murphy



Gloria Hunter



Jennifer Francois