

BEGONIACEAE

by

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Herbs or undershrubs, somewhat succulent or woody near the base, often provided with tubers. Leaves alternate, usually unequal-sided, entire, lobed or digitately parted. Stipules caducous or deciduous. Inflorescence consisting of unisexual or bisexual, axillary cymes. Male flowers: sepals 2; petals 2—6 or wanting; stamens numerous to 4. Female flowers: tepals 5—2 or rarely 6—9; ovary inferior or nearly so, usually winged and 3-celled, sometimes incompletely 2—6-celled; styles as many as the cells, free or united at the base, generally 2-cleft; ovules anatropous, numerous, on axillary placentas; fruit a capsule or berry; seeds numerous, minute, straight; endosperm wanting.

About 820 species in 5 genera, in tropical regions except Australia.

Begonia Linnaeus, Spec. Plant. 1056. 1753

Monoecious or dioecious herbs or undershrubs. Male flowers: sepals 2, opposite, valvate; petals 2 or 0; stamens numerous, inserted on the receptacle; filaments free or basically united; anthers of variable shape; rudiment of the ovary wanting. Female flowers: tepals 2—5, rarely 6—9, free, unequal; ovary inferior, 3-winged or 3-angled, 3- (2—5-) celled. Fruit a capsule, 3-angled or unequally 3-winged, opening loculicidally below the persistent perianth limb, rarely fleshy and berry-like and then opening irregularly.

Over 800 species in tropical regions, except Australia.

Begonia retusa O. E. Schulz

O. E. SCHULZ in URBAN, Symb. Ant. 7: 20. 1911; BOLDINGH, Fl. Ned. W. Ind. Eil. 294. 1913; ARNOLDO, Gekw. en nutt. pl. Ned. Ant. 27, fig. 29. 1954; — *B. domingensis* auct. non A. DE CANDOLLE; BOLDINGH, Fl. D. W. Ind. Isl. 1: 139. 1909.

Undershrub, up to 80 cm tall; stems glabrous, succulent, red. Leaves petiolate; the petiole up to 12 cm long, pilose at the apex, the hairs reddish-brown; blade ovate, strongly unequal-sided, acuminate at the apex, cordate at the base, up to 18 × 12 cm, palmately 6—9-veined, glabrous above, pilose or

glabrescent underneath, especially along the veins, the hairs reddish-brown; margin remotely denticulate, the teeth at the end of the principal veins about 5 mm long. Stipules oblong-lanceolate, mucronate, 6—17 × 3—6 mm, deciduous. Inflorescence consisting of unisexual, axillary, few- to many-flowered cymes; peduncle up to 20 cm long, glabrous. Male inflorescence: bracts broadly ovate, truncate at the apex, about 10 mm long, deciduous; pedicels 6—10 mm long; bracteoles elliptic, mucronate, 2 × 1 mm; sepals 2, suborbicular or broadly obovate, 9—13 × 8—11 mm, red or white; petals 2, obovate, about 9 × 6 mm, white; stamens about 20; filaments free, about 1 mm long; anthers linear, 2.5 mm long. Female inflorescence: bracts broadly ovate, truncate at the apex, about 10 mm long, deciduous; pedicels 3.5—5 mm long; bracteoles shortly obovate, truncate or emarginate at the apex, 2.5—3.5 mm long; tepals 5, unequal, narrowly obovate to broadly obovate, up to 10 × 7 mm, rose or white; ovary unequally 3-winged; styles 3, more or less connate at the base, 2-branched and the branches 2-cleft, papillose; capsule 10—12 × 6—8 mm, truncate at the base, wings up to 15 mm at the top, gradually narrowing towards the base; seeds oblong-ellipsoid, obtuse, reticulate, about 0.25 mm long.

St. Bartholomew, Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts, and Montserrat.

Montane forests; cultivated in the islands of the Leeward Group, and in St. Martin.

Vernacular names: begonia, mountain manna (Windward Group).

pelda, ala di anguel (Leeward Group).

SABA: slope of The Mountain, 800 m (Boldingh 1809, fl. & fr. July; 2212, fl. & fr. July; Arnoldo 874, fl. & fr. August; Stoffers 4221, fl. August; 4628, fl. & fr. March); id., 600—800 m (Boldingh 1787, st. July; Stoffers 3261, fl. & fr. May); slope of The Mountain at the side of The Bottom, 400—500 m (Stoffers 3116, fr. Ap.); between Hellsgate and Santa Cruz (Stoffers 3171, fl. May); id., 500—600 m (Stoffers 3456, fl. & fr. May); slope of The Mountain at "Under the Cliff", 680 m (Stoffers 3227, fl. & fr. May).

ST. EUSTATIUS: top of The Quill (Boldingh 472, st. June); *ibid.*, 450 m (Boldingh 382, fr. June); without loc. (v. Groll-Meyer 123, fl. & fr.).