

African Begonias

Of the 500+ named begonia species from Africa, we know there are at least 120 in cultivation. Of these only about 20 are readily available to us, those at the Fort Worth Botanical Garden. We will review this shorter list and comment on the unusual and the rare.

First, African species are particularly unique in that they are the only begonias with yellow flowers. Examples that we all currently share include *B. microsperma*, *prismatocarpa*, and *quadrialata* ssp. *nimbaensis*. These are all rhizomatous and require very high humidity, hence are terrarium plants. Two very desirable cultivars resulting from these species are:

B. 'Buttercup', Kartuz MJ. , 1975, *prismatocarpa* X *microsperma*

B. 'Gold Coast', Seitner P. , 1975, *prismatocarpa* X *staudtii* var. *dispersipilosa*

There is some doubt as to the identity of *B. 'Gold Coast'*. Most literature information says this plant is very similar to *B. 'Buttercup'* in appearance, but I recently have been given a plant by a very reliable source, named *B' Gold Coast'*, that is considerable different, in all respects; leaf shape, flower color and others.

Another group of plants that I find of particular interest are the semi-tuberous plants that are all classified as *B. 'dregei'*. As they were discovered, they differed enough in leaf shape to have received several names, now synonyms. I currently grow *richardsiana*, a plain green leaf of average shape. I also grow *partita*, a variation that has long pointed leaves (all deeply incised) and green color with some white spots. A third variation that I have is a recognized cultivar, *B. dregei 'Glasgow'*. This plant has deep green leaves with strong white spots. I have recently read several papers written by Dr. Tracy McClellan in which she has found more than 39 populations of *B. dregei* in southeastern Africa, each having uniquely different leaf shapes. How's that for natural diversity!

Another plant I grow that is particularly interesting is *B. longipetiolata*. This plant has come to me under three different names, i.e. *B. crassipes*, *gracilipetiolata* and even *squamulosa*. The plant resembles *B. lanceolata* in appearance, but has long rhizomes to which the lanceolate leaves are attached with long petioles (hence the name). I find this plant easy to grow and easy to propagate from rooted leaves.

African species currently at Fort Worth Botanical Gardens.

Notes:

1. Shown in order: name, author, date of name.
2. Synonyms or cultivar names are shown indented.

ciliobracteata , Warburg , 1895
----- raynaliorum* , Wilczek , 1969
dregei var. dregei * , Otto & Dietrich , 1836
----- richardsiana * , Moore T. , 1871
----- dregei 'Glasgow'* , --- , ---
----- dregei 'Partita'* , --- , ---
----- partita * , Imscher , 1961
----- dregei 'Suffruticosa' , --- , ---
----- suffruticosa * , Meisner , 1841
ebolowensis * , Engler , 1921
emini * , Warburg , 1894
johnstonii forma johnstonii* , Oliver ex Hooker JD. , 1866
komoensis * , Imscher , 1921
longipetiolata* , Gilg , 1904
----- crassipes* , Gilg ex Engler , 1921
----- gracilipetiolata, De Wilderman , 1908
loranthoides * , Hooker JD. , 1871
loranthoides ssp.rhopalocarpa* , (Warburg) de Wilde JJ. , 1979
----- rhopalocarpa , Warburg , 1895
macrocarpa * , Warburg , 1895
microsperma * , Warburg , 1895
molleri * , (de Candolle C.) Warburg , 1894
natalensis * , Hooker WJ. , 1855
polygonoides * , Hooker JD. , 1871
prismatocarpa * , Sosef M. , 1994
----- prismatocarpa 'Variegation' , --- , ---
----- 'Variegation' , , ---
quadrialata var quadrialata* , Sosef M. , 1994
quadrialata ssp. nimbaensis* , Sosef M. , 1994
----- U089 , Imscher E. , 1984
scapigera ssp. scapigera* , Sosef M. , 1994
subscutata * , de Wilderman , 1908
U189 * , J.D. 1575 , ~1985

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