

# *Shrub-like Begonias*



*Begonia cubensis*

**Shrub-like begonias** are a group of 350 different species mostly from Central and South America. Shrub-like begonias are great garden performers as they are hardy and many flower all year round, and all tend to have a longer flowering period than other begonias.

The group is divided roughly into the following classes:

**Hairy-leaved:** Surface of the leaf is hairy regardless of type of hairiness.

**Bare-leaved:** Surface of the leaf is glabrous (free of hair). Further divided into large, medium and small leaved. Some can be grown into standards.

**Distinctive Foliage:** This special group demand special culture. The designation of distinctive foliage is the result of subjective judgment and opinions vary.

**Miniature and Dwarf:** There are plants of small stature growing to only 20cms. Some need special terrarium attention but not all.

**Growing Conditions:** Begonias of this group are bushy and can be improved by light pruning and removal of woody growth. Most prefer semi shade especially the hairy-leaf types, but those hybrids with tougher leaves with Semperflorens background enjoy full sun.

**Temperature:** Shrub-like enjoy a temperature between 11<sup>0</sup>C – 22<sup>0</sup>C. Shrub-like are not demanding as regards humidity, around the 40% is sufficient. Those with distinctive foliage may need higher humidity, or grow best down low in a shade-house or as ground cover under trees, and a few special beauties require terrarium conditions.

**Care:** Potting mix, watering and fertilizing are similar to all other begonias. That is an open mix, water pots when top 1cm – 2cm of soil is dry and fertilise regularly when the plant is in active growth.

**Propagation:** Stem cuttings are the most popular way to increase your stock. Place several stems in each pot to create an attractive plant.

Leaf cuttings are not generally recommended although some of the distinctive leaf types may strike. Seed will only come true from species stock.

*Melbourne Begonia Society Inc.*

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Website: [www.begoniasmelb.org.au](http://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**