

would give a good account of themselves for as I have already emphasised they are a very hardy lot. Proximity to water is of course beneficial as they require high humidity to grow to perfection.

### **Planting**

When planting begonias whose rhizomes creep over the surface of the garden be extremely careful not to cover the whole of the rhizome as the upper surface should not be covered with soil. In fact I have been warned never to cover the rhizome at all but experience has shown that in the garden setting it is often very difficult to keep leaf litter clear of the rhizomes. We have given up trying to keep all the fallen leaves away from the begonias in the Royal Botanic Gardens and it seems that a light covering of leaf litter does no harm. However, it is wise to keep rhizomes uncovered whenever possible. In pot culture of course it is easy to keep the surface of the mix clear of all plant debris and this is extremely important, for dead plant material on pot surfaces will often attract botrytis, a damaging mildew growth which will attack live plants once established.

Cane-like, shrub-like and semperflorens begonias benefit when planted a little lower in the garden soil than they were in the delivery container. Planting like this will encourage root growth from the newly covered section of stem - remember, they are succulents? This applies at all stages of potting-up or potting-on and especially when first pricking out from the seed bed.

Tuberous types on the other hand, especially the non-stops, should be planted the same depth in the garden as they were in their pots - that is, with the tuber just lightly covered.

### **Fronts and backs**

Many of the upright growing begonias have a front and a back. This is very evident with the tuberous types and the upright growing rhizomatous, and the cane-likes to some extent. Make sure the front is faced correctly when planting.

### **Staking and tying**

Begonias are generally fast growing plants and many of the taller growing types (eg the cane-like begonias and some of the shrub-likes) may need staking in the early stages of development. Use a good quality bamboo or similar wooden stake set in firmly behind the plant. Do not use plastic covered wire twist ties as these will cut into the soft flesh of the begonia. It is better to use a soft tying material such as plastic grafting tape or florists' tape (but please not old nylon stockings - they do make the garden look