

**Blooming Begonias Newsletter**  
**February, 2023 – March, 2023**

President: Rebecca Stallard  
Vice-President: Lois Petzold  
Treasurer: Frances Drescher  
Secretary: Marcia Bedasse  
National Representative: Beverly Lichtenstein

**Next Meeting: May 8, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m. – Betsey Szymczak – Growing Begonias for Show**

**Upcoming events:**

**“Earth Day...Every Day” NGC Horticulture Specialty Flower Show hosted by Wellington Garden Club District X on Saturday, April 22 from 11 am to 4 pm at Wellington Community Center, 1215 Forest Hill Blvd., Wellington, FL**

**Mounts Botanical Garden Plantapalooza, Saturday and Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Our society will have a booth at the plant sale!**

**Garden Tour of Kit Pannill, Palm Beach, on Saturday, May 13 at 10:30 am.**

***President’s Message***

Our chapter is busy, busy, busy with upcoming garden tours, interesting programs and plant sales. We are also bringing the society current with a presence on social media. I like to say we are a small but mighty group. There is an advantage, however, in growing and modernizing our society to further educate the community on begonias and also to attract new members. Our begonia garden at Mounts Botanical Garden has been spiffed up thanks to a group of us who met there to groom the garden. We had a fun day and enjoyed getting together for lunch afterward. Mounts Botanical Horticulturist Palmer Crippen was very kind to meet us there to give advice and cheer us on. The garden is looking quite nice. We will have a booth at the upcoming Mounts Botanical Plantapalooza on Saturday and Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. We hope you will consider volunteering at the booth or at the very least stop in and bring your family and friends. Looking forward to sharing all the upcoming society activities with all of you!

***Rebecca Stallard, President***

***Minutes - Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches***  
***February 13, 2023***

**BEGONIA SOCIETY OF THE PALM BEACHES, INC.**

The regular monthly meeting of the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches was held on Monday, February 13, 2023, at 7:30 P.M. in the Mounts Auditorium, the President being in the chair.

**REPORTS**

**President**

Donnie, Frances and Susan, a friend of Frances’, were thanked as door openers. Rebecca recognized guests Susan and Dan. Rebecca noted that Palmer Crippen will help at the begonia garden to help spruce it up and will host a program at the March 2023 meeting.

**Vice President**

Lois will set up a Zoom account for the membership to access individually. You will need to let Lois know the title of the program you want to access for her to set up.

#### **Treasurer**

Frances reported the balance as of January, 2023. She reported that the mini auctions help augment the treasury.

#### **Membership**

Sandy Sklar introduced Susan, a friend of Frances'. Dan, a potential new member, is interested in terrarium begonias. She reminded members of the clean-up at Mounts, 10 A.M., Saturday, February 18, 2023.

#### **Refreshments**

Nancy thanked Lois and Rebecca for Valentine- themed refreshments.

#### **Newsletter**

Leslie Fee would like members to send pictures by the first week of the month for the newsletter.

#### **Webmaster**

Linda Lichtenstein reported that the website is up to date.

#### **New Business**

Participation in the Mounts April plant sale depends on getting a shady location with possibly a bench. It was suggested that terrariums/plants be added to the mix.

#### **Motion**

It was moved and seconded that the Begonia Society have a booth at the April plant sale at Mounts. The motion was adopted unanimously. Lois suggested we pay dues on a yearly basis rather than the calendar year. After discussion, Sandy Sklar, Membership chair, preferred to keep the present system. "Thinking of you" cards were signed by those present and sent to Sandy Arlund and Nancy Cohen.

#### **Adjournment**

The business meeting adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

#### **Program**

Lois conducted an auction of hybrid and species begonias.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Beverly Lichtenstein, substituting for Secretary, Marcia Bedasse*

**NEXT MEETING MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023.**

*Minutes - Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches*  
*March 13, 2023 Meeting*  
**BEGONIA SOCIETY OF THE PALM BEACHES, INC.**

The regular monthly meeting of the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches was held on Monday, March 13, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. in the Mounts Auditorium, the President being in the chair and the Vice President being present.

#### **REPORTS**

##### **President**

Rebecca opened the meeting at 7:15 P.M. She thanked Nancy Cavnar and herself for serving as door openers. She thanked Frances Drescher for bringing the badge plant, B. Nightfall, which was delivered with our December Harmony order.

##### **Vice President**

Lois reported she's finding a fair number of interesting speakers for upcoming meetings and is always taking suggestions for future speakers and/or programs. She reported on potential future programs; Betsy Szymack (who is also a flower judge) has several topics online and will do a free zoom presentation; a gentleman from the Potomac branch who is a super grower of Rex plants; Emily Lisborg of In Search of Small things who reportedly does excellent online presentations; a lady who was blue ribbon winner from Delaware branch that won a lot of awards for terrariums (she doesn't grow in terrariums but actually grows in bog conditions and then stages in terrariums for shows). Many interesting possibilities. Zoom meetings would be held here. Lois will also provide a photo presentation of Philadelphia plant show where she recently served as judge.

##### **Treasurer**

Frances reported the balance as of March 13, 2023.

##### **National Representative**

Bev Lichtenstein reported she is keeping up on national activities, but nothing new to report.

##### **Membership**

Sandy Sklar reported that Dale Sena, a long-time member of the Tampa Bay branch, recently joined our branch. She also welcomed guest, Dan Salkin.

**Refreshments**

Nancy thanked everyone who contributed to the refreshments. Reminder that we don't need much in the way of snacks and everyone is encouraged to volunteer.

**Newsletter**

Leslie Fee would like members to send pictures by the first week of the month for the newsletter. Rebecca thanked Leslie for the informative newsletters.

**New Business**

There was a discussion about the upcoming Spring Plant Sale at Mounts, i.e., placement of booth (shade preferred), cost of booth, size of booth, etc. Lois volunteered to travel to Harmony Gardens to secure plants for the sale. Our branch has not participated in the sale since November, 2019. It is important to participate to help educate the gardening community about begonias and our society, and to sell begonias. Frances is willing to be the contact with the organizers to enroll our society in the sale.

**Webmaster**

Linda Lichtenstein reported that newsletters are being uploaded successfully to the site.

**Motion**

Sandy Sklar moved to give discretion to Frances and allow her to commit to reserving our society a 10 x 20 booth at the Spring Plant Sale. Lois Petzold seconded. The motion was adopted.

**Financial Review**

The Financial Review Committee Chair, Nancy Cavnar, reported that the Begonia Society of the Palm Beaches bookkeeping records kept by Treasurer Frances Drescher are accurate and meet regulatory requirements. The review was conducted by Nancy Cavnar, Chair; Pauline Ma and Rebecca Stallard, committee members.

**Program**

Rebecca introduced Palmer Crippen, who presented a program on Epiphytic Ant Plants of the South Pacific.

**BADGE PLANT**

The badge plant was won by Marcia.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 P.M.

***Respectfully submitted,***

*Leslie Fee, substituting for Secretary, Marcia Bedasse*

**NEXT MEETING MONDAY, APRIL 10, 2023**

Spring has sprung here in Palm Beach County. How nice it has been to have several days of long-awaited rainfall. We can water till the cows come home but there's nothing like a good downpour to brighten up our gardens.

Calling all begonia collectors...accomplished Florida begonia grower and expert Doug Pridgen has contacted our society with a request. He has been searching for B. 'Amber Sweet', a cane begonia that was hybridized by Greg Sytch. He hasn't been able to find the plant and Greg Sytch advised he no longer has it. He doesn't want to see the Amber Sweet hybrid lost to the ages. Does anyone have it in their collection? If so, please contact us so that we can figure out a way to get either a plant or at least a cutting to Mr. Pridgen.

We had a spirited mini auction during our February meeting, led by auctioneer Lois Petzold. Lois auctioned off numerous beautiful hybrid and species begonias. These mini auctions are loads of fun with the added bonus of adding to our coffers which allows us to the ability to continue bringing interesting, sometimes hard to find, begonias to our group for purchase. We are thankful to Lois for taking up the mantle as our auctioneer.

We were pleased to have Horticulturist Palmer Crippen join us and present his program, Epiphytic Ant Plants of the South Pacific, for our March meeting. He took us on a pictorial tour through the rain forest of the South Pacific so that we could observe the incredibly unique and bizarre world epiphytic ant plants. Palmer's program was informative and educational, with a discussion on the wide diversity of these living, symbiotic ant homes, together with their native habitats and

cultivation. He shared photos of some of the most rarely seen and elusive plants in the wild. Not only did Palmer put on a great program for us, he also has been very supportive of our group by visiting our meeting and also helping out with our groom the begonia garden day at the Mounts Botanical Garden.



*Palmer Crippen, Horticulturist*



*Ant Plant – Hoya imbricata*

We had a fantastic garden tour day on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Two of our members, Frances Drescher and Pauline Ma, both live in the same neighborhood and both have beautiful gardens.

We met at Frances' home first where we were able to enjoy countless species and hybrid begonias both potted on her screened patio or planted in the landscape. Frances enjoys adding unusual and hard to find plants and trees to her yard. Her screened in patio is home to stunning potted begonias many of which were in bloom. There are also many other shade loving plants growing beautifully – hanging pots of hoyo, an unusual sansevieria, ferns, bromeliads, Zamioculcas zamfolia “ZZ plant” and succulents. She also is growing begonias in terrariums. She has numerous terrariums in varying shapes and sizes beautifully displayed in her home where they receive the perfect amount of light. She is also propagating many plants. Frances' backyard is a serene and peaceful space with meandering pathways shaded by, to name a couple, Japanese Fern trees and a unique Silk Floss tree. She has lots of begonias planted in the ground, different varieties of variegated hoyo vining up and hanging from trees, pink princess philodendron vining up trees with it's lovely pink and dark green leaves, lots of butterfly attractors including a white shrimp plant with pretty white/lavender blooms. There is also a stand of rhizomatous begonias growing beautifully in a rock garden. It would be impossible to list all the plants in her garden, but suffice to say you cannot

take a step without seeing something so beautiful to behold, whether you are looking on the ground, straight ahead or up into the trees.

Next, we traveled a short distance to Pauline's home. Pauline and her husband are true collectors – specifically orchids, begonias, hoyas and succulents, just to name a few. They have extensive plant racks filled to overflowing with orchids outside and inside their screened porch and a stand-alone screened shade house with more orchids, hoyas, begonias and succulents. We were there at the perfect time for the orchids, as many of these were stunningly in bloom. Pauline's screened shade house is bordered by a beautifully designed, meditative Zen-like rock covered space with statuary, container gardens and a vine covered trellis. Once inside the shade house you find Pauline's various collections of begonias, succulents and other plants on the right, and her husband's expansive collection of orchids on the left. We had a grand time soaking in all that beauty. Outside in the yard are lots of palms underplanted with unusual tropicals and of course, more succulents. She has a beautiful potted rock fig nestled in one of the planted areas.

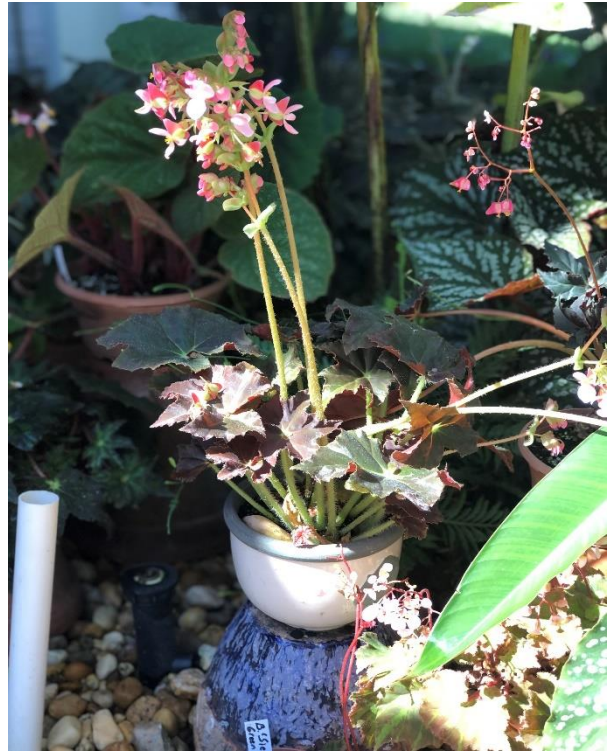
Both Frances and Pauline pride themselves on their thoughtful placement of plants in the landscape together with potted specimens, garden statuary and perfectly placed rocks. It was such a pleasure to see the joy on each of their faces as they exhibited their well cared for and beautifully designed garden spaces.

After the tour, Frances treated us to a delectable lunch, Lois contributed a lovely fruit salad and Pauline provided a delicious dessert. We all enjoyed the luncheon and time together. It was a delightful day thanks to the generosity of our two members who were so willing to share the beauty of their gardens with us.





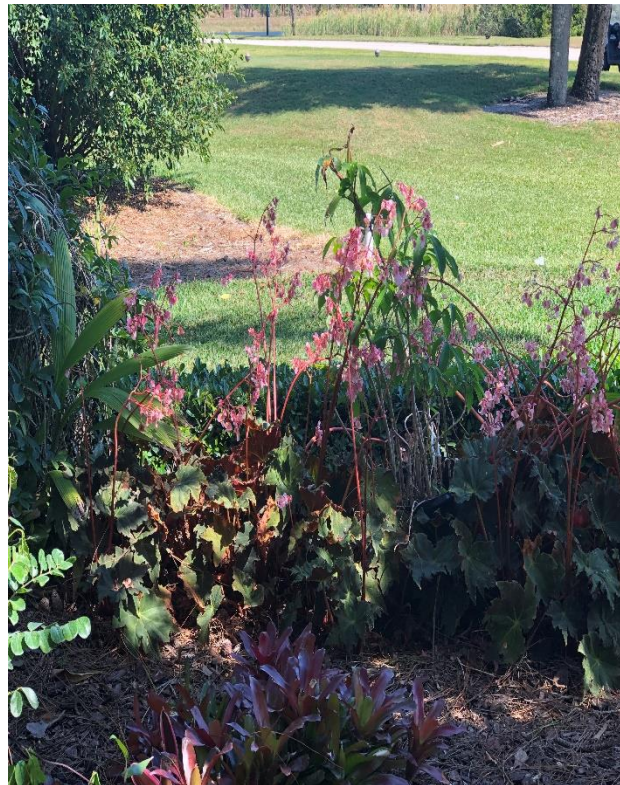
*Frances holding B. 'Elsa,' grown from a FWBG cutting*



*Rick Schoellhorn's hybrid B. 'Copper Penny'*



*Upright rhizomatous begonias*



*B. 'Caribbean King'*





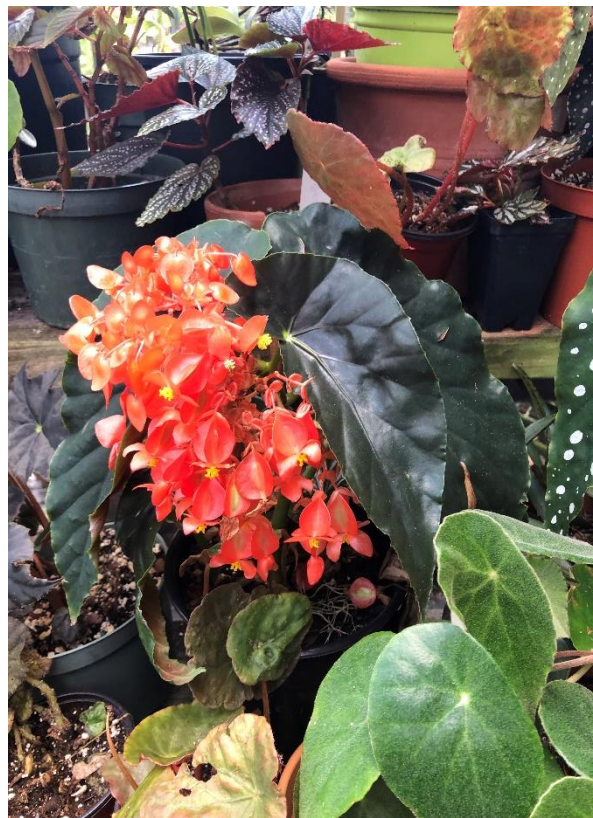
*Pauline Ma with a stunning Vanda Orchid*



*Mixed Begonia display*



*Mixed Begonia display*



*Steve's Leaves Cierge Magique*

Lois Petzold has recently helped to jumpstart our society into the modern world of social media by setting us up on Instagram. I personally haven't joined any social media platforms, but feel like now is the time to do so. Many other societies have an online presence and are able to share photos of their members' plants and news about meetings, activities etc. Now, we can too! Lois says "it's actually pretty fun to see other people's plants and what other branches are doing..." and I couldn't agree more. Our Instagram name is *begonia\_society\_palm\_beaches*. Those of you familiar with this platform, go ahead and start posting photos and explore what other branches are up to. For those of us unfamiliar, let's get busy joining and learning how to navigate sharing our photos.

**Mark your calendars for upcoming events:**

**"Earth Day...Every Day" NGC Horticulture Specialty Flower Show** hosted by Wellington Garden Club District X on Saturday, April 22 from 11 am to 4 pm at Wellington Community Center, 1215 Forest Hill Blvd., Wellington, FL. Sandy Sklar and several other members of the Begonia Society are also members of the Wellington Garden Club and are encouraging us to come out and enjoy this flower show. It is hopeful that some of our members may also be submitting begonias and/or other plants for the show.

**Mounts Botanical Garden Plantapalooza**, Saturday and Sunday April 29 and 30<sup>th</sup>. Stop by our society's booth. As many of you know, we were longtime participants in the Mounts plant sales. We have been absent from the sales for several years in light of the pandemic. We are excited to get back in the mix this Spring!

**Garden Tour at the home of Kit Pannill** in Palm Beach on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. More details to follow. **You do not want to miss this!**

Happy Springtime to all,  
*Leslie Fee, Newsletter Editor*