

New Rieger begonia has super-sized blooms



THE SPECTACULAR Schwabenland Rieger begonia with its luxuriant foliage and super-sized flowers is becoming more available and popular in this country.

Nothing warms a flower lover's heart so much as the introduction of a new, larger version of an old favorite. And, if it takes a bit of sleuthing to track it down, so much the better.

There is something to be said for being the first on your block to display a begonia plant of the outstanding new Rieger variety. With its luxuriant foliage and super-sized flowers, the Rieger is the begonia-fancier's counterpart to the gardener's three-pound tomato.

Developed by the German firm of Otto Rieger and introduced to the U.S. in 1972 by an Ohio firm, the Rieger begonia is available in ever-increasing supply at florists and nurseries, according to the Society of American Florists.

A FIBROUS ROOTED begonia that rivals the showy tuberous rooted begonia, the Rieger comes in an upright multi-stemmed form (Schwabenland) and a single-stemmed form (Aphrodite).

While the Aphrodite is recommended for use in hanging baskets, the Schwabenland potted plants have rapidly become highly favored because of their heavy-blooming and striking colors, including a glorious red, as well as pinks, oranges and rose.

Both types are durable plants, easy to maintain in the home or office, and

resistant to powdery mildew, a problem that has discouraged U.S. production of large flowering begonias for many years.

LIKE ALL BEGONIAS, the Rieger is a shade lover and should be protected from summer sun. Let the soil become dry between waterings, and water potted plants thoroughly to flush out salts that can accumulate in the soil.

Although resistant to mildew, care should be taken to avoid wetting the foliage of the Rieger begonia when watering. Keep the plant in a cool (68-70 degrees), well-ventilated, dry area.

WHEN A POTTED plant outgrows its pot and seems near the end of a blooming-cycle, it can be renewed by pruning and repotting. Let the soil dry for a period of seven to ten days, then, cut the main shoots back to three to four inches, using a sharp knife or razor blade.

Water the plant sparingly until the

pruning wounds heal; then, repot in a larger container, planting the soil ball of the plant into one-fourth inch to one-half inch above the new soil line. Once the cut has entirely healed, begin regular watering and apply a

light solution of fertilizer weekly. In three to four months your Rieger begonia will be in full bloom again. Visitors to Europe this summer will see the Rieger begonia everywhere, in window boxes, as bedding plants and as bright flowering plants in the home, says SAF. As the Rieger becomes more widely available in the U.S., this plant can be expected to brighten many American homes with its pleasing form.

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Pest Of The WEEK



ELM BEETLE

This small beetle of olive green color with indistinct black stripes on wing covers appears in homes at this time of year. They eat nothing, but are a nuisance.

They migrate from the elm trees to find shelter in the fall. This time of year they are moving to the outside to

lay eggs as the weather warms up.

CONTROL: A household fly spray can be used indoors. Probably the best method is to vacuum them up when found. Outdoors, spray elm trees with Sevin 50 wp, two tablespoons per gallon of water, in mid-June.

Wider stud spacing saves on additions

When adding new space to your home or partitioning an attic or basement, space wall studs at 24 inches instead of the traditional 16 inches.

This can save both dollars and time, and is accepted under all model codes. Check with your local building inspector.

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