TAB. 7673.

BEGONIA sinensis.

Native of China and Japan.

Genus Begonia, Linn.; (Benth. & Hook. f. Gen. Plant. vol. i. p. 841.)

Begonia sinensis; pilosula, tabero subglobo, caule annulo erecto herbaeceo ramoso, foliis 3–5-poll. longis oblique ovato-cordatis longe acuminatis basi palmatif 5–9-nerviis grosse suboblolato-dentatis creberrime inaequaliter argute serratis serrulatisque membranaceis supra lute viridibus subus pallidis junioribus roseo irroration, petiolis 1–2-poll. longis, stipulis majusculis ovatis acuminatis herbaeis recurvis, axillis sope bulbiliferis, pedunculis dichotomis inferioribus petiolis longioribus, cymis biseris, bracteis ovato-lanceolatis caducis, floribus roseis breviuscula pedicellata ad 1/2 poll. latis, fl. masc. bibracteolatis, sepalis 2 fere orbiculatis concavis, petals 2 multo minoribus ovalibus, fl. fem. bibracteolatis, sepalis 2, petals 1 vel 2 parvis, staminum columna brevissima, filamentis brevibus, antheris oblongis, ovario obconico 3-gono, stigmatis reniformibus undique papillosis, placenta 3 bipartitis, segmentis extus tantum ovulifera, capsula 3-alata, alis 2 angustis tertia trigona.


Begonia sine nomine, Buschon, Coll. Proc. des Fleurs, Part i. t. xxxv.

Begonia sinensis is well described by A. de Candolle, but is placed in the section Knesebeckia, from his character of which it differs in the segments of the placenta being ovuliferous on the outer faces only. He rightly compares it with B. Evansiana, Andr. (non Bot. Mag. t. 1473), but overlooks the fact that two plants are confounded under that name, One, the original, figured by Andrews (Bot. Rep. t. 627) said to have been found at the waterfall of Penang, with hardly any stipes to the head of stamens; the other, that of Bonpland (Jard. Malm. t. 63, and of this magazine, t. 1473), a much larger-flowered plant, with a long stipes supporting the head of stamens. Unfortunately de Candolle has selected the latter as Andrews' species. Clarke, in "Flora Brit. Ind.," vol. ii. p. 638, cites B. sinensis (from the description) as a synonym of B. Evansiana, with which he unites the Bot. Mag. plant and B. obliqua, Thunb. With regard to "the waterfall in Penang," which Andrews gives as the habitat of B. Evansiana, this is no doubt an error; for C. Curtis, in his Catalogue of the Flowering Plants and Ferns of that September 1st, 1899.
Island, says, "The plant has not been met with here, and could hardly be overlooked." Aiton (Hort. Kew, ed. II. v. 313), who describes B. Evansiana as B. discolor (quoting both Bot. Rep. and Bot. Mag.), gives China as the native country whence it was introduced in 1804 by the Hon. E. I. Company.

Though retaining the name of B. sinensis for this plant, I do not feel sure that it is not B. Evansiana of Andrews, from the figure of which it differs only in the deeply irregularly cut margins of the leaves. It is a widely diffused Chinese plant, there being specimens in Kew Herbarium from the neighbourhood of Peking, the provinces of Hupeh and Kwangtung, and Island of Formosa.

Seeds of B. sinensis, collected in Yunnan by Dr. Henry, M.A., F.L.S., of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, were received at the Royal Gardens, Kew, in 1898; plants raised from which flowered in October of the following year in a greenhouse.

Descr.—Tuber brown, about the size of a large cobnut, giving off copious long flexuous brown fibres from its crown. Stem one and a half to two feet high, rather slender, glabrous or sparsely pubescent, simple or sparingly branched, pale green. Leaves three to five inches long, more or less unequal-sided, ovate-cordate, acuminate, margin acutely lobulate, lobules coarsely, very irregularly, acutely serrate and serrulate, palmately five to nine-nerved at the base, thin, bright green above, paler, and often rose-colrd. beneath, with hairy veins, axils often bulbleiferous; petiole one to two inches long; stipules ovate, or ovate-lanceolate, acuminate, green. Flowers monœcious, in axillary and terminal peduncled cymes, male rather shortly pedicelled, female with much longer decurved pedicels. Male fl. three-fourths of an inch in diam., bright rose-red; sepals two, orbicular-ovate; petals two, very much smaller, oblong; stamens numerous, in a very shortly stipitate head, anthers oblong, obtuse. Female fl. rather larger, sepals and petals like the male, but petals broader, very unequal, or one only; styles short, stigmas reniform, papillose all over. Ovary with two short and one long wing; placenta bifid, arms ovuliferous on the outer surfaces.—J. D. H.

Fig. 1, Portion of stem with stipules and bulbs; 2, staminal columns; 3, styles and stigmas; 4, transverse section of ovary: all enlarged; 5, tuber of the nat. size.