



# Twin City Iris Society

## News and Views

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The modern trend in styles makes use of new colors. Clothes and cars and advertising signs strike us, demanding attention.

As I walked through the Bakke garden two years ago, a flower demanded my attention. Once it had my eye I could not escape its siren command. Everywhere I went I kept sneaking a look back at that row along the hillside. Here was new color. It glittered like the sun, even on a cloudy day. This Bakke-Messer creation is in step with the psychedelic generation's commanding colors. If you want to see real brilliance look to 'Minnesota Glitters'. It will be hard to look away.

The principle business of the March meeting will be a discussion of our proposed name change. We will consider both the pros and cons of this move. Previously I told you that a ballot would accompany the March issue of NEWS AND VIEWS. This was not possible for two reasons. First, we did not have time to discuss the issue at the last meeting. Secondly, the presentation of the proposed amendment was not correctly worded in the last issue. You will find it again presented in this issue. We will discuss the amendment at the March meeting. A result of the pros and cons of our discussion will be carried in a later issue.

Consideration is being given to establish a Minnesota Trophy. We have heard arguments on both sides of this issue. At the present time the discussion has been turned over to Dr. David and the hybridizing committee to get some fresh thinking on the whole issue. They will report to the next Executive Committee meeting on their findings.

The Twin City Iris Society was founded in 1951. Three meetings were held that year. Officers were elected and since it was in the latter part of the year they carried over for the following year. Accordingly, we will celebrate 1971 as the 20th anniversary year. Alice Stenoien is general chairman for this committee and would appreciate any suggestions to make this a memorable event.

I hope to see many irises blooming at the March meeting and we look forward to the fun and friendship of all.

- Julius Wadekamper

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### NOTICE

It has been proposed to amend the Constitution of the Twin City Iris Society.

Present reading: Article I (name)

'The name of the Society shall be the  
Twin City Iris Society.'

Proposed Amendment:

"The name of the Society shall be The Iris  
Society of Minnesota."

POT LUCK - COME AS AN IRIS  
THURSDAY, MARCH 19 - 6:30 p.m.

Do you like to cook? Do you like to eat? The next meeting is for you! It is a pot luck supper at 6:30 p.m. at the Guaranty State Bank in Robbinsdale. Bring your favorite hot dish, salad, or dessert and share it with the other connoisseurs of such goodies. Each man (who does not bring food) will be asked to contribute a dollar - biggest deal ever for you fellows! ! !

Do you know all of the members of the Twin City Iris Society? Wouldn't you like to get better acquainted? You'll have a chance at this meeting - and learn some long eluded facts about some of our best known irisarians. Do you know which one of our members played basketball holding up her bloomers? Or did you know that one of our members lost his class ring in a mudhole near his home town? (At least that's the story his wife has always heard.) Be prepared to find out such important data and have some fun in the process.

Do you like to dress up? Have you always wished you were someone else - or something else? Here is the chance to do both - when you "come as an iris". Hunt through your iris catalogs and find some variety you can depict, preferably one at least a few of us have heard about, unearth your duds and collect your props. Then dress up for this night of fun. If you don't like to dress up and have always been happy with yourself as you are, then add a pin or a scarf or a picture to suggest a particular iris. This, too, will do nicely - and might win you a prize. There will be prizes - the fun type! ! !

Remember - Thursday, March 19 - 6:30 p. m.

Pot luck - Come as an Iris

- Charlotte Sindt

The Birds and the Bees (and the Flowers)

By Lois B. Johnson

Since plants are rooted in one spot they would have a problem achieving cross-pollination without outside help. To get this assistance they must have something potential pollinators would want and they must advertise that fact. Flowers accomplish both purposes by providing the pollen and nectar that the pollinator uses as a source of food and providing the attraction of color and scent. The pollenating agent may be a bird, a bee, a moth, a butterfly, a beetle, a fly, or a bat.

Flowers attractive to insects have one or more of the following characteristics in common. One is highly visible color, especially one that contrasts strongly with the background. If petals are removed from a flower bees will fail to visit it. A second is scent, a quality particularly beneficial to night blooming flowers, although quite a few day bloomers utilize it also. The scent is not always pleasant to people. Consider the skunk cabbage which is attractive only to flies. A third characteristic is abundant pollen. Enough pollen should be produced so that plenty of it is left for flower fertilization after the insects have taken what they use for food. Still another is nectar which unlike pollen is produced solely to attract insects. It is manufactured by glands of nectaries placed in such a way that the insects will come in contact with the anthers and stigma of the flower on the way to the nectary and in this manner pollinate this flower and receive fresh pollen to carry on to the next flower.

Insects are guided to the pollen and nectar by markings on the flower's petals, called honey guides. These may be converging lines as in iris, contrasting eye spots as in primula, rows of dots as in rhododendron, a cluster of stamens as in lilies, or any combination of markings. These act as a pointer showing the insect the way to the source of supply. If these markings are bred out of a flower the insect is confused and either cannot find the nectar and pollen or takes so long in doing so that it is no longer an efficient pollinator. A bee will walk round and round the corolla of a

## Con't - The Birds and the Bees (and the Flowers)

petunia that has had its honey guide markings (converging lines and an eye spot) bred out of it for several minutes without finding the pollen and nectar source. Eventually it will fly on, unrewarded for its search, to the next flower to try again. Sometimes a bee will discover that the nectar source can be reached by biting a hole through the corolla (petals) and bypassing the pollenization mechanism. This constitutes robbery, for the bee gets its reward without doing anything for the flower. Bumble bees are most likely to turn robber, but occasionally honey bees do also.

The lily family are all insect pollinated flowers. However, they are not all pollinated by the same kinds of insects. This accounts for their differences in shape which fit the tongue or body of the specific type of bee, butterfly, or moth that the flower is equipped to attract.

A lily that is a butterfly flower is Lilium philadelphicum. Its blossoms are upward facing, the out-turned petals forming the necessary landing area for butterflies. The lower part of each petal narrows to a claw which forms a groove. This groove guides the butterfly's tongue to the nectary at the base of the petal. As the butterfly reaches into the flower its wings brush the pistel and stamens effecting pollination. Neither a bee or a moth could reach the nectar of this lily. The bee's tongue is not long enough. The flower's angle is wrong for the moth. It needs a blossom that is horizontal so it can hover while gathering nectar.

Lilium canadense is a bee flower. Its flowers hang like bells. The bee lights on the pistel and stamens, then crawls up them to the source of the nectar. As it does so, the bee brushes the underside of its abdomen against the stigma and pistel causing fertilization. Moths would not be attracted to this flower. It is neither light colored or sweet scented. The blossom lacks a landing place for butterflies and has no groove to guide the butterfly's tongue.

An example of a moth flower is the Easter lily, Lilium longiflorum, which is white, sweet scented, and has horizontal blossoms. It has no nectar guides for the moth's very long tongue. Instead, the moth is guided to the source of the nectar by the contour of the blossom. The moth hovers in front of the flower and extends its tongue into it. Pollen is deposited on the moth's head as it reaches for the nectar. Bees and butterflies cannot utilize this type of flower because it lacks a landing place.

The flowers of the iris family are all bee pollinated with the exception of Iris fulva, a Louisiana type of iris. This accounts for the basic similarity of flower shape. Although the size of the flower may differ widely, the mechanisms of pollination are the same. To reach the source of nectar the bee lands on the iris fall, and follows the haft markings up and under the stigmatic lip to the stamens in kind of a tunnel leading back to the nectary. In doing so, the bee deposits on the stigmatic lip what pollen it picked up on the upper side of its abdomen at the last iris it visited. It then collects a fresh deposit of pollen on its back from the stamens to carry on to the next flower. A bee visiting an old bloom can be trapped in the "tunnel" as the bloom closes, which is why it pays to be careful when removing old flowers!

The colors of irises before the hybridizers started improving on nature are those that the bees prefer; blues, lavenders, yellows, and whites. The one exception to this is Iris fulva, which is red. It is not bee pollinated but bird pollinated. Nectar eating birds prefer red flowers. Their long tongues can reach the nectar source. The pollen is deposited on the bird's head, which brushes against the stigmatic lip as the bird visits the next flower.

If you are interested in reading more about this subject, some excellent books are The Principles of Pollen Ecology by K. Faegri and L. van der Pijl, The Story of Pollination by B.J.D. Meeuse, Flower Pollination in the Phlox Family by Verne and Karen Grant, and Look at a Flower by Anne Dowden.



## THE ARIL FANCIER'S DICTIONARY

By Glenn F. Hanson

As the self appointed apostle of the cult of arilism around these parts, I have often written and spoken about the subject, and I usually try to define some of the terminology. But I am frequently asked questions like - what is the difference between an aril and an onco? Or an oncobred and an arilbred? Or what is a Mohr? It happens often enough to indicate that some of our folks are puzzled by the strange jargon that aril people talk, so here once again is a translation of aril language into English.

Aril is a broad term denoting a large group of iris species native to the arid desert regions of the Asiatic middle east. They don't all have the same superficial family resemblances, but they exhibit their kissin' cuzzin status by a prominent band of white around their black seeds. The arils are further subdivided into several groups the most important of which are the ONCOCYCLUS group and the REGELIA group. Without going into the differences, it is sufficient to remember that an oncocyclus is always a species, a regelia is always a species, and an aril is always a species which may be either an oncocyclus or a regelia.

So far so good, but when man gets into the act with his tweezers and starts making some crosses, the terminology gets messed up. If we cross two oncocyclus species we come up with what should be termed an ONCO HYBRID. If we cross two regelia species the result is a REGELIA HYBRID. If we cross an oncocyclus with a regelia we got something that has been termed a REGELIOCYCLUS. Or if you happen to be a real purist, you may insist on ONCOGELIA, depending on which way the cross was made. But note that in all of these crosses there is nothing but aril blood, so the term ARIL HYBRID can be used to denote any combination of oncocyclus and regelia species.

Now let's complicate matters further by adding some non-aril blood. If you cross an oncocyclus with any non-aril variety, dwarf, median or tall, you have an ONCOBRED. If you use a regelia species as the aril parent, you have a REGELIABRED. The suffix "bred" always indicates a non-aril parent. But what happens if we cross an oncobred with a regeliabred, or a regeliabred back to a pure oncocyclus, or any of the other possible combinations? Obviously we need a term to denote any and all of these numerous and possible complicated crosses between arils and non-arils, and so we have the convenient term ARILBRED to embrace all of them.

What is a MOHR? Well, it happens that the first successful cross between an oncocyclus and a non-aril was introduced to the world under the name of the hybridizer. This caught the fancy of subsequent breeders, and we were subjected to a long line of arilbred irises with Mohr somewhere in their names. Grace Mohr, Barrimohr, Lady Mohr, Mohrloff, Mohr and Mohr, Nomohr, Nevermohr, and so on ad infinitum. And so the term "Mohr" came to mean any arilbred iris. It is a sort of slang expression with no official standing, and you will never hear an aril purist use it.

So there, once again, you have all of these confusing terms neatly defined. If you are one of those who have been struggling in vain with this strange language, this may help dispel some of the fog. If you already knew all of this, or if you couldn't care less, you probably haven't read this far anyway!

### GARDEN CHORES:

Remove the winter covering as soon as possible - usually by April 1st in the Minneapolis area. Remove dried and diseased iris leaves, as any debris left in the garden may harbor borer eggs. Check the rhizomes carefully, firming any that need it. Treat for winter damage immediately, if needed. Any of our local commercial growers can give assistance with any unusual problems...

REGIONAL MEETING - West Salem, Wisconsin - April 18, 1970 9:30AM to 4:30PM  
Reservations are \$3.75 Mail to Mr. Clarence Protzmann, RVP 400 E. Van Norman Ave.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207



## POTTED DWARFS

By David B. Sindt

You might think that in order to successfully prepare a 'potted' dwarf iris specimen for the Early Show one could simply inject a shot or two of whiskey into the soil the plants are growing in. But while the preparation of such specimens is not really difficult, more traditional techniques will probably be more successful.

Before you even decide to enter this section of the show you might ask why we have these classes for dwarf irises in pots as well as the cut specimens. Walter Welch explains this well in his discussion of the judging of dwarfs in the Handbook for Judges and Exhibitions on page 69. Consider the points to be judged on a cut specimen of a tall bearded iris. Flowers, stalk, and condition are equally important; further, few one-bloom specimens get very far in a really big show. Dwarf irises by definition have only one bloom and no branching, eliminating many of the points by which other iris types are judged. About all one can judge on a cut dwarf specimen is color, form, and condition; if we judge these by variety, there is little left to distinguish between two equally fresh flowers typical of their varieties; if we don't judge by variety, the choice becomes simply which is the better variety on the show bench. Thus we have potted specimens which have several flowers, buds, and even leaves, all with characteristics that we can judge. We have a far better idea what a dwarf variety looks like in a potted specimen than in a cut specimen, enhancing the educational value of the show.

One possible method of preparation is to pot several plants during the summer to grow them for a show the following spring. This method has several disadvantages. You can't be sure which plants will bloom on which day nine months in advance. You also commit yourself to nine months of special care to be sure the pot doesn't dry out, winterfreeze, or any of the other things that may result in a pot displaying at best a handful of green leaves or at worst a perfect circle of well-cultivated soil. And finally, few of us are so show-minded that we're going to be thinking about potted specimens in July or August when we're busy dividing, replanting, and on vacation.

A more successful - and easier - method is to dig and pot the plants shortly before the show, ideally the day before. In digging the plants, select those that have buds in several stages of development as well as open flowers. In this way, regardless of how fast or slowly the flowers open, you will have some in bloom for the show. Do not attempt to divide the plants, and keep as much soil around the roots as possible, since removal of this soil and division destroys the tiny roots and root hairs that will keep the plants fresh for days, even weeks. Pack the plants and their soil firmly into the pot at the same level they were growing in the garden and water generously. Irises prepared in this manner should remain fresh for many days. I have prepared several pots of dwarf irises and carried them by train and car from St. Paul to east-central Indiana with all of them arriving in good condition.

Early blooming varieties like the pure Iris pumilas, can be potted and refrigerated to hold them for the Early Show date. Properly prepared pots of dwarfs should be able to be held back two or three weeks if necessary. If low humidity in the refrigerator might be a problem, a loose fitting plastic bag could be used to enclose the entire pot and conserve its moisture. This is especially important in holding plants for a week or more, to prevent the drying of buds and leaf tips.

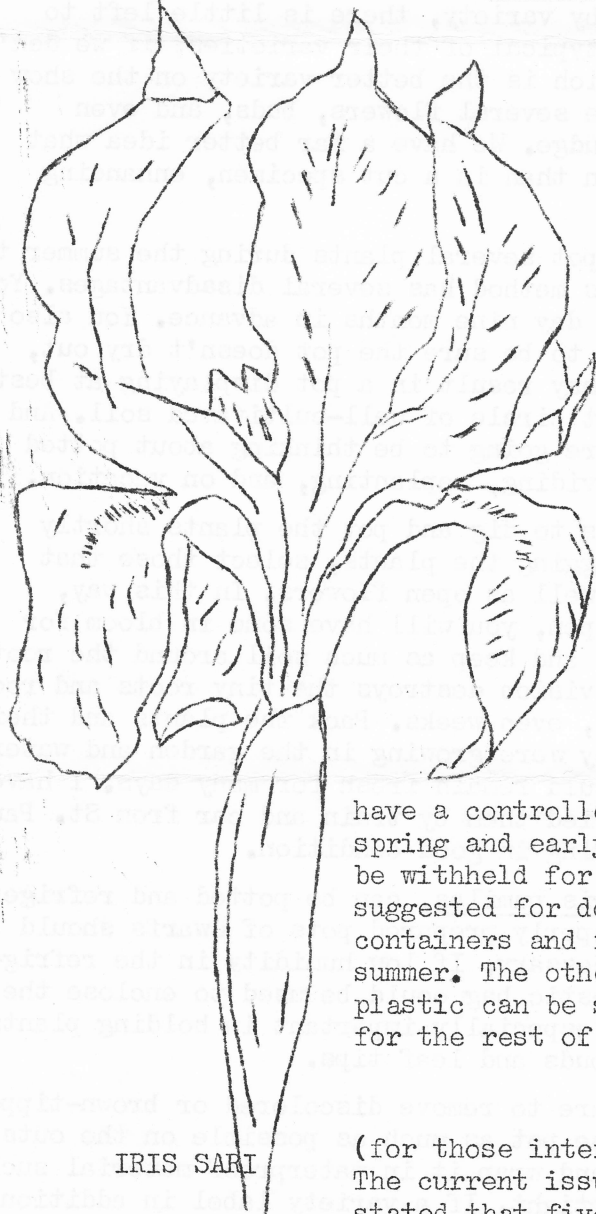
When you bring the pot to the show, be sure to remove discolored or brown-tipped leaves and any spent flowers and stems. Dry the pot as much as possible on the outside while keeping the soil moist though not wet, and wrap it in waterproof material such as aluminum foil if the pot itself isn't watertight. If a variety label in addition to the entry tag is desired, a small wooden or plastic stick label is most attractive and doesn't distract from the exhibit as a whole.

A potted specimen has some similarities to an artistic arrangement, since the balance and proportion of the flowers, buds, and leaves to each other are considered

(Con't - Potted Dwarfs)

in judging. Because of this, selecting varieties to pot for the show involves recognizing good varieties in the garden. Flowers that bloom above the leaves, small rhizomes in proportion to the plant (the main problem with Gay Lassie as a potted specimen), and neat, dainty leaves are all considerations. In addition, be practical and select varieties of which you have plants to spare and that you don't need to save for hybridizing.

Early shows sometimes include classes for pots of several varieties, or irises with other types of flowers. Color combinations are very important here, with subtle, blending combinations generally more pleasing than bright contrasting ones. Some types of flowers that blend well with dwarfs in pots include violas, candytuft, and alpine plants. Be aware of combinations in flower form, leaves, and relative plant sizes and proportions as well as color. Your eye is your best guide here - use it carefully.



IRIS SARI

### IRIS SARI

Iris Sari belongs to the oncocyclus group of irises. This group has a large creamy ring called an aril around their seeds. The rhizomes are bright red skinned. They have unbranched single flowered stems. A broad diffused beard with a marked signal patch below the beard is characteristic of oncocyclus irises.

Iris Sari was found by Theodor Kotschy in 1854 near the Sar River in eastern Cilicia near Kassan Oghlou. Dykes describes Iris Sari as having falls 3 inches long by 1 1/2 inches wide and standards 3 3/4 inches long by 2 1/2 inches wide. The stem, which is contained in 2 sheathing leaves is said to be 6 inches long. The ground color is pale yellow marked with irregular reddish brown veins which become very prominent in the standards. There are also said to be varieties with a lilac colored ground color.

Iris Sari has a fleshy compact rhizome and will not tolerate water during the dormant season.

To successfully grow sari it is necessary to have a controlled environment. Water is necessary during the spring and early growing season until bloomtime. Then it must be withheld for the rest of the summer. Two methods have been suggested for doing this. The first is to grow the plants in containers and remove them to a shed to keep them dry for the summer. The other is to grow them under a frame over which plastic can be spread after the bloom season to keep them dry for the rest of the summer. They tolerate a more calcareous soil.

- J. Wadekamper

(for those interested in growing oncocyclus irises in pots - The current issue of the Aril Society International Newsletter stated that five gallon containers be used, to accomodate the root system. According to one member, "9 inch pots are usually too shallow for Arils, which prefer to root deeply." This very large size may not be necessary for a dwarf such as sari. Also - John Holden recommends "scissoring" foliage from arils, as "pulling" the dried leaf off may result in a wound. Editor)