

THE TRAILING/SCANDENTS - Ground Covers and Climbers

The begonia family also includes plants most suitable as ground covers and climbers which also excel as basket subjects, and we classify these as trailing-scandent. Some are rampant growers such as *Bs. convolvulacea* and *lobata*, ideal for that tropical garden which you want to grow, be it in a tropical or temperate situation. These ground covers also have a yen for climbing and will move skywards when given the chance. They have no natural means of attachment to trees or fences but somehow manage to reach for the sun, although always grateful for a little help. At least one of the shrub-likes, *B. listada*, also makes a great ground cover in fully shaded locations and is one of my favourite begonias.

These climbers and ground covers are apt, in the right conditions, to grow rapidly and threaten to take over, so that pruning at least annually is necessary, but more often will do no harm.

Garden life-span varies greatly and those used as ground covers will take root at any node in contact with the soil, thus becoming virtually everlasting. Prune out old and superfluous growth as required. Used as climbers they will constantly produce new shoots from the root system and the old growth should be pruned out as necessary. If grown in a hanging basket routine pruning is necessary to keep the plant looking at its best and this will prolong its life to six or more years before replacement is advised.



this shrub-like *B. listada* grown as a ground cover