



FLOAT BUILDER'S GUIDE

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BEGONIA FESTIVAL

FLOAT BUILDER'S GUIDE

The Capitola Begonia Festival Committee is a group of community volunteers that has formed to maintain our community heritage of a family friendly, fun, and free festival.

We want you to have fun, FUN, **FUN !!!** With a good float design, some preliminary organization and a core group of energetic float builders, you will have a great time building your float and participating in the Begonia Festival Nautical Parade.

This guide will help you build your float. The festival committee will provide:

- Float building mentor
- Barge
- Access to the begonia picking fields
- Float building site along Soquel Creek
- Floral wire
- Float Builder's Orientation
- Incentives (when available)
 - Grants
 - Community donations
- An Outreach Workshop (typically held in March)

If we can give you one piece of advice, it would be to avoid the temptation of putting things off until the last minute. Just a few hours of planning and construction preparation during June, July and early August will make your float building go smoothly and will give you the confidence that you are ready for Begonia Festival.

We currently have 10 barges available. Depending upon availability of building sites, we can accept 10 entries. There are often more possible entrants than barges, so enter as soon as possible. There is an online form on our website, www.begoniafestival.com. We also ask each entrant for a \$100.00 deposit check which we hold. This deposit is fully refundable after completion of the Nautical Parade and cleanup of your building site/creek. Remember that entry is first come, first reserved. You will need to submit the online Nautical entry form *and* mail your deposit check to secure your place in the Nautical Parade. Don't have a theme figured out yet? You can always announce your float theme later.

A member of the Nautical Committee will contact you to confirm receipt of your entry. If you do not have web access and need a registration form, please contact The Chamber of Commerce at 475-6522 for information on how to enter.

The Begonia Festival Committee is ready to help in any way to answer questions and give you pointers in float building.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

You will be provided with a barge (floating platform) on which to build your float. It is 8' wide and 12' long. At its base, your float may not extend more than 6" beyond the edge of this platform. The top of the platform is plywood to which you will secure your framework. The framework will support a "skin" of 1" chicken wire to which the Begonia blossoms will be attached. In designing your framework, keep two things in mind:

1. Keep it as lightweight as possible but strong enough to support a lot of heavy blossoms.
2. Like a boat the weight of your framework, blossoms and people need to be reasonably balanced on the barge.

There is no height restriction for your float, but it must be able to pass under the Stockton Street Bridge (approximately 8', but you are responsible for checking current conditions). In years past some tall floats have folded down to pass under the bridge. This is dramatic but requires more work to build.

Most float builders make their framework out of the cheapest grade of ½" plywood which is cut in an "interlocking" pattern which creates a very strong but lightweight framework. These plywood frames can be secured to the barge deck using wood cleats. Solid wood supports (such as 2 X4's) or PVC or metal pipe can be used where more strength is needed. Important tools for this part of the construction are electric jigsaws, cordless screwdrivers and staple guns. Use screws for attachments rather than nails. By designing the pieces of your framework so that they can be transported in the back of a pickup, you can build and store the framework in a driveway until parade weekend when you will bring them down to your building site to install on your barge. Because we must dismantle these floats quickly after the parade, if your framework design involves using welded steel or rebar, please contact the Nautical Parade Chairperson regarding requirements for removal and limiting barge damage prior to finalizing the design.

1" chicken wire is stretched over your framework. The Begonia blossoms are then attached to this chicken wire. Some of the chicken wire can be installed on the framework before it is brought down to the barge. When designing your float, try to maximize the areas where float builders can access both sides of the chicken wire to greatly speed up installing blossoms. Also it is awkward for too many people to work on board the barge at once. Therefore, try a design where "panels" of chicken wire can be decorated with blossoms by teams of float builders on land and then installed on the framework after the blossoms are on. This greatly speeds up the process and keeps a lot of people productive at once.

Remember that Begonia blossoms are relatively large so it is very difficult to create fine details on your float. If you are a first time builder, don't be too ambitious with size or complicated moving parts. You will do better and have more fun with a modest design done well than an unfinished big design.

You may use other plant materials such as leaves, fern fronds, other flowers, etc. on your float, but Begonias must PREDOMINATE. Do not artificially color the Begonia blossoms. It is a deduction to use signs and visible manmade objects as part of the float structure. It is acceptable to have people on the float, particularly to advance your theme (costumes, theatrical performance, etc.). Their costumes and props do not have to be of plant materials.

All portions of your framework and barge should be covered with Begonias or other plant materials. Remember to cover the exposed edge of the barge (for example, begonia skirts, fern fronds, etc.). Save all broken Begonia blossoms and petals. Scatter these on the deck and horizontal surfaces of your barge at the last minute to insure complete coverage.

Carefully estimate how many blossoms your design will require. The primary Begonia colors are pink, orange, yellow, light red, dark red and white. There are numerous variations and variegated types, however. White blossoms tend to be quite small, in limited supply and wilt quickly so minimize the amount of white in your design. The dark red color also wilts quickly but turns very dark...almost black...when it wilts. So it is a good choice to use for high contrast design such as lettering or buttons or eyes. You should carefully calculate the square footage of each blossom color on your float. You will likely use cardboard beer/soda flats when picking blossoms so conservatively estimate that one flat will hold enough blossoms to cover ONE SQUARE FOOT. You will quickly find you are going to need hundreds of boxes of blossoms.

The Festival Committee recommends the use of electric trolling motors (no gasoline engines); minimum 50 lbs thrust is needed for adequate propulsion, a backup battery is highly recommended. You will need to construct a cleat on the back of the barge for mounting the motor. Towing is acceptable. Remember, no walking in the creek!

We have included a copy of the Judge's Score Sheet at the back of this guide so you will know what they are looking for and how the factors are weighted.

ATTACHING BLOSSOMS TO YOUR FRAMEWORK

The blossoms are attached to the chicken wire framework using floral wire (supplied by the Begonia Festival Committee) bent in a "U" shape and inserted through the face of the blossom. The wire ends are then twisted behind the chicken wire to hold the blossoms. This process goes most quickly using teams of two people – one sticking the blossom on the chicken wire, one on the other side twisting the wire ends. As mentioned before it is awkward having too many people on the barge at once. Therefore, be alert for panels or sections of the chicken wire that can be covered with flowers by teams working on land and then installed on the barge framework. This allows the maximum number of teams to work at the same time. As a head start you can also get some people working in the late afternoon wiring blossoms in preparation for attaching to the float.

BUILDING SITES

You will be assigned a building site along Soquel Creek. Sometimes site assignments are not available until a few days before the festival. Most of the building sites are on private property. Waiver forms will be provided to your site. We have use of these only with the permission and goodwill of the property owners so it is critical that you take good care of the building site and be considerate of the rights and peace of mind of the people who own the site. Take special care not to damage landscaping, fencing, etc. at your building site. Damage to your site may result in withholding your deposit check.

Your barge will be available at your building site Friday afternoon. You can bring your framework to the building site at that time and install it on your barge. Space will be tight so be as efficient and compact as possible. Make sure you leave space for the stacks of boxes

of blossoms that you will want to keep damp and shaded during the hot sun of Saturday afternoon. The availability of electricity varies from site to site so discuss this with the property owner. Plan to provide light for working at night. If your site has overhead lights, do not attempt to plug into that system. BBQ and potlucks are permitted at the site Saturday night only. Please coordinate with your property owner for Sunday activities.

Parking is a real frustration so you need to be prepared to have to park some distance from your building sites. Check your site out Friday night and perhaps plan some nearby drop off point where your workers can shuttle the blossoms, etc. to your site on foot. Keep a driver in the vehicle at all times and be prepared to move on. All neighborhood permit parking zones, parking meters and time restrictions will be enforced. No vehicles are allowed on the creek path or within your building site.

Portable toilets will be available near the building sites. There are public restrooms at City Hall, Esplanade Park and the Wharf.

Dumpsters will also be available near the building sites. Please bring a garbage can for your site and empty it regularly. You are supposed to be finished with construction by noon on Sunday. At this time you should clean your building site (bring a rake!) and be prepared to make it available to the property owner so that they and their guests can view the parade from their own property. Discuss this with them in advance; hopefully, there will be room for all.

Alcohol -- the possession and consumption of alcohol in public areas (including the pathway along the building sites) is illegal. Alcohol is permitted on the private property of the building sites WITH the permission of the property owners. Again, discuss this with them in advance to insure no misunderstandings. No kegs are allowed. Let's all work to insure we have no ugly incidents involving alcohol. No alcohol consumption is allowed on the barges during the parade.

Curfew -- please observe the following work curfews:

FRIDAY	10:00 PM
SATURDAY	10:00 PM
SUNDAY	NO WORK BEFORE 8:00 AM

There have rarely been problems, but you may leave one group member at the site overnight to watch tools, etc. However, all construction, socializing and noise must stop at curfew.

There will be Begonia Festival staff circulating through the building sites. Please contact them if you have a question or need assistance. Please cooperate fully with them if there is a problem that needs correcting.

BEGONIA PICKING

The Begonia blossoms are made available to us free of charge by Golden State Bulb Growers. Without their generosity, there would be no Begonia Festival. They have a substantial investment in these Begonia plants so it is **VITAL** that we do not damage them through carelessness or improper picking. Failure to follow instructions may result in your immediate dismissal from the gardens and the disqualification of your float. We're sorry if this sounds harsh, but it is crucial to the future of the Begonia Festival.

You should start several weeks in advance to accumulate cardboard beer/soda flats to use in picking and transporting the blossoms. These boxes are plentiful and stack well if turned at 90-degree angles to each other. These boxes may be obtained from grocers, liquor stores, distributors, etc. You may want to mark your boxes in some way to avoid confusion at the gardens. As mentioned before, carefully estimate the numbers of boxes you need of each color. You will surely require several hundred boxes. Transport the boxes in covered pick-ups or vans. We suggest you have an "official tally person" who has the list of how many boxes of each color you need. That person will be in charge of keeping track of your progress in picking each color and will instruct your group when to stop picking and move to another color. You may want to have one vehicle that circulates around the gardens, picking up your filled boxes.

In picking Begonias, nothing beats good, old-fashioned peoplepower. The begonia gardens are a breathtaking sight, but picking blossoms can be a back killer that gets old really quickly! Try to get a crew of at least 12 motivated adult pickers, and you should be done in 3-4 hours. There is no need to be too picky about your blossoms. They all look pretty good on the float when viewed from 30' away.

OK – THESE ARE THE ABSOLUTE NO-NO's

NO CHILDREN UNDER 15 YEARS OF AGE
NO ANIMALS
NO ALCOHOL

AND THESE ARE THE RULES FOR PICKING

1. Do not step into or cross the flowerbeds in mid row. Go to the ends.
2. The plants are brittle and easily damaged. Pick the blossom by pinching and breaking the stem approximately 1" from the blossom. **Do not pull** on the stems, as the plants will easily uproot in this sandy soil.
3. If you pick a rotten blossom, drop it at your feet in the aisles between the flowerbeds. Do not leave it amongst the plants (it will cause plant disease).
4. Stay out of roped off areas and leave all sticks and markers in place.
5. You will be entering the gardens along a private, gravel road. Drive slowly and minimize dust.

MAPS TO THE BEGONIA GARDENS WILL BE PROVIDED AT ORIENTATION MEETING

PARADE SAFETY & PROCEDURES

To ensure the future of our landmark Nautical Parade, we must abide by certain regulations. One such concern is Fish & Game and the protection of the Soquel Creek watershed. Fish & Game prohibits float participants from wading in the creek and strictly monitors the event.

In order to assure a safe Parade, your float will be immediately disqualified for:

1. Barge is turned over at any time in the creek.
2. Any crewmember entering the creek – intentionally or unintentionally.
3. Consumption of alcohol on the barge.
4. Unsafe or disorderly conduct on the barge.
5. Unsportsmanlike conduct. (examples: use of profanity, ramming of other barges, throwing things into the creek or at others, etc.)
6. Having more than the equivalent of seven (7) adults on a barge.

Each float entry should provide a completed Float Information Sheet to the Announcer stand by **10:00 AM** on Sunday. If you desire to have certain music played while your float passes the judges, please provide a CD along with your Float Information Sheet. Please put **music only** on the CD, not your float narrative. The Nautical Emcee(s) will read your narrative at the appropriate time.

Construction should finish by **NOON** on Sunday. The floats will begin staging upriver of the Railroad Trestle at **NOON**. The parade will start at **1:00 PM**. The Creek Marshall will tell you when to start downstream. The parade route is under the Trestle, circle and perform in front of the judge's table, under the Stockton Street Bridge, a sweeping turn around the lagoon.

When the parade is over **ALL** floats are to be taken to the bulkhead area between the Trestle and the Stockton Avenue Bridge. Any partial dismantling to remove equipment you wish to salvage should be done before returning your barge. Fish and Game requires us to remove all blossoms and debris from the water so, please, do not throw blossoms and drop pieces of framework into the water.

Festival and City Public Works personnel will do final dismantling of the floats and removal of the barges.

On Tuesday following the parade each float group is required to send at least one volunteer to help clean floating blossoms and debris, unless previous arrangements have been made with the Nautical Chairperson. Your deposit will not be refunded if you do not participate in the creek cleanup. We will meet at the bridge at 12 NOON. Due to Fish & Game restrictions/requirements we can no longer enter the creek while cleaning up. It will be helpful if you are able to bring a plastic lawn bag and a yard rake to corral the blossoms. Your deposit will only be refunded if your volunteer shows up on time.

SAMPLE FLOAT BUILDER'S TIMELINE

June	Choose a theme. Start design work. Start recruiting workers.
July	Finalize design. Plan framework and estimate materials.
Early August	Purchase materials. Build framework in someone's driveway. Estimate square footage of blossoms by color. Start collecting boxes for blossoms.
Late August	Attend Float Builders Orientation meeting. Finish recruiting workers. Locate pick ups/vans to transport boxes to Begonia gardens. Choose music for float. Finish framework.
Wednesday before Parade	Inspect building site when known and meet owners. Start preparing Float Information Sheet.
Friday before Parade	Take framework to building site late afternoon. Start to install on barge.
Saturday before Parade	Pick blossoms 7 AM. Transport blossoms and equipment to building site. Finish framework assembly. Start wiring blossoms by mid-afternoon. Start putting blossoms on chicken wire late afternoon. Stop construction by 10 PM.
Sunday Parade Day	Start work after 8:00 AM. Turn in your Float Information form, a CD of your music, and all waiver forms to the Announcing Platform by 10:00AM. Finish construction by NOON. Clean up building site. Stage floats at NOON. Parade starts at 1:00 PM. Move floats to bulkhead immediately after parade.
Tuesday after Parade	Volunteer from each float group to Stockton Street Bridge at NOON to help clean up.



**FLOAT INFORMATION SHEET
CAPITOLA BEGONIA FESTIVAL
NAUTICAL PARADE**

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY SO THAT THE EMCEE CAN READ YOUR INFO)

FLOAT # _____

LOCAL CHARITY OF CHOICE _____

GROUP NAME: _____

NAME OF FLOAT (THEME) _____

THEME DEVELOPMENT:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PROJECT _____

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF BEGONIA BLOSSOMS _____

NAMES OF PEOPLE RIDING ON FLOAT:

NARRATIVE (use back of this sheet or additional paper)

**PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM, A CD OF YOUR MUSIC, AND ALL WAIVER FORMS
TO THE ANNOUNCING PLATFORM BY 10:00AM SUNDAY.**

PLEASE HAVE THE NUMBER OF YOUR FLOAT WRITTEN ON THE CD SO THAT WE DON'T GO CRAZY
TRYING TO SORT WHAT IS WHAT.



JUDGES INSTRUCTIONS
CAPITOLA BEGONIA FESTIVAL
NAUTICAL PARADE

Thank you for participating in this year's Nautical Parade as a Judge! The Nautical Parade is considered the 'crowning jewel' of the Capitola Begonia Festival, and is the only ongoing display of begonias in the nation!!

Each year, five (5) Judges are chosen from the community. The Begonia Festival Committee chooses individuals who are key contributors to the community and to the Festival itself; some are veteran judges who have experienced many festivals, and have participated as judges in the past, and some are first-time participants. These instructions are intended to detail the judging criteria as well as outline the expectations for your participation. There will also be a Reception and Orientation the day of the Parade that will offer an opportunity for you to ask any questions, and clarify details.

NOTE: This document is reviewed and updated, so returning Judges are encouraged to quickly review for any changes that might have been implemented.

The Float Builder's Guide is the document that provides detailed instructions to the float building teams on how to design and build the floats. These instructions, along with the Judges Scoring Sheets, are included in the Guide. Judges are encouraged to review this document prior to the event. You can access the document on our website at www.begoniafestival.com or by contacting the Nautical Parade Chairperson.

Outline for Parade Day:

- 11:30am: Doors open at the Community Room at City Hall for you to come and enjoy a light lunch reception. Parking passes will be provided, and spaces will be reserved for you to park in the lower City Hall parking lot.
- 12:15 – 12:30am: Orientation - A Committee volunteer will be on hand to review the judging criteria, and answer any questions that you might have.
- 12:45: Everyone will walk over to the designated Judges Area creekside. You will be seated at a table, with some level of shade, with an unobstructed view of the floats.

Scoring:

Although there is some level of subjectivity, it is important that all floats be judged consistently by the judges. There are 100 total points available, spread evenly (20 points each) through the following areas:

1. **Theme Development:** How closely does the float theme follow the parade theme?
Each year, the Committee selects a theme for the Festival that is intended to generate creative design targets for the floats. The registration process prohibits duplication of float themes. The theme can be represented in many ways, including elements that have historical or community significance.
2. **Originality of Design:** How much originality is shown by float builders? Does the float have a creative 'wow' factor?
3. **Floral Coverage:** How much of the float surface is covered by Begonia flowers? Consider density of flower coverage (no gaps).
4. **Effective use of flowers:** How effectively have float builders used flowers to create visual effects?
You should deduct points if the Begonia blossoms are artificially colored.
5. **Showmanship:** Have builders added activities or features that appeal to the Crowd?

Points should be deducted if the following instructions are violated:

- At its base, the float may not extend more than 6" beyond the edge of the barge platform.
- Float builders may use other plant materials such as leaves, fern fronds, other flowers, etc. on their float, but Begonias must PREDOMINATE.
- Artificially coloring the Begonia blossoms is prohibited. It is a deduction to use signs and visible manmade objects as part of the float structure.
- It is acceptable to have people on the float, particularly to advance their theme (costumes, theatrical performance, etc.). Costumes and props do not have to be of plant materials.
- All portions of the framework and barges themselves should be covered with Begonias or other plant materials. Builders must remember to cover the exposed edge of the barge (for example, they can staple fern fronds or such directly to the barge frame).

Any float should be immediately disqualified if you observe the following:

1. Barge is turned over at any time in the creek.
2. Any crewmember entering the creek – intentionally or unintentionally.
3. Consumption of alcohol on the barge .
4. Unsafe or disorderly conduct on the barge.
5. Unsportsmanlike conduct. (examples: use of profanity, ramming of other barges, throwing things into the creek or at others, etc.)
6. Having more than the equivalent of seven (7) adults on a barge.

