



Twin City Iris Society

News and Views

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Baghdad Beauty is an oncocyclis iris. It grows about 12-14 inches tall in the Wilkes garden in Tujunga, California. It is fertile, increases well, produces seed that germinates well but has no pollen. Baghdad Beauty has a light wine-tinged base color with dark violet veins. The falls are slightly darker than the standards and are set with a very dark signal. It stays open long and well and is a real beauty. It is reported to do well in many regions, including Canada.

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The tall bearded irises were blooming in the gardens in Chihuahua, Mexico. Although there were not many gardens of them it was a pleasure to start the iris season in March. In Southern California many types of irises were blooming. I had an opportunity to visit the Tom and Wiloh Wilkes garden where most of the aril plantings are located. Mrs. Wilkes' C.G. White crosses were blooming by the hundreds and made a beautiful sight on their sloping backyard hillside. Mrs. Wilkes was in the garden working enthusiastically. She is especially interested in a C.G. White labelled W-7 which was believed to be 3/4 onco but has been lost. Only its progeny remain. She also has some excellent crosses from Syrian Moon, yellow with a purple spot. In another article I will give you a more detailed account of the many beautiful aril, spuria and Japanese irises that were blooming in Southern California.

Spring seems to be here. The snow is gone, the killdeer and robins are chirping and I suppose most of the irises are uncovered. Coming events will make the spring seem short. The region 8 meeting is at West Salem on April 18th. There will be an executive board meeting in early May. The early iris show is May 17th and the June Show June 6th and 7th, the AIS National Convention on May 30th to June 2. We hope to see you all Thursday, April 16th at the monthly meeting.

- Julius Wadekamper

A special word is indeed due members and guests of the Twin City Iris Society who contributed in a particular way to make March 19 a memorable date. There were many good cooks who tickled our palates with their tastiest dishes for our pot luck supper. And what a variety of irises were depicted! Such characterizations were clever, elaborate, funny, dramatic - and crazy! They were all such fun - and deserving of the kisses they all received. Thank you to the Goddards and the Millers who served as judges for the various categories.

But you who were unfortunate enough to be absent from this meeting would never believe the tidbits of useless but interesting information gleaned about members and guests in attendance. We were all born - from Sigurney, Iowa to West Germany. We have singers and dancers, runners and swimmers, and one whose ankles intrigued her future mate. Of real note is the fact that every one present participated! This was truly a red letter event - and deserving of our deepest gratitude. Thanks to each of you for making it a successful evening.

- Charlotte Sindt

8 PM
April 16, 1970

Speaker for the April meeting of the Twin City Iris Society will be Mrs. Robert Reyer of St. Paul, who will be offering "Tips on Arranging". Mrs. Reyer has judged the artistic section of our June show several times and will be giving encouragement to potential arrangers. Mrs. Reyer is a certified judge of the Minnesota Horticultural Society and an accredited judge of the National Council of Garden Clubs. She is 1st. Vice President of the Federated Garden Clubs of Minnesota.

- Charlotte Sindt

REGION 8 MEETING RESERVATIONS ARE DUE APRIL 15. MAIL IT IN IMMEDIATELY TO RVP C. PROTZMAN, IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND. ALL MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE, THIS IS NOT LIMITED TO AIS MEMBERSHIP.- MAPLE GROVE COURSE, WISCONSIN, APRIL 18. 9:30 am to 4:30 PM
FROM YOUR EARLY SHOW CHAIRMAN-

Our Early Iris Show will be held this year on Sunday, May 17 at our regular meeting place, The Guaranty State Bank of Robbinsdale, 3700 West Broadway. Exhibits may be entered between 6 and 9:45 that morning. Judging should begin promptly at 10AM and the show will be open to the public for viewing between 12 and 6. We want to stress that all classes are open to anyone who cares to enter. There will be some one there to help in placing the exhibits in the proper classes. If anyone has any sort of iris in bloom that day, he is invited to bring it to the show and join in the fun.

There was some question last year about a suitable way to exhibit species I. aphylla. Aphylla varieties are low branched and sometimes the bottom branch grows right from the rhizome. Rules concerning specimen stalks state that branches must be attached to the stalk. This would necessitate cutting into the rhizome. That is asking quite a lot of an exhibitor. The committee feels that it is enough that the stalk and branch be cut low and shown together, not necessarily attached.

The June Show has divisions to accommodate commercial, experienced amateurs, and novice exhibitors. Some have expressed the feeling that such an arrangement would be desirable for the Early Show. We agree, but it won't work yet because there are too few growers. The greatest number of exhibits by far are shown by a few growers who have more or less specialized in small irises. A division at this time could leave too many classes with too few entries. If everyone would grow a few varieties of each type of iris, and everyone exhibited even one or two each year, we could restructure the show to the benefit of all. It is still easier to take home a ribbon in May than June.

- Carol Lankow

BOOK REVIEW -- NEW APPROACH TO DESIGN PRINCIPLES by Anne Bernat Sutter.
Available through National Council Books, Inc. St. Louis, Mo. \$7.95

A generously illustrated text by a National Council Flower Show School instructor, this book presents the relationship of the elements and principles in floral design as a chart on the inside front cover. The author proceeds to explain this chart in her text.

The two principle divisions, Selecting the Elements and Constructing the Design, are subdivided and discussed in clear and precise terms. By the use of bold face type and spacing between the paragraphs, it is possible, after reading the text, to return to it and find just the reference you need without searching through endless pages. The approach is very logical, easy to follow, and makes sense even to one who has had very little experience in arranging flowers.

There are seven pages of color charts, 22 color plates, and 48 black and white illustrations to assist the reader. The glossary of terms is another bonus. All arrangers, whether beginners or masters, and certainly all judges, can benefit from the excellent material as it is presented in this book.

- Mrs. K. W. Fisher

SPURIA IRISES ARE FOR YOU, TOO

By Ben R Hager

Spuria iris, it turns out, WILL grow and produce in cold winter climates. This has been proven by such growers as Mrs. Ruth Johnson in West Fargo, North Dakota, the Spuria Iris Society Display Garden in Denver, Colorado and other friends and growers in northern or mountainous country where the winters could induce nightmares in a native Californian like me. Spurias do take hot summer temperatures to mature and bloom. This is their secret that we are just beginning to see through. Unless your summer thermometers go over 80 degrees several times during the summer months you had best plant the spuria iris with a southern exposure against a building or a wall. Spurias can only be moved (from California, at least) in the fall, which is a problem for northern growers, but if they are in the ground by September first or shortly thereafter with a good mulch providing a winter cover, they will take hold and will not need the special attention in future seasons.

Spuria irises are the easiest of the beardless irises to grow, being less particular about soil conditions and such than the other "prima donnas" of the non-bearded section. Good drainage is essential. Spuria irises will not grow in waterlogged soil. The soil can be anything on either side of neutral but not too acid. In other words, these irises will be happy in the same situation where Tall Bearded irises do well. Spuria irises are heavy feeders and applications of fertilizer, chemical or natural, will encourage better results. Barnyard manures are especially good if they are well cured, and will not create the problem they do with the bearded irises.

When there is little rainfall in the summer months, irrigation is recommended for full growth. But summer irrigation results in the only real problem we have with these irises. Mustard seed fungus (*Sclerotium rolfsii*) and "summer rot" will often affect all or most of the terminal growth in the bed where high soil moisture and summer heat combine. A product called "Terraclor" (from the Olin Matheson Co.) will control mustard seed fungus, but no control has as yet been found for the summer rot except withholding irrigation water during the hottest periods of the summer, and conditions of excellent drainage. The Spuria Iris Society will soon be publishing a pamphlet on Spuria Iris Culture. For further information on this subject, why don't you join the SIS and get this publication free, or it will be available for a small charge to non-members.

Spuria irises are noble plants in the garden, forming large clumps with tall sword-like foliage and flower stems ranging from 34 inches to over 40 inches. Flowers are large, some of the newer ones approaching Tall Bearded iris flower size. They come in a good range of colors such as yellow, white, bronze, brown, blue, lavender and types with distinct patterns of veining and color contrasts. These irises are not only good garden subjects, but are ideal for cutting and flower arrangements. The substance is tough and will not break so easily in handling as the bearded iris. Buds will all bloom out when the stems are cut and kept in water.

You will not find long lists of spurias in commercial listings and usually nearly all those listed are worth growing depending on the price you want to pay for your collection. The newer ones are generally superior in form, color and such, to older ones, but, are, of course, more expensive.

Practically no work has been done in breeding spurias in colder climatic areas and this would be a great project for some aspiring iris breeder. His work would not only turn out new irises for our gardens, but would add much to our knowledge of this section of the iris family. Think it over, some of you. It's a lot of fun, too!

* (Mr. Ben Hager hybridizes spurias - His introduction 'Connoisseur' was the winner of the 1969 ERIC NIES AWARD and the 1969 MABEL JOHNSON MEMORIAL TROPHY.

CULTIVAR VS. VARIETY

Cultivar is a relatively new term still not universally accepted by horticulturists. Hort. Societies around the world including the American Horticulture Society have agreed to use cultivar in preference to variety for named clones and for some kinds of seed propagated plants of horticulture importance.

It is important to end confusion that has existed in horticulture writings to distinguish wild plant varieties from clones of garden origin, and others of obscure origin but otherwise cultivated. According to botanical usage the term variety applies to wild plants with reference to a population of closely related individuals and not to a clone propagated vegetatively from a single plant. With these quite separate meanings, variety cannot apply as a category for both cultivated plants and wild plants.

A cultivar, according to the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated plants 1961 may be: (1) vegetatively propagated as a clone, usually named and originally derived from a single plant (including chimeras); or (2) seed propagated, as in a line, e.g. cultivated plants, of the term cultivar *Petunia* 'Rosy Morn'.

The code recommends two methods of citing cultivar names in horticultural literature, e.g. daylily or *Hemerocallis* (1) cv. Cartwheels or (2) 'Cartwheels'. While this action of the International Code changed long established custom in the use of the term variety, there is growing acceptance, among horticulturists, and others working with them.

-Frederic G. Meyer, Editor

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JUBILEE IN NEW YORK CITY - 1970

It is a great pleasure to extend to the members of Region 8 an invitation to join us in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the American Iris Society, in New York City where the organizational meeting took place back in 1920. The golden jubilee will be the theme of the 1970 Convention of the Society to be held from Saturday, May 30th (Memorial Day) to Tuesday, June 2nd. The facts and figures are being published in the AIS Bulletin, so I do not propose to repeat them here.

Your host will be the Empire State Iris Society, which takes in all of Region 2 plus part of Region 19 located in New York State. Many of us have attended conventions from time to time held in widely separated spots of the country, and it is our earnest desire that we can stage a convention reaching the high standards set by others, and, as others have done before us, make you and the members of other regions who attend remember the days spent at this convention with great pleasure. May you also return home with a feeling that you have been made truly welcome and that we have appreciated your coming to see us and our gardens.

If we are blessed with anything approaching a "normal season" - you will see fine gardens with grand iris displays. You will be headquartered in midtown New York City with opportunities to take advantage of the many entertainment, sightseeing, and shopping possibilities which our city offers. And not least, you will spend your hours with other irisarians sharing the common interest that is such an important part of every convention.

Do plan to come to this very special convention. Arrive early and stay late. We look forward to seeing you.

- William H. Peck

1970 Convention Chairman

SUMMER MULCHES FOR MOISTURE RETENTION AND WEED CONTROL

By Ed Holloway

I am looking from a window that frames a section of the garden, illuminated by the eerie half light of a winter evening. This portion of the garden is a motley neighborhood of plantings of chrysanthemums, two varieties of mock oranges, six varieties of lilacs, grootendorst and Harrison's roses, a number of varieties of peonies, tulips, and daffodils - not in this order of arrangement, but as they come to mind. Watching over this neighborhood, like a country church over a cemetery, is a lonely wishing-well roofed with a two foot blanket of snow.

We are trying to emerge from forced hibernation by a minus 34 degrees below zero! I see "Mr. Winterwind" busily redecorating the landscape with nervous snowflakes, shaping and reforming the branches of exposed shrubbery. I am warmed by the thought that underneath the white form-fitting blanket, everything is orderly and quiet as an idea being born. Our perennials are relaxed in the arms of morpheus and the summer mulches seem to be relegated to the distant future, but within the agenda of seasons, the time will soon arrive when "Mother Nature" shall call her "flower children" to come forth and be counted, dressed up in their Sunday best to make our land "America the Beautiful." We dream of the days to be over lavishly illustrated garden catalogs, and suddenly realize that spring is here, and the nesting birds in the role of "town crier" give advance billing to summer's arrival.

What do we do now? -- Let's first mention some of the necessary things that should be done before mulching. We have loosened the winter mulch with a garden fork as soon as snow has melted and surface thaws enough to allow movement of mulch. We have cleared mulch from around plants (around April 1st), leaving it in the area between the rows (if so planted) easily available for the unpredictable "cold snap", and sprayed plants, mulch, and the surrounding area with a good dormant spray, insecticide, and fungicide. We have fertilized, applied trace elements and thoroughly cultivated this into the soil, using care to prevent root injury. The thing to remember is not to mulch too early before the soil is thoroughly warmed.

If you have a compost grinder available, spray winter mulch once again for borer eggs and fungus, then run material thru the unit and apply 2" to 4" thick around plantings. If you do not have a compost mill available, try filing a sharp edge on a standard garden spade (not shovel) and "chopping" mulch on a hard-packed pathway in the garden when the material is in a dry brittle state. I believe the results are well worth the effort. The thickness of application will vary depending upon garden conditions with sandy soils requiring heavier mulch for moisture retention. It is the opinion of the writer that a minimum of 2" of mulch is required to inhibit weed growth. If necessary, pull back mulch away from the rhizome during wet weather.

I visited one of the well known commercial growers some 800 miles south of our area last spring, who is a bio-chemist professor in one of the state colleges. He uses hardwood sawdust for both summer and winter mulch and claims to suffer no adverse effects from excess loss of nitrogen due to cellulose decomposition. He, however, finds it necessary to rake away the sawdust from around the rhizomes early in spring to warm the soil, prevent fungus growth and to encourage deep root growth for proper support of the fan.

I intend to experiment with the use of sawdust to mulch seedlings this year. A last word on removal, if your situation is such that it is possible, you may spray the mulch in the fall when removing it prior to winter covering, and return it to the compost heap. Here's wishing you "mulch" success in the Iris garden!

NOTICE

It has been proposed to amend the Constitution of the Twin City Iris Society.
Present reading: Article I (name)

Proposed Amendment: "The name of the Society shall be the Twin City Iris Society."
"The name of the Society shall be The Iris Society of Minnesota".

FERTILIZER

The Tennessee Corp. manufactured Es-Min-El, (essential mineral elements), Loma fertilizer containing Es-Min-El and Loma containing sulphate of iron. These products are no longer available. I believe we could purchase copperas, (sulphate of iron) and add it to our fertilizer.

The Fritto Corp. makes fritted trace elements but I don't know where they can be purchased. I have used all of these products and believed that they produced better growth, stronger stalks and better color.

The past two years I've used a 5-20-20 fertilizer. Five percent nitrogen is sufficient. More could produce tender growth and weak stalks. I don't believe the nitrogen leaches away as fast from the new pelletized fertilizer as it did from the powdered form.

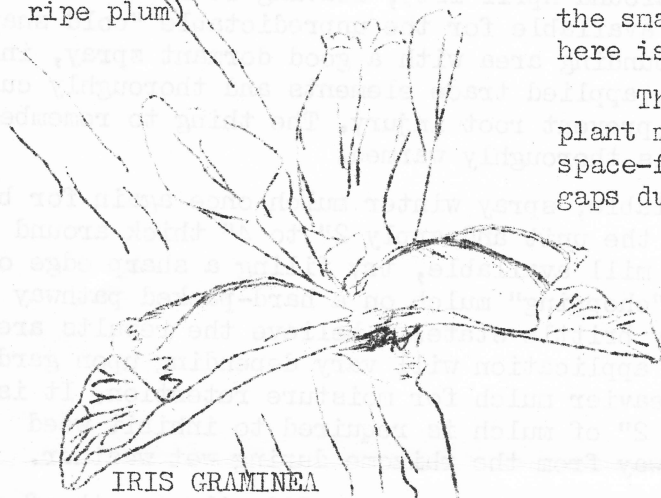
The second element, 20% superphosphate produces the phosphoric acid that makes strong roots and stems and all around good growth. However, I have read that when superphosphate is used alone, that the flowers were pale and lacked the intense color we so much desire.

The third element, 20% potash promotes root growth and it is my belief that it makes large rhizomes and intensifies the color of the flowers. I am no authority on this subject. I am only stating what I believe.

- Gabe

excerpts from- SPURIA SPECIES by Marjorie Barnes

(grass iris)
(has a fragrance of
ripe plum)



IRIS GRAMINEA

Our climate here in the Puget Sound region is on the cool, cloudy side. Perhaps one reason the smaller spuria species are relatively popular here is that they are useful rock garden subjects.

Then, too, with our wealth of available plant material, we are not looking for the larger, space-filling cultivars that will leave unlovely gaps during the late fall and winter months...

So far, *Iris graminea* is my favorite spuria. I also grow *Iris colchica*, which, it seems to me outranks *graminea* in size only, although unquestionably it is more floriferous. Whether or not one considers this in its favor depends on whether one prefers a drizzle or a downpour of these spidery blue-violet flowers. *Colchica* has the unfortunate habit of opening out

almost all at once, their season is so fleeting that one's memory is strained to recall them in their prime. ..

Colchica's foliage is one-third again as long as *graminea*'s (29" and 20 1/2", respectively), twice the width at the widest part of the leaf (more than 1/2" for *colchica* and 1/4" for *graminea*), and the larger plant has lighter green coloration, without the lightly lacquered look of *graminea*'s foliage. The leaves of both droop gracefully, but the small scale of *graminea* makes it the more appropriate choice for the front of the border, or for the rock garden. *Colchica*'s flowers are at least twice the size--and not as fragrant. Both appear to produce two buds per stem; *colchica*, as I've said, opens the two almost at the same time, and all the stems flower at once, so there is one splendid burst of bloom, and then the show is over. On the other hand, *graminea* produces--a bit furtively--two utterly exquisite little blue and rose-violet flowers that follow each other at a decorous several day intervals. Both are practically fool-proof for the non-flower arranger, because the flattened stems carry a leaf beyond the blossom; it remains only to choose a suitable container, and perhaps to delete one of *colchica*'s two flowers....

re-printed from SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, July, 1969