

Cane-like Begonias



Begonia maculata var. elegantissima

There are over 200 different species and many cultivars of cane-like begonias. Their ornamental value is appreciated and their large and usually long-lasting pendulous flower clusters are widely admired.

Cane-like begonias are a great garden plant and need not be confined to pot culture. They have erect or semi-erect stems with swollen nodes similar to bamboo. Most send up new shoots from the base of the plant. There are many leaf shapes and colours varying from dark to light green. Silver and white dots and splashes are prominent on many.

Leaf surfaces are either free of hairs or sparsely hairy. Most have a glossy or satiny surface although there are some that are dull. They vary in height from dwarf types to those that grow well over two metres outdoors.

The varieties differ in growth habit, from low growing miniatures to tall growing begonias. Most canes produce long-lasting pendulous flowers of various colours ranging from white through pink, salmon, orange, red and rose. Many are ever blooming while others are seasonal.

Growing conditions: Cane-like begonias need plenty of light and at least six hours of sunlight a day – preferably filtered. In most areas of Australia

cane-like types should be protected from the mid-day sun during the hottest part of the year.

They will tolerate a wide range of temperatures but grow best between 14°C and 25°C. Most will thrive in higher temperatures if they are watered sufficiently.

Growing in a pot enables you to move the plant until the best situation for growing is found. Terracotta or plastic pots may be used taking care not to over-water in winter.

Cane-like begonias flourish in semi-shaded gardens in frost free zones. As with most begonias, it is best to water early in the morning.

Potting Mix: these begonias like one part sand, one part good potting mix and one part compost as a standard mix. A little blood and bone can be added.

Canes also benefit from long life fertilizer in spring, a top dressing of animal manure occasionally or a liquid feed.

Pruning: this is usually done in late winter or early spring. Young plants are not heavily pruned – just very lightly pinched out at the top. Older plants can be cut back hard. This encourages new growth from the base.

Tip Cutting: cuttings of 10cm – 15cm can be used for propagation. Coarse sand is good or any open rooting medium. e.g. Perlite, cocopeat and vermiculite makes an excellent propagation mix.

Melbourne Begonia Society Inc.

Email: begoniasmelb@live.com.au

Website: www.begoniasmelb.org.au

Meetings: Tucker Road Bentleigh Primary School

16 Tucker Road, Bentleigh 3204

Third Saturday of: February, April, June, August and October,
& First Saturday of December.

Meetings start at 1:30 pm

Visitors welcome

8/2011