



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum¹

Edward F. Gilman, Teresa Howe²

Introduction

These tough little compact garden plants reach barely a foot high but provide almost continuous color in full sun or partial shade locations during the warm months of the year (Fig. 1). The single or double flowers are available in various shades of red, pink, or white, and the shiny, large, succulent leaves are either green, variegated, or bronze-colored. It is the leaf coloration which attracts many people to this plant. The bronze-leaved begonias are better suited to full sun locations and plants will flower from spring until killed back by frost. Plant 12 inches apart in a bed to form a solid mass of color. If desired, plants can be dug up and potted, cut back by one-third, and will continue to bloom indoors throughout the winter in a very sunny window.

General Information

Scientific name: *Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum*

Pronunciation: bee-GO-nee-uh x sem-pur-FLOR-enz-kull-TOR-um

Common name(s): Wax Begonia, Fibrous Begonia

Family: *Begoniaceae*

Plant type: annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: May; Jun; Jul

Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun; Jul; Aug

Planting month for zone 9: Apr; May; Sep; Oct

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Feb; Mar; Oct; Nov; Dec

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter



Figure 1. Wax Begonia.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: .5 to 1.5 feet

Spread: .5 to 1 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-63, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Teresa Howe, coordinator - Research Programs/Services, Gulf Coast REC, Bradenton, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrulate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: palmate
Leaf type and persistence: not applicable
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: purple or red; variegated
Fall color: not applicable
Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: white; pink; salmon
Flower characteristic: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit

Fruit cover: no fruit
Fruit color: not applicable
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance:
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: not applicable

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Begonias can be propagated by seed, leaf cuttings or soft wood cuttings. Some may form many shoots from the ground and can be divided. The seed is very fine and may be hard for inexperienced gardeners to handle. Plant seed in a light, well-drained media kept uniformly moist. Sow the seed thinly and do not cover it. Germination is best one-foot under fluorescent lights left on 24-hours. The seed germinates in one to two weeks at temperatures between 70 and 75-degrees F. In USDA hardiness zones 9 and 10 plant in late fall to early winter for winter color.

Cultivars are available in various heights from 6 to 18 inches, various foliage colors and various flower colors.

Thrips cause irregular reddish brown lines on the upper sides of the leaves. Spots form on the underside of the leaves, especially along the main veins. The leaves may be deformed.

Black vine weevil grub eats the roots causing wilting and death.

Mites stunt the new growth and form a webbing in the foliage.

Pests and Diseases

Begonias may be infected with powdery mildew, especially if growing in the shade.

Stem rot causes the stalks to rot and collapse. The rotted areas are usually black. Avoid crowding and remove any infected plants.

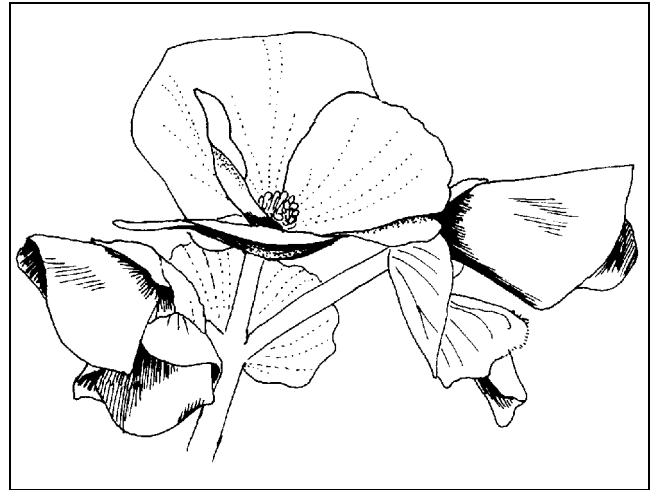


Figure 3. Flower of Wax Begonia