

Another fascinating aspect of this plant family is the diversity of their habitats, ranging from the tropical forest floor in South America to the summer snow line of the Andes Mountains, and all manner of climatic conditions in between. That they have been able to adjust to such great changes in habitat as they moved around the tropical world supports our findings that, far from being delicate indoor specimens, they are in fact most hardy plants, readily assimilated when introduced into the temperate climates and one of the best garden plants available. What a pity it is that the horticultural world knows so little of them and that most nurserymen neither grow nor stock them. The world-wide legions of garden lovers are missing out on one of the greatest gifts of nature – *the Begoniaceae*.



*B.* 'Silver Jewel' planted with Maiden Hair fern