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# C O N T E N T S

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## MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

All members of this Society residing in the United States and Canada shall be members of the American Iris Society. Dues shall be \$1.00 per year.

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE  
Charlotte Withers

I am a happy person. A miracle has taken place. In all of the years since our society was organized each deadline for our publication has been a time of 'blood, sweat -(almost) tears'- of frustration; but this issue is the exception. As you will note it is one of good size, variability and interest. Thanks to those of our membership who did take the time and energy to write articles.

With a row of small but courageous crocus blooming in a sheltered flower bed, nice green tips of irises showing and several different birds making their presence known, spring is coming to this northern state a little earlier than usual. It threatens to be a dry one but with a newly laid water line to the iris beds, none of our favorites will be likely to suffer should rain be scarce.

May I take this space to extend our congratulations to one of our committee chairmen, Mrs. Troy (Eleanor) Westmeyer, who has taken over the office of president of the Society For Japanese Iris. However she has found the position to be a full-time one and has resigned from our Pollen and Seed Committee. Mrs. Sarah Wing Highley, who has offered to serve on this committee with Eleanor is being asked to serve as our chairman. We extend our thanks to our former chairman for the years she has served on the committee and wish her much success in her new office.

News reaches me that Francis Brenner is to be our new Robin Director, taking over the duties of Mrs. Foster Spofford. Dorothy has been our Director for the past few years and we thank her for doing such a wonderful job. Let us all cooperate with Francis and help in any way possible. This is a very responsible job and everyone should take an interest in our Robin program.

On the reverse side of this page is the letter sent to us by Mr. Robert M. Reinhardt, the Director of the Art and Educational Display Committee for the meeting to be held in Milwaukee in 1961. PLEASE READ IT. You will note that the Siberian Society needs a chairman to work on this project. Isn't there SOMEONE sufficiently interested to volunteer to act as chairman? As I said in the last issue, I hope our organization can be represented along with the other special sections of AIS. Please let me hear from someone.

We have been asked to provide articles, photographs and other items of interest usable for a forthcoming issue of the AIS Bulletin. We have contacted several of our members about articles for this issue and hope others will volunteer to write comments, etc. Even tho you don't feel like authoring an article, comment on what you think of the strength and weaknesses of the different varieties you grow in your garden, how you use them in your garden design, arrangements, hybridizing, etc.

ARTS AND EDUCATIONAL EXHIBIT  
FOR THE 1969 AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY  
CONVENTION IN MILWAUKEE, WIS.

We are endeavoring to create something new for our 1969 American Iris Society Convention to be held in Milwaukee, to create further interest in all types of iris and to show what can be done in various forms of Arts & Crafts to glorify the iris. Also an Educational Exhibit to enlighten the public on Iris Culture in its various forms.

All Art work must be done in as realistic form as possible. Cubist and Abstract Art will not be accepted. All Art work can be done in any medium such as oil, pastel, watercolor, tempa, ink, etc. All art work shall not exceed 18" x 24" in size. Art Crafts to be in Ceramics, Woodcarving, Weaving, Metals and other types of Art Crafts suitable for exhibit glorifying the iris. All material sent must have a name and address label attached to their work. If you have work of great value, it is your responsibility to insure your work. We will not be held responsible for losses or damage, but will exercise every effort to protect the entrant's property. All art work will be hung on artistic wall boards and all valuable art crafts will be behind glass.

All educational material on iris should be typewritten. This material will be lettered by us on suitable uniform display cards. All charts and illustrations can be done by your own artists on cards not to exceed 14" x 18" in size. All arts craft and educational work is open to all A. I. S. members.

To avoid confusion and a lot of correspondence, each Society, such as Median, Tall Bearded, Aril, Siberian, Spuria, Japanese, and Louisiana are to CHOOSE A CHAIRMAN to represent them in their respective Society. All information and requests that are necessary can be obtained thru these chairmen.

I will expect these various chairmen to keep in touch with me and we will cooperate with them in every way possible to keep them informed. Each chairman will be given the size of space allotted to his society both in the Art and Educational Section.

ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED AND SENT TO ME BY FEBRUARY 1, 1969.

Please choose your CHAIRMAN as soon as possible and report to me whom you have chosen, so that we can publish their names and addresses, so that those participating can get in contact with them.

LET US ALL COOPERATE AND MAKE THIS AN EXHIBIT FOR ALL OF US TO BE PROUD OF AND THAT WE CAN LONG REMEMBER AND CHERISH. WE WILL DO OUR PART..HOW ABOUT YOU?

Ramona Blodgett, Waukesha, Wis.  
Assistant in Art Section

Kenneth K. Kidd, Madison, Wis.  
Asst. in Educational Section

Robert M. Reinhardt  
14151 - W. National Ave.  
New Berlin, Wisconsin 53151

## SIBERIANS IN MINNESOTA

G. B. Gable

About twenty years ago we had a few clumps of light blue and violet Siberian irises in our perennial border. Then a friend gave Mrs. Gable a clump of European bellflower. This nuisance plant spread all through the border, into the lawn, through the fence into our neighbor's flower border and can still be found growing there among the peonies. I've battled that plant all these years. Our border is now free from the pesky nuisance but some years, seeds from the neighbor's border get scattered on our side of the fence and start to grow until my eagle eye detects the small seedlings and I dig them out, root and all. I tried moving the Siberian irises to our iris garden but still couldn't get rid of the roots of the pest until I dug and buried clumps, roots and all deep in the compost heap.

Several years passed and we went through the winter of 1953-1959. Many iris gardens were wiped out entirely. It was a cold winter. The soil was dry and there was no snow to supply moisture and protection from the dry cold air. Soil temperature was many degrees colder than average and iris rhizomes simply dehydrated and died. We lost about twenty percent of our iris but were not wiped out. In one part of the garden a whole row of Blue Rhythm died while at the back of the garden Blue Rhythm survived. Where I had sprinkled late in the fall, losses were negible but the front of the garden was a fifty percent loss.

In 1955 there was no Twin City Iris Show. Only a few members had irises left. That year I accepted a request to judge the Milwaukee Iris Show and while there visiting iris gardens after the show, I saw clumps of SNOWY EGRET and TYCOON which I admired very much.

That fall one of my good customers asked me to order three plants each of about six varieties of Siberian irises for him. I doubled the order and kept half of the order for myself. SNOWY EGRET, TYCOON and TOWANDA REDFLARE proved outstanding, I thought.

Two years later I entered SNOWY EGRET in a class for iris other than tall bearded and won the blue ribbon with my entry.

I still don't claim to know anything about the different varieties of Siberian irises. My plants have been purchased from different commercial growers. I've often wondered if I received plants true to name. I compared HELEN ASTOR, RED EMPEROR and TOWANDA REDFLARE and could not tell the difference in the flowers.

My iris garden is 55ft. x 160 ft. with about three feet of black dirt above a gravel subsoil which provided excellent drainage. The soil is on the acid side and Siberian irises perform exceedingly well. A two story house built before this addition was platted is just one foot south of my lot line and casts a shadow part way across the garden

until the sun gets high in June. In that shade, irises or daylilies would not grow and perform very well but the Siberian irises do not seem to mind. They do not bloom as early as those in full sun but I've noticed the blooms last longer and do not fade. They are a sight to behold. Garden visitors are always impressed and sales have caused me to replenish my stock from other growers.

If I were limited to only one variety of Siberian iris of those I now have, it would be WHITE SWIRL. It has surely put on a display here for me. Other favorites are TYCOON, SNOWY EGRET, TOWANDA RED-FLARE, VIOLET FLARE and the blues, GATINEAU, ROYAL HERALD and BLUE MOON. CAESAR'S BROTHER is one I like because its foliage stands straight as spires all thru the summer. Several varieties new in my garden cannot be evaluated for comparison until this year.

Each year in the fall I dig, divide and replant about one-third of my clumps of Siberian irises, lining out surplus plants for stock. By doing so, no clump gets more than three years old. Older clumps are more work to divide. I believe the peak performance for quality bloom is during the second and third year.

(Editor's Note: Mr. Gable is a well-known iris grower and owner of the Gable Iris Garden, 2543 30th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is also a Senior iris judge. We thank him for taking time to write the above article for our publication.)

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#### HELP WANTED The Editors

Your editors need help. If our members don't write things - articles, varietal comments, reports of their experiences with Siberians - this publication of ours is going to run out of what to print. How about it? Take your pen in one hand and your courage in the other and go to it.

Of course we aren't the only part of the organization that could use help. All the committees could use workers. The Slide Chairman needs slides - also black and white and color pictures of Siberians - close-ups, whole plants, and plantings of Siberians by themselves and with other plants. We get many requests every year for photographs to illustrate articles, sets of slides to be used for club programs, even slides for Judges' Training sessions - for which we need not only slides of good Siberians but also good slides of bad varieties, for purposes of comparison.

Couldn't you, when you take your camera out in the garden, take an extra couple of shots?

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## SOME MORE HATBOX TRICKS

Peg Edwards

In our fall issue, 1966, I mentioned using hatboxes to root plants; it is of course much too soon to say anything about the project of rooting a division of a Siberian under the hatbox but I did use one in germinating seeds this past fall with fairly good results. (Actually it wasn't a hatbox, it was a sweater-box, about 11 x 16", and 3½" deep inside; the hatbox was in use elsewhere).

I harvested the seeds as soon as they were about ripe, refrigerated them for three weeks, then sowed them in 3" square plastic pots in my usual mixture of sterilized potting soil, milled sphagnum and vermiculite, watered thoroughly, let them drain, set the pots in the plastic box, put the top on, and set it outdoors in light shade. In three weeks the first seedlings were germinating - these were standard dwarf bearded. The first Siberian came along three days later, along with the first tall bearded, a couple of lilies and some tulips. Five weeks after putting the lid on the job 16 out of 20 pots had germinated, and of those that didn't two were lilies that do not make top growth till the year after the seed germinates; I haven't turned them out to see if bulbs have developed! - another was a batch of tulip seed I had not refrigerated; the fourth was standard dwarf bearded. Everything else - bearded, Siberian, Californicae, came up nicely.

In late November I moved all the pots into the coldframe, along with some flats of seed receiver too late to refrigerate; many of the seedlings had already grown too tall to fit under the lid of the plastic box. Several times through the winter, on warm days, I have opened the frame and added water to those which looked a bit dry. Now, in early March, I notice that all the seedlings have come through a fairly bad winter looking nice and healthy and ready to grow. Some of the late arrivals are actually starting to sprout - but the early birds have gained the best part of a year on them.

Oh yes - what was under the hatbox? Cuttings taken in early July, of juniper, Scotch Broom, heath and heather. The heather started blooming a few days after I made the cuttings - and they have never stopped all winter. It is almost ridiculous to see these tiny things, 3" tall, peppered with tiny pearly buds and blossoms. The juniper which is the spreading form called Andorra, is about 6" tall and wearing its beautiful rosy lavender winter dress. The little 2-3" bits of heath are bright spring green and have masses of little branches popping out. The broom doesn't look as gay, but all the little sticks are freshly green.

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Have you asked a friend to join our Society recently?

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THIRTY YEARS GROWING SIBERIANS  
Cloyd F. Sensenbach

I have been growing Siberians for over 30 years but with little attention to pedigree and the maintenance of records; they just grow. I started with about a half dozen plants available then; low growing, flowers well down in the foliage; little or no branching. I found that they were perfectly adapted to our acid soil, very hardy, 20 to 25 below zero hurting them not at all, and that they stood competition much better than the Japanese in the growing of which my efforts have been chiefly expended.

I have found that the white Siberians are just about the most recessive things imaginable, at least with me. Hardly one in 50 seedlings is worth a second look; low growing, little or no branching, small flowers, petals narrow and with about as much substance as a piece of thin tissue paper. Other growers may have had much better results. I have raised 15 or 20 whites which were somewhat better, some as far back as the early 1940s.

Among the plants which I numbered last summer was a white - #20. This plant grew in a bed of seedlings on a slight hill. It had no worthwhile rain for two summers and no artificial watering. It had more stamina than adjacent plants - it had many scapes, 38" high, most of them with two long branches. The flowers were not large possibly due to the very dry weather; it might be useful in producing better branching in whites. The last six summers, all on the dry side, certainly didn't do plants any good. Seedlings of Siberians and Japs which normally had stems from 30" to 45" high grew only 10" to 20". Many buds, especially Japs, didn't open - just dried up on the stems. In 1965 we had no appreciable rain from April to the end of September and last year none at all in June or July. Parenthetically, years ago we had rain about 5 days a week in spring and early summer, so wet it was difficult to plant or transplant anything.

Of many hundreds of seedlings during the years I have grown them, I never numbered any until 1965. Then, during blooming season, I selected about 40 and placed red-and-white tags on the stems. A couple of months later, planning to split and transplant some, I couldn't identify some. Much to my surprise, a lot of the tags had disappeared completely; some were on the stems badly shredded; on some only the string remained. It would seem that some species of bird found them attractive; I can't account for any other critter removing them. We have plenty of trouble with rabbits, groundhogs and deer; there are some plants we cannot raise at all because of them. I have used these tags for years with no trouble. Last year (1966) I very foolishly did the same thing, thinking it would not happen again, but it did. It simply means that the identity of some of my plants was lost until I can re-check in '67. This year you may be certain, I will use only wood-and-wire tags.

About all of the darker seedlings have better substance than the whites. The red or rosy-purple, wine and claret originated here; I had none of these colors in my original planting from which to breed. I know other plantsmen have similar ones but the only one I have seen is RED ENSIGN. There are no other growers in this area with whom to check and during bloom season I just haven't had too much time to travel around. For instance, for several years I have been trying to get to Dr. Randolph's to see his species and dwarfs but haven't made it, although I usually get to Ithaca once or twice in TB season. I had hoped to see some Siberians at Fred Cassabeer's last spring, but due to the late season only 3 or 4 plants were blooming. I did see WHITE SWIRL for the first time. This plant was growing close to his home, which probably accounts for its being in bloom then.

In addition to #20, there was #12, a sort of tricolor - violet-red-purple. Not too large a flower but a good grower and bloomer and the combination of colors makes for a good garden subject. #44 has flowers with a cupped effect, the edge of the petals turning upward. A number of seedlings show a pink or lavender cast. About the most distinctive shape is a 'flattop'. Lloyd Austin in California advertised a similar one a number of years ago - may be a better flower than this. This is similar in form to many of the Japanese. Another has a touch of ivory or canary in the falls. I now have about 60 seedlings under number for further study, and hope to re-mark those whose identity was lost the last two years.

In the past, but not recent years, I made some protected crosses, and some with pollen applied without bags. I also used seed from some of the better or more unusual forms and colors. In this area Siberians set seed readily by insect or other natural pollination. Although I kept no ratio charts, it is my recollection that Siberians are inclined to set more seed by natural than by hand-pollination; possibly some of the pollen just wasn't compatible.

The six very dry summers through which we have just gone were not conducive to much breeding, dividing, transplanting or evaluating. I have grown more Japanese than other varieties, and have many seedlings which I have been unable to evaluate the last three or more years. For instance, in one bed of over a thousand, I have selected only one for possible naming; in a quantity such as this there should be at least a dozen worthy of further study.

This summer, other things being equal, I will make a very definite effort to mark and chart some of the more distinctive (in my opinion) Siberians. I have felt that some of them might appeal to other growers and if so, that they should be distributed more widely, rather than just locally.

I have never registered any Siberians, for lack of time and a basis of comparison.

(Editor's note: This article was from letter to Harry Kuesel and Peg Edwards)

(Comment by Peg Edwards: 'I have not seen these Siberians but have seen slides of many of them and while you cannot judge solely on the basis of slides, some certainly look interesting. I am looking forward to seeing some 'in the flesh' in a year or so, as Mr. Sensesbach plans to send some to Mr. Kuesel for evaluation.)

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AWARDS OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY TO SIBERIANS  
1960 Through 1966

<u>IRIS</u>	<u>HYBRIDIZER</u>	<u>HM</u>	<u>MORGAN AWARD</u>
Blue Brilliant	Cassabeer, Fred	1961	
Blue Moon	Scheffy, Mrs. Elizabeth	1961	
Carrie Lee	Wiswell, Mrs. Gladys	1966	
Cool Spring	Kellogg, W. M.	1951	1966
Joretta	Carlson, Grace	1966	
Mandy Morse	Spofford, Mrs. Foster	1966	
Pirouette	Cassabeer, Fred	1965	
Placid Waters	Cassabeer, Fred	1963	
Silver Tip	Cleveland, Mrs. Francis	1961	
Snowcrest	Gage, L. Merton	1936	1963
Snow Flare	Carlson, Grace	1965	
Tealwood	Varner, D. Steve	1963	1964
Velvet Night	Edwards, Mrs. H.L.	1963	
Violet Flare	Cassabeer, Fred	1961	1965
White Swirl	Cassabeer, Fred	1957	1962

\* \* \* \* \*

## GENETICS AND THE SIBERIAN IRIS WHICH LACKS PEDIGREE

Dr. William G. McGarvey

That one man's "dish" is another man's "drab" will be recognized as correct once the problem of the figure of speech are solved. But it is none-the-less usually a bit surprising to discover that the very thing that one finds noteworthy or even exciting is a source of annoyance and frustration to a friend who has usually seemed to like the same things you do.

Among others the Siberian Iris, WHITE SWIRL, has been the stimulus for just such conflicting reactions. As a handsome iris its good looks and vigor suggest a potential for producing good seedlings. But most hybridizers know too much about genetics to feel that it makes much sense to use as parents individuals which lack pedigrees. It makes little difference whether the hybridizer breeds race horses or hunting dogs or irises. All of them will study pedigrees with the idea in mind, that the knowledge gained from such study can increase their chances for obtaining progeny of virtue - perhaps some even better than their own parents. WHITE SWIRL's lack of a pedigree has frustrated many a hybridizer since it looks like the kind of an iris that really should have an impressive family tree. Now it is a fact that only the inexperienced breeder is likely to believe that a good pedigree guarantees good progeny - but it is also a fact that hybridizers must be forward looking and hence tend to be optimists. For such people the good individual with known good parents is of the stuff of pleasant dreams. Though the pedigree doesn't say all it does provide the hint - that with those parents it should also be good as a parent. In the absence of a pedigree, there is also a hint but only for more uncertain results. The experienced hybridizer rejects even the best looking things, when there is no pedigree. (1)

For the geneticist - vocational or avocational - there is another dream. In this case, however, the reward promised is one that comes in the form of information. What this chap really likes to find most is an area of ignorance within his large field of interests. To find a neat hole in his own body of informations, and beyond this, to discover that what he doesn't know is known to no one else either, is also conducive to dreams - to dreams of how he can produce the missing information. When the geneticist's materials happen to be irises, and when a very well known one is found to lack a pedigree, he at least has a problem of day-dream proportions. And this brings us back to the paradox of WHITE SWIRL which is both a frustration and a promise at the same time.

Many guesses have been made concerning the parents of this fine looking plant. Most of these guesses have been logical in one way or another and at least one of them may have been correct - but which one will never be known. Treating WHITE SWIRL as a problem to be studied rather than a frustration to be avoided has resulted in enough information so that now a good bit can be said about what WHITE SWIRL's parents

were really like - genetically. For example, both of WHITE SWIRL's parents were diploids and both carried the gene for the color white which is recessive to blue and red coloring as is indicated by the fact that WHITE SWIRL is itself homozygous for this recessive white gene. (2)

One or perhaps both of WHITE SWIRL's parents must have carried a dominant gene which acts as a modifier of the anthocyanin pigments when they are expressed. The effect of this gene is to turn red anthocyanin to blue. I have designated this gene ( $M_b/r$ ) meaning that it modifies red anthocyanin and changes it to a blue color. When WHITE SWIRL is crossed with a plant having reddish flowers, a plant such as ROYAL ENSIGN, and which contains no recessive genes for white; all of the progeny will be colored. There will be no white progeny but there won't be any reds either. This result is quite interesting since we have here the case of a plant which carries a full set of recessive genes for white (is monozygous for these genes) but which at the same time carries still other genes that will influence or alter the color of any colored flowers that are bound to appear when the recessive white plant is crossed with plants which carry dominant genes for color. Some later modification of this statement may be required since there are more kinds of red coloring than one. I have had one report of results a bit different from my own. But many hundreds of seedlings from crosses between WHITE SWIRL and a wide range of reds from ROYAL ENSIGN breeding have contained no exceptions.

This same modifier seems to operate in a more intensified way when WHITE SWIRL is crossed with the recessive pinks from ROYAL ENSIGN breeding. (3) Again, nothing but blues appear in the progeny. But instead of a range of blues, the ones that come from these crosses have all been relatively deep in color. The modifier ( $M_b/r$ ) operates in the combination of the recessive white and an almost white recessive pink to produce color over the lack of it, blue over red, and depth of color over bare traces of it.

Still another effect seems very likely to be caused by this same modifier ( $M_b/r$ ). When WHITE SWIRL is crossed with blues from blue (no known reddish ancestry). The blue flowered progeny which result from such combinations have tended to be more blue than their blue parents. It must be noted however, that these last generations are based on combinations which came from a very small number of ancestral plants. All of the blue-blues involved in these experiments came from GATINEAU or CAESAR'S BROTHER or from GATINEAU X CAESAR'S BROTHER.

To explain why it seems necessary to mention the possible effect of a modifier in the case of blue-blues as being different from the effect when reddish ancestry is involved, it should be mentioned that the blues which result when WHITE SWIRL is crossed with a plant from reddish ancestry are grey blues. This means of course that the reddish color has not been completely eliminated and the evidence for this is the dull blues. As garden plants, the seedlings from the blue-blues

combinations are much more attractive in color.

A consistent result from the crosses made by the writer among the *I. sibirica* and *I. sanguinea* hybrids, which comprise the large majority of our garden siberians and which include all of the combinations being discussed in this article, indicates that the colors of the standards of the flowers are determined independently from the colors of the falls. This must have been true for the genes carried by White Swirl's parents since it certainly seems true for the genes carried by White Swirl as shown by the variations between individuals in the progenies obtained from White Swirl. Understandings of this can't be reached by looking at the individual being considered though at times genetic constitution can be known in that way. The results from use of White Swirl as a parent show that its genes for color of petals are independently determined even though White Swirl's own flowers show no significant difference in color between its standards and falls. Tentatively, it seems correct to say that the recessive white, White Swirl, also carries still other recessive genes for white standards. That two or three pairs of genes are more than likely involved is indicated by the fact that gradations from white to large amounts of color can be obtained in progeny. White Swirl has been useful in the investigation of the presence of genes for variation in color between standards and falls in other varieties. I know from use of this plant, for example, that certain of my seedlings carry the genes for amoena though they are not themselves amoenas. If further study continues to support the ideas just expressed it may become convenient to classify siberian amoenas in terms of degree. For illustration, amoenas with sharp contrast between standards and falls could be called "full-amoena" and those with some tinge of coloring in the standards or of white in the falls called "tending-toward-full-amoena" and those with a considerable amount of white in the falls and/or tinged standards called "barely-amoena." In fact, I distinguish among my own seedlings by use of these labels:

Within the framework above, White Swirl itself would seem to be an amoena from a genetic point of view. In this case its amoena characteristics are masked by the action of the genes which eliminate all anthocyanin coloring.

Closely related to the characteristics which determine color in standards and falls is the one which determines the color of the style arms of siberian flowers. For the flowers with flaring form and for those that are of the right size to be used in the front or middle of mixed flower borders, the style arm can have a significant influence on their beauty. This is particularly noticable when there is a sharp contrast between the color of the style arms and the color of either or both standards and falls. When, for example, the style arm is white in a flower with blue standards and falls the flower is made to appear both lighter and brighter. It is also made more conspicuous as an individual bloom. Such white style arms give some flowers a garden presence that would be lacking were the flower a self in color.

The points just made can be checked as an exercise for the judges training program. Siberian style arms of various colors can be easily inserted to replace those cut out of one or more flowers and the various effects discussed in terms of improvement or detriment. Such substitutions are not easy to make with standards or falls but are easily achieved in the case of the style arms. The hybridizer may be interested in this bit of legerdemain as an aid to his plans for effects still to be sought.

The color of style arms is determined independently from the color of the standards and falls for the *sibirica-sanguinea* species. This generalization applies to all of the varieties that have been used in my own studies and most certainly applied to the parents of White Swirl and applies to White Swirl itself. My results strongly suggest that the white style arm is recessive to the colored style arm but is determined by three or more pairs of genes. From a cross between the light blue, Gatingau X the deep purple, Caesar's Brother a progeny of more than 200 seedlings was obtained and except for a few that were winter-killed all were bloomed. One of these seedlings has flowers with almost white style arms. When this plant was crossed with White Swirl a progeny of thirty seedlings was obtained which included eight with flowers having style arms that ranged from white to almost white. Since many of my other crosses involved White Swirl in combination with full siblings to the one that produced the eight mentioned above, and since none of these crosses produced a single plant with light style arms on otherwise colored flowers it does seem logical to assume that a rather full complement of recessive genes were brought together to produce those obtained. From these events it follows that White Swirl's parents must both have carried these genes which are now known to exist in White Swirl. It will also be obvious that when a white style arm is found on an otherwise colored flower of the *sibirica-sanguinea* varieties the fact of its presence is also strong evidence for the presence in the plant that carried the flower, of the recessive gene combination which produces this effect.

It was suggested earlier, that White Swirl should be recognized as a "masked amcena." For quite similar reasons the evidence in relation to the color of style arms indicates that White Swirl has "masked white styles" meaning that the fact of white styles is due to a set of genes quite separate from those that operate to produce the white falls and the white standards. Knowing this it was possible to use White Swirl to locate other plants with relatively large complements of these same recessive genes. For example, seedlings from White Swirl x (Royal Ensign x self) were selfed and then crossed back on White Swirl to produce a small number of plants with flowers that had white style arms.

After color, one of the characteristics that is important in determining the value of a plant as a decorative addition to the flower garden is the size of the flower that carries that color. Just to be big is far from enough to certify a flower as either beautiful or

garden-worthy. But siberian flowers have tended to be too small on relatively large plants and this has had a somewhat unfavorable influence on their use in gardens in spite of their many good and charming qualities. Information about how to increase size of bloom in an attractive way can be of great importance to the hybridizer. But it must also be noted that for the person interested in genetics, the factor of size will be regarded as just as important and interesting as is any other factor.

Concerning the size of siberian flowers, the evidence obtained thus far shows that the size of the flower depends on the action of multiple genes. This is hardly surprising since it is known that this is the case for the flowers of many plants. The basis for this last fact is one of the oldest experimentally based knowledges we have. A botanist by the name of Kölreuter reported in 1760 that the flowers of tobacco plants show many gradations in size between the size of the flowers of a given pair of parent plants when a second generation from the original combination is obtained. The first generation tends to be intermediate between the parents and the second generation to contain a range which runs from one extreme to the other which is particularly noticable when the flowers of the original parents were very different in size. This knowledge is pre-mendelian.

The flower of White Swirl is considered to be large because it is considerably larger than the flowers of most of the siberians in commerce, and because it does in fact produce a good garden show. Crossed with irises having smaller flowers than its own, it produces progenies with flowers that tend to be intermediate between its own size and the size of the smaller flower of the other parent. That these flowers are smaller than its own is just what must be expected. When these seedlings are intercrossed or selfed the results are also those that are to be expected but they will usually range in size from some as large as White Swirl to some that are as small as those on the other parent.

When White Swirl is crossed with plants having flowers larger than its own, the results are again intermediate between the two parents and in this case the seedlings have flowers larger than those on White Swirl. If size is to be increased beyond this point the F<sub>2</sub> generation must be obtained or an F<sub>1</sub> seedling must be crossed back to the larger flowered parent. The results that I have obtained seem to show that White Swirl was the unusual result of a larger flowered plant from two plants with flowers smaller than its own. That this seems to be the case is indicated by the fact that crossing back to White Swirl has never resulted in progenies with any plants having flowers larger than those of White Swirl and has frequently resulted in progenies containing plants with flowers smaller than those of either parent.

Two theoretical positions have a bearing on the problem of size of plant parts. Large size is known to depend in some cases on heterosis which means that progenies have been obtained from inbred plants that are free of damaging recessive genes. These plants were then crossed



with other plants of the same type but of entirely different breeding. The other explanation is based on the idea that factors for some particular trait can be built up additively when the trait is expressed as an action of multiple genes. It is worth noting that both of these effects could be present at one time though I know of no illustration.

To obtain flowers larger than those of either parent is not usual but they do occur. Crossing Gatineau with Caesar's Brother has given me a number of seedlings with flowers much larger than those on either parent. The flowers on one were larger than six inches in diameter and were too big to be attractive. When this plant was crossed with White Swirl it produced plants with flowers larger than those on White Swirl. When these were intercrossed or crossed back to both parents, flower size went up in some seedlings except for those that came from crossing back to White Swirl. However, all of the seedlings that came from this large flowered plant were particularly unattractive and the whole stock was destroyed since it seemed just as possible to get any desired genetic information from sibling plants that were also better parents.

A somewhat smaller but still large flowered plant was obtained from the same cross as the one discussed above. This particular plant has proved to be an interesting and an excellent parent. It was numbered (McG - Lg B) and has flowers that are about five inches in diameter. Its flowers have good form and they are gracefully held on a good plant. White Swirl X (McG -Lg B) have produced many decent looking things. Of particular interest for the present discussion is the fact that when the seedlings from this combination are crossed back to (McG-Lg B) a few flowers have been obtained that have been a bit larger than (McG-Lg B). Since I know of no Siberians with flowers that approach in size those obtained from the cross of Gatineau X Caesar's Brother and since the size does not seem to run down when seedlings are crossed back to (McG-Lg B) I have tentatively accepted the idea that the Gatineau X Caesar's Brother cross brought together some multiple genes that have not been combined before and that the large size of my seedling (McG-Lg B) is due to multiple genes aside from the influence of hybrid vigor (heterosis being a result of hybrid vigor). Again, tentatively, it would seem that White Swirl is better explained by the ideas of hybrid vigor and heterosis since breeding back to it does reduce size and we know that this occurs when plants bred for hybrid vigor are intercrossed in the F<sub>1</sub> or bred back to either parent.

A result having some related bearing on this same problem was reported in part in an article (McGarvey 1966) in which Gatineau X self was mentioned as a favorable combination. This cross produced some plants with flowers that are a bit larger than those of their parent. In a long experience with the results from selfing irises, this result is unusual since it is the only case in my experience in which size of flowers increased in a progeny from selfing an iris. This example seems to be another case of one where multiple genes were accumulated without a buildup of deleterious recessives at the same time. The

selfing of many irises indicates that damaging recessives are more frequently cumulated by selfing than by any other process. This of course, makes the exceptions more significant.

Not all of my findings from my search for information about siberians can be presented in a single article. But further articles are planned and it should be evident from what has been said that the pursuit of information from an interest in the genetic constitutions of non-pedigreed as well as pedigreed irises can have excitement and produce useful knowledge at the same time. Though I will never be able to tell you their names, study has made it possible for me to become rather well acquainted with the parents of White Swirl and I do find pleasure in being able to introduce them to you.

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#### REFERENCES

1. McGarvey, ESIS Newsletter, August 1966. This article discusses the influence on Siberian hybridization of the belief that siberian crosses can't be controlled and finds it the most important block to such activity. Evidence is presented to refute the belief.
2. It is not the purpose of this article to present supported proof of the information contained. The interested reader will find such evidences in other articles by the same author in this and in other iris society publications.
3. McGarvey, AIS Bulletin No. 163, October 1961. This article discusses the appearance of pinks from Royal Ensign breeding.

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None so little enjoy themselves, and are such burdens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do. Only the active have the true relish of life.  
(John Jay)

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Minds are like parachutes. They only function when they are open.  
(Thomas Dewar)

\* \* \* \* \*

If you will not hear reason, she will surely rap your knuckles.  
(Benjamin Franklin)

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## SIBERIAN IRISES FROM A COMMERCIAL POINT OF VIEW

- Ben R. Hager

There is one big trouble with Siberian irises. They are too closely related to the Pacific Coast iris section. There are no more delicately beautiful or lavishly colored iris in the world than the West Coast native, BUT as a commercial item or even as a garden plant they are a jinx. They're just too fussy. But what eliminated them from iris catalogs entirely is the fact that they do not like to be transplanted and can get very tempermental about it. It is even so with the Siberian irises, but not to such an unmanageable extent. Siberian irises can be transplanted, but don't like it and the results are never completely certain. Most of the time the transplanting of the Siberian iris is a success, but the margin of failure is why you so seldom see them listed in iris catalogs. Once they have taken hold and are growing in the garden nothing seems to bother them in our area except too much water! More about that later.

It is from our experiments with transplanting the Pacific Coast iris that we have come up with a shipping method that is proving helpful with the Siberians. The idea is to get root growth started after they are dug and before putting the plants back into the ground. At the season when the roots should normally be growing, it would seem that there should be no problem with that, but unless conditions are ideal these irises will not put out new roots and without new roots they die. So our method is to put wet peat moss around the roots of the plant and enclose it in a polyethelene bag. The peat should not be too wet, just as much water as remains after you squeeze it in your hand (not too hard) is sufficient. We advise the customer to open the bag when he receives it and add a little water, reclose the bag, not tightly, and place the bag in a situation where it will get full light but no direct sunlight. Watch the moisture, but otherwise just wait. When lots of new roots start to appear at the sides of the bag it is time to plant these irises in the garden, about two to three weeks. We do use a rooting hormone on them, but we are not absolutely convinced that it is necessary. The product we use is not available on the market (not even sure we can get more when we run out) but rooting hormones that are available might be experimented with, but should be diluted by half, I'm sure.

And here is an ABSOLUTE. After planting in the ground BE SURE TO KEEP THE SOIL AROUND THEM DAMP UNTIL THEY ARE ESTABLISHED --GROWING VIGOROUSLY. Sometimes people forget. Some live in areas where irrigation is unthought of and depend on rainfall. Rainfall is not dependable; irrigation is. Do not allow them to dry out or you have lost them. This applies, by the way, to ALL beardless iris. Also be sure to plant them deep enough; a covering of soil at least 1" over the crown of the rhizome. In areas where winter comes early, it might even be a good idea to pot these new plants up and keep them at hand during the winter. They will be established in the pots when

you plant them out in the spring and should carry on undaunted if you are careful not to disturb the roots when taking them out of the pots.

As I noted above, we lose more Siberian irises from too much water than anything else. That is a paradox, surely, since we have an average of 12" of rain a year. But it comes all at once in the winter and we have heavy soil. What we have to watch out for more than anything else is GOOD DRAINAGE. I hear of people planting Siberians at pond edges or along stream banks. Those banks must be pretty high above the water line, or the freezing of the ground in the winter acts as a "drier upper" of winter moisture, for in our experience Siberians cannot stand soggy wet feet in the winter--but in the summer it is a different story. They like lots of moisture in the warm weather, but even then they do not like standing water. Moist, yes, but the water must drain away fairly quickly.

Siberian irises of course, want acid soil. There are parts of the United States (high rainfall areas) where this is natural, but in a greater area soils are alkaline. To correct this is simple. Add lots of humus and soil sulphur to the soil when preparing the bed.

These are a few reasons we feel people lose their plants when they order them from catalogs. We hope that future customers will take these suggestions seriously, for if they do not it will be progressively difficult to find commercial listings of Siberian irises. The cost of too many replacements is too high and a profit must be had if a business is to remain one. And remember, the good gardeners know that all plants have individual likes and dislikes -- why should Siberian irises be different!

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DUES - DUES - DUES

In the last issue of our publication the date of expiration of dues was given. Have you taken care of yours? Make life simpler for our secretary by keeping your dues paid in advance. We hate to stress finances but we do like to operate on a business-like basis.

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- SLIDES -

If you have black and white film in your camera, please take a few pictures of Siberian in your garden and send us a couple of the extra ones. We are trying to build up a file for use in fulfilling requests from garden magazines and other publications. As stated elsewhere in this issue, we have been asked to contribute to a future issue of the Bulletin of the American Iris Society in featuring the Siberian irises. Thanks for your cooperation.

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## 1966 REGISTRATIONS

Six Siberian and two Sibirica-Californica hybrids were registered:

CAMOUFLAGE (Jean Witt, R. 1966) Sdlg. 63-07-X2. 30", M. Wlbcn. S. white ground, heavily striped in medium blue; F. white ground, lined and dotted in medium blue, which is intensified over yellow signal; ruffled. Mirza Citronella hybrids X unknown (advance generation hybrid from species of sibirica group). Northwest Hybridizers 1966.

CLARET (Gladys Wisell, R. 1966) 24", M. Rld. Claret self; gold and white haft. Red Emperor X Dorothea K. Williamson, Fairmount 1966. (If this parentage is true and we have no reason to doubt it - this would strictly speaking be a Sibirica-Louisiana hybrid, but it is registered as a Siberian)

ILLINOIS ENCORE (D. Steve Varner, R. 1966) Sdlg. 613. 40", EML, Wlv. S. white with light violet tint; F. white overlaid with etching of light violet. (Tealwood x Snow Crest) X 63-1 (Tealwood x Tealwood)

LIGHTS OF PARIS (R. A. Rich, R. 1966) 40", L, Wly. White self with deep yellow hafts. Unknown Parentage. HC 1966.

SAPPHIRE BOUQUET (Gladys Wiswell, R. 1966) 24", M, BIL. Deep sapphire blue self; golden haft. Unknown parentage. Fairmount 1966.

THE GOWER (H.J. RANDALL, R. 1966) Sdlg. 44/21. 34", M. B3. S. pale blue; F. dark blue. Spender sdlg X Gatineau.

FAIR COLLEEN (Leona P. Mahood, R. 1966) Cal-Sib., E. 22", Wlbcn. S. white ground, covered with fine blue-lavender lines; F. same, with yellow patch at throat, slightly wavy. I. douglasiana X sibirica sdlg. Northwest Hybridizers 1966.

SWIRLING MIST (Jean Witt, R. 1966) Sdlg. 63-06. Cal-Sib., 24", M, VY5L. S. dull lavender, veined and washed on palest ivory ground; F. same, darkening to violet around yellow signal. Pale blue I. douglasiana X brown seedling (probably I. chrysographes x I. forrestii) Northwest Hybridizers 1966.

You will find the addresses of the introducers in your January 1967 Bulletin, Sec. 2, toward the back.

Aw, COME ON, kids - daub a little more pollen! Total registrations last year were (unless I have lost all power of adding) TB, 449; Other bearded 15, broken down by classes - SDB 4, IB 31, BB 31, MTB 15, MDB 41, Arilmeds 7, Arils 15, Onco 6, Apogons 73, broken down by classes - Japanese 41, Spurias 11, Californicae 7, Sibiricae 6, Cal-Sib 2, Louisiana 4, Stylosa 2. Out of 717 introductions we are involved in eight. Just over ONE percent. TBs constituted 5/6 of the total registrations - the lowest I can recall; All the Apogons together totalled just a speck over 10 percent, which seems to be an increase.

I realize that part of the trouble is that hybridizers feel they should have an HC before they register their seedlings - they really don't, of course, though it may help in finding an introducer; and judges don't come to see their seedlings - so they don't get HCs; and commercial growers don't see a demand for Siberians so why bother to hunt out hybridizers? - and we all just go round in circles getting nowhere. How to break the circle? There are some possibilities but in each case it depends on someone getting up off the back of his/her lap and doing something.

The hybridizer could get in touch with his RVP, Regional Chairman for Judges' Training, or the Editor of the Regional publication and tell them that he has seedlings and would appreciate having some judges come to see them. If he also has some good new varieties and some good older ones, he might well be in a position to offer his garden as a good place to hold a training session for Judges and candidates. Or he could announce through the Regional publication that his garden will be open to visitors on or about a certain date, refreshments will be served - please check a week before to make sure of the date. He could also take a chance and register two or three good seedlings even without the HC, notify the RVP of this fact, and if no judges show up, scream out loud at the next Regional meeting. Of course if he lives 500 miles from the nearest judge and there are no other iris gardens or known hybridizers nearby to help induce the judges to come so far, he has really only one option - send divisions of his best seedlings to some friend whose garden does draw judges.

The judges could - and should - find out from his RVP or any Region he plans to visit, well in advance, whether there are any hybridizers in the neighborhood of gardens he plans to visit - and take the trouble to make the necessary detour. It would be courteous, of course, to write to such hybridizers and tell them that he plans to be in their neighborhood on a certain day and would like to visit their garden - would this be permissible? - but if time is too short between getting the information and making the trip I am sure that most hybridizers would rather have a judge come unannounced than not come at all. The judge might also ask the 'big boys' when he visits them whether there are any other hybridizers nearby; most of the major hybridizers are very generous about helping the beginners get started. A Judge should, of course, look at the guests in a major garden even if they aren't in his special field of interest.

Commercial growers might bear in mind that some of their customers might send even larger orders if the grower carried a wider range of type of iris. It is a nuisance to have to send out seven or eight orders to get all the plants you want to add to your garden in one season (this was the idea that made the supermarket a success) - how much more convenient if one dealer could supply TB, SDB, Spuria, Japanese, Siberian, MDB - all in one bunch. Of course not all growers have the right climate and soil conditions for growing all types; but most of

them could handle more than just one or two. As for those who do already carry several types but find the market poor for some - maybe the trouble is that they carry only the old standards in such classes as the Siberians; or maybe they don't handle them properly in digging, packing and shipping; or perhaps they tuck them away in the back of the catalog where they go unnoticed - and unordered - or the buyer's list is over his budget and he doesn't look any farther. A couple of NEW Siberians, listed up front, and sent in condition to grow when ordered, might build up an audience.

And what about the role of us commoners who only BUY the things? We could study the registrations and write the originator and ask whether something that sounds attractive has been introduced - and if not, would the originator sell a division and for how much? We could ask the judges of our acquaintance whether they have seen So-and-so's seedlings and what they thought of them. If we have come by our Siberians by gift or swap, we could write a grower that doesn't carry them and ask why not; or whether he could recommend a good dealer in Siberians (he might get the idea that there could be a market and start listing them himself!)

I wouldn't go so far as to say that the Siberian will displace the TB in popularity in the next five years - or even ten - but they could and should come higher on the list than tied for 12th in the Registration List. They can, if the hybridizer will make his registrations available, the judge will hunt out and vote for the best of the newer introductions and seedlings, the commercial grower will take a chance on listing a few, and the rest of us will make an effort to buy them, thereby encouraging the hybridizer to register his best seedlings. Going round in this circle would get us somewhere.

But only if we make our presence known.

Peg Edwards

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#### DENVER MEETING 1967

By now you should have all reservations made to attend the 1967 AIS Meeting in Denver from May 31st through June 3rd. If you haven't attended one of these annual meetings before plan to be there. If you are planning to attend remember the Society For Siberian Irises members and guests will hold their meeting the evening of May 30th. We will try to make this an interesting meeting, with slides and a discussion of our newest plans for the future of our section. Try to be with us and join the fun. We will be looking for you!

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**THE SIBERIAN IRISES OF ELIZABETH L. SCHEFFY**  
Sarah Tiffney

The late Elizabeth L. Scheffy was one of the major U. S. contributors to the modern Siberian iris. Between 1934 and 1953 she registered and introduced nine Siberians of outstanding quality which are distinguished members of this group today. These irises have not yet, I think, been as well recognized as their quality merits, and many (Region I members) are perhaps still unaware that their originator was a long-time resident of Massachusetts. For many years she maintained a garden, "Lark Meadows", at her home in West Mansfield, Massachusetts, which was a source of choice plants for discriminating gardeners.

Mrs. Scheffy's first and most abiding interest was apparently the genus *Iris*, for the 1939 Check List describes her as an "Iris specialist" and refers to her iris catalog of 1930. Early catalogs from Lark Meadows included dwarf and tall bearded irises, Siberians, Japanese, *Spurias*, and miscellaneous bearded and beardless species. Reading these old lists now is both fascinating and frustrating - fascinating because of the insight they provide into the activities and achievements of the iris world at that time and because of the authentic descriptions they give of some things that seem to have fallen into confusion since, and very frustrating because of the availability then of some rare varieties that one cannot find now.

Elizabeth Scheffy had a true plantsman's interest in many kinds of plants, and catalogs from Lark Meadows in subsequent years listed *hemerocallis*, peonies, other perennials, rock garden plants and succulents, as well as irises. At one time she had a collection of sedums that she believed to be "second to none in the country", as well as *sempervivums* and other succulents. A collection of tender perennial succulents from her home windowsill won a special award at the Boston Spring Flower Show. In reading the descriptions of the plants in these lists, one is very much aware of Elizabeth Scheffy's keen sense of beauty, her happy turn of phrase, and the gardener's eternal enthusiasm.

By 1948-1949, the period when most of her Siberian introductions were made, her interests had settled on beardless irises (Siberians and Japanese), *hemerocallis*, hostas and *sempervivums*. The last published list, 1954-55, contains 76 Siberian irises, (approximately all that were available then), 45 Japanese irises, and about 250 *hemerocallis*. In spite of her admiration for other plants and thorough appreciation of their virtues, the "blessed Siberians" were her first love, and the only group in which she named and introduced new varieties.

In response to an inquiry about her methods, Mrs. Scheffy once wrote me the following paragraph, and most graciously gave her permission to quote it for publication:

"About hybridizing I haven't been at all scientific. Goodness knows I've done plenty of careful crossing and stored countless little



boxes of marked seeds but few of them were ever properly followed through, thanks to lack of time during the busy summer season with so much else to do. With a big house to care for, hungry husband and three growing boys and always a lot of 'summer company', visitors to the garden, countless blooms to check and perhaps re-tag, always correspondence waiting, etc.etc., I always seemed to have to let anything slide that wasn't immediately pressing, those crosses and stored seed among them! With plenty of favorable land for the Siberians and so many kinds of them, it was natural that there should be a lot of crossing by insects and many seedlings springing up, and with my long experience with practically all kinds ever named and introduced, it was only natural that it would be very interesting to me to spot and cherish any that stood out as different in some way or another from those already introduced, and that is the story of most of those I registered and introduced."

Elizabeth Scheffy's Siberian introductions are listed below:

- GAYHEART (1934) Emperor x\_) a tall rich purple with large white signal patches on the falls.
- TUNKHANNOCK (1944) a large white of excellent form, with broad, flaring falls; for many years the largest, broadest white.
- CRYSTAL CHARM (1949) tall, well-branched, long-blooming white with slight ruffling and sharply reflexed falls that give it a distinctive shape; the name is a particularly happy choice, being very descriptive.
- MY LOVE (1949) a larger, clearer Perry's Blue, whose great distinction is that under good culture it has a definite period of reblooming about a month after the main bloom period has passed. Some other Siberians have been observed to send up an occasional late bloom stalk, but MY LOVE is the only one that justifies the name rebloomer.
- ROYAL HERALD (1949) a very rich, very velvety tall dark purple; an early bloomer (other dark purples are midseason or late bloomers.)
- TOWANDA REDFLARE (1949) an excellent red, which in Siberians means wine-color: its falls have long hafts and rather round blades, giving it a form distinct from others of this color class. It is sometimes called just 'Redflare'.
- ZERITA (1949) a tall, well-branched, long-blooming purple with reddish style arms.
- BLUE MOON (1952) a large flower of bright, medium-deep blue-violet with lighter style arms: both standards and falls approach the horizontal, making a flat, Japanese-like flower. BLUE MOON makes a particularly beautiful clump. Of it Mrs. Scheffy wrote, "I think it is probably the best of my introductions". This plant received the very belated recognition of an HM in 1961.
- FAIRY DAWN (1953) a wavy flower of medium size, white with a pale rosy flush on the falls, giving a palest pink landscape effect; short and early.

In 1953 Mrs. Scheffy registered also PINK ALLURE, described as "standards light lavender, falls same finely peoered deeper: bright pink landscape effect. Selected seedling from Mrs. Perry seedling x unknown". This plant was apparently not introduced. It was not mentioned in the 1954-1955 Lark Meadows catalog, which was the last list, for ill health thereafter forced Mrs. Scheffy to give up her gardening activities. So far as I know, PINK ALLURE is not available anywhere now.

The nine Scheffy introductions constitute a very outstanding group in any collection of Siberian irises, and Region I may well be proud that they originated in this area. That they have not received the honors and recognition of which they are well worthy was due to the widespread lack of interest for many years after their introduction.

Elizabeth Scheffy once wrote that she had tried very earnestly to name and introduce only those Siberians which were distinctly and worthily different from all available named varieties. The distinguished quality of her introductions shows how conscientiously and successfully she adhered to this guiding principle.

I should like to direct some of the credit for this article, if any credit there be, to Eleanor Westmeyer, who first suggested that I do it, too long ago! Some of the information came from the old catalog collection of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, which is a joy to investigate; if anyone is discarding old catalogs, he would do posterity a favor if he contributed them to this collection.

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(Highley - Continued from page 244)  
Certificate is a possibility. What do you, the members of the Society For Siberian Irises think of a Siberian 'Queen of the Show'?

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Many people know how to work hard; many others know how to play well; but the rarest talent in the world is the ability to introduce elements of playfulness into work, and to put some constructive labor into our leisure. (Sydney Harris)

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The busier we are, the more acutely we feel that we live, the more conscious we are of life. (Immanuel Kant)

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The gardener's planting rule is to plant one for the blackbird, and two for the crow, three for the cutworm and four to grow. Let us plant one for a friend, two for a show, three to hybridize and four in a nice row.

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## SHOWING SIBERIAN IRISES Sarah Wing Highley

The thing about a flower show is that it is a beauty contest among flowers. The contestants are judged against imaginary standards of perfection under artificial conditions. Flowers are at an advantage because the question is not which is the best, but which is the best example of its variety. For example: A bloom stalk of CAESAR'S BROTHER does not compete against a bloom stalk of WHITE SWIRL. They both compete against the images of perfection which the judge has in his mind. The bloom stalk that most nearly reaches the standard of the judges is the winner. Two stalks of the same variety must compete between themselves and also with the ever present standard of perfection.

Then there is the problem of grooming! Anything in a beauty contest is groomed to the teeth! A flower should be no exception. The grooming of Siberians is easy if a few precautions are observed. When the stalks are cut it pays to wash the stems under running water to free them from any spray residue or just plain dirt. Any insects noted should be removed at this time. Judges are most unhappy about spiders, ants, etc., on the exhibits. Cut the stalks one at a time, wash them and put them into warm water up to the base of the lowest flower. If you are going to have many stems put a collar around the stem just below the flowers to protect them. If there is an old flower on the stem remove it gently, deep in the spathe so the stub of the ovary does not show. Do not damage or remove the spathes, Label the stalk carefully; set the bucket in the garage, cellar or other cool place and go get the next stem. Most show schedules specify one to three specimens of the same variety in the Siberian Classes. Three specimens make a much nicer exhibit if all three are nice blooms. A bud does not detract very much, but do not include a flower that is past its prime just to make three.

This brings us to another problem, that of physical perfection. Physical perfection is a must. The judge can frequently ease her or his task by reviewing the class and eliminating all damaged specimens from further consideration. Occasionally this eliminates the whole class! Too bad, but in my opinion no ribbon or other award should be given in these cases. Those flowers are to be judged just as they are right then. It may have been beautiful yesterday or it might be lovely tomorrow, but the judge is judging right now; so among other things remember to add water to the container. Also remember that no judge worth his salt ever missed a torn petal or broken standard.

Another portion of the problem in physical perfection is color. Siberians do not fade as some of the other irises do, but in the darker colored ones there is a definite color change. It is preferable to use blooms of the richest, deepest color possible. A day in the sun makes such a difference, and a bloom that has been beaten by the rain or wind is a particularly unhappy sight on the show bench. This is true even though the bloom is perfectly acceptable by garden standards.

Now the morning of the show has come. All that has been mentioned before was done last evening or even yesterday morning. Two courses of action are open to you, the potential exhibitor. The first started yesterday. Today you arose early, checked the blooms cut yesterday to make sure they are as you hope. Now you check the exhibition schedule to determine exactly where you are going and what time the doors open. Unless you know exactly where you are headed check the road map. Then comes a check of the car. It would be most unfortunate to miss the show because you ran out of gas. Now pack your show kit, take a sack, box, or such and put in a small sharp knife, a pair of scissors or other cutting implements, some rubber bands, a piece of Oasis, two pens (one might not work at that all important instant). Put this in the car and add properly labeled well conditioned flowers. A piece of old rag is nice to take too. When you get to the exhibit, set up your flowers with the least fuss. Remove your tools at once and clean up your mess, using the rag. Be sure the containers have enough water in them, and set them well back on the staging. No Siberian is improved by an impromptu trip to the floor. This is the ideal way to go to the show. As the ultimate it is difficult to achieve.

The other extreme goes like this. You overslept and didn't decide to come to the show until late this morning. You dashed out into the garden, grabbed the first thing that was in bloom and rushed off to the show. Because shows are sometimes moved to new quarters after years at the same place, you may arrive and find that this isn't the place at all. Sometimes people get mixed up about the dates the show is being held, and the worst is to arrive just after the show has been closed for judging.

You finally arrive, late and completely disorganized. There are usually several other people in the same state, the Show Committee are losing their minds also, but someone has to help you set up your exhibit, supplying knife, pen, rubberbands, etc., as needed. Finally you are pushed out protesting that you aren't done. Somehow the worst of these times yield ribbons, but some people are always disorganized.

A word about Shows and Guests. A Guest is a very special plant in a very special category. It must be displayed to all Exhibition Judges as well as those Judges and other interested people who visit your garden. The exception here is those plants that have not recovered from the shock of moving or which do very poorly in your garden. The right to be sick in private should be extended to plants for no one wants to look at a sickly plant.

Guests which have not been introduced are properly entered in the seedling class according to the new Rule (4). Here they compete with the Tall Bearded and all other unintroduced seedlings, no matter what the species. The entry is made in the name of the OWNER of the clone and any award is in his name. Be very careful to get both the name (if any) and the seedling number correct. Also enter your own seedlings if you have any good ones. A Siberian with an Exhibition

(Cont. on page 242)

FROM JAPAN - Dr. Shuichi Hirao

I asked Dr. Hirao if he would write something for the publication, and this is his reply (which I thought was so interesting I'm sharing it with the membership)

"You kindly suggested me to write something about Siberian irises in Japan, but it seems for me too early. This iris, although the wild form is found rather plentifully in mountains, has been neglected by people and very few varieties, or may be forms of *Iris orientalis*, are found in the garden. Western varieties have not been introduced here yet. A dwarf white which we call it, three inch iris although the actual height may be about five inches, a purple form of the same, a dark violet good one which we call *Iris Kamayama* and a few others with common blue color. This is all that we find in the garden here.

About one hundred years ago, there lived an excellent hybridizer of Japanese iris, namely Mr. Sho-oh Matsudaira. He wrote a small book on Japanese iris. Among that article I find an interesting description. He said: there is a multi-petal form of Siberian iris which blooms in the same flower form year after year, but the multi-petal variety of Japanese iris varies its form occasionally. This article seems to state a multi-petal form of Siberian iris did exist those days which was about one hundred years ago. Today, unfortunately, nobody knows of it here. Have you ever heard of it there? I suppose the multipetal Siberian might have been such type of double as we see in the double form of *Iris gracilipes* BLUE ROSE"

Perhaps someone can answer Shu's question. How about it?

Mildred Johnson

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FROM KETCHUM IRIS GARDEN  
Jake H. Scharff, Chairman

I asked Mr. Scharff if he had been successful in getting people to send Siberian irises for the Ketchum plantings in Memphis, Tennessee, and this is his reply in part:

"I finally gave up on trying to secure iris for our Siberian Display Garden and wrote to Ben Hager to send a representative group and to bill us for them.

To my surprise he sent up a group of sixteen, including several of the newer ones. Then one of our members nearby gave us an additional start of WHITE SWIRL, which Ben had sent plus a start of VIOLET FLARE. So we now have a representative group. We certainly do not expect much show next spring. However, they should do well here since

our soil is naturally on the acid side and I hope they will increase rapidly.

I hope you will be able to give Ben and Melrose Gardens due credit for this fine gift to our display garden as we intend to do in our brochure that we give to all of the visitors in Ketchum Iris Garden."

I'm personally pleased that Ben responded to this need, and do give him credit for helping the Siberian irises to be seen in such a large planting, which I am sure will whet the appetites of visitors who see them, but have never been aware of Siberians before.

Mildred Johnson

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#### THOUGHTS

James M. Aultz: "With the price of everything sky-rocketing, you should double the dues .....

I tried HELEN ASTOR two or three times and never managed to make it bloom, the "easier to maintain" TOWANDA REDFLARE eventually gave up the ghost, while ERIC THE RED (for me) goes on and on! Is anyone trying the English originated Siberians in the new color-breaks? Dorothy Spofford said she was going to do so, but I haven't heard from her in some time...Has Dr. McGarvey ever come up with a really pink one? His article on same was in '61 for AIS Bulletin. Blues, no matter how lovely, are plentiful."

Jim added that he does not hybridize and has no intention of doing so, and thinks there's not much he can contribute except something on Garden Uses of Siberian Irises, which he says "would hardly be useful to the publication, TSI. I hope he does an article on his concept of Garden Uses for the next issue, don't you?

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Mollie Gordon, Blyth, Nightcaps, R.I., Southland, New Zealand, writes since she is not in the "pink" of condition, and has retired to a small new house and rock garden in a small town called Alexandra. She says her energy and space are both small so she has found it necessary to resign from our Society as well as AIS. We will miss her membership but hope her newsy letters still come.

She says, "You people are miles ahead of us in the Siberian world. I have a white coming out...results of a seed from America. First flowering. I have read of SNOW FLARE. They grow well here. Shelter, damp, sun quite good, and plenty of farm manure."

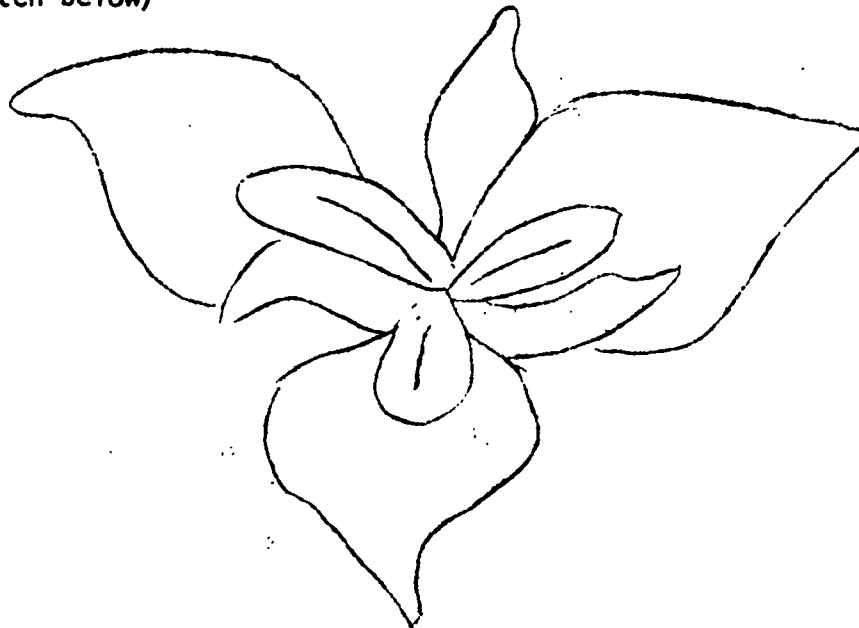
We can still reach her at the above address since she says her son takes over.

COMMENT ON MAX STEIGER'S 'Weiser Orient'  
By Mr. R. Kutylowski, Warsaw, Poland

'Weisser Orient' grew much better and offered quite a number of blooms, large and of exquisite shape. I made a very amateurish drawing in actual size (which is attached to this letter) as maybe this variety did not reach you yet. The standards are much broader than usual and less upright, the falls are flaring, broad...pointed at the ends and undulating...it is an exquisite flower. It is a little taller than 'Snow Queen' and its foliage resembles the latter. I planted it in the spring; in the fall I got Cassabeer's 'White Swirl'...I hope to have some bloom next spring and be able to compare the two whites.

A friend sent me from England Kitton's 'Court Violet' which produced one flower only, but I was struck by the deep almost black color.

(See sketch below)



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Report from the Secretary:

I'm proud of you all for the way you've been keeping up on your dues; our membership is really growing. I'm also proud of you who "came through" with articles for this issue (I had to stop and read each page as I printed it and it was so interesting). It took extra ink to get this issue out, Charlotte and Peg are to be complimented on a fine job; as our editors they are the greatest.

SIBERIANS  
Wm. E. McClure

It would be difficult to pinpoint the single factor that pushed me over the brink on Siberians. For years they were casually tolerated in gardens, but rarely were given more than a glance. Then one balmy spring day a visit was made to a Salt Lake City friend's garden where several new varieties were seen blooming. They were growing in profusion in a rich, moist, humusy soil and it was obvious they were not difficult subjects to grow as heretofore believed. It was only a matter of time until a damp, poorly drained area of my garden was transformed, by incorporating leaf mold, composted manure and fir bark, into an ideal growing medium for Siberians and related Species.

As a result, increase is excellent, they bloom well and most important, they have never shown any signs of rot or related ills known to plague the tall bearded patch.

The flowers are more suited for the arranger's hand than the tall bearded irises and the dried or glycernized pods are excellent in fall and winter arrangements.

It is often frustrating to find an inability to locate many Siberians and especially species from whence the Siberians came. While it would probably be a gargantuan task, the Siberian Society would do well to compile a comprehensive list of worthwhile named varieties and commercial growers who list them. Siberians will not receive their just place until potential growers know where to obtain them.

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MY EIGHT WONDERS OF THE WORLD OF SIBIRICA  
Mildred R. Johnson

As the years pass, and the Siberians I planted as tiny sprouts become clumps ....

I wonder why MANDY MORSE does so well in my garden, really multiplying well...

I wonder why MATANE does so poorly. Each year, I think "This will be the year it will take off". But so far it is still a tiny sprout (which yellows down each early fall.

I wonder how I can ever get enough of WHITE SWIRL to give the iris lovers I know. Everyone is intrigued with the form of this fairy flower.

I wonder why there are so many blues in Siberians...although, I still can't find fault with one of those I grow which includes COOL SPRING, JORETTA, KINGFISHER and PERIWINKLE to name a few.



I wonder why CAESAR grows taller than CAESAR'S BROTHER in my garden when I'm so good to both of them.

I wonder if I could produce an iris in my hybridizing program that would give the height of CAESAR, the foliage and increase of MANDY MORSE, the form of WHITE SWIRL, and the color of the sunset. (In a dream world, maybe?)

I wonder why more Siberians aren't planted in gardens when their landscape value is so great, their arranging potential is tops, and their airy beauty is a joy following the TB season.

And lastly,

I wonder why I didn't plant Siberian irises at the beginning of my iris "career" - I'm just ten years late finding Utopia.

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TREASURER'S REPORT  
Dr. Wm. G. McGarvey

BALANCE ON HAND APRIL 1966 \$264.70

Income: Deposits	6/29/66	\$87.08	
(Dues &	1/26/67	57.00	
Documents sold)	Adjment	2.25	146.33
			<u>\$ 411.03</u>

Disbursements:

Secretary's expenses	\$40.41	
Budget Advance to her	50.00	
Budget Advance 1/26/67	40.00	
Bank Service Charges	2.63	133.04
BALANCE ON JANUARY 27, 1967		<u>\$ 277.99</u>

Secretary's Expenditure of budget advances: \$ 50.00

July-August mailing	6.60	
September	.65	
November	.80	
December: Mailing TSI	29.81	37.86
		<u>12.14</u>
Budget Advance 1/26/67		40.00
Balance on Hand		<u>\$ 52.14</u>

Outstanding debt - Judging Standards \$150.00

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