



photo by Julie Vanderwilt

Begonia 'Pollux'

by Morris Mueller

B. 'Pollux' is a rex, jointed at or below the soil with erect stems. The foliage is a stippled silver and is quite attractive. It was hybridized in 1994 in Japan by Yamaguchi. Only in the last few years, however, has it made its way into the United States.

B. 'Pollux' is the result of a three-way cross between B. *hemsleyana* X (B. *circumlobata* x B. 'The Chief').

B. *hemsleyana* is rhizomatous with the rhizome jointed at or below the soil level, with erect stems (which accounts for the growth habit of B. 'Pollux.' B. *hemsleyana* has palmate leaves.

B. *circumlobata* is also rhizomatous with large compound leaves.

No information was found about B. 'The Chief,' but my hunch is that it is a rex and accounts for the leaf shape and color.

The two species "parents" are from China and discovered back in the late

1800s. The Thompsons, in their book ***BEGONIAS: The Complete Reference Guide***, state that both are 'For the Collector.'

B. 'Pollux' needs very high humidity and so must be grown in either a greenhouse or terrarium. It can be started from either a leaf or stem cutting.

The most mature plant I have observed was 15" to 18" high and filled an eight-inch pot.

Given that the two species parents have pink flowers, as do the majority of rexes, B. 'Pollux' probably flowers pink in the late fall or winter.

The largest leaves on this plant were about two inches long and about as wide.

As with many rexes and upright rhizomatous types, this plant is very susceptible to mildew and should be grown with an active anti-fungal program.

