

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

CONTAINED ATMOSPHERES PRESENTED BY LEORA FUENTES

The March 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. For many years, Leora has been growing in contained atmospheres 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

March

1 st & 2 nd	Pisces
7 th & 8 th	Taurus
12 th & 13 th	Cancer
21 st & 22 nd	Scorpio
25 th & 26 th	Capricorn
30 th & 31 st	Pisces

April

3 rd & 4 th	Taurus
8 th & 9 th	Cancer
17 th & 18 th	Scorpio
21 st , 22 nd & 23	Capricorn
27 th & 28 th	Pisces
30 th	Taurus



B. 'Herciflia'

******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. Curly Firebush'

Weather Forecast For March 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 March. Our temperatures will be near normal and our precipitation will be above normal. Our average temperatures should range from 47 degrees in the North to 58 degrees in the South.

Our coolest March temperatures will be March. 1st & 2nd, 6th thru 9th, 13th thru 16th.

Our warmest March temperatures will be March 4th & 5th, 11th, 18th, and 23rd thru 27th

There is a good chance for scattered thunderstorms and a few areas of steady rain about March 5th thru 7th, 12th thru 15th, 18th thru 20th, and 27th thru 29th. There is a good chance for scattered thunderstorms and a few areas of steady rain around March 5th thru 7th, 12th thru 15th, 18th thru 20th, and 27th thru 29th. There may be several severe storms on or about March 5 & 6th, 12th & 13th and 27th & 28th. Also a chance for spotty heavy rain.

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



photo by Julie Vanderwilt

Begonia kellermannii C. DC. by Morris Mueller

B. kellermannii was discovered in Southern Guatemala in 1809 by William Kellerman who was a fungi specialist at Ohio State University. The plant was described in 1919 by Casimir DeCandolle. It is listed under the Section Gireoudia along with about 65 other species from Mexico and Central America.

This begonia is classified as a shrub. It branches moderately and sends up new stems from the soil as well. The thick leaves and stems look as if they were cut from felt, as they are covered by short, wooly, silver-gray fuzz giving them a greenish gray color. Leaves are peltate (joined to the leaf near the center away from its edge, much like a water lily). The leaf margin is slightly wavy. The flowers are very pale pink, almost white and not very large. It has never flowered for me so I have no idea the time of year it blooms.

B. kellermannii is closely related to *B. kuhlmannii* and *B. peltata*. The differences with these two are that *B. kuhlmannii* is covered with brown hair and the leaves of

B. peltata are larger than *B. kellermannii*.

All three plants grow best when kept on the dry side as too much water causes rot. The planting mix should be light and fast draining. They are all hard to start from cuttings because of the rot problem. They can take more sun than most other begonias (I have found *B. peltata* for sale in a cactus nursery!). Higher light increases the density of the fuzzy hairs. This fuzz is easily brushed off revealing a smooth green leaf underneath. It also withstands more cold than many other begonias for me.

There have been quite a few hybrids using *B. kellermannii*. It was used nine times as pollen parent and six times as seed parent. Most of these hybrids are not easily found, if they still exist at all. *B. 'Mish'* by Rudy Ziesenhenné is still available. It is registered with the ABS as #444. *B. 'Notre Dame'* is a hybrid of Leslie Woodriff.

The Thompsons in their book **BEGONIAS: The Complete Reference Guide** list it as For the Collector. I have found it easy to grow (if kept dry).



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

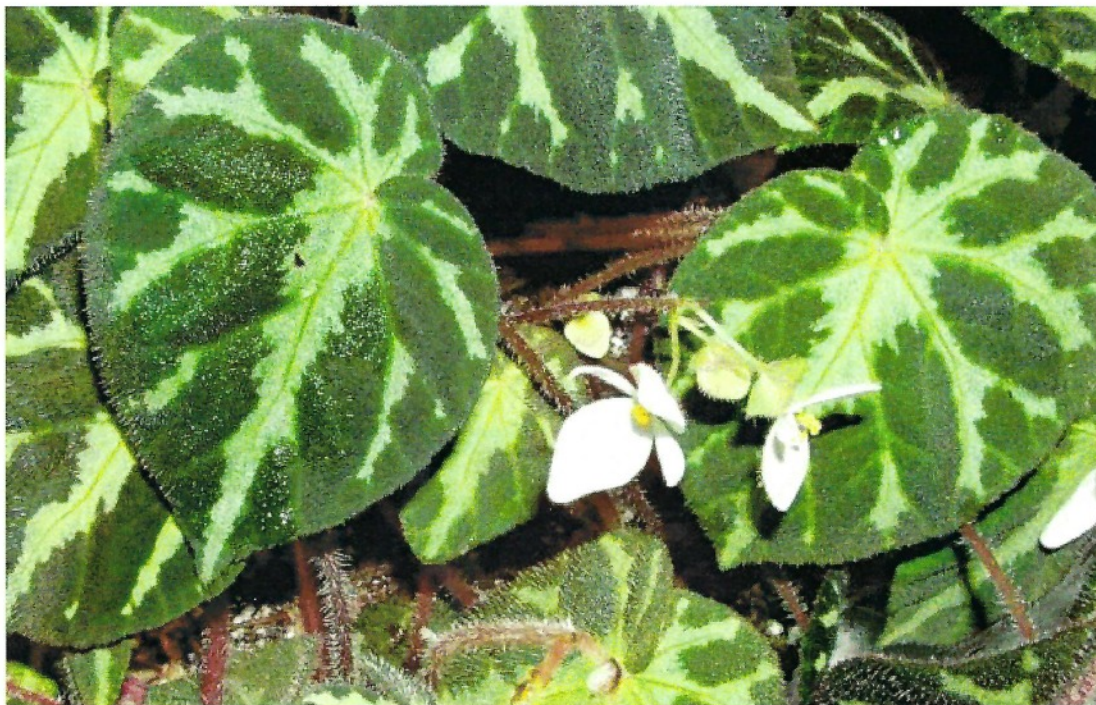


photo by Paul Tsamtsis

Begonia turrialbae Burt-Utley by Morris Mueller

Begonia turrialbae was discovered in Central America by Dr. Kathleen Burt-Utley, quite recently by begonia discovery standards. It is so new that it is not even included in the 1986 edition of *Begoniaceae* published by the Smithsonian. *Begoniaceae* is known as the "last word" on known begonia species.

Dr. Burt-Utley made a presentation at the 2003 Oklahoma City ABS Convention and showed slides of the plant in its habitat. It covered a sizeable portion of a steep hillside. At that time she verified it as being a new species and published it as *B. turrialbae*. When I had received my plant of it just a few years before, it still had her collection number on it.

B. turrialbae has proven to be a very easy-to-grow plant with the exception

that it needs the higher humidity of a terrarium or greenhouse for optimum growth. The amount of light it receives changes its leaf color. Very high light will result in pale leaves with some brown in the markings. In low light the colors intensify and the leaves are marked with a dark vibrant green with lighter medium green areas.

It grows as a creeping, thin-stemmed rhizomatous plant and appears to have pustular foliage. The leaves are about two inches wide to about three inches long.

Propagation is quite easy by rhizome cuttings and may also be started from leaf cuttings, although I have not yet tried this method for this plant.

It seems tolerant of both warm and cool growing temperature. It has never bloomed for me, although other Branch members report the flowers to be white with a pale pink flush. Overall, it is a very easy plant to grow.



Joan Coulat - Sacramento Branch, American Begonia Society, June 2005