



The Bayou Begonian

Newsletter of the
Louisiana E-Branch of the American Begonia
Society

Special SWR Edition 2019

Cindy's Message

Conventions inspire and create enthusiasm and our Southwest gathering in Austin certainly fulfilled that role. We came home with many new begonias and knowledge that you can only gather from other Begonians who share your interest. Friendships are renewed – husband Harry, not himself a begonia grower, enjoys seeing friends from previous meetings.

We filled our car with 6 specimens we thought worthy and did collect 6 blue ribbons. The plants rode in the back seat as previous convention transportation in the trunk always resulted in leaf burn. 'Merlot', 'Cowardly Lion' (See these on page 4.) and U508 were division winners. (U508 is on left of photo below, to right is a cultivar 'Oteka' which I did not take as it had leaf spot problems.) Both 'Merlot' and U508 are upright rhizomatous types, showing the vigor and heat resistance that Freda has been selecting for in her breeding work.



'Dejah Thoris' (right above) was a reject from last spring's convention sale-the 4" pot unsaleable with one leaf at the time. 12 months later it was a gem - sometimes you just need patience. The other 2 plants I took were identified at the show - a bonus, making use of all the begonia knowledge available on the judging staff. The shrub I received at a meeting in Maryland labeled *B.scharffii* was actually a hybrid of *scharffii*, 'Waltanna.'

And the blooming plant given to me as a Cuban hybrid turned out to be from Ecuador and I am saving seed for Freda! Best of Show award went to a terrarium-grown *B. bogneri*. Those of you who went to the Hammond meeting will remember the *B. bogneri* Monika Saxton brought to show - it would have taken the top award had

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it been in Austin.

A highlight of the trip for me was a visit to an outstanding Austin retail nursery - "Great Outdoors." Austin is the hotbed in Texas of native plants, naturalizing species and pollinator gardens and the inventory there was amazing. I bought many plants to bring home - my garden club sponsors and maintains a butterfly area in our local botanic garden, so our butterfly plant list got a big bump. We have about 30 species now that are NOT milkweed, although that of course has its place.

Our tour on Thursday was a treat - The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. This was my second visit and so much has been added since I was there last - Texas must have the best wildflowers in America and they capitalize on them! The restaurant was excellent - Harry brought home a recipe. After lunch we visited a commercial greenhouse, Miller's Tropical in Dripping Springs. It is a mail order collection, mostly orchids, succulents, *Aeschynanthus* (lipstick), tropical cactus, bromeliads, and other epiphytes which he waters once a day BY HAND. His only water source is RAIN which he collects in cisterns - way beyond my stress tolerance. His former greenhouse was in Florida - what a change in growing conditions. My find there was a runner offset from a handsome agave, pulled from the dust two feet from the bus.

Next up - Sacramento in September. We won't be able to bring plants, but you can bet we'll bring some home. If you have had a California visit on your mind, this could be a destination. They have great tours, including many private residences. You will see more begonias than seems possible, plus a whole new landscape experience. Look it up now on the ABS website which has all the details.

Freda's Message

A SWR Get-Together is always very special; it has all the elements of a national convention, but is more condensed with fewer attendees. This lends to more and longer conversations with old and new friends. Cindy, Harry, RL and I all really enjoyed the Get-Together this year.

Since I am also a member of the Austin Branch because my son lives in Austin as did we for almost 30 years so we can sometimes visit meetings. I have known most of its members for many years. I was asked to be responsible for the seminars for the Get-Together which I enjoyed doing although one is always on pins and needles for fear you might have a last minute cancellation

that calls for a replacement; but for this Get-Together everything came together well in the seminars.

Seminars

On Thursday evening we first had a panel led by Tom Keepin, below. Speakers were arranged by Cheryl Lenert who was originally to host the seminar, but suffered both pneumonia and a displaced shoulder, so had to cancel. Cheryl and Tom, both from Houston, always work closely together though and the panel went off like clockwork. The panel had speakers from other SWR

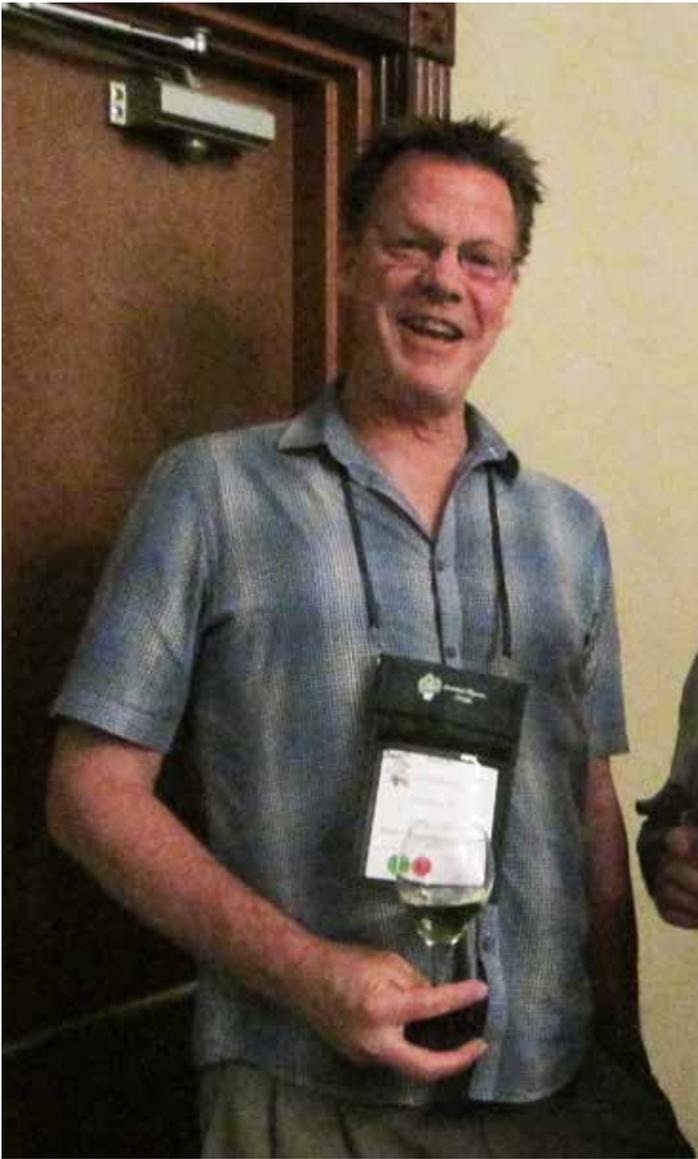


branches discussing a favorite plant that grows very well in their area. We heard from Tom, Leora Fuentes of the Dallas Branch who is noted for her beautiful terrarium plants, Doug Byrom of Austin who is an all around good grower, and our own Cindy Moran representing us in discussing her plant of *B. 'Morocco'* - we know Cindy grows everything well, but as the photo shows maybe this one grows especially well!

Our second seminar was presented by Rick Schoelhorn, who is a member with a long history in horticulture, with a Ph.D. from a university in Florida, many years as a researcher of new plants for Proven Winners, a stint as a professor in Florida, and nursery owner, plant propagator in Alaska, Colorado, and other places.

He described new begonias being introduced by





I missed getting a photo of Rick Schoelhorn during his seminar, but caught him enjoying a glass of wine at the happy hour before the banquet on Saturday. Rick is very tall and stands out in a crowd.

back was that Rekha as always gives a great discussion of her joys and travails in her collecting efforts.

On Friday afternoon, after judging and lunch, I was again able to introduce and benefit from the presentation by Taddie Hamilton, volunteer at the Ft. Worth Begonia Species Bank, with the participation of Debbie Garrett, staff leader, and Don Miller who not only volunteers but assists in curating and collecting for the Species Bank. Taddie demonstrated planting a terrarium from start to finish, then Don discussed and shared photos of the many new plants being added to the Species Bank. Debbie finished with a discussion of future plans and hopes for the greenhouses required to house the collection.



Here are Taddie and Don cooperating on their presentation. And below is our speaker on his travels in China out he happy hour chatting with me on Saturday evening. He is currently trying to put together tour to once again visit China for those interested in either begonias or gesneriads.

various companies this year including T-Rex Begonias from Terra Nova Nurseries. Following this, he discussed his new ABS publication on the history of Florida Hybridizing. This new book was for sale at the Get-Together, saving mailing charges, and sales were rapid.

On Saturday morning, I unfortunately was needed to judge in the show since judges were short so I had to miss the two seminars. I was assured however that they were great. We had a presentation by Stephen Maciejewski on his travels collecting begonias and Gesneriads in China. Feedback was that his photos of the areas he visited were fascinating. Following his seminar, we had Rekha Morris presenting photos and a discussion of the begonias she had collected in Mexico. Again, my feed-





Photos clockwise from top left : My new B. 'Emerald of Siam', a heat resistant Upright Rhizomatous; Cindy Moran's gorgeous, Best of Division winner, B. 'Cowardly Lion' which was the largest plant of this cultivar I have ever seen, although I have seen many in shows over the years!; next is Cindy's B. Merlot which not only won Best of Division, but also the new Dianna Willkerson Award for Best U Number Hybrid (and as you know also my hybrid); then we have Cindy's also beautiful mother of the previous plant, Begonia U508 also beautifully grown and a Division Winner; and lastly you see my new blue ribbon seedling as yet unnamed. Two photos above by Cindy.

Business Meetings

We had a Board Meeting of the ABS discussing activities - minutes will be published later in the *Begonian*. Following this we had the annual meeting of the Southwest Region led by outgoing Director Kenny Wilkerson. These minutes will appear in an upcoming edition of the SWR Newsletter, the *Begonia Leaflet*. We also met the upcoming officers for the new year. See their photo and names on page 7.

The Show

Louisiana Show Winners

I was pleased to win two blue ribbons for my plants and a blue and red or first and second in the photo prints class. However, as usual, Louisiana's outstanding winner was our Cindy Moran with two division winners, winner of the new Dianna Wilkerson Award for Best U# Hybrid, and six blue ribbon winners! Some photos of our winners are on page 4.

Other Show Winners

Best of Show Winner

As usual in Austin, there were many terrarium winners and the Best of Show winner was *B. bogneri*, sometimes identified as the "grass begonia" which is a tiny tuberous species always grown in a terrarium or controlled environment greenhouse which are the only places we in the South can grow tuberous begonias. This one excelled because it was flowering profusely. Leora Fuentes, known as a master grower of terrarium begonias won this award. I was unable to get a good photo of this one because of reflection on the glass of the terrarium, but see page 7 for a photo Johanna Zinn supplied

People's Choice Award (Below)

This award is from the visitors to the show by vote



rather than from the judges, who did however give it a Best of Division Award. It went to a beautiful *Begonia variegata* grown by Doug Pridgen. The size and perfection of this not easy to grow species was hard to believe. **New Plants are the Get-Together Highlight - The Sale**

The highlight of any begonia meeting is always the sale and this one was especially wonderful with plants from two nurseries, Harmony and North Carolina Farms, grown out from plugs by Doug Byrom, many new species contributed by Fort Worth and Randy Kerr, and many other plants from individual members including myself. I came home with a tiny prize—a tiny seedling of *Begonia baccata* – the reputedly tallest begonia of all from Africa; I have my fingers crossed that I get it to grow as African begonias have never been my greatest growing success. I bought tiny plants of many new species that will have to go under lights while I get them to a size I can test them outside for our climate. An interesting one I thought on sight was a species, but I found it instead to be an older hybrid, *B. 'Jabberwockie'*. I'm really hoping this one can be grown outside. I spent one entire day after we returned just getting my new acquisitions settled in, recording them and researching all those I had no familiarity with. Another interesting, almost cane like species was labeled *B. majungensis* which alas is from Madagascar whose species I also have little luck growing. Many of these are very small plants and experience tells me that I will probably lose a number of them in the transition, but always hope for the best.

Great Outdoors Nursery

One day Cindy and I set out with Bobbie Price on a side expedition to what we were told was currently the best nursery in Austin. Visiting nurseries either on a tour as Cindy was able to do or as a side trip is another benefit of a Get-Together. Indeed, it was a delight and we all found some interesting new plants. I found a new *Alocasia 'Royal Drift'* – these being one of my non-begonia plant obsessions. It has midnight black leaves and promises to be very big; one of the new *Begonia T-Rex's* Rick Schoelhorn told us about; a couple of unusual *Calibrachoa* plants that were on sale, and a replacement for our bay leaf tree that has almost surrendered to the large oak it grows near. I'm thinking of putting this one in a pot for near the back door for RL to care for as he likes to put its leaves in everything he cooks.

The Banquet Conclusion

A Get-Together always ends with a social hour followed by the banquet. This is where we get to say good-

by to all old and new friends before we meet again next year. Our delicious meal was followed by the Awards Ceremonies. All these awards will be announced in the next Begonia Leaflet, but I was pleased to receive an award as SWR Hybridizer of the Year for the second time. Here Cindy also received her Cultural Awards which are given for plants receiving 95 or more points out of 100. See her receive her awards on page 7 left column, second photo. There was a brief auction of about 7 new species contributed by Don Miller, but by that point I could make no bids because I knew I already had more new plants that I could possibly grow! Get-Togethers are always great, but this years' felt like the best ever!



At left, top, Harry enjoying socializing and below, Cindy's blue ribbon B. 'Waltanna.' Above, top, Steve's Leaves' Best Commercial New Introduction, B. 'Yellow Jacket' and just above a close up of its yellow flowers - on a Rex! and below, B. montiselephantis in a terrarium - I brought one home! Photos above from Johanna Zinn.



Some Other Photos



New Southwest Region Officers, left to right: Doug Byrom of Austin, Treasurer; Taddie Hamilton of Dallas/Ft..Worth, Directors (equals to President);Leora Fuentes of Dallas/Ft. Worth, Vice-Director and master terrarium grower; Joan Estes of Austin, Membership Chair, Eric Challain of San Antonio, Secretary and SWR Liason to the Fort Worth Species Bank.



Photo at left, Cindy receives her Cultural Awards from Judging Chair Johanna Zinn.

Photo at bottom left: Pi Stone of Blanco, TX, winner of Showing is Sharing Award for most show entries, and Don Miller who was Show Chairman



Top left column: Best of Show, *B. bogneri* with terrarium cover removed. Grown by Leora Fuentes.
 Second left column: Awards given to *B. bogneri* - blue ribbon, Division Winner, Best of Show, Rekha Morris Best Species Award.. Photos from Johanna Zinn.
 Top photo, right column: Freda with SWR Hybridizer of Year plaque and Doug Byrom, Show Chairman



The photo, middle right ,is of the winning Best Cane Begonia, *B. undulata* grown by Doug Byrom.
 Bottom right is one of the three Commercial Begonia Introductions, all Rex Cultivars. *B. 'Yellow Jacket'* was o page 6 and this is *B. 'Steve's Leaves' Phantom*. This one is beautiful with deep leaf lobes, but nowhere near as unique as 'Yellow Jacket'.

Also, the masthead photo on page 1 is of *B. koksunii* in a terrarium. It has both striking leaves which you can just see and flowers. I brought one home!