



US00PP11967P2

(12) **United States Plant Patent**
Booman

(10) **Patent No.:** **US PP11,967 P2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Jul. 3, 2001**

(54) **BEGONIA PLANT NAMED ‘HOUSTON FIESTA’**

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(*) **Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) **Appl. No.:** **09/375,780**

(22) **Filed:** **Aug. 17, 1999**

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **A01H 5/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **Plt./343**

(58) **Field of Search** **Plt./343**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct cultivar of Rex Begonia plant named ‘Houston Fiesta’, characterized by its uniform growth habit; moderate plant vigor; no requirement for winter dormancy; and interesting and attractive leaf coloration and pattern.

1 Drawing Sheet

1

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Begonia plant, botanically known as *Begonia rex* hybrid, commercially known as Rex Begonia, and hereinafter referred to by the name ‘Houston Fiesta’.

The new Rex Begonia was discovered and selected by the Inventor in a controlled environment in Vista, Calif., in 1995, within a large group of seedling progeny from multiple crossings of unidentified selections of *Begonia rex* hybrids.

The selection of this plant was based on its uniform growth habit, moderate plant vigor, and attractive foliage coloration and pattern.

Asexual reproduction of the new Rex Begonia by leaf cuttings taken in a controlled environment in Vista, Calif., has shown that the unique features of this new Rex Begonia are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The cultivar ‘Houston Fiesta’ 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 ‘Houston Fiesta’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Houston Fiesta’ as a new and distinct Rex Begonia:

1. Uniform growth habit.
2. Moderate plant vigor.
3. Does not require winter dormancy.
4. Interesting and attractive leaf coloration and pattern.

In side-by-side comparisons conducted by the Inventor in Vista, Calif., plants of the new Rex Begonia differ from plants of the nonpatented cultivar Merry Christmas Corkscrew in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Rex Begonia have flatter leaves than plants of the cultivar Merry Christmas Corkscrew.
2. Leaves of plants of the new Rex Begonia and the cultivar Merry Christmas Corkscrew differ in coloration and pattern.

2

3. Leaves of plants of the new Rex Begonia do not have a “corkscrew” formation whereas leaves of plants of the cultivar Merry Christmas Corkscrew have a “corkscrew” formation.

4. Plants of the new Rex Begonia do not require a winter dormancy period whereas plants of the cultivar Merry Christmas Corkscrew do require a winter dormancy period.

In side-by-side comparisons conducted by the Inventor in Vista, Calif., plants of the new Rex Begonia differ from plants of the nonpatented cultivar Lillium in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Rex Begonia are more compact than plants of the cultivar Lillium.
2. Plants of the new Rex Begonia have flatter and more rounded leaves than plants of the cultivar Lillium.
3. Leaves of plants of the new Rex Begonia and the cultivar Lillium differ in coloration and pattern.
4. Plants of the new Rex Begonia do not require a winter dormancy period whereas plants of the cultivar Lillium do require a winter dormancy period.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

The accompanying colored photograph illustrates the overall appearance of the new Rex Begonia, 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 plant of ‘Houston Fiesta’. Foliage colors in the photograph may differ from the actual colors due to light reflectance.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

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 during the spring in Vista, Calif., under conditions which approximate commercial practice. Plants used for this description were grown in 15-cm containers for about 3 months.

Botanical classification: *Begonia rex* hybrid cultivar Houston Fiesta.
Commercial classification: Rex Begonia.

Parentage: Chance seedling of multiple crossings of unidentified selections of *Begonia rex* hybrids.

Propagation:

Type.—Leaf cuttings.

Time to initiate roots, summer.—About 56 days at 21° C.

Time to initiate roots, winter.—About 56 days at 21° C.

Time to develop roots, summer.—About 84 days at 21° C.

Time to develop roots, winter.—About 98 days at 21° C.

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

Plant description:

Plant form.—Rosette; compact; dense and outwardly arching potted plant; freely basal branching with good leaf petiole strength.

Vigor.—Moderate.

Plant height, soil surface to top of leaf canopy.—About 21.5 cm.

Plant width.—About 62 cm.

Leaves.—Arrangement: Simple. Length: Petiole to apex: About 14.5 cm. Base to apex: About 22.5 cm. Width: About 12.5 cm. Shape: Asymmetrical, oblique, ovate. Apex: Acute. Base: Asymmetrically cordate. Margin: Pectinate; and very irregularly undulate. Texture: Leathery, rugose; pubescence on lower surface veins. Color: Young foliage, upper surface: Margin: 187A with antimarginal border of 186C. Central venal areas: 200C, bordered by metallic 186B to 186C with overtones of 185B. Blade: Iridescent 148D and 194C with a background of 146A. Speckles of 148D and 194C extending to margin. Young foliage, lower surface: Margin: 187B. Central venal areas: 178A, bleeding along veins. Background: 148C. Mature, fully expanded, foliage, upper surface: Margin: Dark brown, 200A. Central venal areas: 200A. Blade: Metallic 185B to 185C, speckled with 46C; merging with iridescent 191D. Antemarginal: Irregular border of iridescent green, 146D, containing numerous spots of 148D and 186C. Veins: 200C. Mature, fully expanded, foliage, lower surface: Margin: 183A to 178A. Blade: 183A to 178A. Background: 148C. Veins: 183B; reticulate.

Petioles.—Length: About 15.8 cm. Diameter: About 6.2 mm. Shape: Longitudinally grooved. Texture: Pubescent. Color: 173A, 160D to 199D at leaf base.

Stipules.—Length: About 17.5 mm. Diameter at base: About 7.5 mm. Shape: Subulate, deltoid. Color: Close to 142A.

Flower description:

Flowering habit.—Male flowers, single with one whorl of four tepals. Female flowers, semi-double with three tepals interior to outer whorl of five tepals. Usually about three or four flowers per cyme. Flowers persistent.

Natural flowering season.—Plants will flower continuously, but typically plants flower more abundantly during the spring and summer.

Flowers.—Shape: Rounded; somewhat cup-shaped. Diameter: About 4.4 cm. Depth (height): About 2.5 cm. Aspect: Drooping about 20° from vertical. Fragrance: None.

Flower buds.—Shape: Spherical; bulbous with marginal lip. Length: About 13 mm. Diameter: About 9.5 mm. Color: 47A at pedicel to 52A at margin.

Tepals.—Arrangement: Rosette. Length: About 2.1 cm. Width: About 1.7 cm. Shape: Ovate with obtuse apex. Margin: Entire. Texture: Smooth, waxy; iridescent, translucent. Color: When opening, upper surface: 55C. When opening, lower surface: 55A to 55D. Fully opened, upper surface: 55B. Fully opened, lower surface: 55A.

Peduncles.—Angle: About 30° from vertical. Length: About 4.5 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Strength: Firm. Texture: Smooth, waxy. Color: 166B to 165A.

Pedicels.—Angle: About 35° from vertical. Length: About 1.7 cm. Diameter: About 2 mm. Strength: Moderate. Texture: Smooth, waxy. Color: 173A.

Reproductive organs.—Male flowers: Stamen quantity: About 110, globose mass. Anther shape: Rhomboidal; lower sides curved inwardly. Anther length: About 2.5 mm. Filament length: About 2 mm. Anther color: Close to 15B. Pollen: Not observed. Female flowers: Pistil length: About 2 cm. Stigma shape: Funnel; bilobate. Stigma color: 162B, 163C. Ovary: Inferior; three-winged; one large top wing and two lower wings; both surfaces, 34A with overtones of 45A.

Disease resistance: Resistance to diseases common to Rex Begonia has not been determined.

Seed production: Seed production has not been observed.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of Rex Begonia plant named 'Houston Fiesta', as illustrated and described.

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