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Begonia Festival

# Capitola To Support Its Claim: Begonia Capital Of The World

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This week Capitola again supports its claim as "Begonia Capital of the World" with its annual Begonia Festival.

Showy, colorful tuberous begonias are assuming an important role in the cut flower market. Antonelli Bros. Nursery ships begonia blooms to Los Angeles in refrigerated trucks and to the east coast by air freight.

In cutting begonias, Pat Antonelli recommends: "Take half, leave half of the stem." The part of the stem remaining on the plant will drop off naturally without plant dieback. Begonias are packed between layers of cotton in strawberry crates and both cotton and blooms sprayed with water.

Begonias from Antonelli's will be used to decorate the ball honoring President Ford at the Beverly Hilton in Hollywood next week.

Tuberous begonias, which have made themselves at home here for more than 50 years, prefer the normal cool, humid summer, but in spite of heat and drought are putting on a spectacular show in both private and commercial gardens. Richard Criswell at the Santa Cruz City Hall grows fine tuberous begonia specimens.

Tuberous begonias should be grown in a mix of two-thirds oakleaf mold and one-third sandy loam without clay particles. They prefer filtered sunlight but will tolerate morning sun. Fish-based fertilizers are best as a starter food for

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begonias. As the plants mature they need additional phosphorous and potash which may be combined with the fish by using an 0-10-10 formula. Romeros makes a balanced water-soluble begonia food for Antonelli's which requires no addition or adjustment for maximum bloom production.

Fibrous-rooted Orange Rubra begonias are good companion plants for tuberous begonias or make colorful specimen plants and borders. They have inch-wide flowers of orange and salmon, and green foliage with bronze tones. They differ from Semperviron

fibrous begonias in flower size and color and in sun tolerance.

The many events of the week-long Begonia Festival will be climaxed by the regatta Sunday noon featuring colorful begonia-decorated barges on the lagoon in Capitola.