

VICTORIAN BEGONIA SOCIETY Inc

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No Meeting in November

Because of the on-going coronavirus restrictions the Robert Clarke Centre will not be available so the AGM that was to be held on 21st November is cancelled but will tentatively be held on Saturday 16th January, 2021.

Normally your annual membership subscription to VBS would be due now, however several of us have discussed the possibility of extending your present membership to include up to 31st December 2021, This will need to be decided at our AGM but it makes sense as we haven't been able to meet since January this year.

We are hopeful that the Ballarat Begonia Festival in March next year will be able to be held but no-one knows at this stage.

Keep safe and enjoy your Christmas and New Year celebrations

News from Wayne

Hi everybody. We hope you are well and if not get well soon.

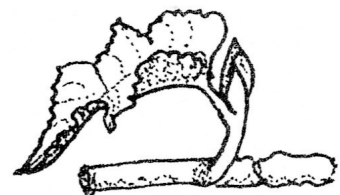
All your begonias should be potted up by now and they should be showing a bit of colour by now. But this October has been quite cold but don't worry the weather should warm up by next month. Just be careful with watering until they start to grow soon. By the middle of next month if the weather is good your begonias should be ready to be potted up to their final pots. Make sure you do not over-pot as the plants will not grow and can die because of too much moisture in the pot causing the tuber to rot. The weather plays a big part in growing.

Everyone have a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.

MALLET CUTTINGS

Mallet cuttings can be taken from most shrub-like and cane-like begonias. This method is particularly good for spreading types. By using this method you can usually get more cuttings from your plant. To make this type of cutting, select a long stem that has developed side shoots or branches along the length of the stem. Cut the main stem on each side of the side shoots or branches. There should be about 1cm of the main stem on each side of the side shoot or branch. Insert the cuttings in the rooting medium so that the leaves stand upright. The mallet should be embedded in the rooting medium securely but not deeply ■

Sourced from QBS journal Spring 2011



Reasons to Prune Trevor McGuigan

- To make your begonias more compact and fuller. Pruning forces your plants to send up basal growth and to branch. Without pruning many begonias can grow rangy and tall with little side growth. Pruning is a way to train begonias to grow into a more orderly and pleasing shape.
- To train our plants to grow a specific way. To grow begonias as bonsai, standard, trellis, or other unusual ways requires attention to pruning to achieve those desired results.
- To force your begonias to grow to a certain shape. In order to grow begonias in baskets or as tall specimen plants require proper pruning to train them. Most begonias grown in hanging baskets don't normally grow in a perfect basket shape. Most tend to grow up right and must be pruned to keep them in a basket shape.
- To keep your plants to a manageable size. If left to their own devices most begonias will grow large and rangy and may outgrow their available space. By pruning you can keep your begonias smaller and have room for more plants.
- To increase the amount of bloom. When you prune your plants properly you force more branches. The more branches you have the more possible blooms you have. If your begonia only has a few branches you can't expect it to produce lots of flowers since it will have limited tips from which to bloom.

Sourced from *Begonia Society of W.A.* October 2020

WHY WINGS ON BEGONIA SEED CAPSULES? Peter Sharp



Just why are there wings on the seed capsules? Begonias are not like maples which 'fly' their seeds on the wind – indeed the begonia's wings are on the capsules not the seed, and the capsule remains on the plant. Interesting question, no?

I have been collecting begonia seed for some time now but this question has only recently been bugging me and it arose from another question – how do begonias in a landscape situation distribute their seed? Another interesting question, as I soon found out.

Let me start from the beginning, as the Queen of Hearts advised (you did read Alice in Wonderland, didn't you?) – begonia flowers generally face upwards when first they bloom, but the females after pollination slowly droop so that what was the top with the flower on it becomes the bottom, as it were, and in this attitude the flower dies and falls, the seeds mature and the stem of what is now the seed capsule shrinks and hardens and turns brown and, one would think, would also become brittle and liable to break and fall. Not so – in fact these stems become stronger as they dry so that the now mature seed cases remain attached to the parent plants for a considerable time.

The seeds in begonia capsules are contained in separate compartments called carpels of which there are usually three but there are variations, such as *B. diadema* which has but one wing and one carpel. They are termed dehiscent because they split open to allow the seed to fall, but begonia carpels each produce openings which vary in shape between species, but which are unfailingly small and at the top where the stem joins the capsule. How then can the seeds 'fall' out?



The answer of course is blowing in the wind! The winds blow, the capsules dance to their tune and the seeds are bounced out, one by one. The stronger the wind, the more seeds are released and the further are they distributed. What a simple and ingenious system, but my answer is, I must admit, based on deduction and not observation, for I just don't have the equipment to observe begonia seed being carried on the wind. I do note however the frantic dance of the seed capsules whenever a breeze happens along.



And those wings on the capsules? Why, to catch the wind, of course, and make them jitterbug so much better ■

Sourced from *Begonia Australis* December 2011

Illustrations from "*Seeing Begonias*" by Jack Golding

B. hatacoa, *B. egregia*, *B. fagifolia*

Growing Tuberous Begonias in Tasmania Owen Bedford

My wife and I live in Burnie on the north west coast of Tasmania. About thirty years ago I bought three non-stop tuberous begonias. Later I bought seven Blackmore and Langdon named tubers. When they flowered I was hooked! They were *B.*'Sam Phillips', *B.*'Jim Kirby', *B.*'Vin Rouge', *B.*'Judy Langdon', *B.*'Melissa', *B.*'First Love' and *B.*'Harlequin Cascade'.



Begonia 'Apricot Charm'



B. 'Gwen Cross'

I knew nothing about tuberous begonias and thought they were like bulbs and would multiply and I didn't know how to take cuttings, cross pollinate or that each plant had male & female flowers. I caught six bees and put them in the shadehouse - thought they would like the beautiful flowers - but they couldn't get out quick enough.

Two years later I lost all of the tubers to vine weevils. The next season I bought more tubers and put mothballs around the pots hoping the smell would keep the weevils away. I found some weevils but not as many

as the previous year. In recent years I have successfully kept the weevils and mildew away by spraying with Rose Shield.

I went to the library and found a book on tuberous begonias which showed how to take cuttings and recommended to spray with Nimrod for mildew.

Several years later I joined the Victorian Begonia Society and gained some information from Phil Wright. Later I joined the Canterbury (N.Z.)



B. 'Thames Valley'

Begonia Circle and received very useful information from Mike Stevens.

My first crossings were from a white Fimbriata which I crossed with *B.*'Bernat Klein' and *B.*'Sugar Candy'. I kept three good seedlings which I named *B.*'Glacier', *B.*'Jack Frost' and *B.*'Coconut Ice'. Other good seedlings I have named and sent to Victoria are *B.*'Melody', *B.*'Gwen Cross', *B.*'Thames Valley' and *B.*'Fantasia'. I also have many good hanging basket seedlings. The best seedlings are trialled for several years and then named. I hope to send more named seedlings to Victoria in the future.

Every year around 300 people visit our garden including tourists from the cruise ships that visit Burnie, garden clubs and the general public.

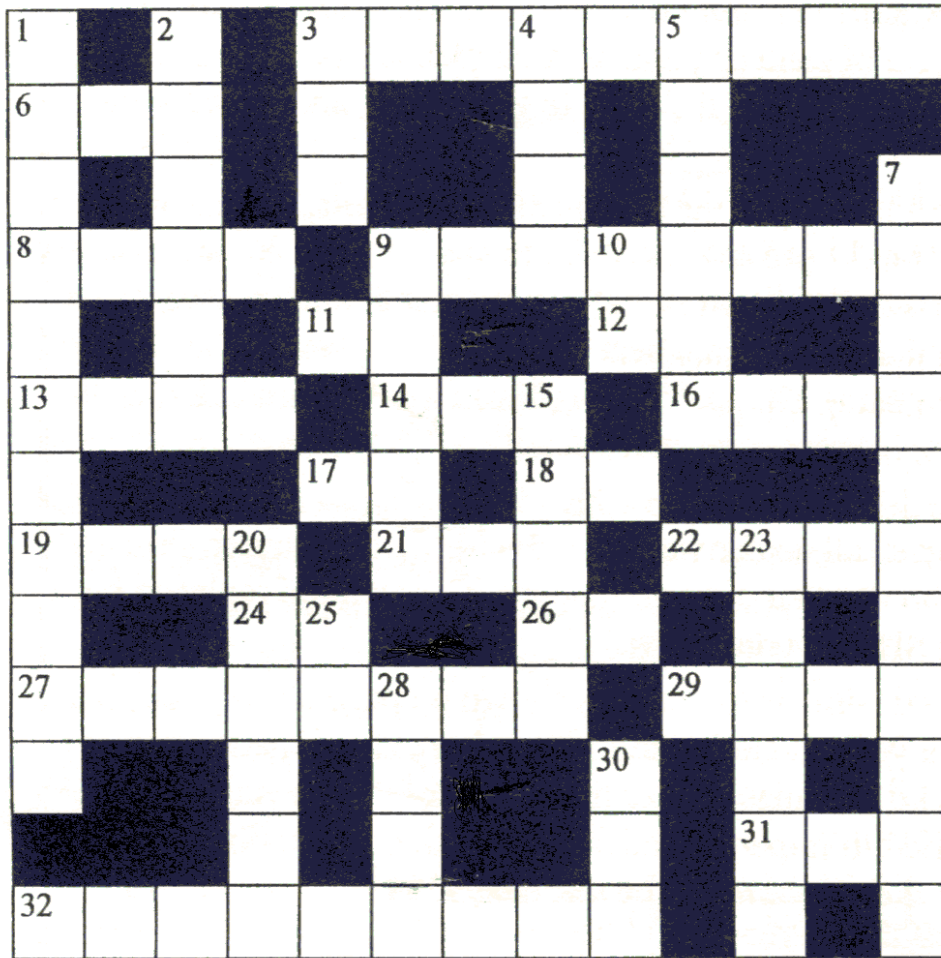
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I enjoy passing on the knowledge that I have gained and often speak at garden clubs on the north west coast here in Tasmania and three years ago my wife and I were made life members of the Burnie Garden Club ■ Sourced from *Begonia Australis* December 2015



Some of Owen's seedlings

Crossword



Across:

- 3. A 1995 basket from B&L in glowing orange and gold (9)
- 6. A grain (3)
- 8. Needed to enjoy fragrant begonias (4)
- 9. Scouts might like this bright yellow/red picotee (8)
- 11. A degree - for the unwed??
- 12. Popular TV show (2)
- 13 & 32. Semperflorens (lit.) (4, 9)
- 14. Contact them for import/export (3)
- 16. A type of lily (4)
- 17. I (obj.) (2)
- 18. See 26 across.
- 19. Keen growers often run out of this (4)
- 21. "To ___ with love" (3)
- 22. See 9 Down
- 24. Qualifier (2)
- 26/10 Dn/18 Ac. Amen (2, 2, 2)
- 27. Recommended as a check for pH (4, 4)
- 29. Gives a head start to dormant tubers (4)
- 31. Said on wedding day (1, 2)
- 32. See 13 Across

Down:

- 1. A pleasant fruit drink, but also a white/orange picotee, a Ralph Willsmore hybrid (6, 5)
- 2. Cruickshank, white/pink pi-cotee (6)
- 3. An aid to ventilation (3)
- 4. A type of cheese (4)
- 5. Cream/pink picotee from B&L, named after goddess (6)
- 7. Outcome of good seed sowing (11)
- 9 & 22 Ac. White/red picotee, bred by an amateur UK grower (5, 4)
- 10. See 26 Across
- 15. _____ Love, a white/pink picotee from B&L (5)
- 20. Watch out for this when nights are cool and days are warm (6)
- 23. A dreaded pest (6)
- 25. Twelve inches (abbr.) (2)
- 28. An old term for a jug (4)
- 30. Loam mixes may do this but bark mixes do not (3)

Solution:

Across: 3 Firedance; 6 Rye; 8 Nose; 9 Jamboree; 11 BA; 12 ER; 13 Ever; 14 MAF; 16 Arum; 17 Me; 18 It; 19 Room; 21 Sir; 22 Owen; 24 If; 26 So; 27; Soil test; 29 Heat; 31 I do; 32 Flowering.
 Down: 1 Orange Crush; 2 Jessie; 3 Fan; 4 Edam; 5 Aurora; 7 Germination; 9 James; 10 Be; 15 First; 20 Mildew; 23 Weevil; 25 Ft; 28 Ever; 30 Pug.