**Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum**

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### 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-enk-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
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.