American Iris Society - Region 23

2005 ANNUAL CONVENTION & JUDGES TRAINING SCHOOL PROGRAM

Once Apon A Time - Vincent Christopherson

August 26 - 28, 2005

Radisson Hotel Santa Fe
Santa Fe, NM

Hosted by Santa Fe Iris Society

Santa Fe Iris Society

P.O. Box 5561

Santa Fe, NM 87502

Dear AIS Region 23 - 2005 Annual Convention and Judges Training Attendees

We hope that you enjoy your stay in Santa Fe and gain new insights into the judging of Medians and Siberian Iris as presented by Ramona Howard. We also hope that you have gained new wisdom on the Space Age Iris and hybridizing by Vincent Christopherson.

The AIS Region 23 - 2005 Annual Convention and Judges Training Program contains articles pertaining to the speaker's topics as well as nuggets of Iris interest. These articles are from the AIS Bulletin or from AIS Section or Cooperating Societies publications or other Affiliates. The major and very important item missing from this Program is the outstanding detailed pictures and photographs that are associated with the articles. I encourage you to join the AIS Sections or Cooperating Societies that interest you. Their respective publications contain a wealth of information, (and great color pictures) as has been noted in this Program, and an excellent group of professionals to share ideas, concerns, and to develop an everlasting friendship to associate with at the National Conventions and Regional Meetings.

Please let any member of the Santa Fe Iris Society, and especially me, know if there is anything we can do to make your visit with us more pleasant.

Al Elliott

Alverton (Al) Elliott

Santa Fe Iris Society, President

AIS Region 23 – 2005 Convention, Chairperson

American Iris Society – Region 23
2005 Annual Convention and Judges Training Program

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American Iris Society - Region 23
2005
Annual Convention and Judges Training School

Schedule of Events

Radisson Santa Fe Hotel **750 North Saint Francis Drive** **Santa Fe, NM**

Friday, August 26, 2005

5:30 pm – 6:45 pm	Gather at O'Keefe Cafe
6:45 pm – 8:00 pm	Georgia O'Keefe Museum

Saturday, August 27, 2005

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration and Socializing - Continental Breakfast
9:00 am – 12:00 am	Judges Training - "Medians" by Ramona Howard
12:00 am – 1:30 pm	Lunch on your own
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Business Meeting
2:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Hybridizer seminar by Vincent Christopherson
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Break …. Shop Santa Fe
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Social Hour (No-Host Bar)
7:00 pm – 10:30 pm	Banquet and Auction, prizes, Raffles

Guest Speaker - Vincent Christopherson "Space Age Iris"

Sunday, August 28, 2005

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration and socializing - Continental Breakfast
9:00 am – 12:00 am	Judges Training – "Siberians" by Ramona Howard

THANKS FOR COMING – VIA CON DIOS

Sponsored by the Santa Fe Iris Society

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An Iris Blessing

May your blooms be floriferous and in good form,
Distinctive, with good substance, flare, and airborne,
With standards and falls that endure, never torn.
May you display many buds and blooms sublime,
In graceful proportion on strong stalks each day,
Gently floating above the fans and the fray.
May you too reach toward the moon and stars,
Bloom after bloom, many seasons in the sun,
Enjoying your life, health, and each loved one,
Until your 'living day's are artfully done.
By Georgia Gudykunst

Iris, Most Beautiful Flower

Iris, most beautiful flower,
Symbol of life, love, and light;
Found by the brook, and the meadow,
Or lofty, on arable height.
You come in such glorious colors,
In hues, the rainbow surpass;
The chart of color portrays you,
In petal, or veins, of your class.
You bloom with the first in Winter,
With the last, in the Fall, you still show;
You steal the full beauty of Springtime,
With your fragrance and sharp color glow.
Your form and beauty of flower,
An artist's desire of full worth;
So Iris, we love you and crown you,
MOST BEAUTIFUL FLOWER ON EARTH!

Edith Buckner Edwards
AIS bulletin January 1961

Iris: Fleur de Luce

By W.H.W. Bliss
November, 1921
From AIS Bulletin Number 6, October 1922

Flower of light! who gave thee first that name
Saw clear thy flower soul through purple prism bars,
Lifting thy threefold standard to the stars,
Poised, perfect, still,--like an arrested flame,
A carven prayer all luminous, thou art
Part human flower and winged Archangel part.

Flower of light! Fair prism that disparts
But to remake the Sun's too sovereign light,
Tempering his blinding, incandescent white
In Iris colours to our human sight,
Filling with uncummunicable joys our hearts;--
As the arched splendours of God's rainbow, blent,
Make the white glory of His firmament.

Flower of light! Emblem of Hope, that calls,
With lifted arms to Heaven, but still lets down
The curved beauties of thy triple gown
To Earth: as we too, reaching to a crown
Hold fast to human love, so thy soft velvet falls,
Emblem of Faith and Hope and Charity
That, rooted still in Earth, still clasps Eternity.

Flower of light! In thine arched petals dwells
The curve that yet no painter ever drew,
The secret beauty of the Heart of things;
That Hogarth sought and Leonardo knew
Beyond their mortal reach;--like distant bells
Heard on awakening, dream imagings
Clasped at and gone, that ever must elude
Man's dear desire and mock his pencil crude.

Flower of light! Who knows if fables old
First gave Olympus' messenger thy name
Or gave thee hers;--but this I know--there came
Down the arch'd bow in multicoloured flame,
To star our Earth with purple and with gold
Thy beauty;--for a breath of Heaven yet clings
About they robes, and thy translucent stillness brings
Faint Seraph songs, half heard, and winnowings of wings.

Introduction to the Median Bearded Irises

In "Median Bearded Irises, Introduction and Varietal Listing Through 1990

THE MEDIAN IRIS SOCIETY

Early in the 1950s, development through hybridization of an entirely new type of iris sparked the formation within the American Iris Society of a group of enthusiasts dedicated to improving and promoting the new type, and at the same time, "fostering the culture, appreciation, breeding and distribution" of all bearded irises of medium height. This group was formed first into a Median Iris Club, then into the Median Iris Society, which formally organized in 1957 with 117 charter members. As interest grew, the membership rapidly increased to more than 300 and included many of the most advanced hybridizers of modern irises, both in the United States and abroad.

At the time the new society was being formed, the American Iris Society (AIS) was preparing for the publication, in 1958, of its massive book Garden Irises, with Dr. L. F. Randolph as editor. Members of the new society cooperated in preparing a classification for the group of medium-sized bearded irises now called "Median Irises," and in writing the chapters of the new book concerning these irises. At the same time, the Median Iris Society (MIS) published its first yearbooks, I Median, for 1958 and 1959, and in 1960 first issued its quarterly, Medianite, which has since treated the median class in depth.

In 1960, the American Iris Society's Board of Directors recognized the importance of sponsoring special interest groups whose aims should foster a wider development of the genus Iris, and authorized the establishment of Sections, of which the Median Iris Society became the first. As an official section of the American Iris Society, the Median Iris Society requires no separate classification, registration 'or awards program, but participates in those of the American Iris Society. The MIS has no separate judges; all irises are judged by the rules and by the judges and officials of the AIS, a large number of whom belong to the Median Section. The MIS and its members do actively participate in the writing of and changes to the American 1n Society's Judges Handbook.

THE FOUR MEDIAN IRIS CLASSES

The present classification, as set up by the American Iris Society in 1958, was a radical new departure; it created six separate and separately judged and award classes of bearded irises, of which the largest in both plant size and number of varieties is the tall bearded class of the familiar giants of late spring, officially all that are over 27 inches (68 cm) in height. The smallest in size is that of the miniature dwarfs (up to 10 inches - 25 cm R. before 1976, up to 8 inches - 20 cm R. 1976 or after), most of which had also been newly created; and the other four classes, the in-betweens, were the medium sized, or median irises.

Standard Dwarf Bearded Irses

The standard dwarf bearded irises, the smallest of the medians, but with the largest number of registrations, are bearded irises over 8 inches to 15 inches (20.3 cm to 38.1 cm) inclusive in height, measured from ground level to the top of the blossom. SDB's are often highly vigorous and hardy, quickly producing large clumps, typically of cushion habit, with the blossoms blanketing the clump, and just a little taller than the leaves. All colors found in other classes of iris are also found among the SDBs. They bloom toward the end of the miniature dwarf bearded season, and before the intermediate bearded irises., combining well with the later spring bulbs and the low-growing spring-flowering perennials. They are most attractive at the front of borders and in a variety of other garden uses, and their leaves often continue to provide an attractive mound of low green spears well into the summer and even fall. A few varieties rebloom in the fall, giving a most welcome repeat performance with the asters and chrysanthemums. ……..……..David B. Sindt

Intermediate Bearded Irises

Intermediates are so called because of their intermediate height and bloom season, which comes between those of the standard dwarfs and the tall beardeds. They range in height from 16 inches (41 cm) to 27 inches (70 cm) inclusive. Stems are non-flexouus, usually with two branches, and extended well above the erect foliage. Flowers are four to five inches with a normal number of five buds per stalk. They are mainly of hybrid origin, usually produced by crossing the standard dwarfs with the tall bearded varieties, but some of them have come from crossing species such as Iris aphylla and I. champeiris with the tall beardeds. They may also be produced by intercrossing the intermediates, but since the fertility of these 44-chromosome hybrids is greatly reduced, this is not as easy.

The newer intermediates have much of the finished qualities of the modem tall bearded. Their substance is heavy, form is pleasing, falls rounded and flared; standards are arched and closed, and many have ruffles and lace. They have the wide range of colors found in the tall beardeds, plus some other color combinations and patterns.

Intermediates have good hybrid vigor and make excellent accent plants for the front of the border. They are available to fill the gap between the standard dwarfs and the tall beardeds, thus providing a continuous sequence of iris bloom. ..... Alta Brown

Border Bearded Irises

The border bearded class, was created in 1958 when the American Iris Society revised its classification system and adopted the 1949 proposal with the border bearded as a subclass of the tall bearded division. In the 1958 classification revision, border beardeds were defined as a distinct type, "Plants 16 - 27 inches (40.6 - 68.6 cm) tall; stalks branched, stiffly erect; leaves erect and shorter than the bloomstalk; blooms larger than those of the miniature tall bearded, but preferably smaller than those of the typical tall bearded; blooming with the tall-bearded irises."

Since that time the people who are most interested in the class have realized that although it is not officially required, a good border bearded should not have merely a short stem with tall bearded size flowers, but should also have small flowers with all other parts of the plant in proportion. These irisarians feel that the ideal border bearded should be dainty in its overall effect. Above all, it should be so distinctively a border bearded that it cannot be mistaken for a tall bearded. Border bearded irises should not look like tall bearded irises that did not quite get up there.

Border beardeds with these qualifications have the advantage of needing no staking, even in windy areas and, in addition, their small blooms are ideal for flower arranging. The compactness of such plants makes them perfect for use in front of the flower border. .....May Belle Wright

Miniature Tall Bearded Irises

The miniature tall beardeds (also called table irises) are delicate modern versions of grandmother's old flags, designed to meet the needs of the flower arranger and the small gardener. Flower size is about the same as the SDB, 2.5 inches (6.4 cm) to 3.5 inches (8.9 cm) across, while the form is also airier and less ruffled than in the larger irises, with more of a wild flower look. The plants, however, have typical tall-bearded proportions in miniature, with flowers carried well above the foliage, not resting on it. Stems range from 15 inches (38.1 cm) to 25 inches (62.5 cm) in height, the optimum being about 21 inches (53.3 cm) in height. MTBs are distinguished from the lBs and BBs whose height range is similar, by slightly smaller size of flower and plant, and especially by their much thinner, more graceful, wiry, well branched delicate stems. Their bloom season coincides with that of the BB and TB classes, mid-May to mid-June in the northern states, and includes both the early and late-late varieties. .....Jean G.Witt

Space Age

Space Agers are named as such, because they came to prominence during the Space Age (i.e. the late 1970's), but in fact have been around since man first started helping nature by doing some pollen-daubing of his own. What makes them so different from other iris is that the rib that extends from the end of the beard down the fall has lifted from its bed, curving up into a horn. Past hybridizers made crosses to enhance this characteristic, and initially managing to lengthen the horn, eventually succeeded in getting it to curve back onto itself to form a hook, flattened the end to give a spoon, and even flattened the whole horn forming a flounce. ..... By Clive Russell

The following was taken from the AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials, 6th Edition

CHAPTER 15 **SPACE AGE IRISES** (Page 145)

The Space Age iris cultivars came into existence by the work of a single individual, the late Lloyd Austin of Placerville, California. He noted that some plicata seedlings in the garden of the late Sydney B. Mitchell had little growths at the end of their beards. Mr. Austin interbred these seedlings until he obtained plants with horns at the ends of the beards. Further breeding produced spoons and flounces and even double appendages in this location.

GARDEN JUDGING

INTRODUCED CULTIVARS AND SEEDLINGS

These popular irises have flowers which possess some sort of projection at the ends of the beards. While the term "horn' is used to describe a shorter, stubby protrusion or extension of the beard, the term "spoon" refers to an elongated version of the same that widens near the end to effect a spoon-shaped petaloid. A 'flounce" refers to a still larger expansion of this projection into a wide, folded, often canoe or fan-shaped embellishment. There have been many recent introductions in this classification, and the quality of these cultivars is much improved over their forebears.

The mere presence of horns, spoons or flounces is not sufficient; they must be functional. The horns might be short and not very conspicuous, but they must add lilt to the beard line. Longer protrusions and filaments ending in spoons or flounces should express gracefulness, sprightliness, humor or charm to the flower. Flounces can be detrimental to a flower, so be certain they do not distort the flower's shape or weigh it down. Properly, the overall effect should be an harmonious extension of the flower form.

CHAPTER 19 **Siberian Irises** (Page 178)

Definition: Siberian irises comprise that group of beardless irises consisting of two subseries; subseries Sibiricae, having 28 chromosomes, and subseries Chrysographes, having 40 chromosomes. There are three species in the Sibiricae subseries: I. sibirica I. sanguinea, and I. typhifolia. Subseries Chrysographes presently includes eight species : I. bulleyana, I. clarkei I. chry'sographes, I. delavayi, I. dykesil, I. forrestii, I. phragmitetorum and I. wilsonhl. All are native to central Europe and Asia. They vary in height from 18 to 120 cm (7 to 48 inches) and in many other characteristics, such as flower form and foliage.

Hybrid cultivars exist among the species of each subseries, as well as one authenticated intersubseries hybrid, 'Foretell.' There are tetraploid forms of both subseries. The tetraploid hybrids tend to differ somewhat from the diploids in such aspects as the size and substance of flowers, length of flower stalk, and width of foliage, but the judging standards remain the same.

Judges should not allow their personal preferences regarding color, form or other characteristics to affect their rating of an iris that falls within the accepted judging limits.

Searching For Space Age Appendages

By Vincent Christopherson

Tall Talk, Fall 2005, Pages 8-13

There are strange new worlds out there just waiting to be discovered. We can now go where no one has gone before. This is the reality of hybridizing for new space age irises. Not just horns and flounces but incorporating other traits like color patterns that have not been seen heretofore in these celestial beauties. We have only scratched the surface of trying to add all the best traits to this unusual race. The possibilities are endless but no longer a novelty. If there is one thing hybridizing has taught me, it is to keep your eyes open. As a hybridizing program for space age appendages progresses you never know what will, *literally*, pop up.

The trick is to just get started. Plant a seed and it will grow. From the time the first seed pod is set it seems like it will take forever to see that first allusive blossom. All of a sudden the years have passed and we cannot find enough time in the garden to do all we really desire in our hybridizing program. It's just like growing up. When we are children, time seems to move so slowly (we say, "Are we there yet?") but the day soon comes that we grow older and never seem to have enough time (we say, "If I only had it to do over again!"). It all seems like we are caught in some strange dream, then when we are standing before a bloom of some floral wonder like HEARTBEAT AWAY, we are snatched abruptly back into the now. There is no time like the present to stand gawking. Or per chance as you gaze at the balance and pose of a wondrous blossom like seedling S4-155A we are snapped back into reality.

Back in, reality… I mean, 1991 I saw my first space age irises (SA's) and made my first crosses to try to get flounces. This was inspired by FLOUNCED PREMIER, Austin '60, the only flounced iris I had ever seen! It turned out to be infertile in my garden but luckily I also had crosses with SKY HOOKS, Osborne '79. My original crosses were of *one space age (SA) variety* X *one normal variety*. As it turns out those first crosses, with only a few seedlings, yielded only horned specimens. I was encouraged but wanted to get the more impressive flounces. Wondering if crossing two horned varieties would yield flounces I crossed seedling FP2 (Sky Hooks X Momentum) back to SKY HOOKS. The best individual from this cross was nicknamed then named MISTER FLOUNCE '01. A test cross with DAREDEVIL, Keppel '87, showed that MISTER FLOUNCE was carrying plicata and gave SOFT RAIN '05, a white grounded blue plicata with orange beards tipped blue, Soft Rain X Clown Around has produced P0-37AF. As it turns out two SA's crossed together will yield greater numbers of flounced offspring.

One possible drawback of crossing two SA's is flower distortions in some of the offspring. Clown Around sibling, Rock Star x FP2 is an example of a beautiful flower that is rejected as far as introduction because the lower left hand branch always has malformed blossoms. It has not, so far, passed the flaw to its offspring. An example of one of its progeny is P0-17AF, Lonely Hearts X Clown Around sibling. Flower distortions can however be inherited. When crossing space age with space age, the more you experiment the more you may be forced to reject because of flower distortions. The good side to this problem is that the keepers can have some impressive appendages. Also some SA cultivars are reluctant even to give appendages, let alone distortions, and need to be crossed with other SA's to yield any appreciable numbers of SA offspring.

Whichever way the cross is made the number of flower distortions are seldom very many. The worst case scenario for me was twenty five percent of the seedlings showed distortions and it made it easy to decide which ones to reject. In other words, keep only the good.

Another hybridizing strategy is to use cultivars that already express vestigial horns (sometimes called crests) in crosses with SA's. There are many modern irises that have these miniature horns. They can be spotted just inside the beard hairs, just off the beard end, or even further out on the petals (usually at the end of a ridge). Some cultivars produce multiple horns or flounces that have, for me, seemed to be placed in relationship to the positions that vestigial horns are also found. I always search the iris catalogs with a magnifying glass because a closer look can reveal their crests. Many of these vestigial horned cultivars pop up in the garden. EVER SO SOFTLY '06 and SHINE ON THRU '01 display yellow vestigial horns. Introductions of INVITATION ONLY '05 and OVER THE FALLS '05 have white vestigial horns. Following are some examples of horned or flounced irises crossed with vestigial horned varieties. Seedling LG1-68AH has nice form and horns and is a cross of the horned glaciata seedling AG6-61HH x Ample Charm X Invitation Only. This type of cross can also give some very nice flounced specimens. A cross of two plicata carriers gave the flounced offspring P4–207AF, Dance For Joy X Brandy Sipper (Broadway X Michigan Pride, which has vestigial horns). Rock Star X Brandy Sipper gave RODEO ARENA (see photo) and NAVAJO CODE. Some of these cultivars mentioned above have produced other interesting features.

It has become my practice to examine iris blooms more closely, not just for vestigial horns but for other unusual appendages to enhance and incorporate into SA breeding. Seedling L8-61BH (Over The Falls sibling X Rodeo Arena) has exhibited small horns on the inside of the standards. Although not consistent this feature gives reason for closer examination of other blossoms. NAVAJO CODE exhibits small petals up through the center of the style arms. These style petals can be enhanced by selective breeding. In a cross of Ominous Stranger X Chiffon Ruffles seedling P5-10Avhss exhibited vestigial horns, a double set of style petals, and on occasion small feather-like structures on the styles themselves. A self cross of P5-10Avhss produced a seedling we have nicknamed STYLE SPRAY because of its enhanced spray of style petals. STYLE SPRAY also has more pronounced feathers on the style arms but no vestigial horns.

Space Age Appendages

By Vincent Christopherson

Tall Talk, Fall 2005, Page 13

Irises display their most impressive blossoms when grown in conditions where their roots are undisturbed. This is especially true of space age varieties. Their roots grow out horizontally very near the surface. Cutting roots by cultivating, tearing them while pulling weeds, constricting them by soil compaction, or letting old clumps grow too tightly is detrimental to ideal bloom and space age (SA) appendage production.

Soggy soil, too much organic mater, untimely freezes, excessive pre-emergent, and residue from chemical fertilizers (usually in the form of salts), can be even more stressful if not fatal to the entire plant. Disturbing the roots at bloom time can affect flower size, color, fragrance, and substance. Leading up to the bloom season, during winter and spring, disturbing the roots by any of these means can affect branching and bud count as well as blossom attributes.

The iris blossom's whole purpose in life is to attract pollinators so that the species will be perpetuated. The reproductive flower parts (anthers, stigmas, style arms, and ovaries) get top priority when drawing energy reserves from the plant. This becomes more evident during and after periods of drought or other stress. The standards will be diminished, then the fall size will be compromised in an attempt to preserve the reproductive flower parts. Most importantly for us space age enthusiasts, potential appendages will be sacrificed long before the normal petals. In other words, the plant and blossom will survive and SA appendages be neglected. In the order of importance to the perpetuation of the species, horns, spoons, flounces, or other extra appendages come last.

As if all this were not enough, other factors are holding us back from big luscious SA features beyond our wildest dreams. Too much shade can result in low performance. Reduced photosynthesis (the plants mechanism used to collect energy from sunlight) results in insufficient stored energy to produce extra appendages. Some iris cultivars will give too much energy to their increase, neglecting the blossom, and of course the SA appendages will suffer first. This can cause unpredictable results for these varieties from season to season. Variable branching or bud count and especially variable appendages make for poor show bench candidates. Appendage variability can also be due to a cultivars genetic predisposition and consistently result in mixed horns, spoons, or flounces all on the same blossom.

Lack of specific nutrients can also be a factor in the production of flower parts. Nitrogen promotes green growth, increases the size of individual cells, and thus the size of the plant. Potash promotes heat and cold tolerance and disease resistance. Phosphorus however enhances root formation and flower (and appendage) production … exactly what we need to achieve the maximum potential in SA appendages. Soil pH controls the relative abundance of phosphorus in usable forms. You can have plenty of phosphorus in the soil but flower parts can vary relative to the soils pH. **Note:** phosphorus is not readily soluble in water and can be retained in the soil causing phosphorus poisoning. If you use it, don't abuse it or you will add to the problems listed above. There is also something to be said for just plain old virgin soil and its undepleted mineral content. Irises will usually grow and bloom their best in a fresh location. Attend but do not over tend your soil. If you can grow the flowers, you can show the flowers.

Why doesn't my Fat Flouncy look like yours?

Neil Mogensen -Western North Carolina

Tall Talk, March 2005, Pages 28-29

Space Age irises are notorious for their variability.

A horned variety produces flounces -or a flounced one looks like the most ordinary of non- Space Age stock. This makes selecting a bloomstalk for the local show more than ordinarily difficult. Judges do have a tendency to refer to the *Check List* or recent copies of the *Registrations and Introductions* for the entry on "Fat Flouncy" just to see if this really is that unfamiliar variety. The entry says "flounces." The stalk on the bench has one bloom with two spoons and one horn, another bloom with only one horn, and a third, perfect, bloom with none at all. Ooops. No ribbon.

Worse yet, someone trying to breed for Space Age characteristics is confronted with trying to determine if seedling number three is an SA at all. The first year it had little bitty horns. The second year one side of the clump had occasional horns at best, and the other side had a stalk not only taller, but also with rather elaborate spoons on the first blossom that opened. The second flower not only lacked the spoons or horns, but one standard was missing too.

The third year, after lining the lovely thing out and feeding it well, it not only rotted, it had flounces on the survivor.

What on earth is going on?

Those who try to make sense out of the senseless have come up with a list of things that can and do affect SA expression.

Let's start with pH. Variety " A " in an acid soil- not especially acid, just a bit acidic - looked like a perfectly normal mainline variety. Then the stock was reset into new ground that was naturally neutral, but also had been rather generously limed the year before. " A " responded by producing lovely half- inch horns on every bloom on the stalk.

But variety "B" side by side with " A " the year before had good generous flounces. It got spread around the grounds into a variety of soils just to show it off. One clump had flounces that were almost spoons and not much more. Another clump had horns. Still another clump had flounces so elaborate they had rosettes and extra thing-a-ma-bobs below the flounce.
What happened? It was pH -but just the opposite of " A," the lower the pH the more elaborate the SA expression. The most acidic situation of all produced the lovely rosettes, and the highest pH -the mildly alkaline location -just had horns.

Some other things have been noted to cause variation in the SA's. Temperature -perhaps the daily profile last fall, or was it this spring? - and the spoons turned into forks or the flounces into caribou antlers.

Put on compost -change! Move to a location with more sun-change! Send some to your mother-in-law-change!

But change -predictable? Yes. The more vigorous the growth, the more richly the SA extension of the beard is expressed. That is a very predictable rule for SA's. Why did the contrary results with pH occur? Simply because different varieties respond optimally to different pH levels. "Some like it hot, some like it cold, some like it in the pot. ..."

Tall Beardeds are complex hybrids with ancestries from widely differing regions in Europe, including eastern European Continental conditions resembling those from Texas to Manitoba. Others

came from the far western edge of Europe with Marine West Coast Oregon-like climate. Still others came from the eastern Mediterranean California-like climates and some eastward even into the Himalayas in areas like Idaho, Utah, Colorado to say nothing of New Mexico or Arizona.

Different ancestral locations had widely varying conditions, not only of temperature and elevation, but of different patterns of rainfall as well. Italy and North Africa resemble California's winters with cool air and intermittent but highly variable rain, with summers predictably warn and dry. Farther inland and eastward the climates tended to the extreme, with high elevations getting fairly abundant snow in the mild winters. Others tended to be both dryer and colder, just like one finds moving eastward and upward in North America.

Bearded irises located in these highly varying areas were ideally adapted to the local conditions. In our gardens, however, those stable, long established adaptations are crisscrossed every which way in the ancestries of our modern tetraploids. They don't know when to grow, let alone when to bloom. Do they thrive in dry, hot alkaline soils? Some do, some don't. What about long, gentle happily moist winters and hot, dormant summers. Do they thrive? Some do, some don't.

The bewildering thing about our Tall Beardeds is that so many of them do thrive under an amazing variety of climates. Not so surprisingly, however, they don't behave exactly the same under different conditions.

Space Age varieties are responding to the same differences any other Tall Bearded experiences. We are just a lot more aware of the variations because of the startlingly obvious deviation from the expected iris form.

All varieties vary. In my own experience in judging on the show bench, I have always been astonished at the range anyone variety can show coming in from different gardens. The differences are even more obvious evaluating irises in the gardens themselves.

I am not surprised to learn that Space Age varieties vary. As a breeder and as a grower I'm new to the type, but I have come to expect that the more optimum and the more uniform I can make the conditions the better the Space Age varieties are going to look.

But that was true for all the irises. The same conditions that produce the best possible YAQUINA BLUE will produce the best SOLAR FIRE or CONJURATION .

Then my wife makes a remark about cookies. "It's all in the baking," she says. "It's not the recipe, it's the cook."

I have a suspicion the same is true for growing good irises. Now. What do I have to do to learn how to cook?

What Irises Have Done To Me

By Vincent Christopherson, Arlington, TX

Tall Talk, Fall 2004, Volume VII, Issue II, Pages 26 to 30.

Warning -contact with irises can be addictive! Laws should be passed that require warning signs at the entrance to all iris gardens. Little do unsuspecting people know, at first contact, what an encounter with irises may do to them. Let me say that you too may be drawn down the primrose path. Step by step you may even turn into a pollen dauber. Let me show you graphic pictorial evidence. Let me tell you how it happened to me, how one thing led to another.

It all started when I was about ten years old and read a book about Luther Burbank. I was impressed by the fact that he developed Cobbler and Kenebeck potatoes from seed grown plants. The book said that the seedling variation was unlimited but the cuttings from the potatoes would produce plants the same as the originals. Sure in my mind that this would also work with tulips, I went home and asked mom if I could use her little 10' by 10' garden. She told me that I could, but I had to keep it weeded and also said, "Vincent you better not change the color of my tulips". She was particularly concerned about Black Beauty, her favorite. I set seed pods and planted the tulip seeds but they did not germinate. It was at this time I collected first irises growing in wild clumps in the ditches close to home. I later learned that these original collected plants would have been classified as variegatas.

My next encounter with irises was when I moved to Texas in 1980. I rented a room from a family until I could afford my own apartment. The lady of the house gave me her iris collection when the family decided move back to Joplin, Missouri. She told me that I had to take good care of them because they had been given to her by her mom, who was a member of the Joplin Iris Society. Her mom had paid as much as twenty-dollars each because they were new introductions bought through mail order catalogs. Her charge to was that I must take care of them or her mom would not forgive her.

Over the next five years I probably moved as many times. Each time I carried the precious irises with me. This of course kept most of them from blooming. When I met the love of my life, Louise, I married, settled down, and planted the irises out by the mail box. Then they started to bloom and I was impressed with their beauty. I later identified two varieties from this group as CELESTIAL SNOW and VIETNAM. I had never seen such a big ruffled white or a plicata before and was awestruck by the stitched edges on VIETNAM. By chance it was at the same time that I received a Spring Hill flower catalog. The iris collection they were offering had NIGHT OWL and VANITY in it. I had never seen a black or a pink iris. Even though I did not want to spend the money, I bought the collection. The thought then came back to me of the seed pods that I had set on mon's tulips.

I started hybridizing on old flags to see what new colors or patterns might come. I was attending college at The University Of Texas At Arlington working toward my bachelor's degree in botany. My botany professor found out I was hybridizing irises and asked me if I would give a presentation to the botany laboratory. Of course I accepted, but in the back of my mind I was thinking I did not know enough about irises to stand up in front of the class. With the help of directory assistance, I found the number for the Fort Worth Iris Society and went to their next meeting. My presentation to the botany laboratory was a success, but I could not have imagined in my wildest dreams what this would lead to.

As providence would have it, the FWIS was hosting the American Iris Society convention. The gardens were blooming with first year clumps. When Patsy Rosep, a club member and AIS certified judge found out I was hybridizing on old flags, she offered to let me set some seed on the modern cultivars in her garden. She introduced me to Tom Burseen, a local hybridizer, who also let me make some crosses in his garden. Abandoning my old flag breeding program, I started over. Patsy also told me she was taking care of the guest iris beds in Duncanville, TX and suggested, "Vincent you should come and pull weeds because it would familiarize you with the newer irises" I think she is related to my mom. Patsy then gave me a box of past AIS bulletins and I read them all. Articles on a wide spectrum of iris knowledge were laid before me. With my appetite for iris knowledge whetted, the quest began.

The World Of Irises was my first book purchase and I read it from cover to cover at least twice. The section on color pigments in iris really fascinated me. My botany professor had told me that lycopene was the pigment that makes tomatoes red. It was look out red iris, here I come! I purchased all of the registration and introduction checklists that were available, reading them as though they were novels. My wife thought I had gone off the deep end. I procured iris catalogs and cut out the photos, arranging them according to color pattern. Purchasing all the breeding stock to supply my own garden took a while but I was on my way to producing modern hybrids. The color patterns of most interest to me were recessive traits that are not often stumbled onto, but required a selective breeding program. As I look back, it is apparent that all the homework saved a lot of extra footwork.

My first seedling garden was devoted specifically to reverse bitones and bicolors. Having been inspired by IN REVERSE and HULA DANCER I had several seedlings ready to guest when the Dallas Iris Society hosted the AIS convention in 2000. There were seedlings guested at the Arboretum in Dallas, at the Clark Garden, and at the Rodeo Arena of Jean and Joan Stanley. Three seedlings from the reverse and bitone work which were there drew many comments from convention goers, ANGEL'S DESIRE, ALL ABOARD, and WORLD OF COLOR. In the past I had guested seedlings in Sacramento, California and in Boulder, Colorado but the Rodeo Arena planting at the Dallas convention brought the most feedback from garden viewers.

It was Joan Stanley who approached me and asked if I would guest some of my seedlings in the arena. When she knew that I was intending to ride on one of the tour buses she said, "Vincent, if you ride on the bus you will only meet the people on that bus, but if you hang out here at the arena, I will introduce you to all the iris people as they arrive." As fate would have it, a good rain occurred and Jean became concerned that all of Joan's work would be for naught. He went out and purchased grass type carpet and had it in installed around the entire arena so the garden would be accessible to all the viewers. This was a true love story! Because of all this the arena garden was pristine and raised quite a stir among convention goers. Of course this special set of circumstances became a highlight my iris experience. There was one cultivar from my guest irises in the arena that did not bloom till the day after the convention, and that has now become RODEO ARENA. Special thanks to Jean and Joan, and introduced in 2004 in their honor is RODEO ARENA sdlg# P4-170 (Rock Star X Brandy Sipper).

Luminatas became the focus of two gardens made available to me by close neighbors. It was on my weeding excursions to the Duncanville garden that I originally fell in love with SPIRIT WORLD, MIND READER and the pure luminata pattern. A stroke of luck won me SPIRIT WORLD from the FWIS guest iris program in 1994. The purple in the plant parts was intriguing. From crosses made with plant color in mind came FANCY FRIENDS (Gypsy Skirts

X Spirit World), introduced in 2001 and TALL DARK STRANGER (Mind Reader X Chiffon Ruffles) introduced in 2002. SPIRIT WORLD's crests at the ends of the beards were a definite enticement to cross it with some horned varieties. Efforts along these avenues are carried into my current lines with cultivars such as INVITATION ONLY sdlg #L9-5A (Mind Reader X chiffon Ruffles) an amoena luminata in white and blue with beard crests and purple stalks, MAKE A WISH sdlg# LP8-10AH (Invitation Only X Rodeo Arena) a horned variegata luminata in yellow and red-brown, and L 1- 49BH Invitation Only X L8-13AH (L5-124; Romantic Mood x Spirit World) x (L5-115 ; Spirit World x Amelia's Orchid) a horned variegata luminata in peach and light purple. In the luminata lines that carry plicata, come one type of expression which are often called fancies, fancy plicatas, or luminata plicatas. These express luminata washes but do not have a flower core free of dark pigments as the pure luminatas do. Thus as a by-product of breeding for luminatas came the introductions LET'S BE FRIENDS in 2002 and PREPOSITION, a border bearded in 2004.

Glaciatas became the focus of a third seedling garden with growing space made available by another friend.

As time has passed and new seedlings bloomed, new developments have occurred. The most exciting has probably been the emergence of the first glaciata cultivars. From a cross of PIl (Gigolo x unknown) X Rock Star came G3-236BH an orange glaciata with horns. This is nice but not a strong grower. G3-236BH I 11 crossed with BURNING BRIGHT gave better growing plants and a range of color variation. Among these were G6-61 YH a horned yellow glaciata, AG6-61HH a horned orange glaciata, and G6-6lA a white and yellow amoena glaciata. From another line came AG5-2E (Mind Reader X Scorch), an amoena glaciata with white standards and light yellow falls blended with peach. These two lines both lead back to GIGOLO, which I consider to be the probable source of their amoena ground color.

If you have read this article until here, you too have been drawn, unaware, into the twilight zone of the iris world. By now, well passed the point of no return, I am hopelessly immersed to everything iris, but know that I am not alone. At every turn there have been friends along the way. Each new seedling crop brings new insights. Each new success leads to renewed effort. Anticipation keeps me waiting for the future. What new iris wonders will it bring? What new people will I meet?

Our new garden location is on twenty acres south of Arlington, Texas where my family lives. I now grow iris stock and hybridize there. Accent Iris Garden presented by Vincent Christopherson is now open and inquiries are welcome. My temporary web site is being built at toolsbydesign.comlvciris/ and will be up so everyone can look in on the progress. Our email address is vincentl@integrity.com.

Pollen - Pick it when it's ready and use it when you're ready.

By Vincent Christopherson -Arlington, TX

Tall Talk, Fall 2004, Pages 22-23

Many times an iris bloom will open but we do not have a nice anther of fluffy viable pollen from the one other variety that would complete the ultimate cross. So it is that when we are hybridizing we do not reach all our goals of advancing the iris species in just the way we would desire.

There are many reasons why we can not get that elusive viable pollen when we want it most. Could be that the other cultivar has finished its bloom season or is yet to bloom. From one day to the next temperature, humidity, wind, and sunshine conditions vary. Pollen mayor may not be viable if these conditions are not orchestrated to perfection. A cultivar may have pollen in one spot of the garden but not in the other, or vary from garden to garden. The problem could also be receptivity. The time of day that the stigma lips on the iris blossoms are most receptive will not always coincide with the best time to pick the pollen.

There are human reasons why you may need to be very specific as to the time you use pollen. Creating new varieties to extend the bloom season of a given color pattern can be a desirable goal. For instance luminatas tend to bloom early. Pollen can be collected and frozen for use on late blooming varieties. What if you could get that beautiful Keppel style pure luminata that blooms after others are gone. You may also want to save pollen by freezing, from the late blooming reds, to use on the earliest varieties next spring. What if you could get that big Schreiner's style red to bloom before others in the garden. What if you could that awesome Ring Around Rosie pattern of Ernst with purple bloom stalks and untold other traits to bloom in any season you desire. Color pattern may not be the only trait you want to move around for your garden viewing pleasure.

You may also want to save pollen for daily use throughout the bloom season. Be the master of wind and rain by taking control of *when* you make the crosses you most desire. Lets take a look at how to freeze pollen or save it two weeks or more to serve your purposes. What ever your purpose may be to want fluffy viable pollen at a precise point in time why not *pick it when it* s *ready and use it when you're ready.*

Pollen can remain viable without freezing for an extended period of days if kept in the right way in appropriate containers (whipped cream cartons) which are easy to prepare. This can be very useful if you do a lot of crosses or for not missing that ultimate cross whenever it may be. The goal is to control temperature and humidity in the containers. Water in the form of dew, rain, condensation, or just plain humidity is an *enemy* of fluffy viable pollen. Take a clean dry whip cream carton, add three or four heaping tablespoons of baking soda, and place a coffee filter in the carton. The plastic container keeps moister out. The baking soda works as a desiccant to pull moisture away from the pollen (this can be changed as needed) .And the coffee filter keeps soda out of the pollen. You are now ready to start collecting pollen.

To collect your pollen use approximately a 3 1/2" by 3 1/2" piece of paper cut out of an old phone book. Fold the paper in half and place three anthers of pollen end to end on the paper. Then fold a narrow strip on the two ends of the paper creating a small envelope. Set your envelopes in a dry place in the house for two or three days, until dry. When dry place the envelopes in the pollen bank (whip cream carton) and use as needed in your daily hybridizing. Remember to not let the *enemies* of pollen (water in any form and temperature) attack. Keep the lid on the pollen bank at all times. Do not place the pollen bank in direct sunlight and protect it

from dew or condensation in the mornings. I use a five-gallon bucket which doubles as a seat and keeps the sun off and dew away from the containers. Do not remove the pollen anthers from their envelopes over the open container thus contaminating your pollen bank as unseen granules of pollen drift down.

I collect three containers of pollen or more each year and classify my envelopes in each one with note cards. Cut the cards so they sit slightly taller than your folded envelopes. Also list your headings on the lid of the carton in the same order as they are inside.

To freeze pollen use the same envelope method and classify it the same way inside and out. Place each envelope in a zip lock bag with desiccant and seal. Place the zip locks in a larger container with desiccant, seal and freeze. Any good desiccant will work, silica capsules are good in the zip locks, I use agrosoke crystals in the large container because they draw so much water. They are designed to keep potting soil hydrated but draw moisture when they are empty. The desiccant in the zip lock keeps moisture away from the pollen. The desiccant in the larger sealed container helps hold down water from the condensation that gathers when you open it to take out individual zip locks (this desiccant in the larger container can be changed if you open the container a lot). Do not open the zip locks unless you intend to use the pollen at that time. Remember the enemies of pollen. Be sure that your anthers are totally dry before freezing. Water in undried anther stems can move and contaminate pollen. Ice can have liquid water molecules in it at any given time even when in the frozen state.

Pollen pickers aptitude test.

Why collect pollen for later use?
A) To impress your friends and meet like-minded gardeners.
B) It makes good snuff with a real kick to it.
C) To overcome not having it when you need it.
D) To advance your hybridizing goals.
E) Both C and D

The best way to always have fluffy viable pollen is:
A) Use trained bumblebees to collect it for you.
B) Always sprinkle your garden with water just before collecting pollen.
C) Never pick it. Always use a paintbrush that needs constant decontamination and re-drying.
D) All of the above.
E) *Pick it when it s ready and use it when you're ready.*

The enemies of pollen are:
A) Infiltrating our iris societies and could attack at any time.
B) Have their pictures on the walls at the post office.
C) Masquerade as happy gardeners.
D) Are temperature and water in any form.

Use zip lock bags, watertight containers, and desiccants to:
A) Suffocate viral bacterium so they will not disease your pollen.
B) Avoid hyperventilating while pollinating and you need the bag.
C) Shrivel prunes for later use.
D) Draw or seal moisture away from pollen.

Initiating a Cross

By Fred Kerr, North Highlands, California
Tall Talk, September 2000, Page 50-51

Does one of your favorite varieties, let's call it "Great Expectations," have a shortcoming? Do you wish it had better branching or form? How about some lace, better foliage, better form, or could it simply grow better in your area? A positive answer to any of those questions means a ready-made project for the hybridizer; moreover, you already have one parent so you are fifty percent through the selection process when you have a variety that possesses some of the desired traits.

Now the next step is to find a spouse. If your goal is to change just one thing about "Great Expectations," look for possible mates that differ from it as little as possible, e.g. cross a blue to a blue, a blue- violet, or a violet rather than a pink, yellow, or orange. This will focus your project and will give you more potential on-program seedlings than if you go with the wider cross. If you are working with a self, you might do well not to use a bicolor, as this will give you fewer or, in some cases, no selfs from which to select the improved variety.

Tall bearded irises can be divided roughly into three groups by pigments: blue and related colors (anthocyanins), yellow and related colors (carotinoids), and those having both pigments. Blue includes blue, blue-violet, red-violet. The yellow pigment group includes yellow, orange, and pink. Very often this group carries an inhibitor for the blue pigments, and crossing one of this group with the blue pigment group can result in seedlings which do not show the blue pigments. Tall bearded irises which contain both the blue group pigments and yellow group pigments do not carry the inhibitor .

When you cross to varieties with similar characteristics, this is a recombination cross which we hope will combine the best characteristics of two varieties in one seedling. This is perhaps the simplest approach to hybridizing and is probably the most frequently used by hybridizers. Introducible results are hoped for in the first generation and at the time the cross is initiated, there is no plan to do more crosses to reach a specific goal. In reality most of the seedlings will not ever approach the goal. Many of the seedlings will seem to be the exact opposite of what is wanted. Rest assured that even master hybridizers make crosses that are duds, e.g., not a single seedling is worth keeping.

Multiple Generation Programs

More ambitious programs may involve planned crosses for two or more generations. Some years ago I thought I would like to produce a flower with blue standards and yellow falls. The cross for such a program would involve reverse blue amoenas, also called dark tops, with yellow amoenas. An analysis of the dark tops shows that the darker color in the standards is the result of the flower having a great deal more anthocyanin pigment in the standards than the falls. Although I selected varieties with blue standards and white falls, the same pigment distribution is seen in such varieties as **Fascinator** as well as George Shoop' s line of **Hula Dancer** introductions. In these varieties, the undercolor of the standards is yellow through orange as a result of carotinoid pigments being present in addition to the anthocyanin pigments. Recognizing that carotinoid pigments in the standards would make my goal improbable at best, I selected for the program **Little Much** and **Edge of Winter** as the reverse amoena parents. For yellow

amoenas I selected **Echo De France** and **Neutron Dance.** Because yellow frequently carries an inhibitor for blue pigments, I assumed that the first generation seed- lings would be yellows and yellow amoenas and this turned out to be the case. **Little Much** X **Echo de France** yielded **Arc de Triomphe** which was crossed to Shoop's **Sea Quest.** This seemed a desirable cross because it promised to add the tangerine factor to the mix and suggested the possibility of future generations with blue standards and pink falls.

The best resulting seedling was 95005D which is a large flower on a good stalk and has blue violet standards and falls of a strong yellow color. Further use of this seedling with **Faberge, His and Hers, Magharee** and **Shurton Inn** has given interesting colors including seedlings with violet to blue standards and brown to khaki falls.

Reinventing the Wheel

Occasionally it is a good idea to remake crosses in types of tall beardeds which do not seem to be progressing. Often the gene pool of a certain group is so limited that continuous reshuffling of the genes produces no improvement in color, form or branching. A case in point is the black plicata group. Multiple generations of crossing the best dark blue over white ground plicatas, such as **Licorice Fantasy,** produced little or no improvement in depth of color . Keith Keppel took the bull by the horns and crossed white ground plicatas with very dark selfs, knowing that he had a multiple generation program under way. The first introducible result, garden name "Son of Skunk," is due for introduction in 2001 and is better in every aspect than previous "black" plicatas.

Whatever type of crosses is undertaken, we hope that the parents selected are fertile, preferably in both directions. In tall bearded iris varieties some are pollen sterile. They may have missing or undeveloped anthers. In some cases the anther appears normal, but has no pollen or the pollen is clumped or other- wise abnormal. Occasionally these varieties produce good pollen, but the search can become a major effort. Weather can have an effect on pollen production and insects may eat the pollen before the hybridizer gets to it. Varieties with good pollen one day can produce no viable pollen a few days later. Some years a variety may fail to produce pollen, only to produce in abundance the next. The hybridizer soon becomes as interested in the condition of anthers and pollen as any bee.

Pod fertility is more difficult to estimate just by looking. Slicing through an ovary to see if it contains ovules might be helpful, but we usually find out if a variety is pod fertile by actually making a cross and seeing if pods develop. A number of pollinations are necessary, since a pod is not produced by every pollination even in fertile combinations.

After pollination be certain to label the cross. Memories are especially faulty and not to be trusted. Most hybridizers use one tag for each flower, but if the entire stalk, clump or row is to be pollinated by the same parent, one will do. Some hybridizers re- move the falls at this point to prevent bee contamination of the cross and as a reminder of which flowers have been pollinated. Likewise some remove the standards before pollination just to get them out of the way. The result can be three style arms and a tag where an iris flower once stood. If the cross "takes" the hybridizer is on his way and the program is launched.

With a color idea in mind and by following these steps, you can be on the way to producing the seedlings of your dreams.

An AIS Judge, Should I Be One?

Carla Lankow, Kansas City Iris Society Newsletter, December 1997

How many times have you heard someone say, or said yourself "I'm not going to that meeting, it's Judges Training, that's just for judges". I want to correct this misconception. Judge's Training is designed for AIS Judges but anyone can attend and every one will learn from the information presented at these classes. AIS Judges Training sessions are presented on a variety of topics all concerning our favorite flower. Even to someone who wants to just grow pretty flowers and has no intention of ever becoming a judge these training sessions are important. They will help you understand what the difference is between a poor plant and a good one and why it is important for every gardener to know the difference.

Now if you have attended several training sessions you may think you want to become an AIS judge. With the honor of being an AIS judge comes certain responsibilities and duties. Though judging at shows may be the most visible duty of a judge to the public, it is not the most important. The most important responsibility of a judge is voting the annual AIS ballot for the AIS awards and medals. In this way the AIS judge recommends to the public top quality iris for their gardens by endorsing the very best irises. These awards also encourage hybridizers to produce top quality irises. To vote the ballot knowledgeably a judge must grow a selection of newer varieties of many types. He must also visit gardens during bloom time each year to observe as many irises as possible. This takes a commitment of time and money. The AIS judge is also committed to promoting AIS and it's goals by judging shows, giving presentations when asked and supporting the local clubs. If you are willing to fully take on these responsibilities you will make a good AIS judge.

How do you become an AIS accredited judge? There are several steps in the process and several levels. The AIS requirements are only a minimum and each Region may have additional requirements.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE REGION 13 JUDGES TRAINING PROGRAM
REQUIREMENTS TO BE COMPLETED AS A CANDIDATE FOR AIS JUDGESHIP

1. Make application to the Region 13 Judges Training Chairman for entry into the judges' training program.

2. Have a copy of the most recent "Handbook for Judges and Show Officials".

3. Maintain three years of continuous membership in the AIS. However, training to become an Apprentice may start before the three years are complete.

4. Successfully complete a minimum of two training sessions for a total of ten hours, passing written examinations on each session. At least one hour of this training must be on garden judging and one hour on show judging.

5. Submit an annual activity report.

6. Get the recommendation for advancement from five accredited judges.

REQUIREMENTS TO BE COMPLETED AS AN APPRENTICE JUDGE

1. Maintain continuous AIS membership.
2. Complete two, two-hour sessions of garden training under different instructors. At least one session must be on some iris other than tall bearded.
3. Complete two, two-hour sessions of show judging training under different instructors.
4. Successfully complete a two-hour course on awards and balloting.
5. Complete all requirements within three years after becoming an apprentice judge.
6. Complete an annual activity report each year.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTAINING STATUS AS AN ACCREDITED JUDGE

1. Maintain continuous AIS membership
2. Vote the official ballot each year before the deadline. Failure to do so for two consecutive years results in automatic disqualification.
3. Attend refresher courses during each three-year period. Five hours credit is required of Accredited Judges, and three hours credit is required of Active Master Judges.
4. Complete the annual activity report.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER JUDGES

1. After an Accredited Judge has served the Society for fifteen years a Judge is elevated to the status of Master Judge. This is a lifetime appointment. This class is divided into two sections.
   A. An Active Master Judge must vote their AIS ballot and return their activity reports annually. They must also complete three hours of AIS approved judges training in a three year period. Failure to complete these requirements will result in their becoming Retired Master Judges.
   B. Retired Master Judges are not required to fulfill any of the obligations outlined above, but may not vote the AIS ballot.

EMERITUS JUDGES

Emeritus Judges are appointed by the AIS Board of Directors. This honor is only given to Accredited Judges who have shown outstanding leadership in the AIS at the national level. Emeritus Judges are not required to fulfill any of the usual obligations of other Judges accept to maintain AIS membership.

AIS Judges - You Gotta Love 'Em Baby

Brad Kasperek*

Your'e going to "improve" judging by telling the judges they're lazy, incompetent, lacking in integrity, and their feet smell like soft rot?

I have a lot of respect for our unrepentantly, individualistic judges. They represent well the authority, heart and soul of the AIS. Their unpredictability alone has prevented the "death by boredom" of the AIS.

Lately, section technocrats, hybridizers, and even experienced judges have offered us "constructive criticism" on the competency and integrity of AIS judges. I guess they don't trust the other judges to vote just like they do.

Maybe they're forgetting the subjective side of judging. It takes more to assess beauty than a tape measure and a count of buds and branches. They may believe uniformity in judging will improve the AIS, but actually it may cause harm.

If hybridizers can predict how judges will vote, some will be tempted to hybridize "for the judges" and give up developing new iris lines. Hybridizing could degenerate into a competition to produce the "same" iris better than anyone else! We need more variety - not less!

Enough philosophizing, let's take a "light hearted" look at our lovable judges. (I know they're lovable because I'm one). Although they come from diverse backgrounds and have widely varying levels of training, many of them can be grouped by their judging "attitudes". I've identified three which I call the Parent, the Social Director, and the Artist. Frequently, judges assume more than one of these attitudes during the voting process.

The Parent is the authority of the AIS. They show up at your garden with comfortable shoes, judge's manual, notebook, three pens or pencils, and a well used tape measure. They spend hours measuring, counting buds, and noting every deficiency of an iris. These judges are essential to the awards process. They protect the validity of the classification system and usually represent the deciding votes for Medals. The meanest thing you can do to this judge is to ask them if they "like" an iris. They get the strangest looks on their faces as they try to reduce their notes to such a simplistic concept.

The Social Director is the heart of the AIS. When a judge assumes this attitude, they are showing respect for deceased hybridizers and people who have done outstanding services for the AIS. Personally, I'll die easier just knowing some judges will remember me. This show of respect should be limited to only a few votes, but what harm is done by casting a vote or two from the heart.

The Artist is the soul of the AIS. They are my favorites because they use the "I like it" holistic approach to judging. The Artist bounces all over the garden as they look at iris catching their eye. They examine an iris carefully before deciding if it's worthy of their vote, but they concentrate on iris they like.

They are the soul of the AIS because they recognize that garden appeal is the single most important characteristic of a good iris.

THREE CHEERS FOR OUR JUDGES!!! MAY THEIR DIVERSITY OUT-LIVE THEIR DETRACTORS!

*Commentary reprinted, with the permission of the author, from Zebra Gardens' 1996 catalog, from the section entitled "The Zebra Muse".

Historic Irises at Shows

Joe Spears, Texas

ROOTS, Journal of the Historical Iris Preservation Society, Vol 18, Issue 1, Spring' 05, Page 17 &18

In 2000 Chapter 26 -Historic Irises -was added to the *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials.* It provided instruction on the proper inclusion of Historic irises in AIS approved shows including the sentence, "Exhibitors should have the choice of entering the 30+ year old iris in the Historic or regular class (TB, MTB, etc.). This seemed to say that one exhibitor could choose to enter STEPPING OUT, for instance, in the Historic section while another exhibitor could enter his STEPPING OUT in the TB section. Many felt that this would create a situation in conflict with the instruction in Chapter 4, page 41 under "Award Ribbons" which stated, "Only one first place ribbon (blue), one second place ribbon (red), and one third place ribbon (white) may be awarded to each cultivar." The concern is that in the above instance the cultivar, STEPPING OUT, could be awarded blue ribbons in each of the sections.

This dilemma was discussed at length at the 2002 AIS Fall Board Meeting in Fort Worth. Finally a suggestion by Keith Keppel was adopted adding these four words to the instruction on page 41: "in any given section". So now more than one blue, red, or white ribbon may be awarded to a cultivar and the potential exists for two specimens of STEPPING OUT (one from each section) to compete for Best in Show. Since only one specimen can win Best in Show this should not be a problem.

But there are problems when it comes to showing and judging Historic irises which have nothing to do with the *Handbook.* Or perhaps these problems simply occur due to ignorance of instructions provided by the *Handbook.*

There is a perception that, while there may be a place for Historic irises in a show, irises entered in the Historic section may not win Best in Show. There are several instructions that refute that idea. On page 65 it says, "Each stalk is evaluated against the maximum typical performance of the variety being judged." It would seem then that even a typically ugly variety could win provided that it is ugly, grown and groomed well, and is in good condition. Beginning on page 219 the *Handbook* says of judging Historic irises, "Emphasis should be on the excellence of the horticultural specimen rather than any proximity of the cultivar itself to currently preferred style in flower form, stalk or overall size. " Also on page 54: "The judge must make every effort to eliminate any ideas or opinions that reflect personal preferences." Then, on page 17, "Personal preferences in color and form should not be allowed to interfere with selection of worthy specimens for awards."

In the first paragraph of Chapter 2, Duties and Responsibilities of Judges, the *Handbook* states that an AIS member "should never accept the appointment (as Judge) unless he/she is willing to follow all rules concerning AIS judges".

Throughout the *Handbook* are admonitions to judges to grow many different irises and visit as many gardens as possible to gain a "thorough knowledge of irises and their characteristics" (page 15). "Both new and *old* varieties will be shown, and this points to the need for much garden visiting." The Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS), a section of the AIS, publishes annually a directory of gardens that are open to the public and growing Historic irises. It would seem that this directory would be an excellent resource for judges interested in improving their knowledge of Historic irises.

The Handbook suggests on page 14 that "Every judge should continue to study written material. ..to improve judging techniques." Another superb resource from HIPS is the semi-annual publication, *ROOTS,* containing extensive information about and color photos of Historic irises. HIPS also makes available reproductions of older catalogs and publications that prove invaluable in helping identify older varieties in lieu of the confusing codes in older Checklists. Local societies are encouraged to acquire these older publications and make them available to judges at shows (page 220).

Selecting the best specimen of the show is covered in Chapter 22 of the Handbook. "This selection is the most important evaluation judges will make from *every* section of the show. .." "The choice is made from *all* competitive single specimen classes except seedlings and bulbous."

The handbook is very clear that **all** entries are eligible for best specimen of the show. The only distinction reads as follows: "When two specimens are judged equal in all respects except for the date of introduction, the newer variety should be placed higher. .." Maybe some judges will consider including a mention of these ideas in their future judges' training classes.

Unfortunately, some of the misperceptions mentioned earlier affect the outcome of a show. Many of the irises grown by new members, especially, are older irises. As we encourage them to get involved and enter their specimens in the show, shouldn't we insure that these entries receive the same consideration afforded to newer specimens? Let's encourage all judges to become more familiar with recent changes in the rules governing judging Historic irises.

American Iris Society Check List

Why – Who - When - What – How

Alverton A. Elliott, Santa Fe Iris Society Meeting, February 14, 2005

ACUTIKOR. RC Gard. Chron. 3rd. Ser.47: 399. 18 June 1910; Rev. Hort. 82:355. 16 July 1910%; Gard. Chron. 70: 5. 2 July 1921%; Hd. Bk. Gard. Irises, Dykes, 156. 1924% (*acultiloba X korolkowi)* – Reference *1939 American Iris Society (AIS) Alphabetic Iris Checklist*

Sunfisher: (Marty Schafer/Jan Sacks, R. 2003). Sdlg.S97-85-10. SIB, 28" (71cm), EM. S. light yellow (RHS 13D), deeper (12A) highlights and edge; style arms pearly pale yellow, yellow (10A) midrib and curl; F. deep yellow (13B), signal with green veining blending imperceptibly into F.; slight fragrance. S94-21-1: (S90-31-1: ((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x (Crème Chantilly x (Warburton ARV80 x Butter and Sugar))) x S92-88-5: (((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x Careless Sally)) X Tom Schaefer. Joe Pye Weed 2003 – Reference *AIS Reference Registrations and Introductions in 2003*

The difference between a 1939 and a 2003 description is startling and indicative of progress of communicating an Iris species. These above descriptions also separates the POPs (Plain old Purple) iris from the Queen of the Show iris.

Why:

The process of registration of an iris, or any other plant, is a critically important scientific activity that ensures that names and plant descriptions are recorded in consistent forms. The American Iris Society (AIS) description of the registered Irises has matured as evidenced in the two examples above. The overall purpose and any scientific description is to ensure that the plant and its name is described, documented, and published according to the scientific criteria of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature for species, or the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants for man-made hybrids or plants used in horticulture, forestry, agriculture and so forth. This scientific activity of recording the existence and the name of a new plant, or a newly discovered plant, and the use if scrupulous rules exist to keep order in nomenclature where otherwise there might be utter chaos and no possibility of communication among scientists, or other interested parties such as the Iris growing community.

Having a registered name will not ensure that the Iris will survive forever. Not having a registered name does not mean that the Iris is doomed to die. But only when you have a name recognized and registered by AIS, do you have an iris with any name at all. A POP cannot be a Queen of Show. A registered Iris can be a Queen of Show.

Who:

The AIS is the recognized International registering agency for the genus Iris. Information on non-American irises are provided by associates from the sponsoring societies that includes: the British Iris Society, Geselischaft der Staudenfreunde E.V., Iris Society of Austrialia, Middle-European Iris Societ, New Zealand Iris Society, Russian Iris Society, Societa Italiana Dell'Iris, and Societe Francaise des Iris Plantes Bulbeuses, and the Japanese Iris Society.

Each Iris variety is first "Registered" with the AIS and later "Introduced". An iris is considered "Registered" when the application is accepted and approved by the AIS Registrar. Following this, when an iris is offered for sale to the general public and when proof of that is

submitted to the AIS Registrar it would then be considered "Introduced". The date/year of Registration and Introduction are usually different.

When:

The American Iris Society Alphabetical Iris Check list of 1929 listed about 12,000 names of Irises including species, forms of species, horticulture varieties and synonyms. The first hardbound Check List of AIS was the 1939 Check List. The stated purpose of this Alphabetical Iris Check list was to:

> "correct all the mistakes in our Bulletins (which have been legion, the mistakes, I mean) and also those in former checklists. In view of more recent research and investigation and because of better cooperation with breeders, nurserymen, other Iris and Horticulture societies, etc., this book must be considered as the final authority for any Iris and should be used for classification in Iris Shows, by nurserymen for spelling, etc. when making catalogues, by writers when dissertating upon variety (especially when writing for our Bulletins!) and may I suggest that our editor use it? – In fact, it should be the reference book, not only for our American Iris Society members; but for other flower shows and other publications." By Ethel Anson S. Pickham, Editor, Checklist 1939.

These lists were in exact alphabetical order with no groupings and no Madams or Misters, thus making it quick and easy for us men with "label trouble" to look up the mysterious conglomeration of letters he sees before him and find out what the name really should be. The AIS registrars added the blooming seasons, references to illustrations, use of the asterisk before the name of a variety that is obsolete, and adhering to the Iris Color Classification. The importance in the use of the terms "bicolor" (two colors) and "bitone" (two tones of yellow – dark and light) was developed to recognize that our irises are often of two tones of the same color. This 1939 Check List formalized the fact the AIS Registrar has the ultimate responsibility for deciding the placing of a variety.

> "The Registrar is faithful about writing for full descriptions and suggestions from raisers as to what the general effect is. After discussion, the variety is classified. It should be conceded that those who have done such work for a number of years should be the most skilled in the matter and it is also advisable that headquarters should attend to it; for the peculiar variations among individual' ideas of Iris colors are something as diverse as the genus itself."

The1949 Alphabetical Iris Check List began the tradition of a new hardbound Check List every ten years and included the annual Registrar's reports for the decade. Supplement No.1 to the 1939 Checklist was published in 1942. Since 1942, registrations and related information have been published yearly in the AIS Bulletins. While the information was complete, it is unavailable to many members due to the fact that these issues are out of print, therefore, it was deemed advisable to consolidate this information in one volume for ready reference, thus the publication of the 1949 Alphabetical Iris Check List. Because of time, effort and cost, the technique for compiling this list resulted in many Irises listed several times and was unavoidable. The listings were in alphabetical order and for the duplicates, were in chronological order and no effort was made to delete the duplicate listings.

The 1959 Iris Check List included the 5,466 names that were added in 1950 to 1959 inclusive. The color symbols continued to follow the Official Iris Color Classification of 1949. For the first time, the Iris awards made by AIS during 1920 to 1959 appeared as an appendix.

The 1969 Iris Check List continued the format of the 1959 Check List.

1979 Iris Check List included the Maerz & Paul Color Dictionary (M&P), the Royal Horticultural Colour Chart (RHC) and the Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Colour (RHS).

The 1989 Iris Check List had no major changes to format of the 1979 Check List.

The 1999 Iris Check List continued the traditional format, but does vary somewhat from that previously published. Some descriptions were reworded or reformatted slightly for clarity and consistency and they tried to eliminate inconsistencies in the way a particular firm or individual is listed from year to year. The coding for bloom season has been modified slightly. At the request of the Russian associate registrar, the spelling of a few names transliterated from the Cyrillic alphabet has been changed.

What:

The following is guidance in the January 2004, "*Registrations and Introductions in 2003"* Check List. This provides the path on how to use and understand the Check List. I will use the **Sunfisher** as the example to explain the 'mystery' of the Check List.

Sunfisher (Marty Schafer/Jan Sacks, R. 2003). Sdlg.S97-85-10. SIB, 28" (71cm), EM. S. light yellow (RHS 13D), deeper (12A) highlights and edge; style arms pearly pale yellow, yellow (10A) midrib and curl; F. deep yellow (13B), signal with green veining blending imperceptibly into F.; slight fragrance. S94-21-1: (S90-31-1: ((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x (Crème Chantilly x (Warburton ARV80 x Butter and Sugar))) x S92-88-5: (((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x Careless Sally)) X Tom Schaefer. Joe Pye Weed 2003

Name of Variety: *Sunfisher*

A name is selected that has not been previously used. To determine availability of name, hybridizers refer to all ten-year Check Lists (beginning 1939) and annual Registrations and Introductions booklets (beginning 2000). (Preliminary checking can also be done on the internet: **www.irisregister.com**). A name is not registered until the registration application has been completed and approved and a certificate of registration is provided the hybridizer.

Names should follow the rules established by the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants. Rules are subject to change, but at the present time the following names will not be permitted:

1. Names of living persons without their written consent, or names of recently (10 years) deceased persons without permission of next of kin or other authority.
2. Personal names containing the following forms of address or their equivalent in another language: Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.
3. Names including symbols, numerals, non-essential punctuation or abbreviations.

4. Names beginning with the articles "a" or "the" or their equivalent in other languages unless required by linguistic custom.
5. Names in Latin or in latinized form.
6. Slight variation of a previously registered name.
7. Names in excess of three words, ten syllables, or thirty letters.
8. Names containing the word "iris" or "flag" or the species name of any recognized species of Iris, or formed wholly by recombining parts of the parental species' names.
9. Names containing the hybridizer's name in possessive form.
10. Names which exaggerate or may become inaccurate (e.g. Heaviest Lace, Tallest Black), or which are composed solely of adjectives which could be construed as a simple description (e.g. Pale Blue, Ruffled).
11. Names translated from the original language; they should be transliterated as necessary.

Previously registered names may be re-used only if (a) the original registration has not been introduced or distributed by name, (b) does not appear by name in the parentage of later registrations, and (c) a statement of permission is obtained from the prior registrant.

Names will not be released as obsolete unless there is proof that no stock now exists and that the iris was not listed as a parent in registrations. It is the obligation of the registrant to furnish the registrar with acceptable proof.

(Hybridizer and/or Registrant, Year of Registration) - *(Marty Shafer/Jan Sacks, R 2003)*

Seedling Number, if available – *Sdlg. S97-85-10*

Classification of iris, height in inches (and centimeters) – *SIB 28" (71cm)*

Classification Designations: AB = aribred; AR = aril; BB = border bearded; CA = californicae (Pacific Coast Natives); IB = intermediate bearded; JI = japanese; LA = louisiana; MDB = miniature dwarf bearded; MTB = miniature tall bearded; OG = oncogelia; OGB = oncogeliabred; OH = oncocyclus hybrid; RB = regeliabred; RC = regeliocyclus; RH = regalia hybrid; SDB = standard dwarf bearded; SIB = siberian; SPEC = species; SPEC-X = species hybrid; SPU = spuria; TB = tall bearded.

Seasons of Bloom compared to others of the same classification - *EM.*

Seasons designation: VE = very early; E = early; M = midseason; L= late; VL = very late; RE = remontant (tendency to rebloom later in year.)

Description – *S. light yellow (RHS 13D), deeper (12A) highlights and edge; style arms pearly pale yellow, yellow (10A) midrib and curl; F. deep yellow (13B), signal with green veining blending imperceptibly into F.; slight fragrance.*

Color Chart reference abbreviations: HCC = HortiColour Chart, British Coulour Council/Royal Horticulture Society; M&P = Maerz & Paul Dictionary of Color; RHS = Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart.

Description and parental abbreviations: chr. = chromosome(s); dip = diploid; f. = falls; inv. = involving; R. = registered; S. = standards; sdlg. = seedling; sib = sibling; tet. = tetraploid.

Parentage - *S94-21-1: (S90-31-1: ((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x (Crème Chantilly x (Warburton ARV80 x Butter and Sugar))) x S92-88-5: (((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x Careless Sally)) X Tom Schaefer.*

Parentages:

All parentages contain one large **X**, which indicates the final cross made; (everything to the left of the **X** pertains to the pod (female) parent, everything to the right pertains to the pollen (Male) parent

Female: S94-21-1: (S90-31-1: ((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x (Crème Chantilly x (Warburton ARV80 x Butter and Sugar))) x S92-88-5: (((Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet) x Careless Sally))

Male: Tom Schaefer.

Each set of parentheses () represents <u>one</u> cross of <u>two</u> parents:

Seedling S90-31-1 =

1. Star Cluster female pod is crossed with Ruffled Velvet male pollen
2. Warburton ARV80 female pod is crossed with Butter and Sugar male pollen
3. Crème Chantilly female pod is crossed with the male pollen resulting from the Warburton x Butter and Sugar cross.
4. The female pod resulting from the Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet cross is crossed with the male pod resulting from the Crème Chantilly female pod crossed with the male pollen resulting from the Warburton x Butter Sugar cross

Seedling S92-88-5 =

1. Star Cluster female pod is crossed with Ruffled Velvet male pod
2. The female pod resulting from the Star Cluster x Ruffled Velvet is crossed with the Careless Sally male pollen.

S94-21-1 is the result of the S90-31-1 female pod crossed with the male pollen of S92-88-5

The S94-21-1 female pod is **X** (crossed) with the Tom Schaefer male pollen to result in the **Sunfisher.**

Introducer and year of introduction, if introduced - *Joe Pye Weed 2003*

Organizational abbreviations: AIS = American Iris Society; BIS = British Iris Society; KAVB = Koninklijke Alege,eeme Vereeniging voor Bloemboembolienculturr (Royal General Bulbgower's Association, Holland); SIGNA = Species Iris Group of North America.

How:

The AIS Bulletin provides instructions and forms on how to register an Iris. Basically, you write to the AIS Registrar, Mike and Anne Lowe, 12219 Zilles Road, Blackstone, VA 23824 for a registration blank, enclosing check for the registration fee payable to the American Iris Society. The fee is $7.50 per registration, or $10.00 if transferring a name from a previous registration.

At the fall 1997 AIS Board meeting it was voted to decrease the time that paid reserved names will be held, from the present five-year limit to three years. Starting with the 1998 registrations year (December 1, 1997 November 30, 1998), names paid will be held for a maximum of four years; names paid December 1, 1998, or later will be held for three years.

The full five-year reservation period will be maintained for all reserved names which had been paid prior to December 1, 1997. As before, at the end of the reservation period it is possible to reserve the name for an additional period of time upon payment of the $7.50 registration fee. Once the registration application form has been submitted and the registration certificate issued, no further action is required of the hybridizer, other than notifying the registrar if/when the iris is introduced. There is only one fee: the $7.50 charge for clearing the name includes the eventual registration and recording of introduction.

A Few Reasons Why Bearded Irises May Not Bloom

from Laurie Frazer's website : http://www.angelfire.com/mn3/shadowood/irisfaq .html

Reprinted in the Medianite: Vol. 43, No. 2, Page 50

Not adequately established: Some iris cultivars need a year or more to fully establish in their new locations before blooming. If you relocate them frequently, they may never become well enough established to bloom. Plant irises far enough apart to allow for several years' growth before requiring division.

Inadequate sun: Bearded irises need at least 6 hours of direct sun a day to bloom well.

Nutrient deficiencies: Consider having a soil test run to make sure your soil provides all necessary plant nutrients in appropriate amounts and fertilize according to the recommendations returned with the soil analysis. Soil that has been growing irises for many years without amendments or fertilization is probably nutritionally depleted. Avoid high-nitrogen fertilizers. If bearded irises are fed high-nitrogen fertilizers, they may grow lush foliage with little or no bloom.

Inappropriate watering: Bearded irises might not bloom well if they experience periods of extended drought, though the plants themselves are quite drought-tolerant. Conversely, bearded irises that are over-watered are often susceptible to bacterial soft rot and fungal leaf spot infections. If you provide supplemental water, water deeply no more than once a week. Soaker hoses are preferable to overhead watering to avoid spreading leaf diseases from plant to plant.

Planted too deeply: Bearded iris rhizomes should be planted so the tops of the rhizomes are at or slightly below the soil surface. If planted too deeply, bearded irises will grow leaves but may not flower. Be careful, also, not to allow mulch to cover the rhizomes. Make sure any mulch is pushed away from the rhizomes.

Overcrowding: Overcrowded clumps often quit blooming until they are divided, OR irises closely planted with other plants may not bloom well (or at all) if they are struggling to compete for sunlight, water, and soil nutrients.

Weeds: There are certain weeds and grasses that are so aggressive they can inhibit the performance or even survival of plants they invade (Canada thistle is one of them). Keep the weeds and grasses away from your Irises.

Health: Irises that are diseased or under insect attack may not be able to bloom until the problem is eliminated. *(Mediate Editor's note: Through the eastern US, iris borers are a major problem as they can not only move down through the fan and the rhizome to give rot a foothold, but often move up through the bloom stalk and destroy it or the buds. The usual advice is to spray with Cygon, but reports in the AIS Bulletin indicate good success for some individuals with applying other systemic sprays, burning old foliage during winter, spraying soap solution on fans, and scratching granular systemics (Merit) into the soil. And some swear by pinching out baby borers early!)*

Late freezes: If a late freeze occurs when flower stalk development has already started, the stalk may abort. If a late freeze occurs when flower stalk development has already started, the stalk may abort, (even if the stalk is not showing yet. Killing freezes that are severe enough to damage iris foliage within 6 to 8 weeks prior to normal bloom can abort stalks.)

Immature rhizome: Rhizomes will not bloom until they are mature. If you have planted smaller rhizomes, you probably need only wait for them to grow a bit before they will bloom.

Irregular bloomer: All irises are not created equal. While some irises may bloom very regularly in your garden once established, others may never do any better than blooming once every several years ... or perhaps never blooming at all. The same cultivars that bloom beautifully and reliably for a neighbor down the road or a friend across the country may do nothing more than sulk in your own garden. The only way to discover which irises will perform best for you is to keep trying different cultivars, growing them properly, and replacing those that don't meet expectations within 2-3 years after planting.

Irises Do Enjoy Companionship - Other Than Yours

By Loretta Aaron

Reprinted from Sooner State Iris News, June - July 1983

Many irisarians have never given their favorite flower a chance to mingle with unrelated species of plants. For most of them, an iris is an only child. Most irisarians prefer it that way. As you know, a first child, upon the arrival of a new brother or sister, may sulk for awhile, but after the arrival of maybe the third or fourth, it is an accepted fact that sharing will have to take place. After the additions of a few biennials or perennials, the iris really will not mind. The point I wish to make -- why not share a part of your garden with other flowers?

In any garden where irises are well grown, they are just naturally going to be "standouts". There are quite a number of flowers that bloom at exactly the same time as the iris, and the proximity of other flowers of different form and texture actually enhances an iris planting. I have the feeling that the irisarian might also get carried away and continue with an integrated garden.

BIENNIALS

An often-neglected group of plants, and ones that can be grown easily and successfully from seed at very little expense, are the biennials. These seeds MUST be planted in late summer or early fall if they are to bloom the following spring -- and at iris time.

SWEET ROCKET (Hesperia Matronalis): This is the fragrant lavender one that grows from 30 to 36 inches tall, and is ideal for background plantings. Flowers are similar to phlox. Bloom begins at almost the same time as the early iris begins to open, and extends weeks beyond. Plant in full sun or partial shade. Sow seed in July, August, or early September only. If it does not rain, keep seeded area moist until seedlings appear, which is usually by late September. In planting any biennial seed, I work up the area to be seeded ahead of time, and have the soil loose and friable. Seed is scattered on top of the ground, and watered well immediately. After that, the areas is never allowed to dry out, and in a few weeks the tiny seedlings will appear and stay green all winter. They will not freeze out if kept moist.

SWEET WILLIAM: These should be planted in late summer or early fall. Plants should have full sunlight. They will tolerate light shade for part of the day, but more sturdy compact plants can be expected in full sunlight. Height is generally from 16 to 20 inches tall, and they make good plantings in the foreground or middle sections of borders or beds. Seed is available in single or mixed colors, and come in single or double blossoms. A very nice salmon pink is Newport Pink. When plants are about 8 inches tall, sprinkle Sevin or Chlordane dust under the plants, as the sow bugs will hide underneath and chew them off at the base.

LUNARIA (Honesty or Money Plant): This is a charming plant to grow under deciduous trees, or in shady nooks. The plant will not grow well in full sun. It also prefers a slightly acid soil, so the addition of spaghnum peat moss is beneficial if your soil should be alkaline. Sow seed in July or August. Seedlings will appear in early October and stay green all winter. The orchid blooms appear at iris time, and make a pretty planting. These plants are prized for dried arrangements, as the flower stalks will produce flat discs, that after the outer covering is removed, will leave silver transparent discs, very pretty. The discs should not be removed until late summer.

SIBERIAN WALLFLOWER: This is an ideal plant for a neat edging, border, or even a rock garden. These, as other biennials, should be planted in July or August if you want them to bloom at iris time. In fact, they often start blooming with the dwarf and intermediate iris, and

will bloom at least two months, even longer, if the spring is long. Colors are orange, yellow and apricot. The apricot one is not as heavy a bloomer. Height is only 6 to 10 inches all. These little charmers are very fragrant.

NEMOPHILA (Baby Blue Eyes): This pretty border plant thrives in partial shade or full shade -- will bloom in the sunlight, but will not last too long. Height is from 6 to 9 inches tall, and the very attractive foliage is simply covered with the one-inch single blue flower with a white center. Plant seed in July, August or September only. Again, this one is in bloom at iris time.

HARDY ANNUALS THAT BLOOM AT IRIS TIME

DRUMMONDI PHLOX: This one annual alone will give more bloom than any other annual I have ever grown. Once introduced into the garden and established, they will become a permanent part of your garden, and nature will scatter them throughout your plantings. Plant in July or August from seed. The small seedlings will come up in late September, and grow slowly all winter long. Bloom will begin before the iris bloom, and will be at peak during the iris season. There are several varieties available, from the star-shaped very dwarf Twinkles, to a regular dwarf and taller one to 20 inches. Colors are available in single or mixed colors. They may be transplanted early in spring to areas you wish them to perform. I like to group a dozen or so plants together in the foreground of iris. They will bloom for at least 3 months.

CHINESE FORGET-ME-NOTS: A very low growing blue flower for the border in a shady area, or part shade. Will grow to about 10 inches tall. May be planted from January through early March. These will perpetuate themselves, and will return each spring, once introduced into the garden.

CALIFORNIA POPPY: To get this to bloom at iris time, it must be sown from seed in the fall months. I prefer September or October. If area is kept reasonably moist, it will not freeze out, and makes a pretty border plant in the foreground of iris plantings. Mixed colors are available -- mostly in yellow and orange. Foliage is a light green, and very lacy and delicate in appearance.

PANSIES, VIOLAS, and JOHNNIE JUMP-UPS: These three flowers are all members of the same family, and are classed as hardy annuals. All bloom at iris time. These are best put out as bedding plants -- especially the violas and pansies. Johnnie Jump-Ups can be grown quite easily from seed sown in August or September. Areas where you plan to grow pansies and violas should be prepared in advance, and generous amounts of cattle manure, organic compost, or spaghnum peat moss worked into the area. Plants should be set out in the fall for best results. I prefer late November or early December. Water well after planting, and never allow them to dry out during the winter months. They will not freeze out. In fact, the cold weather will send the roots deep, and you will have stocky, compact plants, that will last weeks longer. They love a snow covering. Violas can be purchased in separate colors, if you wish to work out a color scheme. I personally like the Giant Swiss mixture -- really pretty colors. I use the small Johnnie Jump-Ups around a good many of my iris plantings, and grouped together, they pack a lot of color.

DIANTHUS (Pinks): These will sometimes live over the second year, but are best treated as hardy annuals. For bloom at iris time, seed should be planted the following summer. The small plants will not freeze out during the winter if kept moist. Small bedding plants are not too expensive, and to assure that yours will bloom at iris time, you may want to purchase plants, but do set them out early -- late March or very early April, as soon as hard freezes are past. They will

take light freezes or frosts, even if they have been grown in a greenhouse. Try to get plants that have been grown in cold frames, and these will be completely hardy. I prefer the variety "Gaiety", which is a large single, and colors are distinct and very pretty. "Bravo" is an orange-red that is also pretty. Protect all Dianthus from the sow bug by sprinkling Sevin or Chlordane dust underneath.

PERENNIALS

PEONIES: Most peonies bloom at iris time. It takes the third or fourth year clumps to really put on big displays. Should some of you have this in mind, for a possible convention display, get with it in the fall four years prior to the convention. Peonies prefer fall planting. Choose an area away from large trees or hedges, and one that you will not want to disturb for years, as Peonies do not like to be disturbed once established. Plant shallow, with the tips covered with not more than 1-1/2 to 2 inches of soil. Use only 3 to 5 eye divisions to start your clump. Give them generous amounts of cattle manure, as Peonies are heavy feeders. Peonies are ideal as companion plants near iris plantings. Keep enough distance that the cattle manure would not get too close to the iris rhizomes.

COLUMBINES: These always bloom at iris time. Takes about three years to get dense plantings from seed, which should be planted in July or August. The small seedlings will come up in September, stay green all winter, and will bloom some the first year. Second year plants should give reasonably good bloom, and the third year the bloom will be terrific. Plants are available, and these should be put out in early March for best results. Columbines are a cool weather plant, and should be planted in shady locations. They will do well with morning sun, or on the east side of a house. Columbines prefer a slightly acid soil -- I use spaghnum peat moss in my plantings, as my soil is naturally alkaline. Be sure the drainage is good, or you will have troubles.

CERASTIUM (Snow-in-Summer): This is strictly a border plant, or is good in rock gardens. Growth habit is similar to the well-known creeping phlox. Foliage is an attractive grey, and is completely covered with the single, fragrant white flowers during iris season, and several weeks beyond. Seed is easily germinated if planted in July or August, and kept moist during this period. Give full sunlight for best results. After the plant is established, divisions may be taken and transplanted to different areas. Will perform well in any average garden soil.

PHLOX SUBULATA (Creeping Phlox): This is a well-known perennial, and is in bloom at iris time. Bloom begins at the same time as the little dwarf iris shows color. Colors are white, red, fuschia, and blue. Idea to border beds or walks. Does best in full sun. The best way to get this started is to call on a friend who has a large planting, and take up small divisions. It is also available in greenhouses; best time to plant is early April.

ANCHUSA: This is the big one - the variety that grows from 3-1/2 to 4 feet tall, and always steals the show -- even from the iris! I general use from 3 to 5 of these showy plants, mixed between the iris plantings, each spring. Generally, a mature plant will live from 5 to 6 years before it dies, but there are always small plants that appear from seed dropped from the parent plant. If you plan to grow this from seed, plant seed in July or August. The perennial Anchusa rarely blooms the first year if grown from seed. Color is about the brightest, deepest shade of blue I have ever seen. As the bloom stalks are tall and quite heavy, use a double ring plant support around the entire plant. Plant in full sunlight in any good garden soil. This is a perfect companion for irises.

PERENNIAL POPPY: These should be planted in fall only for best results. I have found the ideal location is one that gets morning sun only, and filtered sunlight during the heat of the day. My planting is near some iris, and shaded in the afternoon by a Tulip tree. (The irises are in full sun). Once a planting is established, put out a DO NOT DISTURB sign. These plants do not want to be crowded by other plants either. A deep organic soil is appreciated by the perennial poppy.

RANUNCLUS (Buttercup): This is the perennial form, not the bulb. There is also a perennial for used for ground cover that has a creeping habit, and very little bloom. The compact form blooms during iris time, and is completely covered with the yellow blooms for weeks, and during the entire blooming season or iris. Grows to about 20 inches tall. Full sunlight, with all types of soil. One of the easiest perennials of all to grow -- just be sure you get this one, and not the creeping form, unless you are looking for a ground cover.

BULBS

Unfortunately, most early spring flowering bulbs are gone by iris time, at least the tall bearded iris. The peony-flowered tulips -- the doubles -- are among the last of the tulips to bloom, and often these will still be in bloom at iris time. You can help this out, by holding back the bulbs until about December 15th. Keep bulbs in a cool place. I like to put mine down under the sink -- the area where the pipes are. This has been an ideal storage place for all bulbs for me. By late planting, I think you can be reasonably certain of having most of the late blooming varieties bloom at iris time. However, the second year they will do their thing, and bloom earlier, unless you lifted the bulbs. It is certainly worth a try, if you want tulips at that time, and will hold them back. Last year I had a dozen parrot tulips -- Texas Flame -- in bloom at iris time. I forgot them, and did not get them planted until December 20th. They were late beauties!

The large flowering Alliums are very showy, and these would all be in bloom at iris time. The smaller varieties are not very showy, and I do not give them space. Use in groupings of three -- and they stop traffic. Ones I particularly like are Giganteum, Karataviense, Aflatunense, and Albopolisum.Biennial seed may be purchased at all times from Parks Seed Company, Greenwood, South Carolina.

I really believe that once you introduce some of these plants into your garden, you will wonder why you waited so long. In fact, this journey into experimenting with a few biennials and perennials just might develop a latent collecting instinct. By this time, the iris will have accepted the idea, and will be performing beautifully in their allotted space, and not mind at all. Really!

Do I grow iris? You bet! They rate at the top of the list as one of my favorite perennials. They have learned to co-exist with my other plants. Every spring I explain to them, that if they stand straight, unfurl each little standard and fall just right, they will get to go to the show. Some do. Maybe they want to get away from those cotton-pickin' drummondi phlox surrounding them!

Potting Iris for Sale and Enjoyment

By Harold Peters, California

Bulletin of the American Iris Society, April 2003, page 92-96

I was editor of the Region 14 Bulletin and kind of insisted that garden related articles start with a description of the garden's climate and microclimates. Without that basic information at the beginning, readers could get misled. Accordingly my garden is in the low Sierra Nevada foothills about 25 east of Sacramento. This means cool wet winters, hot dry summers. From a microclimate perspective, the garden is on top of a hill so there is full sun most of the day and rarely is there freezing weather. My challenge with pots is retaining moisture during the hot summer days. Northern gardeners and many others primary concern would be freezing. For that, this article isn't going to be of much assistance.

Both of my parents were retail storeowners so I have had a fairly extensive exposure to retail operations. When I first got started commercially, I had limited stock but a beautiful site. I decided my advantage was for carriage trade (walk-in customers). In addition, I was not ready for catalog sales. My feeling was that American consumers were not into delayed gratification. Therefore my primary marketing was going to be one-gallon pots. I would have a display clump of what I had in pots and photos of the cultivars in pots. That combined with the pots blooming gave me three ways to sell the pots. All I had to do then was learn how to grow irises in one-gallon pots.

At the current time I will end up with about 2500 pots of TBs for next year's sales. I will also have 100 to 150 pots of Siberians and 50 to 75 LAs. I am growing all of my LAs in pots in kiddie pools because of gophers. My display clumps are in 7-gallon, squat pots. I have grown arilbreds in pots. I had thought I was going to have a surplus of good median rhizomes so I was planning on potting some medians on sale. However I may have sold so many that the median experiment may wait a year. The strategy with the medians was to keep them under an oak tree canopy to slow their bloom time down so that the TB customers would see the medians in bloom. The primary thing that sells a potted iris is a flower.

I will not repeat all of the learning experiences that have transpired since my first year commercial year. What I relearned is that irises are very tolerant of varying conditions. A one-gallon pot does not have enough resources for a TB to perform to its full potential. Comparison of a one-gallon potted TB iris and an in ground iris will generally show some aspect that is noticeably poorer. It can be flower size, stalk height, foliage height, number of increases or something else. A 5-gallon pot seems to be much better if a person wants to grow their TBs in pots; however, my experience with the larger pots is limited.

This year I am using a potting mix that is 500/0 forest humus and 50 topsoil. The challenge with this type of mix is that it varies each load because the two ingredients vary. Last year the topsoil was very sandy. The problem this caused was that the mix would run out of the drainage holes in the pot if the mix got a little too dry. I had to water the mix routinely and there is a fine line between too dry, workable, and too wet. This year the topsoil appears more clay like. The humus is courser so even a very dry mix doesn't run out of the drain holes. However, the mix seems to set rather hard when it dries. I will not allow composts made with manure to be used in my potting mix. I had an unpleasant experience of massive rot with aged stable cleanings. A friend had a similar experience. I know that "well-aged" manure composts can be used without a problem. I just don't know how to specify the difference between what works and

what causes rot. A problem with some mixes is that as the potting mix dries, it breaks away from the side of the pot. This is undesirable as it allows the water to run out quickly and not get captured by the potting mix.

I pot from a wheelbarrow because I have an iris work station in the middle of the north side of my three-story house with an 8' deck extending out from the second level. This way I can work in the shade any time I want. Working at the pile would mean being in the hot, bright sun. A heaping wheelbarrow of potting mix yields about 50 pots. Using the pot as a scoop, I fill the pot about 2/3 full and give the pot a wiggle to level and settle the potting mix. I throw a small handful of alfalfa pellets in the pot. I hold the rhizome where I want it spatially in the pot and then fill the pot using a trowel. Two full scoops of the trowel fills the pot. I want the top of the rhizome about 1 inch below the rim of the pot and the back of the rhizome close to the side of the pot. (The front of the rhizome is the growing end). I wiggle the pot again to both level and settle the soil. Occasionally I will use my fingers to compress the soil around the rhizome. I am aiming to have 3/4 inch plus or minus 1/4 inch between the lip of the pot and the soil level. (Sorry but I am an engineer and that way of thinking is natural for me.) The pot has to hold water to get water to penetrate to the bottom of the pot. Very important is the name tag placed along side the side of the pot. I make the name tags in advance and put the tag in while the pot is in the wheelbarrow. Name tags frequently have to be pulled to be read. If the tag is along side the pot, the tag is much easier to get back into the pot.

The pots are loaded onto a handy cart from Sam's or Costco (J.nd taken to the frames. I have decided that minimizing the sun on the sides of the pots is very important-in my hot, dry climate. I made frames of 1 " x 8" redwood assembled into 5' x 8' rectangles. The pots are loaded into the frames as tightly as they will fit. The first and the odd numbered rows hold 15 pots. The even numbered rows hold 16 pots so the frame holds 155 pots. The frames are loaded in rows from south to north starting each row on the west end. The frame shades the first row of pots and then the first pots shade the subsequent pots.

Until this year, all watering has been with a hand wand on a hose. A good quality head with even distribution and a medium velocity is important. The velocity is important because of aphids. Too low a velocity and the aphids don't get washed of£ Too high a velocity and blooms and/or stalks are damaged. Watering took about an hour when all the frames were full. I am experimenting with a couple of watering devices like a bow sprinkler. I know they use more water but the slower application rate per pot should give better penetration of the water within the pot. It is also easier for me.

The name tags are vinyl miniblind slats from Wal Mart cut into about 3" long pieces. Too long and they are harder to get back into the pot and too short doesn't stay in place or gets buried too deep. The best depth from my perspective is with the top of the tag even with the top of the pot. The sharp corners are SHARP. If the name has been written to the right size, it is sometime possible to read the tag without removing it. I use #2 pencil to write the name after learning how fast ink can fade in the sun.

Shortly after putting the pot in the frames, the pots gets fertilized with Osmocote time release pellets. This can be done at the time of potting when the pots are in the cart. A second shot of fertilizer in the spring is recommended. Foliar fertilizers have also been used but without an attempt to determine if they make a difference.

Problems? Every time I go through the pots for a maintenance phase, I find pots that do not have any green. I use a wide variety of rhizomes from a wide variety of sources. Some just don't start new roots. Some die over the winter for a variety of reasons. Others are bloom outs,

meaning only a bloom stalk with no increase showing. I will not sell bloom outs. I will give them away with an explanation of what a bloom out is and why I will not sell it. Then after the sales season, more will die. There are a whole bunch of reasons for all this. The numbers have not been that high that I have had to do something different.

Aphids can be a real problem. Most years aphids have been controlled by washing them off or killing them with thumb and forefinger. When that didn't work, insecticidal soap was tried next. When it got into a major infestation, Diazanon was used with great success. With the loss of Diazanon, only experience will see if the new stuff works.

Weeds are a problem. I have been reluctant to use a pre-emergent in the pots so almost all weeding has been by hand. Early after potting, weeding wasn't a big deal. An entire frame could be done in 5 to 10 minutes. Using a rotation system and then starting over again worked. Then the rains started and the days got shorter and shorter and the weeds had a chance to get well established. A selective grass herbicide product called Grass Getter was used on the pots and worked pretty well. Getting the proper application was a little tricky. Grasses are one of my more difficult weeds.

The biggest project under my system is the late winter cleanup, sorting by cultivar and reloading the frames in strictly alphabetical order. There is no way for me to pot alphabetically so I have to put the cultivars into rows in rough alphabetical order, inventory what I have and then put them back into the frames in order. I use See- Fine metal label stakes in the field to identify the clumps. If there are five or more of a cultivar, I use one of the name stakes for that cultivar. The name stake goes into what I consider to be the weakest pot of that cultivar and that pot is placed last in the group. This helps keep the label in place. Many customers have no problems mastering my system of finding a cultivar. Others have problems. If I could start from scratch, I would make the frames 4' deep instead of 5'. The middle rows are challenging to reach.

In summary, irises can be successfully grown in pots. The right conditions for the local area can be accomplished with some ingenuity to meet any aesthetic requirements. For sales, a one-gallon pot works. For enjoyment bigger pots are better. I would recommend a 2-gallon for arilbreds and the smaller medians. For taller BBs and TBs, 5 gallons is the minimum. I would also recommend that no iris stay more than 1 year in a pot. Irises are heavy feeders and will exhaust the potting soil before a year is out.

Nightmare in the Garden

By Barbara Nicodemus

Tall Talk, September 2000, Pages 48-49

In the iris garden, the most dreaded insect pest, the iris borer, ranks at the very top for being extremely destructive if left unchecked. Iris borers not only will ~ill many plants, but also permit entry of serious rot and other diseases into the rhizomes. Especially serious in the garden is the foul smelling bacterial soft rot *(Erwinia* carotovora)which is inevitably caused by the borers' injurious tunneling. The iris borer is mainly of little or no importance west of the Rocky Mountains and the southern United States. In the rest of the country, however, it is a very dangerous pest, affecting not only tall bearded irises, but all types of irises.

The insect goes through four stages in its life cycle: egg, larva (borer or caterpillar), pupa, and finally the adult, violet brown night-flying moth *Macronocture anusta).* The main body is almost black with a crested head. Its brownish fore wings are marked with fine black lines, with the hind wings being lighter and whiter. The wing span is approximately one and one-half inches across and a little over three-quarters inch long. Due to its secretive nature of becoming active at dusk or after dark and avoiding even night lights, it is seldom ever seen, keeping well hidden during the day with the exception of sometimes appearing on dark, cloudy days. The moths usually appear during September or October and begin mating within a few days. The female soon lays her 150-200 eggs in clusters of about 25 or more on old stalks, lower base of the plant (sometimes higher up), cracks on the rhizome, shriveling old leaves, and other debris around the iris plant. The one-fiftieth inch eggs are cylindrical shaped, having flattened tops and bottoms. When first laid, eggs are shiny white, but as they mature, the eggs go through different color changes until they are a lavender hue just prior to latching.

In early April through June, upon hatching, the one-eighth inch, hairless, brown headed larvae are light greyish to white with pinkish tones. This is the stage when the larvae start their journey of destruction! They crawl up nearby leaves and proceed to feed on the new growth. Some, however, may spin fine threads to become wind-borne, thereby, spreading to other iris plants in the garden. In a few days, the larvae will start "mining" in the leaf, working their way down inside the leaf sheath, eating their way to the base in about a week. Iris borers are cannibalistic, so only one is left per plant by the time it reaches the rhizome. There it will spend several weeks feeding on the rhizome, eventually hollowing it out, and may even feed on the roots. There still can easily be more larvae that have survived on nearby fans or by becoming wind-borne to other clumps, as mentioned previously.

Normally a larger tall bearded rhizome will feed the larvae to maturity , but the smaller rhizomes and some beardless, like Siberians, won't be enough. Then, they will travel in the soil from one rhizome to the other until they destroy most, if not all, of the clump. In mid-August or September, the mature larvae are up to one and one-half inches long, soft, fat (approximately one-half inch wide), and pinkish tinged, with a brown head. It is at this time that they will leave the hollowed out rhizomes to pupate in the nearby soil.

The chestnut brown pupae are easily identified, shiny and oval in shape, up to one inch in length. The pupae can be found within a one foot radius of the clump, but are normally closer. They are buried about six inches deep and have been known to be even deeper. The pupation will take a month, and then the moths will emerge, starting their life cycle again.

The presence of the iris borer may first be recognized by the wet stains along the leaf edges, notched out leaves, small pinholes, fine silk threads left from their spinning, and "sawdust" looking remains at the base of the plant from their waste. Later, the newly developing central leaves will have

larger, more ragged, "saw-toothed" edges, due to the growing borer feeding inside the lower base of the leaf sheaths. The outside base of the plant will become slimy and look water-soaked due to the "bleeding" of the leaves. In the advanced stage, the central leaf may yellow and will be easily pulled out, sometimes even the whole fan. Bloom stalks will topple over and, upon inspection, the base will show the slimy, riddled work of the borer. The preceding two signs might be all that is noticed on smaller rhizomes, like MDBs, etc. This is especially true on some beardless irises, like Siberians.

Preventive measures are the first defense against iris borers. Clean up the garden in early spring and late fall, thus getting rid of most eggs. Remove all of the dead leaves and other debris in and around the clump and bum it. In the spring, be alert to any signs on the leaves that the borers are present, especially if you had trouble with them the year before. Hand pick and kill any larvae found. If they are already 'mining' in the leaf sheath, many can be killed by squeezing all leaves which show wet stains, pinholes, or any damage. Starting at the leafbase, firmly squeeze the leaf between the thumb and forefinger, pulling upward. Even this might not get rid of all of them, especially if they are already tunneling from the base into the rhizome. In a heavily infested garden the best way to get rid of the borers is to dig up the plants after flowering. Examine all the rhizomes, cut out any rot or borers found, and treat the rhizome for soft rot. If this procedure is done when the iris should naturally be divided, the borers should be kept fairly well under control.

Pesticides can be very beneficial if used with some common sense. They can be hazardous to the environment and the user, if used excessively or recklessly, so only use them when everything else has failed. You also need to make sure that any pesticide you use is labeled for use on irises, including any mentioned in this article. Otherwise. it is against the law to use them.

The most effective chemical control of iris borers is Cygon 2E (dimethoate) or Lindane, which is a contact insecticide. Lindane is only useful early in the season since it is a contact spray and will only kill the larvae that are active on the surface of the plant when used. It will be ineffective against the larvae once they are mining inside the plant leaves and rhizomes. The first spraying should be timed when the larvae are starting to hatch in early spring, followed by weekly spraying for the next two or three weeks. Cygon 2E (dimethoate), or any sprays containing dimethoate, are systemic insecticides and, therefore, will be absorbed throughout the plant when used. For this reason it isn't necessary to spray the whole plant, just the lower part of the leaves and base. Heavy spraying of Cygon 2E on the upper leaf tips during hot weather can bum them, so it should be avoided. Cygon 2E can be repeated with a second spraying if necessary, especially if you were heavily infested with borers the year before. It can also be beneficial if the borers are detected late in the season and have invaded the rhizomes. But when mixing insecticides, - etc., for irises, a few drops of detergent or a commercial sticker must be used per gallon of spray, to prevent it from shedding off their waxy leaves. It must also be stressed that chemical control needs to coincide with the egg hatching in early spring because as the larvae grow they become much harder to kill. This is normally when new leaf growth is four to six inches high. The temperature will also affect the time of hatching due to being warmer (earlier) or cooler (later) in the spring than normal. This can make it less reliable to depend on just plant growth alone, so all considerations need to be taken into account to start watching or spraying for them in the spring. Once there are no further signs of borers, spraying can be reduced to once a year in early spring for one or two more years and then discontinued. But a person must always be vigilant every spring for their reappearance.

The time of month the borer first appears in spring will vary for different parts of the country, so it is very important to find out this information for your area. This can be done by contacting your state or local Agriculture Department Extension Office or local iris growers. They will also be a good source of more information about how to get rid of and effective treatment for the iris borers mentioned here; the goal is to keep this *nightmare,* the iris borer, out of your garden!

Gardening From the Soil Up

(Information from Material provided by Peters Professional Plant Food)
Bulletin of the American Iris Society, July 1999, Page 43-44

Every gardener understands the value of sunlight and water. On average, plants need about six hours of direct sunlight a day and one inch of water a week. But, in addition to the sun and water, the right soil mixture and proper nutrients are vital to growing healthy, productive plants.

A good soil composition is as important to plants as a solid foundation is to a building. The soil composition consists of three main constituents: sand, silt and clay. For most plants, the ideal garden soil is about 40% sand, 40% silt and 20% clay. The best way to determine the soil composition is to conduct a simple test.

One method, recommended by garden centers, is to take a handful of soil and squeeze it into a ball. If it is unable to hold its shape, the soil is probably too loose, or sandy. Assuming the soil can be made into a ball, try to break the ball apart by pressing on it with your thumb. A good soil will break apart readily, if not, you probably have too much clay.

Another sampling method is to place a couple of cups of soil into a half-gallon bucket filled half way with water. Stir it until the soil is completely in suspension and then let it settle overnight. The next day, there should be three distinct layers: clay at the top, and then silt and sand at the bottom. If not, amend the soil based on the sample test concentration breakdown of clay, silt and sand.

After identifying the soil make up, using organic matter is the best way to f1X soil composition problems. If your soil is high in sand or silt, add a combination of topsoil and peat moss. If it has too much clay, add peat moss or compost and some sand to loosen the soil. Another way to compensate for too much clay is to build a raised bed. This will provide your plants more drainage and prevent the need to replace large amounts of dirt.

The next step in creating the right growing environment is to determine the acid or alkaline levels in the soil with a pH test. To do so, take a sample of your soil from about four inches deep and use either a self-test kit, available at most garden centers, home centers and hard- ware stores, or have an area garden center determine the pH level. Based on the test results, you can amend the soil by added lime to raise the pH level and gypsum to lower the pH level. The lime and gypsum packages usually explain amounts to create the proper pH balance. Commercial plant food companies, such as Peters Professional Plant Food, produce an acid-loving plant food product that will lower and maintain the pH level. The ideal soil pH for most plants is 6.5 to 7.5. Acid loving plants, such as evergreens, azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons and many beard- less irises -Siberians, Louisianas, Pacific Coast hybrids and particularly the Japanese irises, need a lower pH, about 5.5 to 6.5.

In addition to preparing the proper atmosphere, plants, just like people, need proper nutrition to grow strong and healthy. Without the necessary nutrients, plants become weak, susceptible to disease and can die. There are 16 essential nutrients for plant growth and reproduction. Similar to the four basic food groups, plants require three main nutrients: nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. These nutrients are found in the soil and supplemented through plant food. Together known as N- P- K, these nutrients are displayed on the outside of plant food packages in the form of numbers, such as 20-20-20. Nitrogen enhances leaf growth, phosphorus supports root growth, and potassium aids in flowering and fruiting.

How do you know what N -P- K formula is right for your plants? All commercial plant foods contain different N-P-K formulas for specific plant needs. Be sure to check the packaging to match the appropriate food for your plants. The key for plants to maximize the nutrient value from plant food is availability. Plant food needs to be reasonably soluble and available to plants soon after application. For bearded irises particularly, too high a concentration of nitrogen can lead to over growth of foliage, leaving irises vulnerable to leaf spot and soft rot. Siberian and Japanese irises are more tolerant of higher nitrogen, although they probably do best with a balanced fertilizer.

Paying attention to soil and the nutrients in it will give you a good foundation for your garden By working together with Mother Nature and science, you will save yourself a lot of time, money and effort. More importantly, you will have a more enjoyable experience as your garden becomes more productive.

Taking Photos at the Convention By Char Holte, Wisconsin
Bulletin of the American Iris Society, April 2005, Pages 71-72

*O*ver the past three years I have attended three National AIS Conventions, one Siberian Convention, and one TBIS Convention. Until this year I was very unhappy with my pictures from these events. I have a Nikon Coolpix camera and it is the first camera I have ever owned.

This year I had gained some experience with my camera, with convention attendance, and with the software I was using. I am happier with the outcome of my pictures this year. I confess I took a class at a tech school to increase my very limited skills with the software I was trying to use.

At the class I quickly learned my software Adobe Photoshop Essentials was not going to do the trick for what I needed. Off to the bookstore I went and purchased Adobe Photoshop CS --the whole program, not a scaled down program. I completed the class and immediately I was in the midst of the best bloom I had ever seen here n Wisconsin. I was able to do some things with my camera that made my pictures better right away.

I had already set up some procedures for my pictures and records. At home I take all possible pictures early in the day, individual Iris and clumps, and then after dark download the camera to my PC and into a file with the day's date. This gives me a record of the bloom date and also groups together the Iris that bloom around the same time.

For Conventions I do the same thing but break down the 1nformation to the date and then the garden. I take pictures of as many Iris as I can that are in bloom, and each picture is followed by a picture of its garden marker. I can run this as a slide show during convention and critique my photos for the day without doing anything else. I also take pictures of guests in the gardens, trying to get faces is sometimes very hard as everyone is looking at the Iris or their paperwork. I take pictures of the whole garden, the home of the garden owners, and the owners if I can. In general, I try to include items of interest within the scope of that particular iris garden.

After the bloom is done at home, I start working on the pictures in he evening. I convert the file name of the picture to the name of the Iris, the marker gets the same name and I leave the camera number on the file. My camera numbers the pictures progressively. In this way the computer does not complain about two pictures with the same name. I might rename the picture in this way: 'BRAT KEPPEL IB 0434.jpg'. I move each file to a sub folder named 'rename' or similar. If I get interrupted I can quickly go back to the file and the picture I need to work on next, this keeps everything neat and tidy for me.

So, when all of the pictures have been renamed I burn the file folder on a CD and put it away. If I ever lose a picture, have my computer crash or something else unexpected, I still have the picture.

I then work through all the pictures in Photoshop. I crop, take out things I don't want (like a dead bloom or someone's foot, or whatever is unwelcome). As I do this I add to the picture: the iris name, hybridizer and category of the iris. So the example would be, 'BRAT KEPPEL IB'. If I use Windows for a slide show the name now appears on the screen of my PC. Additionally, with the name of the iris first on the name of the file, the computer will automatically sort all the pictures in the file folder alphabetically. So all the pictures from the event where I saw BRAT will sort together and I can look at them separately, or all at one time, or as a tiles.

If I need a picture of BRAT I can search my hard drive for BRAT and have a list of all the pictures of BRAT on my computer. Additionally, if I have BRAT numbered 055, 0434, 2679, etc., I will know at a glance that I saw and took a photo of that iris, in bloom, in more than one garden. I have a list of which numbers were assigned to which garden on what date. This is very minor bookwork done ahead of time and it makes life much nicer.

Now I have 569 pictures from one event and I can run the slide program if I choose. Being a techy of sorts I can't just leave them like that. I put them into Power Point. I can do many different things with Power Point to make the presentation more interesting and fun to watch, such as different colors around the pictures, different entrances of the pictures, sound and other things. The best part is that I can put an individual flower alongside a clump and see the two at the same time. In Power Point I have 378 individuals, so there were many that had a clump to show or more than one of an individual Iris.

I found that looking back on the pictures was almost like attending the event again and revisiting the people who are all so nice. The garden owners who share their gardens, their homes and really a part of their lives with the guests make the event. I hope I have given a few of you an insight into the way I handle my digital pictures --and a poke in the ribs to get out there and try some pictures of your own!

How to be a Courteous Visitor

Garden Etiquette by AIS Region 3.

With bloom season fast approaching, I thought it appropriate to have some reminders on how to act while in someone's garden.

Private gardens are best seen by appointment. It is best to call ahead. Please phone in advance for directions and to set a mutually acceptable time for viewing the garden. Arrive promptly for your garden tour. Remember that Mother Nature does not always agree with our plans - or our anticipated bloom times! Remember that you are there to see the garden, so you may not be given a "house tour". While your host may offer you food and drink, you shouldn't expect it.

Wear sensible shoes, and expect to get them dirty. A hat or sunscreen should be brought along to protect you from the sun's rays. You are bound to see something you like, so bring a notepad and pen for future reference.

Please do not touch or pick the flowers! Some gardeners are iris hybridizers. They need the blooms for this purpose and you could upset their hybridizing efforts by touching tags or picking flowers that they need to make crosses. They may have already made a cross and are waiting for the seed pod to ripen. This is why it is very important not to "help" by doing any deadheading in the garden.

Don't move any plant markers. If you question the accuracy of one, share your concern with your host, rather than trying to guess where it should go

Be careful with your umbrella, handbag, and camera. Also take care not to disturb any tags while walking through the garden. Most gardeners have a tendency to plant too close, so watch your feet! And always stay on the provided walking paths. The most common cause of broken stalks seems to be people trying to climb over a row as a shortcut

P-l-e-a-s-e - NO uncontrollable pets or children! Many gardens have rare or valuable plants that could be damaged.

Do not ask for (or take!) plants or seeds.

Lastly, and most importantly... Please remember that you are a guest. These gardeners are extending themselves and their gardens for your benefit. They do this freely on a volunteer basis. Have Fun! Ask questions! But please...leave the garden as you found it! (Unless you want to do a bit of weeding.)

Do You Really Enjoy Your Irises?

By R. Bailey

Reprinted from Sooner State Iris Society News, April 1973

With the iris gardener, when bloom season comes around, either one of two things usually happens. One, he redoubles the zeal with which he has been working, worrying, keening over his irises for most of the preceding twelve months. Two, he rushes about to see if his irises are blooming as well as those in his friends' gardens. Not once in a hundred cases does he make any serious show of soaking up the grace and beauty of peak iris bloom in his own garden. With him, to see an iris is to worry about it or fuss over it. When conducting visitors on a tour of the garden he makes hypocritical apologies and mutterings about the mirage-like "next year" that he is confident in his heart will never come. These slightly exaggerated statements could be documented by any gardener touched with the saving grace of laziness or to put in more kindly -- the ability to relax.

Perhaps relaxation is the magic word. Offhand, you'd say that for most amateur gardeners their hobby is itself their relaxation. But relaxation is relative, not absolute. The possibility of applying measurable amounts of it, to the leaving of any lump are infinite. Even so satisfactory a lump as the hobby of gardening is no exception. In short what things can you do for and with irises in twelve months that you can't do in eleven?

Irises, to be sure, are jealous mistresses. They have a way of demanding and getting first attention from gardeners who are at all susceptible to their blandishments in the first place. Their beauty is of a noble sort, automatically commanding admiration, and of a substance that cannot be argued. And I think sometimes we become enmeshed in a very unnecessary competition for their favors. It is also true that devotion can become a habit, subject eventually to the dulling effects of overindulgence. The ultimate result may not be revulsion against irises, but an acceptance of them at a level considerably below that of their true merit.

That, I think, is the real risk of over absorption in the tasks and techniques of growing irises. If irises as plants were bigger, as trees are "big" for example, or if their blooms which are their chief adornment were less arresting as to kind, quantity, and seasonal emergence, perhaps they would command the occasional quiet contemplations which would keep our judgement of them unclouded. All to few growers, I am afraid, have ever really looked at their irises at all except in terms of time or money spent, of space filled or unfilled, of new names to be added to a list, of imperfections or be scourged at no matter what the pains. Only the long view yields constructive criticism. Only the interested but dispassionate judgment can weigh overall merits. Only the relaxed mind can absorb beauty.

Is it, after all, so necessary to enjoy irises for what they are rather than as the gardening challenge they so often seem to represent? Naturally, since I raised the whole question, I think it is. These are among my reasons. Gardening for most of us constitutes a freer kind of living than the more restrictive sort we are required to pursue, however rewarding. One of the freedoms involved is the freedom to know beauty in a way not otherwise available. We are duller gardeners, and probably duller people, if we decline to expose ourselves to this beauty as fully as possible. Again, mere doing without at least a periodic appreciation of the deed being done, is a vitiating and essentially unrewarding pursuit. For one thing it is just that -- pursuit. And the world can probably do with less of it. Consider, too, that there is no better way of discovering how well worth doing a job may be than the completed job.

So at this season I urge the joys of a comfortable chair by the garden-side, the uncompetitive satisfaction of good company, the proud acceptance of your Irises as the personal reward for your season's husbandry.

Addicted to Irises
(Comical But True)

By Melanie North and Yvette Meador, Applegate, CA
Tall Talk, March 2005. Page 32-33

Words like "I don't have that one," "This one is different,~' "OK, I have enough irises, I'm not going to purchase any more". Sound familiar? Well it works temporarily anyway, until you get those beautiful catalogs through the mail. You know the ones with those gorgeous photos, and once the drooling stops you can't help but grab for your marker and start highlighting the catalogs. "Well maybe just a few," and before you know it your sealing the envelope and putting it in the mail. Once you come out of your trance you realize that you have just spent "another" hundred dollars, "How am I going to explain all those new irises? ," maybe he won't notice. "I'll just re-word the register in my checkbook and have it read "fertilizer," and then I'll think of a new alternative for the next time I have to hide my purchases."

Your irises arrive, once again you explain to your husbands "Oh, didn't I tell you about those?", but this one is different; no, that one had a yellow standard with an orange beard, this one has a yellow standard with a white beard." "Yes, dear, this one will be the last." As you walk around your yard you motion to your husband, "Look you can build one more raised bed here, we can move that tree over there." Again your husband throws up his hands and mumbles as he walks away. A smile crosses your face and you think to yourself it worked one more time. Pretty soon the sound of hammering and sawing fills the air as your husband makes yet another raised bed, "Isn't he sweet."

I don't know if any of you out there are like the two of us but the addiction does not end outside. Iris collecting can be done inside, with books, frames, photos, shower curtains, floor mats, jewelry, and clothing. Where does it end? It doesn't. At least that's what our husbands think. As soon as your friends and family find out you love iris, the flood gates open, and every birth- day, Mother's Day, and Christmas, you get iris gifts. My husband shakes his head and says once more, "Where are you going to put that one?" Please, no more iris in the house. It's starting to look like a garden!"

You know you're an addict if you keep collecting new iris even though you don't have a place for them. That is OK too, because then Yvette plants them at her mother's house, her friend's house, which has lots of property, and when they run out of room she says, "1 can always find somewhere else."

Each year our Sierra Foothills Iris Society has their annual show in Auburn, California and each year Yvette and I volunteer to help out. I know you're thinking "good idea" ...right? Wrong! ! ! ! Because you have two whole days to view irises that you have never seen, don't have, must have, and soon will be added to your wish list. "Come smell this one -it smells like grape soda. I just have to have it." It doesn't just stop at just colors, there are re-bloomers that bloom several times a year, space age, novelty iris, and we're just talking about bearded iris! The list goes on and on; when does it end? It doesn't!

I remember a circumstance when Yvette and her husband Hank returned from a recent trip to Washington and Oregon, and visiting a few iris gardens along the way. With catalogs safely hidden on Yvette's side of the car, they returned home after a week's absence. As they were driving down their long driveway they came upon several new iris beds that had not been in bloom when they left for their trip. They were now in full bloom, along with Yvette's other beds, which made for a spectacular sight. Hank suddenly stops the car, turns to Yvette and says "Do you think you have enough now?" and Yvette says, "Of course not, honey, they keep coming out with new ones. I must have at least one of every kind!"

Yvette's addiction is in full bloom, after having this disease for almost 20 years, but mine is in the bud stage, after being bitten for only four years. As I say to my husband, "Look what I have to look forward to, dear," as my husband rolls his eyes towards heaven, as if looking for help.

Yes there is hope for all those who are addicted to irises. Yvette and I have discussed the possibility of starting a support group for all those people whose husbands or wives just don't understand the need for just one more iris! For all those we come in contact with, through shows, sales, the internet, garden clubs and iris gardens, and for every "Gee, dear, I have to have that one" we hear, we see potential members for our group and they too will be standing up and saying soon, "Hi, my name is *(fill in you name here)* and I am an iris addict, please help!

From Blunder to Bloom

One woman's story about how she learned to garden.

by Dorothy Foltz-Gray, special to HGTV.com

Fifteen years ago I bought a house from a gardener--an awful and awe-full thing. The first spring I ran around in the yard stunned by irises, burning pink azaleas, flirting clematis, daylilies, a luscious hydrangea. But I felt a terrible dread as well. Because I knew sooner or later I was going to kill them all. And sure enough, by summer No. 3 or so, the irises had stopped blooming, the hydrangea was growing into another tree, the azaleas were anemic, the daylilies had migrated into the woods and the clematis had vanished.

My response, of course, was to get some information, especially after a neighbor asked where the irises were (tacky but jolting). I had some old gardening books---the former owner's, I think--that smelled of mildew and basement and read to me a little bit like a computer manual. If I only understood the language--tuber, perennial, deciduous, peat moss--I might get somewhere. What I did glean, however, was that irises had to be dug up and replanted periodically to keep flowering. This was my first big project. The irises spread across one wall of the house and by the time I was done, iris bulbs lay heaped in the yard. So was I. I replanted a third, perhaps; it seemed there were hundreds. And never again did I see an iris bloom while I lived at that house.

This was my first inkling that gardening is a bit like cooking. You have to read the recipe--the whole thing--and you have to kind of know some basics, which I didn't. I also found out that most garden failures don't reveal themselves immediately. I had a year or two of great hopes for my irises--and hence for the entire plot they resided in. What, I thought, if I bought a bunch of flowers, stuck them around the irises, and defined the whole area with mulch? That very afternoon, I stood, amazed. In a few short hours, I had turned my garden of iris humiliation into a lovely, albeit iris-less, spot.

The beauty lasted about a week. Some of the flowers thrived; some lay down dead. Had I paid a moment's attention to sun and shade, to soil, to watering? No, no, and no. This sounds funny to me now, almost unbelievable. But I knew nothing. I was at the equivalent, say, of learning to boil an egg.

Gradually, I noticed a change. I began to read the garden column in the newspaper. To ask questions at the farmer's market. To subscribe to a gardening magazine. And somehow I got on the list of several gardening catalogs. Although most of these read like gibberish to me and the photos caused aching bouts of jealousy--the plants so alive and thick--I began to garner some basics. And my flowers began to teach me themselves by dying, by multiplying, by doing better in one spot than another. I noticed, for instance, that the deeper, blacker and looser the soil, the better my charges did. And some things--like lantana--simply flourished with almost no care at all. My rosemary grew from a sprite to a foot-high bush. On November nights when I would clip a few sprigs for my roasting lamb, I'd bless my greening thumb for growing this Mediterranean glory in East Tennessee.

My prize, however, was my Russian sage, whose purple haze beat out Jimi Hendrix's. Captivated by its delicacy, I put one in a sunny spot. Each year it rewarded me by growing thicker and higher. By now I was cultivating, fertilizing, mulching. And I had acquired ambition, discovering to my parsimonious glee that many plants could be divided. What I'd paid for in the first place could be mine, over and over. Cocky with success, I plucked my sage from the ground

and took a knife to its throat. Somehow I realized immediately that I'd killed it. I also knew I'd crossed into new gardening territory: grief. Every day, the sage's hole was a reproach.

But it was also a lesson. To become a better gardener--like becoming a better anything--requires failure, in fact turns failure to value. Will I ever try to divide a Russian sage again? Not likely. More important, the experience made me realize that gardening's thin-edged mortality is what draws me. Every single spring, I can't wait to see who made it over the winter, who's going to peek his head up--and alas, whom I've killed. I wouldn't part with gardening's melange of wild successes and bruising disasters.

Understanding what I love about gardening edged me away from my starting role of Killer. Because it set me free. If I could survive the death of my Russian sage, couldn't I also dare to set out two dried up rose-of-Sharon cast-offs, prune them close to the ground, and see what news they held for me next spring? Couldn't I divide the hosta root, and see what it did with itself in the next month or two? Couldn't I cut back my wisteria to train its embracing spread?

Discovering the answer was yes, yes, and yes was, well, both intoxicating and overwhelming. Now I had no end of things to dig up, to divide, to train, to prune. I had a hundred choices and a hundred new paths toward failure *at all times*.

But I also realized I was reaching a kind of peace--or maybe I should say acceptance--necessary to someone who nurtures rather than kills. My garden would never be perfect, in part because it would never be static or complete. It could develop any which way, and every choice I made affected every other choice. So it turns out that nobody else gardens--or could garden--quite like I do. Sometimes I hate my choices, dig them up, and move them to another spot--and another, and another--and finally to the crematorium. But other moments I feel a delivery room sits right there on my lawn. Either way I know whatever I set in motion is not about death but about what the earth is, and all that shifting.

--Dorothy Foltz-Gray is a contributing editor for *Health*, *Alternative Medicine*, and *Arthritis Today* magazines. She is writing *With and Without Her*, a memoir about being and losing a twin.

Some Iris-World Personalities

by Hortus Veritas

AIS Region Four Newscast Newsletter. It also appeared in the quarterly Canadian Iris Society Newsletter, January 1996 and April 1996.

The following are some observations on some famous personalities in the world of irises. Old-timers are sure to recognize some, if not all of these beloved eccentrics. These people do not often see their names in print, or their virtues sufficiently praised. So, here are some of my favorite "friends".

Mrs. T.B. Only - In the eyes of Mrs. T.B. Only, there is only one type of iris... tall beardeds! She is of course a garden judge. She doesn't grow anything but tall beardeds and doesn't read anything about other types of irises and has never voted to give an iris an award if it failed to be a tall bearded. Mrs. Only once had a nervous breakdown at an iris show she was judging with two other judges. Outvoted, she could not endure the tragedy when a standard dwarf bearded iris was chosen as Queen of the Show. She has never fully recovered from the pain of this event. Mrs. Only hates rebloomers and space age irises. She considers both these types of iris to be "against nature". She refers to Japanese irises as "those freaks" and calls Siberians "those dinky wild things". Some years ago when BROWN LASSO, a Border Bearded iris won the Dykes Medal, Mrs. Only wrote a letter of resignation to the iris society. Upon second thought, however, she tore up the letter instead of mailing it. No, she felt herself duty bound to stay in there and maintain the standards of the organization. And that she does. In any group of people with whom Mrs.T.B. Only associates, it is likely that similar views will prevail. After all, Mrs. Only will not associate with anyone who disagrees with her views, which she received through divine revelation.

Mr. Hi Quality - Mr. Hi Quality only grows 20 iris cultivars, and they are always the newest, most expensive and of course the highest quality. No inferior iris would ever be allowed in Hi's garden. How sad, Hi believes, that others grow such old inferior things. If you tell Hi that you like a particular pink iris, be prepared for him to tell you all its many faults (unless it is the pink one that he is currently growing) For Hi, there are only three hybridizers whose iris are worthy of growing. He would not even consider growing an iris by some other hybridizer. Hi is also a judge. He does not believe in giving firsts to irises that are not in his view, the best. Thus a perfect specimen of last years Dykes winner, which Hi did not vote for or approve, will never get a first if Hi can prevent it. Hi has never grown VANITY. As Hi will be quick to tell you, "That iris will never get within ten miles of my garden".

Mr. I.V. Gotyou - Hi there everyone, I'm a new hybridizer. I joined the AIS at the local mall last year when there was an iris show and I really like iris. I planted some seeds from a pod last year that my Aunt Bee sent me. Well they all have come up and I've got names all picked out for them. Isn't that great! They all flowered except one and they are excellent irises I'm sure. I mean my whole family came over to see them and they told me so. They can't be wrong can they? Anyway I sent in to the AIS for their papers and can hardly wait until they are registered. They are all siblings, seven of them, How tall do iris have to be? Can't wait until next year when I'll have even more seeds to plant and introduce.

Description: Flowers are huge, standards wide open, falls point down, standards and falls are both the exciting colour of tea-bag brown, infused with streaks of yellow. Nothing else like it. Truly unique. (Unknown x Unknown) Anyway, buy one and I'll send the other six to you as a bonus! You'll be sure to buy some from me won't you? Quantities are limited. $50.00 US funds. Mail to: Mr. I.V. Gotyou c/o Grand Cayman Island Cayman Islands

Miss Phulla Woe - Phulla Woe is destined to failure. Her trials and tribulations know no end. They are of monumental proportions. No one has ever had such infestations of iris borer (and she has them every year!) And the iris borers who come to Miss Woe's garden are not of the ordinary size or typical constitution. They are so large that they could easily be mistaken for boa constrictors. They drink Cygon cocktails for breakfast and only grow larger. Although Phulla Woe lives on the east coast where scorch is virtually unheard of, her garden is periodically beset by this ravenous disease. Every year's bloom is worse than last year's. Rot is always rampant in her irises. It is a special type of rot that has escaped from the iris beds and attacked her old oak trees. Fungi and blights peculiar to Central Asia have somehow made it into Phulla's garden. There are of course, no cures for these rare diseases. When one visits Miss Woe's garden it is always immaculately maintained. Her irises are always grown to perfection. No one has ever seen a trace of rust on a leaf or a hole in a rhizome. A sickly plant? Not likely. Every year Phulla Woe wins the Sweepstakes Award at the local show and her den is wallpapered with Best Specimen rosettes. Obviously, her iris diseases and pests are invisible... which makes them even more difficult to combat. Alas, next year is sure to be even worse.

Mr. A. Chievement - Mr. A. Chievement has been breeding and introducing irises for a number of years. He introduces lots of irises. And he has never introduced one that was short of being the best in its color class or a break of great significance. A typical description of one of Mr. A. Chievement's irises taken from his catalogue; WHITE RAINBOW RIBBONS (Chievement 1994) Tall Bearded, gorgeous, heavily ruffled, unique in new shades of white with highlights of blue, red, purple, cranberry, apricot, primrose and orange. Heavy wax-like substance and magnificent classic branching. There are 15 to 18 buds per stalk. Incredible vigor and rapid increase. Perfect in clump and show bench. Multicolored haft markings are distinctive and add to the overall effect of this outstanding color break. This is the best of the whites. (unnamed seedling x sibling) $40.00 Alas, those of us who bought Mr. Chievement's last introduction which was also advertised as best of the whites (an iris called ALMOST VIRGINAL) are now behind the times. ALMOST VIRGINAL is now passé. Of course, it never bloomed for me in the two years that I grew it. Did not increase. Was beset with rot. And has long since disappeared from my garden. Yes, A. Chievement will be sure to introduce another best of the whites next year... and a best of the yellows, best of the reds, etc.. These irises will not win any awards from the AIS because as Mr. Chievement explains, "the judges don't like me". He is actually quite a pleasant fellow.

Garden Tidbits

Jeanne W. Price, Blacksburg, Virginia
Sooner State Iris Society Iris News, May 1973)

A garden is but a container in which to arrange and exhibit a collection of happiness, love, prayer, thoughts and growing beauty.

An irisarian is a good grower of irises that has more friends from May until September when divisions and plantings are made.

New members are those who desire to "know all about irises in one easy lesson", while one meeting at a time will soon compile a book whose contents will be absorbed, practiced, and appreciated.

A drop out is a member who has not been properly taught the fundamentals of growing irises by the older and more experienced members.

An iris expert is a person and grower who has garnered knowledge through study, judging schools, read every book written on them, grown irises in every State of the Union, conquered every prevailing weather condition, every disease, has had no losses, no weeds and can judge them sight unseen.....but he has a barn filled with increases that cannot be disposed of.

Why don't hybridizers "dub" irises with names that will fit on a 3" label?

An avid iris grower is one who plants her husband's pay check in the garden before he receives it.

An iris auction is the gathering place for the tight-fisted who become liberal at the offering of a bargain.

Guest irises should be treated as a guest in your home, even though you may have to go to the attic to bring out the red carpet.

Divisions of an iris catalogue are: WANTS -- MUST HAVES -- CAN'T AFFORDS.

A wishful thinker is a catalogue thinker.

Wouldn't it be nice if subscriptions were sold for iris catalogues for maybe a three to five year period?

Generally speaking, if two first cousins marry, the risk of producing idiots and high-strung geniuses may result within the third generation of offspring.....could this be applicable to rises that often show up in the test gardens? The cells and genes have to split sooner or later!

Pity the poor irises that get pinched just to see if they "have substance". Better still, try it on your friends.

Women growers would rather be right than reasonable.

Miss Phulla Woe - Phulla Woe is destined to failure. Her trials and tribulations know no end. They are of monumental proportions. No one has ever had such infestations of iris borer (and she has them every year!) And the iris borers who come to Miss Woe's garden are not of the ordinary size or typical constitution. They are so large that they could easily be mistaken for boa constrictors. They drink Cygon cocktails for breakfast and only grow larger. Although Phulla Woe lives on the east coast where scorch is virtually unheard of, her garden is periodically beset by this ravenous disease. Every year's bloom is worse than last year's. Rot is always rampant in her irises. It is a special type of rot that has escaped from the iris beds and attacked her old oak trees. Fungi and blights peculiar to Central Asia have somehow made it into Phulla's garden. There are of course, no cures for these rare diseases. When one visits Miss Woe's garden it is always immaculately maintained. Her irises are always grown to perfection. No one has ever seen a trace of rust on a leaf or a hole in a rhizome. A sickly plant? Not likely. Every year Phulla Woe wins the Sweepstakes Award at the local show and her den is wallpapered with Best Specimen rosettes. Obviously, her iris diseases and pests are invisible... which makes them even more difficult to combat. Alas, next year is sure to be even worse.

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A green thumb is a dirty thumb.

A weed is no more than a flower in disguise, but they are never advertised for sale.

A garden tour is the converging of masterminds.

Wanted: A pair of flat-heeled walking shows that will pad my paths rather than plow them up.

Wanted: A weatherman who knows when your garden has had enough rain to assure an excellent bloom season. No applications accepted from applicants who think all gardeners should have webbed feet.

A region is no stronger than its members.

A bit of wit from day to day will keep the sorrows away.

Hospitality begins with the sight of another person, and a smile says the first word.

Do you cultivate your irises from a "down to your knees position". If so, sew pockets on your blue jeans and then insert sponges into them for greater comfort.

Fertilizer savings can be made by purchasing a higher nutrient formula and applying less of it.

Any rampant plant that "takes the place" by spreading far and wide may be held within bounds cheaply and easily. Obtain gallon containers from restaurants, hospitals, or any other place where canned goods are purchased in large containers. Remove the top and bottom and sink the open cylinder into the soil to the soil level. Fill with soil and plant desired plant in the center.

When exhibiting specimens add a teaspoon of granulated sugar to the water in the container, stir it well until it dissolves. Plain corn syrup will also work in the same manner (one teaspoon) to extend the life of the blossom by increasing the substance.

Give Weeds a Chance

HOW A CULTIVATED DISLIKE OF GARDENING
CAN LEAD TO MORE TIME ON THE PORCH BY ANN HODGMAN
Smithsonian, August, 2003

"MOM, THE SUN is not your friend," my daughter once said to me. And being out in the sun is only one of the things I don't like about gardening. I also don't like digging (too dirty), dragging hoses around (too twisty), seeing leaves close up (too veiny) and accidentally cutting worms in half with a trowel (too messy). If I ever get more money than I can bear, I'll hire a gardener. Until then, I'm fine with a tattered lawn and a border of shrubs that my father once euphemistically called "primitive."

Well, not exactly fine. Actually, I'm ashamed of dodging America's favorite pastime. It seems furtive and unpatriotic to lie on the porch sofa reading mysteries while all around me, gardeners are sweating away their weekends lugging mulch and swatting gnats. On the other hand, why should I feel guilty? I'm the one holding the moral high ground. No one hates nature more than a gardener.

Here's a friend of mine, a very nice man, telling me that a woodchuck has invaded his suburban lawn. "I'd bomb his tunnel if I could find the entrance," he says. Another friend has planted a Concord grape arbor in one corner of her yard. To her amazement, the arbor has attracted raccoons. Although my friend has enough grapes to keep her family in jelly for centuries, she can't spare any fruit for the coons. "I asked the Audubon Society if it was OK to shoot them, and they said no!" she moans. "Do you believe it?"

Meanwhile, the main topic at local dinner parties is how to keep deer away from the day lilies, which deer chomp like lollipops. (Bags of lion hair? A flamethrower? A comet crashing into the earth?) Meanwhile, an Arizona relative who says she doesn't like the look of indigenous plants confesses that her traditional English garden uses an awful lot of water. Meanwhile, the droning of leaf blowers destroys tranquil summer days all across the nation. God forbid that a leaf should touch anyone's grass.

I'm not saying beauty is bad. Nor am I suggesting that all gardeners should be as happy to see a woodchuck munching their perennials as I would be. But planting a garden full of proven animal treats and then hating the animals that move in.. . Hey, why not set a freshly baked cake on the grass and then declare war on the ants swarming over it? The minute you plant a garden, wilderness starts trying to take advantage of it. Getting mad at the process is like getting mad at gravity.

"But flowers are prettier than pests," gardeners will say, without acknowledging that prettiness is entirely a matter of opinion. There's the truism about a weed's being a flower where you don't want it, or whatever. And I'd rather watch any kind of animal, even a snail, than any kind of flower, even a forest full of rare orchids. To me, a cottontail in the backyard provides more entertainment than a bunch of flowers. Plants just stand there with their feet in the dirt. And I can't look at them without seeing the work required to keep them standing there. At least it's less stressful to appreciate the living things that don't need special care—or special poisons—to stay alive. It's also prettier to see deer eating my yews and holly in the winter than to shroud all the bushes in brown burlap. (If deer are hungry enough to eat holly, I say they're welcome to it.)

"But we own this plot of land," gardeners will argue. "We have a right to keep it looking nice!" Why? Did Mother Nature sign a contract with them? We buy land from other humans. Why should we expect nature to respect our borders? Why not abandon the incongruity of taming a little patch of land while savagely battling nature to stay on the other side of the fence?

Gardening feels redemptive, which may account for the odor of sanctity exhaled by so many gardeners. It seems like a selfless act; you're improving your little corner of the world and working out at the same time. But gardening is just an- other luxury hobby, like getting a manicure or learning to make the perfect cassoulet. There's nothing wrong with fancy pastimes; if we can indulge in them, we're lucky. But we shouldn't make them the excuse for declaring war on the natural world. Summers would be a lot more peaceful if we sat back and smelled the roses—even if all we have is clover.

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The Obsessed Gardener

This Article was presented by Joanne Snowbarger at the October, 2000, Garden City Area Iris Club meeting. The Article was taken from The Weeder's Reader by Chris Woods

Are you one? Take the test.
It's hared for me to say exactly when gardening stopped being just a healthy pastime and became an all-consuming passion. One day I'm fertilizing a few tomato plants, and the next thing I know, an eighteen-wheeler is unloading 50 yards of compost for a 3,000-square-foot cutting garden.

This obsession for gardening doesn't really happen all at once. Instead, it sneaks up on you. How can you tell whether you're a normal, healthy gardener or have crossed the line into dangerous territory? Easy, take this quiz!

N = Normal Gardener
O = Obsessed Gardener

N = You won't leave town when your iris are in bloom.
O = or your daffodils, your lilacs, your wisteria, your roses, your clematis, your lilies, your hydrangea, your asters …….

N = You have a charge account at the local garden center.
O = Your spouse buys all your Christmas presents there.

N = You invest in fine gardening tools.
O = You keep spare tools in your car for gardening emergencies.

N = You value all living things, great and small
O = You cheered when Bambi's mother died.

N = You have a compost heap.
O = You take its temperature every day

N = You can't believe you ordered so many bulbs this fall.
O = It wasn't enough.

N = You know the Latin names of your plants.
O = You use them in conversations …. With the plants.

N = You love to grow and cook your own vegetables.
O = Cook? Who has time to cook?

N = You are proud of your baby carrots.
O = You carry pictures of them in your wallet