



# Begonias 101: An Introduction to Begonias

Courtesy of the Houston Astros Branch, the International Database of Begoniaceae, and the American Begonia Society

## Species vs. Hybrid

Species - a plant as it grows in nature, a "wild" begonia

- Propagation by seed (self-cross) produces the same type plant as the parent.

Hybrid - a variety created by crossing two different types of plants.

- Propagation by seed produces a different type plant than the parent(s)

## Growth Habits/ Types of Begonias

### Cane-like - Angel Wing, or Trout Leaf Begonias.

Stems erect or semi-erect with bamboo-like nodes

Does better in filtered sunlight, not a deep shade plant.

Propagation technique: stem cuttings

Prune in winter or early spring to control size

### Shrub-like - Bushy, branches easily.

Does not send up the long bamboo-like canes of a cane-like type.

Usually seasonal bloomers, mostly fall & winter

Propagation technique: stem cuttings

### Rhizomatous - Easy to grow, more tolerant of indoors, few disease issues.

Has rhizomes (creeping stems), which store food and water. Blooms winter to early spring.

Sensitive to over watering or over-potting.

Need bright, indirect light.

Propagation techniques: leaf cuttings, leaf wedges/squares or rhizome tips.

### Rhizomatous > Rex Cultorum

They like cool, humid conditions so they look their best in spring and fall.

Best colors are in cool conditions, often they change color dramatically when purchased or brought indoors. Winter versus Summer color changes as well.

If indoors consider a terrarium or aquarium, where humidity can be kept very high. These plants hate indoor heating & AC, too dry.

Propagation techniques: leaf cuttings, leaf wedges/squares or rhizome tips.

### Rhizomatous > Upright Jointed Stem

Below ground rhizome with stems sent above ground.

Usually stem, with swollen leaf nodes, appears jointed.

Usually summer into fall blooming.

Propagation techniques: leaf cuttings, leaf wedges/squares or stem and rhizome tip cuttings.

### Thick Stem

This group is poorly described, it attempts to lump a bunch of dissimilar plants together, and just confuses most people.

Generally poor branching, tend to single stem or few stems.

Stems are thick, and leaves are usually mostly at the top of the plant, the lower leaves having fallen off.

Propagation technique: stem cuttings, seed.



# Begonias 101: An Introduction to Begonias

Courtesy of the Houston Astros Branch, the International Database of Begoniaceae, and the American Begonia Society

## **Trailing / Scandent**

This stemmed, trailing plants that may or may not clamber up trees and surrounding plants.

Propagation by stem cuttings.

Flowering season usually spring into summer, but it can vary.

Some are quite fragrant.

## **Tuberous/semi-tuberous**

These plants like bright sun with daytime temperatures around 60F and night temperatures in the high 40's to 50's. Not tolerant at all of high temperatures (above 80F), these are rarely grown in the southern US.

Flowering begins in summer.

Propagation used to be only from tubers, now mostly from seed.

## **Tuberous/semi-tuberous > xHiemalis**

Commonly known as Rieger or Elatior Begonias.

A cross of tuberous begonia and *Begonia socotrana* (from the Island of Socotra).

Winter flowering! Different from most begonias, primarily sold as a flowering indoor plant. Long lasting under indoor conditions.

Extremely sensitive to overwatering. Propagation is by stem cuttings.

## **Tuberous/semi-tuberous > xCheimantha**

Fall flowering –so a good winter houseplant. Similar to xHiemalis.

Must be grown from tissue culture, then multiplied by stem cuttings.

## **Semperflorens**

Extremely easy, bulletproof.

Nearly full sun to shade –tolerate a wide range of conditions.

Flowering almost year-round.

Propagation by seed, stem cuttings, and division of older clumps.

## **Semperflorens > Dragon Wing**

Extremely easy, bulletproof.

Nearly full sun to shade –tolerate a wide range of conditions.

Flowering almost year-round.

Propagation by seed, stem cuttings, and division of older clumps.

NOTES: