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begoniasvictoria.org

VICTORIAN BEGONIA SOCIETY Inc No A0018681J

Newsletter
January 2023

Volume 36: Issue 1

Next Meeting—Saturday 21st January 2023

**at the Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanical
Gardens**

**11.15am Committee meeting
12.30pm Luncheon
1.30pm General meeting**

A Word from Wayne.

Hi everyone. We hope you are all well, if not, get well soon.

Dianne and I went and visited Peter and gave him a Christmas hamper from the November meeting. He looked in good spirits and was glad to see us and is happy to be home, but still has a long time to recover.

The begonia's are very slow because of the weather. I have taken some cuttings which I have grown in propagation mix, 2 weeks ago. They really look good and we just hope they will keep looking well. I have also taken some species begonia's and put in water and have got a 100% strike that I hope will keep growing in soil. The potting mix is Plant Plus Terracotta and Tub mix. We hope to get some warmer weather to assist growth.

The Committee meeting is at 11.15am on the 21st January; we will be discussing the Begonia Festival and the annual competition. A BBQ lunch will be at 12.30 and we ask that you bring a salad and a plate of goodies for afternoon tea, please.

We wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope everything runs really good for you in the coming year. See you on the 21st. Wayne Walters.

BCC Biosecurity requirements for the Robert Clark Horticulture Centre and Ballarat Begonia Festival are:

- No field-dug material, or second-hand pots; and potting mix must be soil-free.
- Plant material with any visible pests, diseases is not permitted.
- No plant material is to be left at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens—please do not leave plant material in the bins.

For regular meetings:

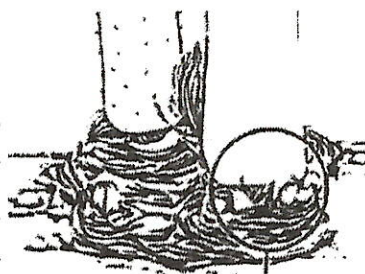
- Any plant material to be used in the Robert Clark Centre (eg cutting material, display plants) must be transported through the gardens to the meeting room in a plastic bag and once finished, any plant material used at the RCHC meeting room is required to be put into a plastic bag and taken home.

<u>President</u>	<u>Vice-President</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Assistant Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
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The most important and efficient way to increase the size of your collection of tuberous begonias is by taking either basal or stem cuttings.

- **Basal cuttings**

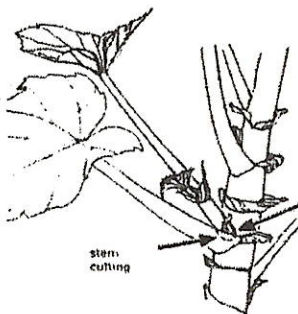
When a tuber starts into growth in the spring it may produce more than one shoot. Unless the tuber is 3-4 years old it is best not to grow more than one stem, thereby any excess shoots can be removed and used as cuttings. These basal shoots are the very best cuttings as they are in full growth, are very vigorous and often when removed from the tuber they will already have small roots attached which gives them a further advantage.



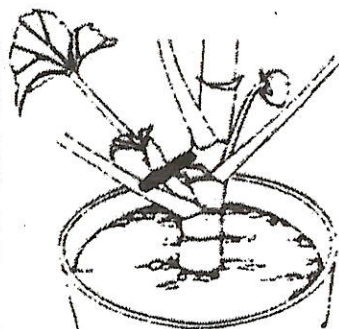
These shoots need to be about 75 mm (3 ins) in height before they are removed. The mix should be carefully brushed away to reveal the base of the shoot, where careful examination will reveal one or more small buds or 'eyes' (see Fig 2). It is important that the shoot is removed with an undamaged 'eye' attached. This can be done by obtaining a scalpel (hobby shops stock these at cheap prices). Sterilize the blade by dipping in methylated spirit. The shoot should now be cut below the 'eye' without cutting any material from - - the tuber. If material is mistakenly taken from the tuber then further unseen dormant 'eyes' may be damaged lessening the number of shoots that will start in following seasons. Alternatively hold the shoot in the fingers and gently rock it to and fro until it detaches.

- **Stem Cuttings**

A stem cutting is obtained by removing a side shoot from the main stem of the plant. The first four leaves will usually have dormant growth buds in the leaf axis. Above this on the stalk the bud is usually a flower bud and no use as a cutting. It is usual to leave two side shoots to fully develop to give a really full complement of flowers on the plant. Above these two side shoots any others can be used as cuttings. These are removed with a sterile scalpel or small knife by making two cuts, one vertical and parallel to the main stem, the other below the cutting, sliding the blade along the leaf stem at right angles to the main stem, ensuring that the 'eye' is taken with the cutting. These cuts will result in a wedge shape at the base of the cutting (see Fig 3). Difficulty can be experienced with some varieties whose growth habit allows little or no room for this exercise.



An alternative and more efficient method is to make your cut straight across, just below the first leaf axil on the actual side shoot. An 'eye' will generally be found in this junction (see Fig 4). The remaining stump of side shoot stem should be trimmed back to about 10 mm and dusted and allowed to drop naturally. There is of course still an 'eye' at the base of this stump which will develop into another side shoot and another cutting - two for the price of one. It can of course be left to grow and flower in due course.



Having removed the cutting by one of the above methods and treated the re-sulting wound on the stem (never dust the cutting), we must now LABEL it. Use a 3B pencil and record the name of the variety and the date on a plastic label.

*Sourced from Begonia News, Canterbury Begonia Circle Vol.1 No 4
Part of an article on propagation*

Membership Renewal

A reminder that your membership renewal is now due. Prices are : family \$28, Single \$25
And if you are a member of another society affiliated with the AABS then you may take out a "Newsletter membership" for \$10 which entitles you to our society newsletter.

Members may be interested in this Youtube video from an Australian Grower, the link is listed below:

**"How to grow and propagate Tuberous Begonia's with Peter Harris" - the link is:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsOH9nzJV0Y>**