Introduction
These tough little compact garden plants reach barely a foot high but provide almost continuous color in full sun or partial shade locations during the warm months of the year (Fig. 1). The single or double flowers are available in various shades of red, pink, or white, and the shiny, large, succulent leaves are either green, variegated, or bronze-colored. It is the leaf coloration which attracts many people to this plant. The bronze-leaved begonias are better suited to full sun locations and plants will flower from spring until killed back by frost. Plant 12 inches apart in a bed to form a solid mass of color. If desired, plants can be dug up and potted, cut back by one-third, and will continue to bloom indoors throughout the winter in a very sunny window.

General Information
Scientific name: Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum
Pronunciation: bee-GO-nee-uh x sem-pur-FLOR-enz-kull-TOR-um
Common name(s): wax begonia, fibrous begonia
Family: Begoniaceae
Plant type: annual
USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: May; Jun; Jul
Planting month for zone 8: May; Jun; Jul; Aug
Planting month for zone 9: Apr; May; Sep; Oct
Planting month for zone 10 & 11: Feb; Mar; Oct; Nov; Dec
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Wax begonia.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Description**

- **Height:** 0.5 to 1.5 feet
- **Spread:** 0.5 to 1 foot
- **Plant habit:** round
- **Plant density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** slow
- **Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** serrulate
- **Leaf shape:** ovate
- **Leaf venation:** palmate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable
- **Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** purple or red; variegated
- **Fall color:** not applicable
- **Fall characteristic:** not applicable

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** white; pink; salmon
- **Flower characteristic:** showy

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** no fruit
- **Fruit length:** no fruit
- **Fruit cover:** no fruit
- **Fruit color:** not applicable
- **Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable
- **Current year stem/twig color:** reddish
- **Current year stem/twig thickness:** thick

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:**

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 6 to 12 inches

**Other**

- **Roots:** not applicable
- **Winter interest:** not applicable
- **Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding
- **Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive
- **Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

Begonias can be propagated by seed, leaf cuttings or soft wood cuttings. Some may form many shoots from the ground and can be divided. The seed is very fine and may be hard for inexperienced gardeners to handle. Plant seed in a light, well drained media kept uniformly moist. Sow the seed thinly and do not cover it. Germination is best one-foot under fluorescent lights left on 24-hours. The seed germinates in one to two weeks at temperatures between 70°F and 75°F. In USDA hardiness zones 9 and 10 plant in late fall to early winter for winter color.

Cultivars are available in various heights from 6 to 18 inches, various foliage colors, and various flower colors.

**Pests and Management**

- Thrips cause irregular reddish brown lines on the upper sides of the leaves. Spots form on the underside of the leaves, especially along the main veins. The leaves may be deformed.

- Black vine weevil grub eats the roots causing wilting and death.

- Mites stunt the new growth and form a webbing in the foliage.

- Begonias may be infected with powdery mildew, especially if growing in the shade.

- Stem rot causes the stalks to rot and collapse. The rotted areas are usually black. Avoid crowding and remove any infected plants.