

Semi-tuberous Begonias



Begonia dregei

Most Semi-tuberous begonias come from South America and a few from Bolivia and Brazil. One favourite is *Begonia dregei*, also known as ‘The Maple Leaf Begonia’, which was the first to be discovered by JF Drege near the coast of South Africa on shaded slopes in the Cape of Good Hope.

The distinctive characteristic of this group is the thickening of the stem at the base, which then tapers away to slender branches. They are an interesting arty looking group, makes them ideal as a bonsai like plant as they resemble small trees. Their preference for under potting also contributes to growing them in this manner. They respond to pruning to shape to please the eye. Small white flowers are produced in spring and summer.

In cool conditions they cease growing and may lose some leaves, but do not usually become totally dormant. It is wise to spray with an anti fungal spray if conditions are changeable to avoid mildew.

Semi tuberous grow well under shade cloth in an area with good air circulation, if in a frost free zone, or they can be grown in controlled conditions in a glasshouse.

Propagate from stem cuttings in spring or when the plants are actively growing.

Begonia dregei grows very well from seed, and the new seedlings develop the swollen base very quickly.

There are not many semi tuberous hybrids. Begonia 'Weltonensis' is a lovely old one, still in cultivation today. Different forms of the maple leaf begonia were used in hybridising miniature Rex and tuberous hybrids.

Semi tuberous begonias are a delightful and rewarding group of begonias to grow.

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