



photo by Julie Vanderwilt

Begonia 'Alleryi'

by Paul Tsamtsis

Begonia 'Alleryi' is a hybrid between two species begonias. The cross is *B. metallica* X *B. gigantea* done by Allery Aubert in 1904. He named the cross by using the Latin possessive form of his first name. In other words he gave us the 'begonia of Allery.' Modern nomenclature rules prohibit such a use of foreign languages in naming hybrids.

Millie and Ed Thompson, in their book ***BEGONIAS: The Complete Reference Guide***, classify this plant as shrub-like, hairy-leaved, wide-leaved. Its flowers are described as pale pink with hairs. It blooms moderately from late summer through the fall.

The Thompsons classify this plant as For the Beginner, but it can be somewhat challenging in the Sacramento area. While many begonias thrive outside here, B. 'Alleryi' seems to grow with smaller leaves in our lower humidity. It also seems to develop brown edged leaves more easily. Higher humidity as supplied by greenhouse growing

eliminates this problem. Because most of the rest of the United States has much higher humidity, that fact probably contributes to its being classified as For the Beginner.

Another characteristic B. 'Alleryi' shows is that it can easily look chlorotic. Chlorosis is a yellowing or bleaching of normally green leaves. It is usually caused by mineral deficiencies or parasites. The discoloration is hardly ever severe in B. 'Alleryi,' but is noticeable.

A well-grown plant can easily be between 3 and 5 feet in height and look good in a 14 to 18 inch pot. B. 'Alleryi' is also one of those plants that is good to exhibit in one of those Begonia Show categories that generally is overlooked, *Begonias Twenty-Five Years or Older*. Many show schedules around the country include a category like this to encourage the growing of older hybrids. Older hybrids are slowly being lost to cultivation and a category like *Twenty-five Years or Older* reminds us of the importance of not losing older examples of our begonia heritage.

