



US00PP10519P

United States Patent [19] Man

[11] Patent Number: Plant 10,519
[45] Date of Patent: Jul. 21, 1998

[54] **BEGONIA PLANT NAMED 'CLARA FRANJE'**
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[21] Appl. No.: **811,738**
[22] Filed: **Mar. 6, 1997**
[51] Int. Cl.⁶ **A01H 5/00**
[52] U.S. Cl. **Plt./87.18**
[58] Field of Search **Plt./87.17, 87.18**

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[57] ABSTRACT

A distinct cultivar of Begonia plant named 'Clara Franje', characterized by its attractive white fully double flowers that are fringed and about 6 cm in diameter; resistance to Powdery Mildew under commercial greenhouse conditions; and excellent postproduction longevity.

1 Drawing Sheet

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The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Begonia plant, botanically known as *Begonia*×*hiemalis*, commercially known as Elatior Begonia, and referred to by the cultivar name Clara Franje.

The new cultivar was discovered by the inventor in a controlled environment in Amstelveen, The Netherlands, in 1995, as a mutation of the Elatior Begonia cultivar Netja Franje (U.S. Plant Patent application filed concurrently). The new cultivar was observed as a single plant in a group of 13-cm flowering plants of the parent cultivar. The selection of this plant was based on its white tepal color.

Asexual reproduction of the new cultivar by terminal cuttings taken in a controlled environment in Aalsmeer, The Netherlands, has shown that the unique features of this new Begonia are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

The cultivar Clara Franje has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment such as temperature, daylength and light intensity, without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of 'Clara Franje'. These characteristics in combination distinguish 'Clara Franje' as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Attractive white fully double flowers that are fringed and about 6 cm in diameter.
2. Resistance to Powdery Mildew under commercial greenhouse conditions.
3. Excellent postproduction longevity.

The new Begonia is similar in growth habit and form to the nonpatented cultivar Clara, however tepal margins of plants of the cultivar Clara are entire and not fringed like plants of the new Begonia.

The accompanying colored photograph illustrates the overall appearance of the new cultivar, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. The photograph comprises a top perspective view of a typical flowering plant of 'Clara Franje'. Flower and foliage colors in the photographs may differ from the actual colors due to light reflectance.

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used. The following observations and measurements describe plants grown in Aalsmeer, The Netherlands, that were flowered in November under commercial practice in a glass-covered greenhouse. Average day temperatures were 20° C. and average night temperatures were 18° C. Assimilation lights provided a maximum light level of 18,000 lux. Mea-

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surements and numerical values represent averages for six typical flowering plants.

Botanical classification: *Begonia*×*hiemalis* cultivar Clara Franje.

Commercial classification: Elatior Begonia.

Parentage: Naturally-occurring mutation of *Begonia*×*hiemalis* cultivar Netja Franje (U.S. Plant Patent application filed concurrently).

Propagation:

Type.—Terminal cuttings.

Time to rooting.—About 14 days with soil temperatures of 23° C.

Rooting habit.—Fine, fibrous and well-branched.

Plant description:

Plant form.—Upright and rounded potted plant, freely branching with good stem and stem base strength. Flowers are fully double and abundant. Plants flower continuously.

Growth habit.—Moderate growth rate and moderately vigorous. Suitable for 10 to 15-cm containers. Under optimal environmental and cultural conditions, usually 10 weeks are required to produce proportional 13-cm potted plants from terminal cuttings. Vegetative shoots are formed at basal nodes and flowering shoots are formed at upper nodes.

Plant height.—About 30 cm.

Plant width.—About 25 cm.

Leaves.—Arrangement: Simple, alternate. Size: Length: About 14 cm. Width: About 11 cm. Shape: Asymmetrically cordate. Apex: Acute. Base: Cordate, overlapping. Margin: Doubly serrate. Texture: Smooth, shiny, leathery. Color: Young foliage: Upper surface: 137B. Lower surface: 138B with red tones. Mature foliage: Upper surface: 139A. Lower surface: 138B with red tones. Venation: Upper surface: Light green. Lower surface: 138B.

Flower description:

Flowering habit.—Fully double flowers arranged in racemes. Many racemes in flower simultaneously. Flowering continuous.

Natural flowering season.—Plants will flower year around regardless of daylength, however plants will flower earlier and more abundantly if daylength is 12 hours or less. Usually plants start flowering after 7 weeks of start of short day/long night treatments.

Flowers.—Shape: Rounded, flat. Diameter: About 6 cm. Depth (height): About 1 cm.

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Tepals.—Arrangement: Rosette. Shape: Flat, rounded with fringed margin. Quantity per flower: Usually about 30 per flower. Color: When opening: 145D. Fully opened: Upper surface: 157C/155B. Lower surface: 157A to light green. Texture: Smooth, velvety, glabrous.

Sepals.—Arrangement: Two, opposite. Shape: Oval. Color: 144A.

Reproductive organs.—Stamens: None. Pistils: None.

Postproduction longevity:

Individual flowers.—Generally 3 weeks.

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Whole plants.—About 6 weeks under interior conditions.

Disease resistance: Plants of the cultivar Clara Franje are resistant to Powdery Mildew under greenhouse conditions.

Seed production: Seed production has not been observed as reproductive organs are not formed.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of Begonia plant named 'Clara Franje', as illustrated and described.

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