



# **Invasive Species Management Plans for Florida**

A light green map of the state of Florida is positioned behind the main title text. The map shows the outline of the state, including the panhandle and the peninsula.

# Begonia

## *Begonia cucullata* (A. DC) Begoniaceae

### INTRODUCTION

Begonias are native to India and other tropical countries but are used extensively across the United States. *Begonia cucullata* is a type of wax begonia that is used heavily in the landscape as a bedding plant, but is also used in container plantings or baskets. There are thousands of begonia cultivars developed for commercial uses but the wax begonia is one of the four original species that was used to breed the common bedding begonias. Because of this, the wax begonia is probably the most popular begonia in the world.

### DESCRIPTION

Begonias are grown for their attractive flowers and/or for the assortment of foliage types. *Begonia cucullata* grows nearly 24 inches wide and 18 inches tall, creating a mound of glossy, succulent green leaves. The leaves have scalloped edges and are cordate in shape. Flowers are white to pink and produced all summer. Very tiny, fine seeds are produced in great quantities.

### IMPACTS

Wax begonia has been found in Florida, particularly from the northern and central peninsula west to central panhandle and also in Georgia. Begonias will invade disturbed areas such as roadsides, harvested forests, old fields, overgrazed pastures, and waste places. Because begonias are such prolific seed producers, seeds are thought to be the primary mechanism of dispersal. Begonias can also root very easily, but this mechanism of reproduction may not play a major role under natural conditions.

### MANAGEMENT

Preventative: The first step in preventative control of begonia is to limit planting and removal of existing plants within the landscape. If possible, removal should occur before seeds are produced. Care must be exercised to prevent seed spread and dispersal during the removal process.

Cultural: Inform the public to refrain from purchasing, propagating, or planting begonia due to their ability to escape into natural areas.

Mechanical: Hand pull seedlings that germinate, but care must be taken to prevent re-rooting of the cuttings.

Biological: There are no known biological control programs for begonia.

Chemical: A broad spectrum herbicide such as glyphosate may be used according to the directions on the manufacturer's label. A 1% solution is recommended, with retreatment to control seedlings. Pre-emergence herbicides may be effective in controlling seedlings, but research in this area has not been conducted.

#### REFERENCES AND USEFUL LINKS:

Floridata Homepage: <http://www.floridata.com>

University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants:  
<http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/welcome.html>

University of Florida's Cooperative Extension Electronic Data Information Source:  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/index.html>

Langeland, K.A. and K. Craddock Burks. 1998. Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. IFAS Publication SP 257. University of Florida, Gainesville. 165 pp.

The Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group. Weeds Gone Wild: Alien Plant Invaders of Natural Areas: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/index.htm>

Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk (PIER). Plant Threats to Pacific Ecosystems:  
<http://www.hear.org/pier/threats.htm>

Invasive Plants of the Eastern United States: <http://www.invasive.org>

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Plants Database: <http://plants.usda.gov>

# Plant

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- Glossy, succulent leaves with scalloped edges
- White to pink flowers
- Tiny, fine inconspicuous seeds

