

blooms are held well into winter. One of the very best begonias for that shaded area, especially when used as an underplanting for trees and shrubs. Shallow rooted so will not interfere with other garden plants. Will also do well as a pot subject. Use several plants together for best effect. Propagate from tip cuttings when flowering has finished. Sets seed readily. Should be tip pruned during early growing period (spring, early summer) but after this allow buds to form. Heavy pruning is recommended after flowering.

*B. luxurians*. Listed in the Thompson's book as a shrub-like species, this truly magnificent begonia, native to Brazil, is in my opinion, more cane-like in appearance, growing very tall, to over 2.5 metres (8 feet) with a multiplicity of thick stems with long internodes resembling bamboo. The leaves are palm-like in appearance, much like those of the hemp plant, and the creamy coloured flowers are produced in large clusters for most of the year in those areas of suitable climate. *B. luxurians* will do best in a well lit location, and a short period of early morning sunshine can be beneficial. Being shallow rooted you will find that very tall specimens may need staking in later life. They have a habit of snapping off in windy conditions and very careful tying is necessary. Plant several of these as a truly eye catching feature and such group planting will enable them to support one another. To propagate use tip cuttings, semi-hard or hard, not soft, as thick as a pencil and having at least 3 nodes, trim off excess foliage and strike in an open mix. *B. luxurians* needs annual pruning to keep it looking its best, removing straggly side growths, reducing the height of excessively tall stems and removing altogether old unsightly stems.

*B. metallica*. Red hairs on the base of the white sepals give this mid-summer flowering shrub-like a most pleasing appearance. The metallic looking foliage is an eye pleaser all the year. Growing to a medium height it will enhance any garden scheme where semi-shade lovers are needed. Plant together with *B. scharffii* or *B. scharffiana* for a pleasing contrast in foliage and to give year round flowers between them.