

The genus Begonia is comprised of almost 1,500 species found all across the globe in moist tropical and sub-tropical areas. They are grown as houseplants in cooler climates for their spectacular foliage and beautiful flowers.

There are three main groups of Begonia; tuberous-rooted, fibrous-rooted and rhizomatous. Tuberous begonias have an underground storage organ called a tuber that allows them to die back completely above ground; as long as the tuber is kept from rotting, new foliage will arise from the tuber the following spring. They also have large, showy flowers and are the varieties most often seen for sale as annual plantings outdoors. Fibrous begonias have what most would consider a traditional root system of finely branching roots attached at a central point to stems above ground and do not have a dormant period. Rhizomatous begonias, including Rex begonias, may be used as annuals outside or kept as house plants. They have a creeping horizontal main root (the rhizome) from which flowers and foliage arise.

BEGONIA CARE

LIGHT

Bright indirect light or morning sun. Begonias grown for their foliage, such as Rex begonias, should not be given direct sun. Rhizomatous and fibrous varieties grown for their flowers do best with three to four hours a day of direct sunlight. Tuberous begonias will flower with or without direct sun, but as much indirect light as possible should be given.

WATERING

Begonias resent over watering and will quickly rot. Allow the top inch of soil to dry out before watering, and then moisten thoroughly. As growth slows in the fall, reduce watering for all types. For varieties that go dormant, keep the soil barely moist.

TEMPERATURE

Actively growing begonias prefer temperatures above 50 ° F; dormant tuberous varieties can be stored in the 40's as long as they are dry.

FEEDING

During active growth, (March through September), fertilize one to two times a month with a balanced liquid fertilizer.

REPOTTING

Transplant in spring just before the plant begins to show signs of active growth into a pot 1-2" larger. Any decent houseplant soil can be used. Be careful not to overwater while plants are adjusting to their new container.