

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: February 6, 2022 TIME: 2:00 P.M. PLACE: Plants For All Seasons PROGRAM: Contained Atmospheres</p>
<p>February 2022 Issue</p>	<p>www.begoniahouston.org</p>

CONTAINED ATMOSPHERES PRESENTED BY LEORA FUENTES

The February 6, 2022 meeting of the Astro Branch of the American Begonia Society will be held at Plants For All Seasons located at 21328 State Highway 249, Houston, TX, Their telephone number is **281-376-1646**. Our Refreshment Host and Hostesses for this meeting will be **Irene Bragg, Malcolm McCorquodale, and Gloria Hunter**.

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 will be **“Contained Atmospheres Presented by Leora Fuentes”**. Leora grows the most beautiful begonias in contained atmospheres imaginable. Leora has been growing in contained atmospheres for many years in Plano, Texas. Growing begonias out of doors in Plano is all but impossible, only a few can tolerate the conditions but most can't. Leora

turned to growing them indoors in containers and became a master. If you have ever been to a begonia convention you have had the pleasure of seeing the contained atmospheres that Leora has entered. Leora has won countless blue ribbons and awards for her entries. Leora will be imparting her knowledge and techniques to us and will also have some plants propagated from her collection for sale at the meeting. Please do your best to attend the meeting and hear and see the how-to's from a real expert and walk away with a plant or two you can't purchase anywhere else.

All you need to bring to the meeting is your checkbook and a notepad and pen/pencil to take notes on how to grow an award-winning begonia in a contained atmosphere.

We will have our usual drawings and the Refreshment Host and Hostesses will have lots of tasty treats for you to enjoy.

We look forward to seeing you there!

PRUNING, PLANTING AND TRANSPLANTING

February

3rd & 4th

7th, 8th & 9th

12th, 13th & 14th

22nd & 23rd

26th & 27th

Pisces

Taurus

Cancer

Scorpio

Capricorn

March

1st & 2nd

7th & 8th

12th & 13th

21st & 22nd

25th & 26th

30th & 31st

Pisces

Taurus

Cancer

Scorpio

Capricorn

Pisces

******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. 'Soli-mulata'



B. 'Abdullahpieei'

Weather Forecast For February 2022

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

Our temperatures will be near normal and our precipitation will be above normal. Our average temperatures should range from 39 degrees in the North to 52 degrees in the South.

Our coolest February temperatures will be February 2nd thru 4th, 8th thru 11th, 17th thru 19th, and 27th thru 28th.

Our warmest February temperatures will be February 1st, 6th thru 7th, 13th thru 15th, and 21st thru 26th.

There will be thunderstorms and periods of rain in the south and rain and snow in the north most likely about February 2 & 3rd, 7th thru 9th, 16th thru 18th, and 26th thru 28th. There will be severe storms likely over the South. Isolated showers can pop up at any time and it will be windy with each storm.

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



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.



Astro Branch's January 2022 Meeting



Begonia cuttings from pruning demonstration.



Malcolm McCorquodale won this un-named drawing plant.



Janet Carpenter with begonia she won.



Mike Bragg won B. 'Flamingo Queen'



Begonias ready for pruning demonstration.



B. 'Louis Burke' after a pruning demonstration.