



Twin City Iris Society

News and Views

President's Message

Awake! Awake! The irises are coming. They are coming in all forms from the miniatures through the Japanese. By the time you read this, some members with south-facing slopes will have had their first blooms. These are very special blooms that vie with woodland carpets and Dutch bulbs. A hint of things to come, and better - a hint of what we could have in our garden beds.

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Awake again to what we as a society have in store for us during the next few months. The first in a series of beautiful events - a program on Border Bearded Irises by Maybelle Wright. Maybelle is a champion of standards and quality in all iris categories, but especially the 'Border Bearded' classification.

Awake in May to our first annual 'Early Blooming Iris Show' with awards. A chance to see first hand - Miniatures, Standard Dwarfs, Arils, Medians and Borders. Here is your chance to win ribbons and rhizomes. Here is your chance to learn about other classes of irises. Here is a chance for the society to present the 'Genus Iris' as a plant category with a longer blooming period and greater hardiness than the general public realizes.

Busy, busy, busy. The month of June is a first class ticket for the largest two day Iris show in the States. Awake for this very special event because you are needed. Rally around Greta Kessenich and make sure we present a show heard of throughout Irisdom. Help set up the show and help take it down, but most important - show what you have.

Other events coming up - the Milwaukee Convention; the Region 8 organizational meeting; would you believe a June hayride and picnic? This last is on the first day of summer. What a way to welcome the season, touring the Arboretum.

Cheer up, you will have the whole month of July for resting, but for now, awake, awake, the irises are coming!
- Warren Johnson

HAVE YOU HEARD that Millie Stover was hospitalized for surgery on April 1st? We wish you a speedy recovery, Millie.

A reminder:

Please return library materials borrowed in February, or before.

Our April Meeting will have as our program - a brief discussion by Maybelle Wright on the merits of Border Bearded Irises and their value in the landscape and extension of the iris season. There will be slides of Borders and also of the newest of the tall bearded, which have been rented from the American Iris Society. If you haven't experienced spring fever as yet - this program is guaranteed to bring it on! Don't forget, April 17, 1969 at 8PM at the Guaranty State Bank in Robbinsdale.

8th District Meeting on Saturday

Let's get acquainted! The Regional Organizational Meeting will begin with a noon luncheon at the Maple Grove Country Club, West Salem, Wisconsin. All Minnesota and Wisconsin iris enthusiasts are urged to attend.

A Review of "Come as an Iris" Costume Party

Those who attended the March meeting, enjoyed a most interesting meeting, I am sure. The attendance was good, some over fifty people; the food delectable as always, and the fellowship very warm. This is the evening when inhibitions are set free and we can enter into a world of fantasy - iris fantasy, that is. Dignity is laid aside and new talents discovered.

I'm sure if a talent scout had been in our midst, he would have wanted to cast Maybelle Wright in a role for the Hillbilly program! Her portrayal of a Hillbilly farmer was good enough for the stage in both costume and manners. The skit was a take-off on Maybelle's introduction "Miss Ruffles". And what happened to the dignity of some of our past presidents, Walter Carlock and Glenn Hanson, and our now president Warren Johnson? Walter as "High Time" and Glenn as "Licorice Stick" were most entertaining - and Warren must have studied ballet at some time or other! He was Siberian "Pirouette". Zula Hanson in another version of "High Time", caused much merriment. We were especially happy to have so many children come in costume and enter into the competition. They were all very good - and the Warren Johnson's children's portrayal of the "Children's Hour" was most charming and well planned.

Our prize winners were most deserving of the prizes, which are given each year by our commercial growers and Greta Kessenich. There were first and second prizes for each category. The laughter was spontaneous when Greta, winner in "Most Humorous" division, (although I thought she was also very original) came in with a doormat as an apron, wearing a top hat and carrying a pail with a dipper. As she bowed and dipped into her bucket, she was the interpretation of the iris "Diplomat". Laura Sutton, second "Most Humorous", wore a bright Gay Nineties bathing suit, and was "Miss America". Dorothy Rudser - dressed in dust cap, curlers and housecoat - kissed her husband - (you knew it was her husband!) and was the iris "Morning Kiss", as the "Most Original". Mrs. Hill, second "Most Original", wore a cook's cap and dress to exemplify "Emma Cook". The first and second "Most Authentic" costumes were worn by Julianne Ipsen, in a lovely ballet-type dress as "Painted Doll" - and by Mary Duvall in coral Chinese lounging pajamas as the iris "Chinese Coral". David Sindt and Millie Stover were the "Most Elaborate", with Millie in her "Elly Mae" costume, false eyelashes and curls as "Blushing Beauty". David was the iris "Wizard", and wore a long Oriental robe and hood.

All in all, it was a delightful evening, and ended with slides and a talk on the Arboretum by Dr. Snyder, which was most interesting and informative. Mr. Bakke was present with his trusty camera and took many pictures. I'm sure we will be able to relive this evening again at some future iris meeting via his slides. Perhaps next year we will have more of our members entering into the spirit of this annual costume party and making the competition a real challenge.

- Alice Foss Stenoiien

News from Paul Folkers, Blair, Virginia:

"I get the Twin City Iris Society NEWS AND VIEWS which I read right away. I would really love to drop in on one of the meetings sometimes. Please greet the friends for me....."

JUDGE THEM RIGHT!

The first rule for judging arilbreds of any kind is to remember that they are not "bearded irises". They should not look "bearded". If they do, they should not be judged as arilbreds.

The arilbred-talls which are one-quarter or more aril and do not show extreme aril traits, should show some evidence of their aril heritage. Fairly large, closed standards and rounded, convex falls with better branching and substance than their more aril relatives, should be expected.

Halfbreds and many of the "3/4 breds" that look much like them, should show their aril heritage quite strongly. In these you will expect to find quite aril flowers with shorter stalks and less branching. The more aril the flower, the less branching is required, so long as the stalk is short enuf to be in proportion to the size of the flower.

Most strongly-traited arilbreds tend to resemble their oncocyclus ancestors; therefore the standards should dominate the flower. The several attractive forms include very full, rounded standards that are closed and well lapped; a full but taller form which may not lap, but is pressed together where the ribs end. With large standards a strong rib is essential, whether the standards are globular or reflexed and ruffled. Falls should recurve quite strongly so they don't extend much beyond the standards. If the falls appear shorter than the standards, that is good. If they do not, the general balance of the flower must be considered. Falls that are longer or bigger than the standards are undesirable. They are acceptable only where some other feature is so outstanding that it outweighs the general rule. A very difficult trait to get at present is strong, all-over veining with substance. Another with quite aril flowers, is unusually good and low-spaced branching. For either of these traits, one might forgive a not-quite-perfect flower until breeding lines are established that will combine these hoped-for traits.

Pattern is pleasing. Some signals may be seen from a distance. Delicate veining and minute speckling will only be observed from close-up. You may be tempted to vote for a large signal but does it have a good, arilbred flower around it? If it doesn't, don't vote for it! Signals are spectacular and easy to get but good quality flowers are not.

"3/4 breds" that look much like some of the halfbreds will often have less branching, or none. If the stem is short enuf for the size of the flower and the flower is good with fairly strong aril traits, two buds in the terminal may be accepted.

Another type of "3/4 bred" can scarcely be distinguished from the onco species. The various patterns of some of the true arils may be present. The stem will be short and never branched. The flower may be large or small but is unmistakably aril.

Interspecies aril hybrids may be allowed more latitude in form and substance than we care to grant the breds. This is due to the peculiar forms of some of the species. Contrary to popular belief, not all oncocyclii are beautiful. Some are amazingly ugly! First-generation hybrids from these may be weird but carry some desired traits. Some of their grandchildren may be beautiful. The standards will dominate these flowers. With this group, the artistic sense of the judge must be a deciding factor. But don't look for extra buds. These are species.

Regelias are something else. This group of the aril family bears little resemblance to the more familiar oncocyclii. Regelias intercross readily with oncos giving interesting and often attractive hybrids that we call RC's. The petals of these tend

(Con't - JUDGE THEM RIGHT)

to point toward the tips as regelia petals do. If the substance is good enuf to hold closed standards, they may be considered "improved".

The regelias' worst fault is poor substance. If you see a regelia hybrid with substance enuf to hold its pointed standards closed, give it your close attention. It will be remarkable for its kind.

Regeliabreds should have the pointed form of the regelias and enuf substance to hold closed standards. This combination won't be easy to get and is well worth your attention if you find it.

If regelia pattern can be carried over to regeliabreds, so much the better. A "stolonifora-bred" could inherit petals with a definite border. I. korolkowii might bestow its beautiful veining and "V" signal. Either pattern in a bred would be a great accomplishment - if coupled with substance.

Regeliabreds from I. hoogiana usually look "other-bearded" and generally need not be considered in judging arilbreds.

- Wiloh Wilkes

from - The Aril Society International Yearbook 1968. Re-printed with permission. W. Wilkes has done much to promote the continuation of Mr. C. G. White's work toward arilbreds that can be grown under the usual garden conditions...

The Destructive Field Mice and Iris Rhizomes

By Greta Kessenich

It was late in the fall when I was able to do the last of my transplanting. I knew these choice rhizomes would be lost if planted in the open field. Wistfully, I kept thinking of the beautiful, warm soil next to the two large compost piles and the cold frame full of chrysanthemums. By now the field mice had also moved for the winter to the compost piles, which would radiate heat and were in full sun. Once this very place was decided on, it was going to be a battle between the hungry field mice, my prized iris rhizomes and me.

The soil was carefully prepared, adding chloradane to prevent the moles from channeling in the new fresh soil in search of food. The iris rhizomes were planted. Two long pipes were available, large enough for a mouse to run through. Poison wheat was carefully poured in each pipe, getting it to the center, so nothing else could possibly get at it. These were laid between the iris rows. The iris rhizomes received a good dusting of sulphur. Similar pipes were put in the cold frame. The beds were covered with oak leaves for the winter. Then came the long winter and heavy snows. All the while, there was much concern. Last week, the beds were uncovered. Every rhizome was in its place, growing, green fans, no damage and the pipes were empty of grain.

In this area, we have maintained a perfectly clean iris bed, with no composted mulches of any kind. This treatment allows good circulation of air and exposure to the sun around all the plants, thereby helping to combat iris rot when rain and humid weather prevails to any extent. There really is no substitute for hoeing, cultivating and pulling weeds. Discourage weeds before they begin to show. It will be a joy to see your plants grow and thrive with this attention. We do know that growing irises year after year on the same soil takes certain fundamental foods out of the soil that must be replaced, if we are to have strong, healthy rhizomes and large flowers. It is necessary to put humus (decomposed leaves, etc.) back in the soil. When planting iris, dig a trench, pack it with humus, cover with soil, forming a mound or ridge. Plant on this prepared bed. The roots of the iris will find their way to this storage of food and moisture that is being retained in the humus. The results are well worth the effort.

Growing Irises For The Bloom Season

By Gus Sindt

The "Bloom Season" is the reason for growing iris and all efforts are expended during the year to make it spectacular. The early spring is one very important season in preparation for the bloom. I find that after the major uncovering in late March or early April the real "grooming" can start.

During the month of April the final cleanup is accomplished. Dead leaves are removed and all traces of winter cover, whether it was hay or leaves, are taken out of the clumps. Investigation of winter injury is made. Many times winter injured plants will be removed with the covering but it is best if the remaining rhizome can be treated. This is done with a good fungicide and most gardeners have their own "best" kind.

After complete cleanup and after the top soil has dried I apply fertilizer. I use a 20-20-20, 10-20-20, ^{or} comparable formula and apply it according to directions. This is then raked into the soil, being careful not to go too deep. Iris roots are very near the surface and any cultivation which is deep enough to break roots also has a detrimental effect on the bloom which will appear later. This fertilization is the original, early, big feeding and should be followed later with light booster feedings of the foliar type for maximum bloom size.

The third type of grooming performed in April is control of the iris borer. This insect hatches on warm days and crawls to an iris plant. Cleaning up the iris bed will dispose of many of them but we assume there are still some left. A spray of methoxychlor liberally applied to the developing plants and the soil will do much to eliminate the young borers. It is my feeling that the application to the soil is at least as important as the spraying of the plants.

April grooming for the bloom season should consist of at least three major chores - cleaning, fertilizing, and spraying.

GARDEN PROBLEMS - -

Here is a condition of disease that I find in my iris plants. I would like help in determining what it is and how to cure it. - -

The condition appears almost exclusively in early spring - very occasionally in late fall. The fans have been cut back in the fall to 5 or 6 inches, pointed toward the center. They are still green and healthy when mulched with flax straw in November. When the mulch is removed in late March, the ground is extremely wet all around the plants. Naturally all the leaves that have been left on the plants have been frozen back to some extent. However, on affected plants, all outer leaves are rotting and mushy back to the rhizome. Within days it becomes evident that this rotting is also extended to the center leaves. If left, within a few more days, the entire center of the plant can be lifted from the rhizome which is also beginning to rot - a soft, creamy rot. It can be scraped away and the rhizome saved. Side shoots are not affected (until next year, when they have a rhizome of their own). As nearly as I can tell, it is impossible in the early stages to determine if the leaves are rotting from the top down or whether the condition originated in the crown of the rhizome. All of this can happen in weather where the air temperature does not exceed 50°F." - J. Rutledge

COMMENT FROM MR. GABLE: I have given a lot of thot to the problem mentioned, and while I do not know all the conditions of the rhizomes going into the winter I believe I've experienced similar losses in other years. Most fungus and bacterial rots and botrytis can be ruled out. He does not mention winter injury, or if the varieties affected were fertilized in the fall and went into the winter with lush tender growth and with the rhizomes full of water. If not, then I would believe the varieties were tender whites, blues, violet or possibly yellow.

Treatment for rot following winter injury is difficult or nearly impossible when it rains every day and the soil is saturated, but as soon as the soil dries out, your favorite treatment will perhaps work as well as mine.

JUDGES for REGION 8
MINNESOTA , AIS

1967 MINNEAPOLIS SHOW

-by Mrs. S.F. Pimperton

Mr. Granville Gable,
senior judge
Mr. Glenn Hanson
Mr. Urban Ipsen
Mrs. Greta Kessenich
Mrs. George Lankow
Mrs. D. C. Messer
Rev. William Rossiter
Mr. Wilbert Sindt,
senior judge
Mrs. Alice Stenoin
Mrs. Clifford Stover
Mrs. Tom Wright

1969 - New Registrations

Bakke: for Bakke-Messer:
MINNESOTA FRILLS
MINNESOTA GARNET

Glenn Hanson:
AUF WIEDERSEHEN

1969 - Introductions

Riverdale Iris Gardens:

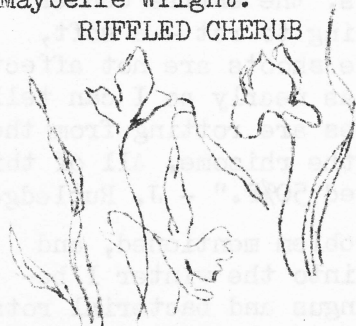
DARK SPARK
GARNET GLEAM
PARCHMENT PLUM
SPARKLING CLOUD
SUN SPARKLE
TIGER BLAZE

David Sindt:

DANCING EYES
GYPSY FLIRT
MOON SHADOWS

Maybelle Wright:

RUFFLED CHERUB



Last June I knew I was going to make a trip to Minneapolis to see my sisters and reading in the Bulletin that their Iris show was to be in June, I thought I'd make it then. My sisters had been to the show several times and sent me the schedules. Also I had seen in the Bulletin that it was the largest show in the U.S. in point of exhibits for several years, so I was very anxious to see it.

I wrote to my friend Mr. G.F. Hanson, then RVP of Region 8. I had ordered iris from him several years and always enjoyed the little notes he enclosed with his iris orders. I told him I'd be in Minneapolis and would enjoy watching the judging etc, of the show as we are limited in shows to judge here. He immediately wrote back asking me to be one of the judges. Was I thrilled.

One of their members called for me the morning of the show and took me to Southdale - a shopping center in a suburb of Minneapolis. I wasn't expecting a big show as everyone, including Mr. Hanson, had warned me about the bad year they had had in Minnesota. They had a warm spell early and then a devastating frost (20 degrees) in early May which had killed many buds. So I wasn't prepared for the beautiful sight. Nearly 1000 stalks in the horticultural exhibit alone, plus many arrangements plus 5 commercial exhibits and several educational exhibits and many many "tubs" or bouquets of iris sitting around as an added attraction.

There were 5 sets of 2 judges for the horticultural division as they wanted the judging done as rapidly as possible so the public could start viewing.

Mr. Hanson and I judged and we agreed on most choices and argued on a few. He made me feel so good by not making me feel inadequate. With my very limited experience in judging I had wondered how I was doing. But I had read everything I could find on the trends in newer iris, also read and reread the judges handbook.

After each pair of judges had finished their section we all judged seedlings. Then chose the Queen of the Show - PACIFIC PANORAMA.

It was a very satisfying experience and I met some wonderful people and saw many commercial and private gardens in the Twin Cities. Their climate is very much like this area and many of their problems are the same.

from - American Iris Society Region 11 Bulletin
Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

The Pimpertons' own a large ranch near Fort Benton, Montana. Mrs. Pimperton (Mollie to her friends) is a former Minnesotan. She is an accredited judge of the AIS and was our guest for the 1967 show.

Wanted to complete a set: - the following American Iris Society Bulletins: Jan, 1960; Jan, 1961; Apr, 1961; Apr, 1963; Jan, 1964; Apr, 1964; July 1964; Oct, 1964; Jan, 1965; Apr, 1965; July 1965; Oct, 1965; Jan, 1966: - by Julius Wadekamper.

PLANT DISEASE

Interrelationship of Environment - Plant Host - Causal Organism

One of the most interesting approaches to plant disease problems is the interrelationship of environment x plant host x causal organism. Diseases are often named for their visible effects on plants (leaf spot) or for the name of the organism that incites the damage (botrytis). To really understand what disease is, remember that all the above conditions must approximate the ideal for development of the disease to take place.

Common sense tells us the plant host is the major factor in this trio of relationships. The healthy plant, well grown in a proper location, is less likely to develop disease symptoms than a plant in poor condition. This is called predisposition of the host and is very important. There is also a genetic factor referred to as resistance, and plants vary in this. Physical factors such as the cuticle or waxy coating on iris leaves help to protect the plant much as a vinyl wax coat on floors protects the surface.

The organisms that incite the disease must be present and unfortunately they are, in great numbers. Fungi, bacteria, virus, and nematodes are the major causal organisms of plant disease. All are small in size, abundant in numbers and adapted to wide dissemination by wind, insects, water, and even birds and man. The incitants reproduce rapidly and although most do not develop or reach a host it only requires one success to ruin a plant. They can induce a local infection as in leaf spot or engulf an entire plant as in the mystery disease called scorch.

Environmental problems predispose a plant to infection and in part, control the rate at which the incitants develop. Wet beds, poor air circulation, too much shade, frost, heat, drought, and any number of natural problems can destroy the plant or weaken it for disease. This concept of viewing disease problems also indicates useful methods of control. To hinder spread of incitants we can interrupt a disease.

Avenues of Entrance: Disease and Insects

How do plant diseases become established in irises? How do they penetrate the plant parts? These are questions that are never answered fully. We know the trouble is there and we hope we can control it. We know that causal organisms are in the soil, on plant debris and even in the air, but how do they get into the plant itself?

Bacteria, fungi, and virus, the most active incitants of plant disease, are spread by insects, wind, water and other carriers such as nematodes. Some of these carriers also provide 'avenues of entrance', or openings, for the causal organisms they carry. Iris borers are one of the main foes in the prevention of disease. Leaf hoppers and some aphids that cause penetration of leaf surfaces open other 'avenues of entrance'.

The weather is another deterrent to disease control. Hail bruises the cuticle that protects the plant. Wind breaks the bloom stalks and leaf blades, opening a pathway for soft rot organisms.

Natural openings, such as stomata provide a means of direct entrance for 'leaf spot' spores. The area where the leaf sheaths overlap is a weak spot for disease control because it protects incitants from spray controls. Soft tissue of the rhizome itself and the roots are attacked by chewing insects and the invisible nematode.

A method of entrance employed by some fungi and never seen by our eyes, is the formation of an appressorium. This is the formation of an adhesive growth that permits a peg-like protrusion to be forced through tissue and then continue growth either between cells or through the cells. If we try to understand how the causal organism of a plant disease gains entrance into an iris we can better understand how to prevent that disease.

- By Warren Johnson

An Old Weed Puller Writes

By G. B. Gable

Last year on this date, March 31st, we had removed most of the hay used to cover our iris, and were off to an early start with the spring work. This year we are experiencing sub-zero temperature at night and must wait for the snow from last week to melt before we can even commence. Perhaps the date set for our Iris Show this year will be nearer the peak of the bloom season than expected.

After many years of study and hard work our hybridizers are getting results and nation wide recognition. Our exhibitors have learned the fine points relative to selecting, transporting, grooming and exhibiting their specimen bloomstalks until there is a more equal distribution of champion and blue ribbons.

There are other activities that we should engage in that I believe would create a lot of enthusiasm and make some interesting subjects for our iris society meetings. I take as much pleasure in growing strong plants with healthy blue-green foliage as producing flowers for a beautiful display garden. And too, strong plants make bigger and better specimen bloom stalks the following year. I believe it would be fun to experiment with different materials for mulching our iris beds and different fertilizers and minerals to produce better growth, more intense color in the flowers and bigger and better bloomstalks. We should experiment with gibberellic acid, agricultural gypsum, crushed lime stone, sulphur, sand, sulphate of iron, and different trace elements and report our results. We should experiment with different fertilizers to compare one against another. Part of the bed or row should be left without fertilizer to check the results. Different rows should be fertilized with different fertilizers and then examined for results. Wood ashes from the fireplace, fertilizer with a high potash content, bone meal, fish meal, super phosphate, balanced commercial fertilizer low in nitrogen can be experimented with for comparison. Last year I purchased fish meal at a feed store and used some. No comparison was made but results were thought to be good.

We should experiment with different mulches to retain moisture around iris roots and prevent weeds. We should try aluminum foil, sheets of plastic, strips of rolled roofing material, old boards, scraps of plywood, loose hay and lawn clippings. I would rule out layers of newspapers as they make an awful mess when they disintegrate. Except for aluminum foil and loose hay, I've used these materials. Sensational results were obtained by cutting holes in throw-away aluminum pie pans and slipping the leaves of tiny plants thru the holes so that the aluminum covered the soil around the rhizomes. Holes should be made in plastic and roofing material to permit water to run thru to the soil and roots underneath.

I believe we should have more discussions on iris culture at our meetings. Years ago we used to discuss hardiness of the different new varieties. Let's make our iris gardening interesting this year.

BUILDERS SHOW 1969

By Walter Carlock

In the period from March 14th through March 23rd, an estimated 70,000 people attended the Builder's Show. Our Twin City Iris Society had a booth, 7' x 7', in the Garden and Horticulture section. Of the 70,000 who attended, perhaps half walked past our booth, and hopefully became aware that there is a flower called the iris. Some were particularly interested and picked up cards or old catalogs from some of our local growers. Some stopped to talk with some of our members who gave of their time for an afternoon or an evening to answer questions. Among those who helped man the booth were Warren Johnson, Henry Halvorson, Mary Haertzen, Mary Waterman, Cel Mutterer, Mary Duvall, Ed Hathaway, Stan Rudser, and Sunny Netco. Walter Carlock put up and took down the booth.. We all wish to thank these members for their time and interest in promoting the Twin City Iris Society. Thank you!