



photo by Paul Tsamtsis

Begonia 'Tom Ment'

by Paul Tsamtsis

B. 'Tom Ment' is one of three popular canes hybridized by Tom Mentelos. The other two are B. 'Tom Ment II' and B. 'Fabulous Tom.' The Thompsons, in their book, *Begonias: The Complete Reference Guide*, list it as cane-like, intermediate in height. The flowers are pink-orange and are ever-blooming and profuse. Intermediate height means that a well-grown plant will be between 2 and 4 feet tall.

Mentelos released it in 1973. He submitted it to the ABS for registration and received number 350.

It is a cross between B. 'Di-Erna' (deep coral flowers) and B. 'Orange Rubra' (spectacular orange flowers) The leaves have spots which do not disappear at maturity and add to the plant's appeal.

This is an easy-to-grow cane that is perfect for the beginner. But because it blooms profusely in a somewhat unusual color, it makes it a desirable plant for advanced growers, too.

Because of its propensity to branch from below the soil level, it gives rise to a nice full plant without too much attention. This branching habit also makes it a great candidate for hanging baskets.

This plant grows relatively fast. It propagates easily from cuttings, but remember that the lowest node on the cutting should not have had a bloom rising from it. A cutting cannot branch from nodes that had a bloom cluster and that means that such a cutting will not develop into a bushy plant.

This plant was the seed parent of my first cross which was with B. *maculata* var. *wightii*, the cane with wide spaces between the nodes and very pronounced spots on the leaves. This cross gave rise to B. 'Amelia,' B. 'MaryAnn Flunker,' and B. 'Catherine.'

As to pests, this hybrid is relatively pest-free. It is not particularly prone to mildew except in the late fall and winter. So a systemic fungicide spray in early fall will make this plant even more carefree to grow.

