

# BEGONIA CHATTER



Astro Branch American Begonia Society 4513 Randwick Drive Houston, Texas 77092-8343 (713) 686-8539	<i>Next Meeting:</i> DATE: December 4, 2022 TIME: 2:00 P.M. PLACE: Plants for All Seasons, 21328 State Hwy 249 PROGRAM: Annual Christmas Party
December 2022 Issue	<a href="http://www.begoniahouston.org">www.begoniahouston.org</a>

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The December 4, 2022, Astro reunion will be a festive occasion! We will be having our Annual Christmas Party, in lieu of an official meeting, at Plants for All Seasons, located at 21328 State Hwy 249, Houston, Texas.

All are welcome to come as early as 12:00 pm to help set up. Some of you may have received a text from Mel Babb about contributing to the feast, but if you didn't and haven't signed up, please contact her at 281-650-6669 (cell). **Note:** please bring your own drink or consider bringing beverages for the group (including ice), as bottled water will not be provided.

**Gift exchange** (the fun part!): For the gift exchange, a potted begonia or plant or plant-related item is encouraged. Tickets will be given for your contribution(s). Wrap your gift if possible, for maximum fun, but just remember, when your ticket number is called, **no shaking the gifts!** Ha!



## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings my friends, I am looking forward to kicking off the holidays with our group. Our program in November was presented by our own lovely Cheryl Lenert. As always, she put on a most interesting and educational presentation. We discussed all about different ways Begonias go about pollinating and how we can help that along. Some people were not all that familiar with distinguishing between the male and female plants. Yes, quite an interesting exchange on the sexual antics of the Begonia, wish you had been there.

As we normally do, this is the meeting at which we install the Officers you have chosen to lead Astro Begonia Society. It would be lovely to have a good attendance to share in our holiday meeting. Mel Babb is our food coordinator, so please let her know what you will be bringing so she can tell you if we already have that or really need something else. We will be holding this at our regular meeting place, Plants for All Seasons. Our members work really hard to make it a fun time for you. As usual, we will have our gift exchange. If you choose to participate, bring a wrapped gift for the table. Something plant or plant related, but not food related. Bring something that you would enjoy receiving. Our people can get really creative sometimes.

*Continued, next page...*

### *President's notes—continued*

I would love to see more members attend our meetings. It's a long drive for some, a 100-mile round trip for me, but its only once month. Some members drive even further than that. Trying to find something more central has been difficult, I have tried. We have a great program lined up for our January, you won't want to miss this one, I promise. We want you to show up and be counted, this is one of the best and nicest groups you will find. So, pack your duds, wrap your gift, bring a potluck item and join us for our final meeting of 2022. Cheers, Midge

#### **Notes of November 6, 2022 meeting:**

Members present : Midge Gorman, Tom Keepin, Chery I Lenert, Janet Carpenter, Gail Warren, Kathleen Murphy, Jennifer Francois, Gloria Hunter, Rosa Brennen, Brenda Andrews, Ann Stiefel, Tony & Donna Robert, Mike & Irene Bragg, Malcolm McCorquadale, Mell Babb, Diana Bukey

Our president Midge Gorman opened meeting at 2:00 p.m. She discussed our picnic in October, what great weather we had and the delicious food and again thanked Mel for opening her home to us.

Thanked our hostesses for the goodies today, Brenda Andres & Irene Bragg

#### Old Business

Tom was nominated and recognized for receiving the "2022 Charles Jaros Lifetime Achievement Award". This award was presented to Tom by Janet Carpenter during the picnic. Comment was made that Tom had been nominated by other Begonia members' not just Astro members.

Discussion led by Mel concerning Christmas celebration all agreed it would be a potluck and a plant based gift exchange. Reminder to all - no shaking, looking at gifts before exchange.

#### New Business

New slate of officers for 2023 was introduced:

Midge Gorman –President

Kathleen Murphy – Vice President

Ann Stiefel– Treasurer

Gloria Hunter – Secretary

### *Meeting notes—continued*

Nomination made, second, counted and motion was carried.

President Gorman appointed an Auditing Committee as follows:

Janet Carpenter, Kathleen Murphy & Announcements

Janet announced that there was a dedication of "Never Forget Garden" on Saturday, November 12th by the Northchester Garden Club.

The Membership List will be printed for members and distributed at the December meeting.

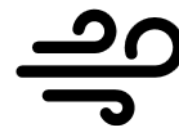
Meeting adjourned,  
Gloria Hunter – Secretary

Monthly program presented by Cheryl Lenert on "Hybridizing Begonia's."

---

## December 2022

1st Pisces  
5th & 6th Taurus  
10th & 11th Cancer  
19th & 20th Scorpio  
24th & 25th Capricorn  
28th & 29th Pisces



#### Region 7 (Houston Area)

Temperatures will be slightly below normal and precipitation will be slightly above normal.

Average temperatures will be slightly above normal. Average temperatures should range from 36 degrees in the north to 49 degrees in the south.

Our coolest temperatures will be December 1st thru 3rd, 7th thru 10th, 15th thru 19th, 21st thru 23rd and 28th thru 31st.

Our warmest temperatures will be 5th & 6th, 13th & 14th and 25th thru 27th .

There is a good chance for thunderstorms and periods of steady rain about December 1st, 6th thru 9th, 14th thru 17th, 20th thru 22nd and 27th thru 30. Locally heavy rain is possible. Snow is possible over the North most likely on December 20th thru 21st and 28th and 29th.

November's Program was by Cheryl Lenert, who presented a program on hybridizing begonias and collecting seed. See photos of her presentation, as well as raffled begonias, below:



## *Begonia tomentosa* Schott

By Cynthia Mueller



*Begonia tomentosa* var. *tomentosa* Schott is a smaller, easy-care, well-branching softly haired species that keeps its good looks for an extended period of time. One of its distinctive features is the ability to continue to be attractive as it grows and matures, with very little to no shedding of older leaves due to ageing out or in response to a dry period or other stressful circumstances. My original *B. tomentosa* began as a small seedling growing in a clear plastic hot-fudge-sundae container. At first I thought this to be an unattractive substitute for a colored plastic pot or even an opaque plastic drinking cup, but appreciated the ease of checking on the growth of new roots in the potting mix through the transparent sides of the container. The plant grew and branched quickly and eventually toppled off the lid of a 15 gallon terrarium several times. After these tumbles, not a single branch had broken – not even a leaf petiole was snapped. Water when the potting media has had a chance to become fairly dry. I used some small gravel in a mix of potting soil, perlite and a small amount of sand, to stabilize the begonia as it grew into a full-bodied smaller shrub. It was typically fertilized with a weak solution of fish emulsion. This is a plant that can thrive on the humidity and air conditioning found in today's homes, without the need for an enclosed atmosphere.

### ***Begonia tomentosa* Schott**

One of the main attractions of *B. tomentosa* are the many soft, woolly hairs that cover the plant. The rust-colored or softly reddish tint of the hairs on the backs of the leaves give this begonia extra distinction. My plant bloomed periodically in its kitchen-table situation under artificial lighting of approximately 12 hours per cycle, with short sprays of pinkish-white flowers. The male blooms have four petals, with two opposite petals being large and rounded and the others small and oblong. The female blossoms consist of two large, oval white petals. Propagation may be done through cuttings of leafy stems or by seed.

*Begonia tomentosa* var. *tomentosa* was first described by Heinrich Wilhelm Schott (1794-1865). It is one of the 125 species of the group *Pritzelia* documented from eastern Brazil. According to Mark Tebbits, at least 50 members of this group are now under



cultivation. It is closely related to *B. scharffiana* and *B. scharffii*. The only documented progeny of *B. tomentosa* (*B. 'Metosa'*) was grown by Rudolph Zeisenhenne in 1966 by crossing it with *B. metallica*.

There are several photographs and cultural notes on *B. tomentosa* by Marie Minter in the July 1949 issue of *The Begonian* (vol. XVI, p. 146).

[Cynthia Mueller is an Astro member who resides in College Station, Texas]