



BEGONIA SCHARFFII.

Native of South Brazil.

Nat. Ord. BEGONIACEÆ.

Genus BEGONIA, Linn.; (*Benth. et Hook. f. Gen. Pl. vol. i. p. 841.*)

BEGONIA Scharffii; elata, robusta, hispido-pilosa, ramis petioliis pedunculis pedicellisque sanguineis, foliis amplis oblique ovato-cordatis acuminatis sinuato-dentatis, lobis basalibus rotundatis sinu acutis-imo supra saturate viridibus subtus sanguineis, nervis validis subtus prominentibus, stipulis brevibus triangularibus viridibus, cymis multifloris, bracteis parvis ovatis, floribus amplis albis, *masc.* majoribus sepalis orbicularibus, petalis anguste obovato-spathulatis, staminibus in globum parvum dispositis, antheris lineari-oblongis obtuse apiculatis filamentis longioribus, *fl. fem.* sepalis 5 dorso setosis late ellipticis obtusis, styli 3 ramis spiraliter tortis, ovario pilis sanguineis dense hispido 3-loculari, placentis integris v. 2-fidis.

The magnificent species here figured is an example of the great difficulty of classifying the species of the vast genus to which it belongs, for in having both entire and bifid placentæ, sometimes even in the same ovary, it vitiates one of the very best characters hitherto employed for forming the great groups of *Begonia*. If it is to be regarded as normally having bifid placentas, it is referable to A. De Candolle's section *Begoniastrum* (*Prodr. xv. i. 292*), and would be included in that botanist's third division of the group, in which the sepals are hispid externally with coloured hairs, but that division is further characterized by having either peltate or palmate leaves. If, on the other hand, the placentas are to be regarded as normally undivided, it would be referable technically to the section *Ewaldia*. On the whole I am disposed to refer it to *Begoniastrum*, because of its obvious affinity with *B. Schmidiana* (Regel, *Gartenflora*, vol. xxviii. (1879) p. 321, t. 990), which is also a native of South Brazil, and is referred by its author to *Begoniastrum*. By a curious coincidence the latter plant bears the name of a member of the eminent firm of Horticulturists by which *B. Scharffiana* was introduced. *B. Schmidiana* differs in its glabrous ovary.

Messrs. Haage and Schmidt inform me, that mixed with the seed of the plant here figured, were those of two other

species or varieties. Of the three one has produced a noble plant of dwarf habit fifteen to eighteen inches high; another is a plant three to three and a half feet high, with smaller male flowers, but no pollen; the third has the habit of the first, but is smaller, like a starved form. In the same letter Messrs. H. and S. request that the first or second should bear the name of the discoverer of all, Herr D. Scharff.

Begonia Scharffiana was introduced by Miss Haage and Schmidt from the Peninsula of Destierro in the Island of St. Catherine, S. Brazil, and is possibly a native of the Sierra de Catherina in the interior of the province of that name. It is one of the most magnificent species of the genus. The Royal Gardens are indebted to the importers for the plant from which our figure was taken. It flowered for the first time in September, 1887, producing female flowers; these were followed in October by male flowers and female buds, and in November again by another crop of male flowers.

DESCR. Whole plant hispid with red leaves. *Stem* one to one and a half feet high, branched; branches, leaves beneath, petioles, peduncles and pedicels blood-red, patently hairy. *Leaves* a foot long and more, very obliquely ovate-cordate with rounded lobes and an acute sinus, acuminate, sinuate and very obtusely toothed, hairy on both surfaces, dark green above with impressed reddish nerves; stipules short, triangular-ovate, green. *Cymes* large, unisexual, much branched, many-fld.; bracts small, ovate-lanceolate, brown, deciduous; flower white with a few red hairs on the back of the sepals. *Male fl.* two and a half inches in diameter; sepals orbicular, coriaceous. *Petals* small, narrowly spatulate, obtuse. *Stamens* forming a small globose mass; anthers linear-oblong, obtusely apiculate, longer than the filament. *Fem. fl.* one and a half to one and three-quarters of an inch in diameter; sepals subequal, broadly elliptic, obtuse. *Ovary* densely hispidly villous with long red hairs, three-celled; styles large, the twisted arms stout, resembling small spiral shells; placentas simple or two-fid in separate or the same ovaries.—*J. D. H.*

Figs. 1 and 2, Back and front view of stamen; 3, ovary and styles; 4, transverse section of do.:—*all enlarged.*