

THE THICK STEMMED GROUP

Some of the begonias classified as 'Thick Stemmed' are not truly appealing as garden plants, being prone to growing rather tall and gangly, but with diligent care and frequent pruning they can take their place in the garden scheme with pleasing results. *Bs. reniformis* and *vitifolia* are like this. However, there are a number of thick stemmed begonias which make excellent garden feature plants and I include *Bs. egregia*, *parilis*, *ulmifolia* (even though the possums find it a delicacy), *alnifolia* and *multinervia* amongst these. Life expectancy varies greatly with these unusual begonias and I would recommend replacement every five years; however annual pruning will produce new growth from the root systems so a new plant grows every year.



B. egregia a thick-stem left centre and *B. foliosa* to the right

REX BEGONIAS

The Rexes are usually grown as indoor plants although I have seen them used in garden schemes with some success. They are treated as a separate group because they are so very distinctive due to leaf shape, pattern and colour. They are all cultivars having one common ancestor – *Begonia rex*, native to Assam, which has distinctive green leaves with silver banding. If used in the garden they need a brightly lit,