



ABS Hybrids: the people and the plants

Buxton Branch of the American Begonia Society

Bob Hamm

- Excellent propagator and grower
- I had B. 'Bob Hamm', realized named for him, and got me interested in the people and the plants
- Very friendly and active with begonias
- Has had a big collection of begonias, including species, and has sold begonias on Ebay
- Belongs to the Joan Coulat, Sacramento Branch

Bobbie Price

- Lives in Ft. Worth; also belongs to Dallas and Mae Blanton branches
- ABS member since 1982 or 1983
- Bobbie's mom, beefsteak that she loved, "don't you play in that room, you'll break my begonias!"

Awards:

- December, 2015, received an award for over 5,000 hours of service to FWBG
- Over 20 years of volunteer involvement with the FWBG
- Learned about the collection when on very day Bobbie was graduating from Master Gardener course, did a tour of the collection and that was all it took.
- May 2016, SW Region recognized Bobbie as "Ambassador for the Begonia," "there isn't any place she goes that she doesn't say, have you seen our begonia collection?"

Favorite things about begonias:

- Never gets tired when working with begonias; loses track of time
- Species in the FWBG collection "are my babies.", loves to take care of them.

Five favorite begonias

- "I love every one of them."
- 'Bobbie Price'
- 'Priceless' yellow blooms, cane
- crassicaulis, "one of my favorites"
- U485
- Sericoneura, "just love"

Phone conversation concluded with: Begonia world is "the love of my live"

Brad Thompson

- Wonderful hybridizer, creating new hybrids since 1988
 - Has hybridized 100s of begonias
- Served as editor of The Begonian
- Created his website, Brad's Begonia World, a great resource for learning about different types of begonias, care and culture, growing for show, etc.

From a Begonian article about Brad:

His handiwork was everywhere at the Convention! He worked the computer for the show registration, his artwork adorned the convention literature, his framed artwork went to show winners, the boutique offered more of his works.

Charles Jaros

Has been an ABS member for 44 years; joined when he was 17-years old.

Works for Customs & Border Protection in their communications/intelligence center here in Orlando; this past May I have 40 years with the Federal Government.

Was ABS president twice (the only person to do so),

ABS show co-chair along with Johanna Zinn,

U numbers

Has donated very many plants for sales at convention

National award established in his name: The Executive Board is working to finalize the establishment of a new ABS National Award in honor of Charles Jaros. This award will highlight endeavors to educate the

membership of the Society through the selfless sharing of extensive, comprehensive knowledge of Begonias.

Don Miller

- Has written many articles for The Begonian
- Begonia 'Don Miller' was hybridized by Naron Stewart of Bulverde, Tx. in 1991.
- Traveled all over the world to Botanical gardens to look at Begonias.
- Now is growing Begonias and other plants for Steve Rosenbaum and the on-line Nursery at stevesleaves.com
- Very active with ABS and SW Region, does volunteer work at the FWBG, and works at Steve's Leaves.
- Bobbie Price: We would sink at the FWBG without Don Miller. He knows the Millie Book. He's a dictionary on begonias.
 - Most fantastic grower and person. The sweetest. His mom was also an ABS member.
 - Fantastic volunteer at FWBG.
 - Active in ABS and the SW Region
 - He spoke at the Eastern Region convention on minis.

In 1992, Stew (Naron) and Barbara Stewart crossed B. U062 and B. 'Torch' which yielded two spectacular seedlings. These were eventually introduced as Begonia 'Don Miller' and Begonia 'Maurice Amey.'

Freda Holley

- 2013 Alfred D. Robinson Medal for B. 'Holley's Beauty'
- 2012 for B. 'Pagoda'
- 2011 for B. 'Taylor Anne'
- 2010 Herbert P. Dyckman Award
- 2005 Robinson Medal for B. 'Holleymoon'
- 2003 Rudolf Ziesenhenné Award
- 2000 Even Kenworthy Gray Award
- Purchased her first begonia in Austin, from a small nursery, a semp, and fell in love with it.
- Learned of ABS when read about ABS in a magazine
- Joined ABS in 1972
- Retired in 1989, and went to her first ABS gathering in 1994; in Ft. Worth (SW Region Get-together).
- "People were just so friendly."
- After retiring, grew a lot of begonias!
- Always loved starting from seeds; begonia seeds were a bit attraction
- Next year, the convention was in OK City, and was "so overwhelmed," Irene Nuss, Mabel Corwin, Rudy, were there. "It was like seeing all the stars of the begonia society."
- Freda did the SW Leaflet; SW knew she could write, so asked her to do it.
- She purchased and went through all the back issues of The Begonian, always learning and enjoying this.
- Anne Salisbury asked Freda to edit the Begonian; she learned so much from doing this.
- Jack Golding was Nomenclature Editor then, and he was a stickler and another opportunity to learn.
- Opportunity to learn, the friendly people
- Freda's Folly – Brad Thompson, rhizomatous

- Freda – Bobbie Price, rex

Helene Jaros

Charles:

- Here is a photo of mom receiving the Eva Kenworthy Gray award in 2002.
- Mom joined the ABS in 1972 and was a member until her death in 2004.
- She was a member of the Miami Branch, Palm Beaches Branch (charter member) and Ft. Lauderdale Branch.
- She was Co-Chair of the 1978 Eastern Region Convention in Miami (the east coast branches used to have a region like the SW Region).
The other co-chair was Alma Crawford for which there is a begonia named for B. 'Lady Alma Crawford'. Mom has 3 begonias named for her B. Helene Jaros, B. 'Sister Jaros both hybridized by Paul Lowe and B. 'Lady Helene Jaros' hybridized by Tim Anderson. In fact my whole family has begonias named for them B. 'Chuck Jaros' is named after my father.

Helene was an ABS judge

Helene did most of the growing

Hugh McLaughlan

From Samuel and Betty Kennedy, Scotland

Hugh and his wife Betty were visiting their daughter and her husband in America, and as Hugh was interested in begonias she took them along to a flower show in the area where they met a very young Charles Jaros and his parents.

From then on until the year that Hugh died he visited USA and gave many talks on his life in 'show business', and growing begonias.

He was also responsible for introducing new varieties of begonia into Great Britain.

He was Vice- President of the Scottish Begonia Society for more than 10 years, and became President in 2000.

However due to ill health he retired as President in 2002, but Scottish Begonia Society Presidents always are given a new title of Honorary Past President.

Hugh was born in Hamilton in Lanarkshire, Scotland, served in the Second World War, attaining the rank of Captain.

His marital home was in Bishopbriggs, Glasgow, where he stayed until he died.

After the war he and his wife Betty took to the stage and performed 'acrobatic' acts 'Raoul and Bette' all over the world and performed in front of 'royalty' of many countries.

After their daughter was born, Hugh returned to his trade as an electrician working in Scottish Television as a lighting engineer until his retirement at 65.

Scottish Begonia Society supplied information to Antoon Hoefnagels with his entry of B. Hugh D. McLaughlan as the best new plant introduction into cultivation in Europe 2014.

Charles Jaros remembers:

- Was a member of ABS and a Banquet speaker at several ABS conventions.
- Hugh traveled all over the world in pursuit of his begonia passion, including rainforests
- Was instrumental in promoting non-tuberous types of begonias in Scotland.

From Antoon Hoefnagels, Holland, the hybridizer

- When on a trip to Scotland, I sent a plant to Samuel Kennedy to show them there. And that moment it was new and no named, so I ask them to name this plant.
- So the person Hugh McLaughlan was a Begonia lover from Scotland and was past away. So the during the meeting the name was born.
- "So for me, a perfect name named for a Begonia and named after a colorful begonia friend".

Irene Nuss

- Began hybridizing just for the fun of it, and created more than 50 named varieties of cane begonias.
- One of the best hybridizers in ABS history.
- Believed in having distinctions between her plants.
- Would throw hybrids away if she thought them unworthy, lacking distinction, so that no one else would retrieve it and grow them up.

Jan Brown:

- Irene Nuss was my mentor and role model
- Irene said, "if you belong to an organization, then you help!"

From an article in the LA Times, *Begonias and Beyond*:

- Received a special recognition award from the Huntington Botanical Gardens, along with Rudy and Brad Thompson, celebrating people whose passion for plants has led them into something that benefits other gardeners.

Jan Brown

- Home branch: Westchester (also Palos Verdes, South Bay, Marge Lee, Orange County, Joan Coulat, SW Region)
- Jan has always loved ABS
- Irene Nuss belonged to Westchester, and was Jan's mentor.
- Irene took Jan to her first convention, 1992, Oklahoma City, and put her to work: Irene said, "if you belong to an organization, then you help!"
- Ruth Pease also belonged to Westchester and was also a great hybridizer and mentor.
- Joined ABS in 1991, and was asked right away to be involved with ABS conventions.
- A past ABS president, currently heads the ABS Bookstore.
- At the 2016 ABS Convention, \$2300 in book sales at the boutique
- People consider Jan to be a "mediator"

Brad Thompson has hybridized an additional begonia for Jan, B. 'Lady Brown'

Favorite begonias (loves thick-stemmed)

- wollnyi
- aconitifolia
- 'Janet Brown'
- luxurians
- 'Chuck Jaros'

Joan Coulat

- Joined ABS in 1974. At the time, she was going to American River College studying horticulture.
- Joan went to one branch meeting, "and was hooked."
- For ABS, has served as national show chair and also co-chair for San Francisco convention
- Sacramento branch is named for Joan
- A prior VP of ABS

Has 4 begonias named for her:

- Joan Coulat (Rudy)
- Curly Coulat (Paul Tsamtsis)
- Madame Coulat (Brad Thompson)
 - Joan's Fantasy (Paul)
- Joan worked at Capital Nursery, Sacramento, for 24 years.
 - When she began, there were zero begonias in the nursery.
 - After 24 years, when the nursery closed, there were "begonias galore."
- In Sacramento, Joan is known as "the begonia lady." Six months ago, having surgery, anesthesiologist said, "aren't you the begonia lady?", proceeded to ask Joan questions while prepping her, and went to visit her after the surgery.

"I love begonias" "begonias are my life"

Joan's 6-year old granddaughter has traveled a lot with her parents, and brought Joan a begonia from Madagascar.

- This granddaughter loves begonias, and recently asked Joan for a polilloensis, even pronouncing it correctly, and letting Joan know that she'd be able to set up a terrarium for it.

Kit Jeans Mounger

Prolific hybridizer

Recently has followed ABS on its Facebook page, commenting on posts, and most recently a post on B. 'Pink Minx', which she hybridized

Mary Bucholtz

Lives in Florida

Mary joined ABS in 1970s.

How she found out about begonias: Aunt saw one on a porch and brought it home. It was B. 'Thurstonii.' Had a friend who had a greenhouse, went there, and rows and rows of begonias, all for .50 cents each!

Did branch relations for ABS for 16-18 years. Got several new branches going.

Currently there isn't a branch close to her.

Has written many articles for The Begonian

Was an ABS VP

U numbers: Mary and Charles try to describe them, give them a number, and have written publications on the U numbers.

Has judged for ABS shows

Hobbies: needlepoint.

Favorite begonias:

- 'Wanda'
- any begonia with yellow flowers
- Pink African violet, a semp, but it isn't a semp, blooms and is as happy as can be
- sizemoreae

In ABS, met great people, and they are all over the place. Very few people that you don't want to be around.

Mary Sakamoto

- Has lived in Orange County, CA for 50 years.
- An ABS member for 33 years
- Belongs to: Orange County, Long Beach Parent (first branch ever formed), Palos Verdes, Westchester, SW Region
- Has served as: ABS Prez, 2nd VP, and for past 11 years treasurer for Orange County
- Became a senior ABS judge in 2000
- For many years, has served as ABS Convention Advisor
- Became interested in begonias years ago, when saw a plant at a nursery, in a wooden hanging basket. Went back, bought it (rhizomatous), and that was it.
- Brad Thompson has hybridized and named several begonias after Mary, including one called, 'Bloody Mary.'
- Favorite begonias: 'Irene Nuss' and 'Jumbo Jet', both canes
- "Begonias are fun and relaxing to work with.

Maurice Amey

- Lived in Dallas
- Very active in the SW Region, described as a worker bee and having a lively, very fun personality.
- In 1992, Stew (Naron) and Barbara Stewart crossed B. U062 and B. 'Torch' which yielded two spectacular seedlings. These were eventually introduced as Begonia 'Don Miller' and Begonia 'Maurice Amey.'
- Maurice Amey was an accomplished begonia grower
- He served as Editor for the Southwest Region Leaflet,

- Convention Chair and Master of Ceremonies of Get Togethers,
 - and received every service award in the Dallas Branch and Southwest Region.
- Maurice was obsessed with begonias and loved sharing his knowledge with others.

From a plant blog:

Quite a few years ago I went to a begonia convention in Texas. There were some extraordinarily gorgeous begonias there for student judges to practice on; some of them were begonias I grew, but never that beautifully. Turned out at least some of them were grown by Maurice Amey. Later during the convention--don't remember the exact circumstances--I ran into him with no one else around. Think we were early for some meeting. I was happy to have a chance to visit and talk begonias with him. He said sometimes people were amazed to learn he was a serious grower but that he 'only' grew begonias. "I only grow begonias. If I want to grow a philodendron, I find a begonia that looks like a philodendron. If I want an ivy, I grow a begonia that looks like an ivy...For all of you who are new to begonias, look at some pictures of begonias and see how much variety there is. Some of my favorite begonias are the ones that make people say, 'THAT'S a Begonia?!' -- Maurice Amey

Michael Ludwig

Herbert P. Dyckman Award
 ABS president
 Seed Fund
 KOLZ, founded in 2006, an important archive of begonia study.

Many other roles:

- ABS Awards Committee Chair,
- Leader for all, especially SO CA, with interest in begonias and sharing knowledge

Millie Thompson

- Showing is Sharing Award for Buxton
- Millie Thompson Publication Fund: assists in funding new written material on begonias
- Along w/her husband, wrote "the bible" of begonias. Very scholarly
- Some efforts now to locate her son and see if ABS can get rights to reprint the book

Described as:

- Very petite
- Very quiet and shy.

Wanda remembers:

- Lived on Long Island
- Were members of Buxton
- Millie and Ed were both good teachers of begonias.
- They gave most of their collection to 2 botanic gardens.

From her obituary:

- Internationally recognized begonia expert
- Millie was known for her meticulous research and tireless devotion to making hard to find information about begonias available to botanists and horticulturists around the world.
- Millie and Ed came to the attention of ABS in September, 1970, at the Fifth Eastern Begonia Convention in Westbury, Long Island when she won "Best in Show" for a wonderfully grown *B. foliosa*.
- In addition to her research efforts, Ed and Millie were outstanding growers. Southampton College near their home had a greenhouse which Ed and Millie rebuilt for their "begonia museum." Those of us who

were fortunate enough to visit the “begonia museum” saw hundreds of perfectly grown begonias beautifully displayed. The greenhouse was vandalized in an incident that was devastating to the Thompsons, which caused them to retreat from their begonia activities which at the time was dominating their lives.

Morris Mueller

- From Sacramento.
- Was a math teacher.
- Was an ABS president
- SOS program participant

When passed away: 40% of his estate to ABS, 10% to Sacramento branch, rest went to animal humane organizations.

To ABS:

- Scholarship
- Collecting begonias
- Paying for research expeditions

Wanda:

- Did a lot of traveling and collecting
- He provided ABS with bogneri
- Originally from Missouri, and moved to CA

Randy Kerr

Randy MK2 is a beautiful cultivar, created by ABS member Joe Romeo of Adelaide South Australia. The parents are B. Silver Shimmer (pollen) and B. longiciliata (pod), formerly known as B. sizemoreae.

Randy MK2 is named for Joe's friend and ABS member, Randy Kerr. Randy is passionate about species conservation and is a co-chair of the ABS Unidentified Species

Committee. Randy created a website to share his love of Begonia species, www.begoniaspecies.org.

Pictured head shot is of Joe Romeo in Sacramento at the 2019 American Begonia Annual Convention, where Randy MK2 won the vote for Best in Division for Commercial Grower and then went on to win the popular vote for the Peoples' Choice Award. Also pictured are Joe's original Randy MK2 and the 2019 People's Choice Award winner grown by Dennis Wheeler.

When creating Randy MK2, one seedling stood out to Joe due to its strong growth and pleasing coloration. This plant was unique, having stood taller and having larger leaves than the others. Joe has been hybridizing begonias for many years. During the proving process, he has lost many beautiful plants over winter as they would go dormant and fail to return . B. Randy MK2 does not have a dormancy period. Joe attributes this to the genes of B. longiciliata, as this trait is also present in other hybrids with this parent.

Randy:

A co-chair of U Numbers, Past ABS secretary, Very passionate about conservation, and has a website on conservation, Very generously shares begonias, knowledge, and enthusiasm.

Rudy Zieshenne

Prolific hybridizer

Hybridized begonias named for his sons: Fred (Freddie and Red Fred) and Skeez. (Skeezzer)

Wanda:

- A fantastic teacher of begonias.
- Great grower.
- Lived in Santa Barbara

Received s special recognition award from the Huntington for his writings about begonias.

- Rudolf Zieshenne (1911-2005), was the dean of Southern California begonia growers—affectionately known as “Mr. Begonia”

- Ziesenhenne soon took charge of the American Begonia Society's research division. He handled nomenclature from 1940 to 1942, and again from 1953 to 1978. This was an appropriate role for him, as he belonged to both the American Society of Taxonomists and the International Association of Plant Taxonomists. Nomenclature was crucial for the expanding world of begonias.
- Ziesenhenne photographed each plant and drew its parts with exceptional accuracy. His descriptions were crisp, and he taught himself Latin to comply with academic requirements.
- In addition to his prolific hybridizing work, Ziesenhenne collaborated with Thomas MacDougall, an amateur plant collector and naturalist from New York. MacDougall worked as a landscape architect, but, during the winters, he visited the Mexican states of Chiapas and Oaxaca looking for new begonias and *Echeveria* species. In all, he brought back 326 species, although some were duplicates. He wrote about his collecting trips in *The Begonian*
- In addition to these seminal contributions to the world of begonias, Ziesenhenne further transformed the field by issuing *A Suggested Guide to Classification of Begonias for Show Purposes*. Judging the entries at begonia shows had been a hit-or-miss affair until he brought clarity and logic to the process. He recommended that each plant start out with one hundred points; judges would then deduct points for various flaws until they reached a final number. This made a huge difference, allowing all branches of the American Begonia Society to operate in the same way. Thus, an award given in Boston or San Diego had the same meaning.

Thelma O'Reilly

- Lived in San Diego
- Her work with ABS goes back to the 30s
- Was a member of several branches, and went to all of their meetings
- Her husband, Tim, was a worker bee
- For many years was long-time director of the U numbers.
- Has been instrumental in the naming of several new begonia species.
- A good hybridizer
- A very knowledgeable woman
- Several people told me they would enjoy getting together with Thelma and arguing over plants.
- A lot of fun to talk to.
- Thelma O'Reilly Fund: provides funds for the reprinting of written material on begonias

Jan:

- "An unbelievable force."
- Thelma worked with Jack Golding and Carrie K: They were a trio and experts. They did books for the Smithsonian.
- Thelma did the round robin and also MAL
- Thelma was a great hybridizer
- Thelma would have an article each month in the *Begonian* in the 70s and 80s
- Thelma is from CT

Virginia Jens

- ABS President
- ABS Judge
- Very active in Palm Beaches Branch
- Always sharing of her time, answering questions

Wanda Macnair

Charles:

“Wanda was the first person I met when I went to my first ABS function, which was the 1975 Eastern Region Convention that was held in Boston. Wanda was, of course, plant sales chair and I had brought some plants for the sale and was promptly put to work. Wanda made me and my mother feel so very welcome. It is something I will never forget.”

- Buxton president
- Buxton membership secretary
- Buxton plant sales
- Plant sales for Buxton shows and also ABS Conventions (SW Region?)
- National show award named for Dick and Wanda, best contained atmosphere.
- Belongs to Buxton, RI, Joan Coulet/Sacramento, SW Region
- Has been an ABS member for over 45 years.
- Dick and Wanda received the Dyckman award
- Has received several SW Region awards

Wendy Corby

- Joined ABS in high school. A senior.
- Then went to college, etc., and rejoined 20 years later.
- Rejoined 2009, but didn't go to meetings for a while because of time conflict
- Went on 2014 Sacramento 'tour, and "I got sucked in again."
- For her 50th birthday, the whole family went to Boston for the convention and to spent time together
- ABS Treasurer
- For Sacramento, newsletter editor and ND
- For Wendy, ABS isn't just about the begonias, not just sharing a love of begonias, but a nice social get-together; the community
- 2016 year of LA convention.
 - First and only time met Brad Thompson, creator of B. 'Lady Corby'
 - Wendy had downloaded his articles from his website, and called Brad about making it into a book.
 - She printed the book. Brad did email Wendy to say he wanted a copy!
 - Wendy met Brad at the Kartuz tour. He wanted to name a rhizomatous begonia for Wendy, but Wendy said that wouldn't survive the heat in Sacramento and suggested a cane. She picked one up, Brad said that would be good for the hot weather in Sacramento, and that was it!

---At the National Convention in Los Wendy Corby was awarded the **Rudolf Ziesenhenn Award**. Wendy's editorial achievement is the publication of a book titled Brad's Begonia World (2015) written by Brad Thompson and edited and compiled by Wendy Corby.

---The whole project started when Wendy found a great set of articles on the website www.BradsBegoniaWorld.com. Wendy downloaded the articles to print for reading (about 50 pages). Then she decided to insert pictures for each article from the International Database of Begoniaceae (www.ibegonias.com). This Word document quickly grew and grew. By the time she finished, it was nearly 200 pages.

---Wendy emailed the document to Brad and asked for permission to print his collection of articles. Brad agreed, sight unseen, and sent Wendy some additional articles he had written that were not on his web- site. Wendy also emailed the photographers whose pictures were included for their permission to use the pictures in the book, and everyone graciously agreed.

---After receiving a draft copy of the book, Brad wrote to Wendy, "Thanks for going to so much trouble and for the great work you did on it. I really was impressed." "Thank you very much for doing so much work on my behalf."

And there are so many more:

Mabel Corwin

Mabel Corwin – One of the best begonia growers I have ever met and a former ABS President and a very, very gracious lady. Also a prolific hybridizer; some of her hybrids include 'Lalomie', 'Casey Corwin' and 'Ralph Corwin' (also her husband) (Charles)

1988 Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

1987 Alfred D. Robinson Medal for B. 'Christmas Candy'

1981 Herbert P. Dyckman Award

Tim and Anne Anderson

Prolific hybridizers

Active and generous ABS members over many years

Bessie Wilson Raymond Buxton

Buxton Branch named for her

1955 Eva Kenworthy Gray Award

We are named Buxton in honor of the late Bessie Raymond Buxton, a great horticulturist, speaker, writer, member, promoter and lover of begonias. In 1939, a thick-stemmed begonia was named after her by T.H. Everett, and we have taken that begonia as our society's mascot and logo.

Wrote several books about begonias, including Begonias and how to Grow Them

- Named after Bessie Raymond Buxton in 1939
- Introduced by Thomas H. Everett(1903-1986)
 - New York botanical Society
- Thick stem begonia
- Rounded waterlily shaped leaves
- Umbels of pink flowers, bloom in winter
- Also known as the Upright Pond Lily begonia

Gene Joyner – Member of the Palm Beaches branch, from Palm Beach Country Extension Agent and owner of Fabulous Acres in West Palm Beach. This Begonia was hybridized by Paul Lowe. (from Charles)