



Twin City Iris Society

News and Views

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Everybody talks about the weather but ..." Well, we are not the exception to the rule. A good rain before winter sets in - or, do we have enough material to provide a layer of good protection against winters' cold - provide a subject for conversation this time of the year.

This year my heart goes out to the commercial growers and the larger private growers. Heat, drought and a tremendous water bill don't help to provide enjoyment to their other tasks in the garden.

The growers generally have had a good business year. The major difficulty has been in bringing their stock through at the right time. The handling of their rhizomes by mail and shipping is a major problem. The dedication of these people in providing quality to their customers is exceptional in the nursery industry.

Mr. Gable and his wife have completed twenty seasons of commercial growing. They have been active in the society for seventeen years. Mr. Gable has given freely of his time and knowledge to everyone on the subject of Irises. Thank you.

Mrs. Alice Foss Stenoiien has been growing Irises commercially for eighteen years. She has been active in serving the needs of the society for seventeen years. Her optimism has been a welcomed respite for many of us. Thank you.

Zula and Glenn Hanson have encouraged the growing of all types of Irises as commercial growers and are long time active members of the society. They have brought us knowledge and beauty in special packs of Iris lore. Thank you.

Mrs. Millie Stover has an original and genuine love of all plant material. A commercial grower of Irises for (?) years her conversations add greatly to cultural notes and color within the society. Thank you.

To those of you who keep on gardening and maintaining your relationship with the society, we wish to thank you also.

- Warren Johnson

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- ANNUAL MEETING -

FRIDAY, October 17, 1969

Punch at 6:30 PM

DINNER at 7:00 PM

SWISS CHALET, at 5201 Excelsior Boulevard

This meeting will be our annual banquet and election of officers. It will be held at the Swiss Chalet at Miracle Mile, and those who attended last year know that it is a most delightful place, and that the food is both excellent and reasonable.

Our speaker, Mr. Carl Miller, who speaks with pictures of nature and flowers in all categories, will provide us with a most inspirational evening. Now retired from teaching and administrative work in the Minneapolis education system, he has also been active in church and civic affairs. His hobby of close-up pictures on slides has been a career in itself, as he has spoken at many different gatherings and conventions. His collection numbers over a thousand slides under glass.

Please do not miss this presentation, plus the fellowship of a good dinner together.

See you there -

- Alice Foss Stencoein

The cost of the dinner will be \$2.82

Please have your reservations in by Wednesday, October 15.

Make your reservations with -

Zula Hanson - Tel. No. 561-1748

7124 Riverdale Road, Minneapolis, Minn 55430

or

Genine Benedict - Tel. No. 561-1384

1917 Laramie Trail, Brooklyn Park, Minn 55430

MEMBERSHIP CONTEST -

The April meeting signaled the start of the membership drive contest, with President Warren Johnson submitting the names of the first two members.

Some of us were obviously busy selling the merits of membership in the Twin City Iris Society at the Regional meeting last April in West Salem, Wisc. (as witness the large number of Wisconsin members we have this year - and the new outstate members who joined while at the Regional meeting.) Following the first large surge of new members, names have continued to trickle in every month, giving us now a total of 34 new members this year.

Julius Wadekamper won first prize for rounding up 11 members, and for his efforts, he received the beautiful iris "Riverdale". The second place winner was Warren Johnson who brought in 5 new members, and he received "Azure Apogee". At the close of the contest on June 30th, no one had qualified for "Minnesota Glitters" or "Skywatch". The rest of us fell far behind with 8 new members brought in by 6 people. Our total membership now is 169.

We know we shall benefit greatly from our new members. A warm welcome to all of you. Share your ideas with us. Tell your friends what our society offers. We hope we can be of service to you in all phases of iris gardening...

Did you take slides for the Minn. Hort. Society this summer?

Don't forget to turn them over to Ralph Hintze.

Bring them with you to the ANNUAL DINNER next Friday..

THE MILWAUKEE CONVENTION-

PROTZMANN'S GARDEN

You have read in the last two or three issues of the News and Views reports of various gardens we saw during the Garden Tours at the National AIS convention at Milwaukee. The weather during the whole convention was misty, cold and rainy - but the warmth, comradeship and wonderful friendliness of all those attending from all over the country was such that - in spite of the inevitable disappointment of not seeing more of the new irises - nothing could really dampen the spirits of the busloads of people who went from one beautifully manicured garden to another.

Such was the spirit of our busload of conventioners as we came to the lovely home and garden of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Protzmann, our hard-working RVP who was also Convention Chairman. Their garden consisted of raised beds bordering grass paths beautifully laid out and landscaped on a long lot. Adding to the beauty of the plantings, (irises, shrubs, perennials etc.) were strategically placed fountains and statuary, resulting in a most lovely whole. Because the Protzmann's home is closer to the lake than any of the others, their garden had been kept cooler, resulting in even fewer blooms than in the other gardens, but the plants with their many stalks and buds were a promise of beautiful sights to come.

We did see Larry Gaulter's JILBY, an AM winner in 1968, which is a beautifully formed, unusual rose-amethyst colored bloom with a burnt orange beard, and JOLIE, a violet and white plicata with flaring form from Robert Schreiner, which won an HM in 1968. Allen Ensminger's BURNING EMBERS was an unusual color - a smoky rose - as close as I could describe it.

Mr. Protzmann's seedling No. 66-4-3 is a beautiful yellow and white flower, ruffled and flaring with good branching. I would have liked to have seen a clump of this in full bloom. It showed real promise.

Also seen here was a seedling that Julius Wadekamper brought back from Victor Hartkopf in Montana, seedling No. 65-1 which is a definite step to the achievement of a blue-bearded white iris. Not finished, as Julius said, but interesting and a step in the right direction, the tip of the beard being a definite blue.

In spite of the sparseness of bloom, it was a delight to see the beautifully laid out and cared for garden which showed the enormous amount of time and energy expended by the owners. We hope to see it again at some future date when the weather cooperates to bring forth the bloom and beauty so lavishly promised.

- Virginia Messer

excerpted from an overseas Robin -

"In June I had the good fortune to be a delegate in the WRS Stand at the Royal Highland Agricultural Show in Edinburgh (Scotland). The stand depicted Homes Through the Ages, and took the form of an 18th Century farm house, a 19th Century manor house, a 19th Century bungalow, and a 11th Century Castle. They were all perfect fortunately, to be shown again at some future date. The flower show was wonderful. Irises and rock plants were excellent. Roses, old and new varieties excellent. But it was the peony section which, to me, was outstanding. "Bowl of Beauty" was quite wonderful."

- Kathleen Mason, Dunbeg, Argyll, Scotlan

Can't you just visualize it?

It is still not too late to plant a few new peonies in your garden. The new hybrids are very desirable garden subjects, and excellent companion plants for your irises.

October is the time to plant iris seeds
in Southern Minnesota

Did you hybridize any irises last spring? If so, you have already collected the seeds, taken them from the pods and counted them, labeling the cross. October is the time to plant the seeds.

There are many different methods used to plant iris seeds. One member of our Twin City Iris Society plants them in garden rows between laths. The purpose of the laths is to identify where the seeds are planted in order to keep them well watered in the spring to aid germination. The laths also help identify the area where the irises will be germinating.

Another method used by some of our members is to plant the seeds in clay pots. This facilitates keeping each cross separate. It is also easy to water in the spring. The pots are then sunk in a cold frame to the top of the rim. They can be kept for the following year since all the seeds do not germinate the first year.

No matter which method you use, some things to remember are:

If the seeds are planted directly in the garden be sure to label the rows accurately and make a map of the rows. Labels have a way of getting lost or removed.

Iris seeds should not be planted in the same locality, since some seeds will not germinate the first year, but rather the second or third or even later years. To plant more seeds in the same area could possibly mix up a cross of later germinating seeds with those planted this year.

Iris seeds should be planted between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1" deep. Germination is erratic. Sometimes over 50% germinate. I have had 80% germination on some crosses. Other times germination is very poor, down to 10 or 15%. Some years germination is better than other years. In 1968 Dr. Reuben David had very poor germination in his pot planted seeds. In 1969 they came up and the percentage of germination was very good. 1969 seems to have been a good year for germination here in southern Minnesota.

There are some theories about the distance apart seeds should be planted. Some people plant the entire pod of seeds in one close clump so the seeds are touching one another. They claim that if the seeds are very close and actually touch each other the germination is better. I know of no controlled experiment conducted to test this hypothesis, but it is an interesting one. Since germination is not consistent it is almost necessary to transplant the iris seedlings when they are 3 or 4 inches high.

Indications are that a lot of fall watering or fall rains are helpful to good germination. Prepare your bed or pots, plant your seeds about $\frac{1}{2}$ " deep, label and map the area; if you use pots it is good to write with a lead pencil on the outer rim of the pot either the number of the cross or the cross itself. If the pots get mixed up or the labels lost, it is always possible to identify the seeds. Keep the seeds sufficiently watered and next April you will be eagerly looking for the spear shaped seedlings to come up.

1. Water requirements in the Germination of Iris Seed. NEWS AND VIEWS, Vol. XVII, No. 2 February 1969
2. Hybridizing for Everyone. NEWS AND VIEWS, Vol. XVII, No. 5 May 1969

PREPARE YOUR IRIS BEDS FOR WINTER

By Julius Wadekamper

Irises should be covered well for the Minnesota winter. Some have said that last winter they did not cover their irises and they came through perfectly well. True, but last winter we had from 4 to 6 feet of snow which served as a perfect natural covering. We cannot always be assured of this easy method to protect our irises.

There are some chores to do before covering irises. First, the beds should be cleaned of all weeds. In the autumn the weeds tend to make a last struggle for survival and put forth many seeds in a very short period of time. Controlling these late season weeds will save a lot of work the following year. Next there is the question of whether the irises should be cut back or not. I have heard convincing arguments in favor of cutting the fans back 6 or 7 inches. I have also heard arguments in favor of not cutting back. I favor cutting the fans to about 6 inches. In the winter the ground is frozen, but many times the air becomes warm - warm enough, in fact, to thaw the leaves. When this happens they lose water through transpiration. Since the ground does not thaw, the plants are not able to take up water. This dessication of the cells causes them to rot. The dry rot sometimes extends down to the rhizome. If the leaves are cut back they stand erect and are not as likely to receive the oblique rays of the sun. Also the leaf surface is greatly reduced, hence less area for transpiration. The erect fans present a neat appearance, leaf spot usually occurring more near the tips which are cut off. It is also easier to keep the covering from blowing since the fans serve as an obstacle to hold the straw.

Beds cleaned, irises cut back, spraying is the next item on the list. The plants and the ground surrounding them should be sprayed well in the fall. This reduces the chances of the early hatching borers reaching the plants.

The beds are now ready for covering. The question is, when to cover? It is necessary to use a sixth sense. Do the ducks know when to fly south? Do the frogs know when to retreat to the lake bottom? Do you know when to cover your irises? A specific date cannot be given, for it depends on the year. It seems that November 1st would be the very earliest, and perhaps most people have their beds covered by Thanksgiving. First, take some pipes or tin cans, place them around the garden with poison corn. The mice will be attracted to the corn and will not destroy the irises. The covering can now be placed on the beds.

What to use for covering? Marsh hay without weeds is very good. It is also hard to get. I like clean oats straw. It does not pack like leaves and is readily available. A certain amount of oats grows the following year, but oats is easy to weed out. If leaves are used they should be placed over branches or twigs to keep them from packing. About one foot of covering, loosely applied is sufficient. More will not be harmful. It is important to see that the covering overlaps the beds or individual plants, if they are growing in separate corners of the garden. It might be necessary to place some branches over the cover to keep it from blowing away.

In summary: Clean the iris beds well
Cut the fans back to about 6 inches
Spray the irises and surrounding area
Cover the beds with 1 to 2 feet of marsh hay or some
suitable covering.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON IRIS DISEASES

National Iris Society Conference
Sheraton-Schroeder Hotel, Milwaukee
June 5, 1969

Gayle L. Worf
Extension Plant Pathologist

Diseases that affect iris are few, compared with those which attack many other crops and ornamentals. The USDA host index of plant diseases lists fewer than 12 fungi and bacteria that feed on this beautiful flower. Roses, by comparison are susceptible to more than 75 such organisms; gladioli to more than 25. Perhaps this is one reason why you find the iris to be such an excellent plant for your purpose!

But the number of diseases that may show up is not the only criterion in evaluating the health of a crop. Just one disease, if it is serious enough and common enough, can destroy the value and desirability of growing a certain flower in our garden. Everyone of you are familial with diseases such as the fungus leaf spot (caused by the fungus Didymellina macrospora); bacterial leaf spot (Xanthomonas tardicrescens - incited); and soft rot (caused by the bacterium Erwinia carotovora). Some of you also have seen rust; crown rot; gray mold rot. Bulbous iris fanciers may worry about Fusarium basal rot, ink spot and blue mold on occasion. Probably the most succinct, yet serious diseases affecting iris and many other vegetatively propagated plants, are caused by viruses which pass from one generation to the next. These latter diseases seldom kill - but they are degenerative in their effects and are extremely difficult to control to the degree we would like. In my judgement serious iris growers need to be aware of these virus diseases and take the precautions that are available in minimizing their effects.

My discussion will deal primarily with virus difficulties.

Two general groups of viruses are known to attack plants: (1) "yellows" - which generally cause stunting, chlorosis and distortion and most of which are transmitted by leafhoppers; (2) "mosaic" - which generally causes mottling and some malformation and often are degenerative in their ultimate effects on the host. Most are transmitted "mechanically" and by aphids - some by nematodes. Both groups are transmitted to the offspring when vegetatively propagated.

Viruses known to infect iris are of the mosaic type.

Bulbous iris are traditionally considered to be most injured by viruses - the variety Wedgwood is a classic example. More recently, rhizomatous types have shown vulnerability.

Specific symptoms vary, but the leaves may show yellow streaks and blotches, due in part to a reduction of chloroplasts and a reduction of epidermal cells. Young leaves and bud sheaths are always more plainly mottled than older leaves. Cool temperatures encourage symptom expression. Varieties that show symptoms in the flowers may appear "broken" (usually darker streaks than the normal color); or with "tear drops" extending towards the throat. Sometimes feather-like cleared streaks, lighter than the normal color, may develop - especially in yellow varieties. Frankly, diagnosis by observations in the garden is a difficult task! Since virtually all offspring from the same immediate parent will be infected, commercial propagators may find grouping such offspring together for observation purposes a useful technique. Such practice is commonly used to assist roguing efforts in the production of registered potato "seed".

(Copies distributed at the AIS Convention in Milwaukee. Included here for the benefit of those who were not able to attend the convention.)