

tip pruning will also prevent the rhizome from growing beyond the confines of the container. Those rhizomatous begonias whose rhizomes grow in an upright fashion should be tip pruned once a year, after flowering, to prevent the plant growing tall and ungainly and to encourage lateral rhizomes to form. All the tips removed in this pruning may of course be used as cuttings to produce new plants.

The rhizomatous begonias also need to have all the old leaves removed in late winter so that the spring flowering will be complemented by undamaged new foliage. It's wise to leave the old leaves on the plant during the cold weather as they will help protect the rhizome.

The bedding begonias or semperflorens will benefit from tip pruning in the early stages of growth to encourage laterals to develop, thus producing a more pleasing appearance. They also need severe pruning when they become too leggy, for tip pruning cannot prevent this in the long term. This entails cutting the plant back to within a few centimetres of the soil level, because all new growth will come from the root system and not from the old growth. This pruning is done when needed, but it's wise to avoid winter pruning when growth has slowed or ceased. Fertilise as soon as pruning is done and new growth will appear within a very short time.

Cane-like begonias should be pruned in late winter after flowering has finished. Up to two thirds of the height may be removed without any ill effects, so when you cut be mindful of the eventual height you want your plant to be. Make the cut just above an outward facing bud. Older cane-likes will also need to have all old brown canes removed completely and these will be found in the centre of the plant. Remember that new canes will develop from the root system on the outside of the plant. Tip pruning of cane-likes is not recommended as this will only in rare cases encourage lateral growth.

The shrub-like group mostly relish tip pruning during early growth and this encourages the formation of laterals and helps in the development of a pleasing shape when adulthood is reached. They will then become pleasing garden (or pot) subjects for many years but will eventually need to be pruned hard to rejuvenate. Do this by cutting to within several centimetres of the roots but be warned, there are some shrub-likes which will not recover from hard pruning and this is where it is essential to have available replacement plants grown from cuttings taken before hard pruning is contemplated. *B. sanguinea* is one such.

Thick stemmed begonias such as *B. egregia* which by the way is an excellent garden subject, will produce new growth from the root system so that pruning, when essential, involves removing the old stems just above the ground level. It is best to prune out just a few stems at a time which will allow new stems to