

*The
Siberian Iris*



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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

As the growing season for 1967 closes here in North Dakota, I am amazed to look back and see how well the garden grew with the lack of natural rainfall from May to November. As I said in the spring issue, a new waterline to the garden helped but even then, with a lack of humidity the Siberians withstood hot winds and made a real good showing for garden visitors. About fifty members of the two local garden clubs came for a picnic in July and tho there were just a few late blooms on both the Siberians and Spurias, we were proud of the condition of the foliage of all of the irises. Last fall and this spring I had to raise, divide and replant many of the Siberians on the south side of our garden path, since my good spouse felt he had to draw a line somewhere in my expansion ever outward and onward into his grass fields.

Have you ever tried to cut down on the size of your gardening space having doubled its original size? Then you know what a lot of very difficult decisions one has to make as to what to keep and plant and what just has to be discarded. Having a heart of butter (soft stage) where any iris is concerned and especially Siberians, it took a good deal of intestinal fortitude to consign even the worst "dog" to the compost pile. I did manage to find good, loving homes for many of the best and feel gratified to think more people are going to be growing a clump of Siberian irises because of my persuasiveness. Most of these new clumps are going into the winter with good growth and well established.

This year I was able to fly to Denver for the AIS convention in June and enjoyed myself very much, not so much for the quality and quantity of iris viewing BUT because of the renewal of past friendships and being able to meet and get acquainted with many new people. It was a heartbreaking experience for the Denver growers and committee members who had plans laid carefully up to the afternoon before the meeting opened when the weatherman turned out to be a first-class "stinker" and let loose with hail long enough to undo several years' labor. Believe me, those irises left in good condition should have extra attention since they really have stamina and are weatherproof. However, by Saturday when we toured the beds at the Denver Botanical Gardens, many of those not in bloom earlier, showed up to good advantage and we all felt it worthwhile.

Maybe the only way to really have good weather at an AIS convention is to put the plants inside as they probably will be in Milwaukee in 1969. Which brings me to my constant problem--no one has volunteered to act as the Art Display Chairman and so with time very short--what do you suggest we do--not be represented at all? Or are you willing to pass along some suggestions? I have tried to see that we will have good representation in the planned iris beds displaying the different varieties.

We are still looking for at least two vice presidents and committee members. Let me hear from you saying you are willing to help us out.

ABOUT THE SIBERIANS

Bee Warburton

This year I feel that I'm beginning to get somewhere. The small turquoise seedling which was the only one I saved from the 100 seedlings of the WHITE SWIRL x ERIC THE RED cross had only one stalk, but it was excellent for pollen. Luckily the pollen is blue so that it shows on the white stigmas and I can ration it out for a lot of crosses. It also dehisced easily, in fact the first set of stigmas surprised me by dehiscing onto the stone table top where I put them to ripen.

I hated to despoil this lovely row of WHITE SWIRL, but was glad that I had when I had developed the pollen from the seedling to the right state, because some sort of miniature bumblebee actually landed on the stumps of the falls to drink nectar, but was far below any contact with stamen or stigma.

I call this seedling turquoise because the style branches are blue-green group 112A by the new Wilson charts. They look more aqua than they are against the vivid violet of the falls and the paler violet of the stands. (Violet-blue group 93, B and C). The only thing I don't like about this seedling is its black on brownish-yellow cross-hatching at the shoulders, though it is fairly well covered by the lovely style arms. I do like this in some Siberians. I think it is notably handsome in the McGarvey seedling Lg-B, which is the pollen parent of EGO and SUPER EGO. I have now developed an impressive row of WHITE SWIRL and intended to do some crosses with the McGarvey seedling as well as the turquoise, but its pollen didn't dehisce as well, so I am not sure of their taking. I had also intended to use TEALWOOD, which is an outstanding flower in darkest violet, and the only iris I know which has velvet standards, almost as dark and velvety as its falls, but it failed to bloom.

What I would like to do is to develop a strain of these diploid Siberians from WHITE SWIRL so reliable that they could be germinated and treated with colchicine in quantity with fair assurance that the work wouldn't be wasted on inferior seedlings. It seems to me that when we have expanded the wonderful WHITE SWIRL type into a color series and then turned them into tetraploids, the Siberian iris which is now one of the best garden perennials will be unbeatable.

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Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, Old Time does not give leeway
Your flower garden, here today, Tomorrow may be a freeway.

An expert is one who knows less than you do, but has it better
organized and uses slides.

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MYSTERY UNSOLVED

A. H. Ellis

Some time ago I wrote of two Median sized Siberians. A white creamy color. One known as 'Mutane' in the U. S. A. The other in Canada known as 'Preston white seedling'. I moved one next to the other. This of course stopped the bloom for last summer. This summer they both bloomed. I cannot discern any difference between them. Picking one bloom and putting it on top of the other did not help. They are the same size and color. This killed in my mind any likelihood of error due to light, etc. They are the same; I would take my oath on it.

Miss Preston did a lot of hybridizing work while at the Station in Ottawa, Siberians as well as lilacs. Could it be that she gave one of her seedlings or more than one, to friends in the U. S. Who introduced 'Mutane?? My collection of AIS check books are complete. The only listing of a name even close to it is 'Montaigne', a T. B. introduced by Rene Cayeux of France in '47. Listed as R9M. This is out, as the plant is white.

This spring I visited the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. In their 'Lilac Dell' there are dozens of lilacs all different. A large number of them are Preston introductions. Too bad her Siberian irises are not as well known.

I was assured a year or so before her death that I would be wasting my time to visit Miss Preston. She being in her late eighties was not too sure of anything.

I am still wondering what happened to her seedlings and those of Mr. Morgan in Montreal. A great loss to all of us.

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MYSTERY RE-SOLVED? AND A BELATED TRIBUTE

Peg Edwards

Albert Ellis' article set me going. The MUTANE he mentions is actually MATANE, listed in the 1939 CHECKLIST as: 'Sib-M-WW (Preston 1937); Nes. 1938; (Snow Queen x Sibirica maxima); R., 1936;' then in heavy type, Metane, Nelson, indicating it had been offered or written about under these incorrect names. So it seems quite possible that the Preston White Seedling is actually MATANE.

I had not heard of her death and perhaps it is a little late to pay tribute to her, but Miss Isabella Preston was one of the leading breeders of new garden subjects of the first half of this century.

Irises were only one area of her many interests; Mr. Ellis mentioned her lilacs, a field in which she had worked for many years; but perhaps her finest work was done in hybridizing lilies. She first produced what came to be known as the Stenographer Series of which the most popular were Lillian Cummings and Brenda Watts. Lilies of this group were crossed with others to produce a line of upright-facing lilies of brilliant colorings from which Miss Preston then developed some fine yellows which are in the parentage of the Fiesta Hybrids. She also made crosses between *L. sargentiae* and *L. ragale* which resulted in the fine white trumpet lily George C. Creelman, and white trumpets of the Creelman Strain are still among the finer varieties readily available.. Miss Preston wrote two books on lilies, *Garden Lilies*, published in 1929, and *Lilies for Every Garden*, 1947.

Miss Preston wrote me in the late 1950's that she had worked in many areas of plant breeding and enjoyed them all but that perhaps the lilies, Siberian irises and lilacs had been of greatest interest and challenge to her. GATINEAU is perhaps her best-known Siberian but in addition to MATANE she introduced ABITITI, 1932; CHAUDIERE, 1932; CHINA BLUE, before 1938; KENOGAMI (also known as Youkon) 1938; KOOTENAY, 1932; MADAWASKA, 1932; MATAPEDIA, not in Check Lists; MATAWIN, (also spelled MATTAWIN) 1932; NIPIGON, 1932; OTTAWA, 1928; PEMBINA, 1932; PICKANOCK, 1937; RIDEAU, 1932; SKEENA, 1938. Quite a respectable list. There may have been others but these were known to have been in gardens as recently as 1960, and I am happy to be growing quite a few of them. It will be a long time before GATINEAU and OTTAWA, for example, become outmoded. I do just wonder how many of this year's new TBs will still be popular garden varieties in 1997 or thereabouts?

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NOTES ON GROWING NEW SIBERIANS How to Put a New Plant Into an Established Border Sarah Wing Highley

When the new plants arrive line them out in the vegetable garden, seedling patch or other open place. Use compost, peat moss, etc., to make the soil more friable. Mulch well with ground bark, chopped straw, ground corn cobs or such. Water as needed and never let them dry and freeze at the same time. Once active growth begins, watering is not so critical. After frost move year old clumps with as much dirt as possible on the roots. Cut back dead foliage and water in well, mulch again. Next spring the plants do not seem to realize they have been moved. The big holes in the vegetable garden can be filled in with the dirt you dug out of the garden bed. CAUTION: 1. Move the plants after frost. Frost kills the leaves and the plants do not have to absorb water through the somewhat disturbed roots to keep their leaves

alive. 2. This is a job for a strong-backed man. Some vigorous Siberians make one year old clumps of roots that are hard to believe and even harder to carry around. These year old clumps are able to go through their first year in the new bed with just the normal watering.

Here Siberians do not make good root growth in the spring and I only order them in the fall. Spring is frantic enough anyway.

(Another note in her letter to Mildred Johnson says she is ordering some of the "new yellow Siberians" and in a year or so her garden will make a good place to see not only her own seedlings but a fair number of the older Siberians. She also has a collection of Siberian Species as well as the other beardless species.)

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From Peg Edwards a report on her Hatbox Trick: "Both divisions flourished in our cool damp spring and I couldn't see enough difference to bother about between the one treated in normal fashion and the one that sheltered under the hatbox. Possibly the box gave that division a couple of days advantage in getting started in spring but the other caught up quickly. I removed the box as soon as growth started after the move. I'm going to try again this spring and see if in what I hope will be a more normal season the box does make a difference.

The box worked wonders in rooting a mess of heath, heather, juniper, etc. I got about 50 good young plants from cuttings placed within a one foot circle. Some of the heaths are going to bloom this coming season."

Report on starting seed in September:

"Actually I started the Siberian seed with a three-week visit to the refrigerator in August last year, mixed with damp vermiculite in a pillbox. Then in late August or early September they were sown on top of good potting soil in small plastic pots (3" square) along with various other seeds, iris and others. The pots were set in a fairly deep clear plastic sweaterbox and by the beginning of October were nicely up. At the beginning of winter the pots were transferred to a covered coldframe. Growth stopped, of course, with the first good freeze, but it resumed in mid-April--of a cold nasty spring, I may say--and by the time I had the new beds cleared for the seedlings the Siberians were nice husky young plants and took the move better than any I had

ever handled before. I noticed that several other batches of seed were also huskier than I have had in the past. Perhaps they like being crowded in the pots in the early stages. I have never before had plants that at the end of their first season looked ready to bloom the following year; Siberians have always been slow to get going here and often it has not been till the fourth year that I had any bloom worth mentioning. But I think this lot may give quite a bit next year. I had intended to repeat the method this year as a check, but late spring meant late bloom and late ripening of seed - not speeded up by the wet cloudy summer - and as a result I didn't have Siberian seed ready to harvest until the last week of September which is kind of late to use this method. So the check-batch will have to wait till next year (an old Brooklyn saying which has been transferred to Shea Stadium).

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1970 GOLDEN JUBILEE CONVENTION AT NEW YORK

The full details of the rules for Guest plantings for this convention will be made in the spring issue of the Bulletin but as this may be a little late for some growers the committee for guest plantings wishes to say that they would prefer all Siberians to be sent to:

Mr. Wm. Peck, Jr.
Mt. Rt. Box 30, Yellow Cote Road
Oyster Bay, New York, 11771

between April 15 and July 15, 1968 in order that the plants can be well established, good sized clumps by convention time. Growers who can spare sufficient stock for two or three divisions are encouraged to do so. The main planting will be in Mr. Peck's garden but by having divisions in one or two other gardens we can insure that the plants will be blooming somewhere even in a crazy year (and what other kind have we had lately?)

Mrs. D. Zezelic
Mrs. H. L. Edwards
Committee for Guest Plantings

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SEED EXCHANGE LIST 1967

I have just recently received a very comprehensive list of available seeds from the AIS Seed Exchange Committee. Oh boy, how I would like to be able to grow about 25-50 different types of irises listed but know from considerable experience over the past twenty-five years it is time and effort wasted for most of those I would like. However,

for those of you residing in areas with milder climate and a little more humidity, PLEASE try growing some of them. They're priced at such a reasonable price it is a shame to pass up a chance to experiment a little.

When I have attended AIS conventions at such places as Portland, Kansas City and Newark, I have seen them growing in gardens, both private and public, and come home all "hepped" up to try--and try I did--over and over. But one has to finally admit the truth, that there are some types we cannot grow here in North Dakota. I always hate to admit to anyone that we are limited in ANY WAY up here in the wide open spaces. It isn't a matter of poor soil, or in my case, lack of water, but usually (as Peg Edwards has remarked about their weather lately) temperatures too hot or too cold at the wrong times! Even tho I have a brother who is a weatherman, I haven't been able to intimidate him enough to get our weather changed to an even keel during the springs and falls.

So, as stated, be sure to read through this Seed Exchange List carefully and order at least a few packets (at 25¢ a packet) and give them a chance to try growing in your garden. Your rewards, I am sure, will be worth many times the money and effort.

Charlotte Withers

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FROM DOWN WEST VIRGINIA WAY

We are always glad to hear how things are growing in various sections of our country and a letter from Jim Aultz of Huntington, West Virginia, brought these comments:

"My Siberians were drastically divided last year, so bloom in general was not prolific, with one real exception. You guessed it! My clump of WHITE SWIRL was huge and full of bloom. I'm afraid that anyone who has ever grown it successfully will want to forget all about other white varieties.

I divided the clump this year and had so many divisions that I told a friend I was thinking of changing the name of my garden to WHITE SWIRL FARM, as all were planted at the back of my borders--east and south--and they should be a sight to behold next spring, or when they bloom again. I expected to hear a similar tale when I talked on the phone with one of the best gardeners I know--but was told he had lost his clump! How could that happen?

The professional hybridizers, of which I am not one, seem to think

one should never save bee crosses. Then how come all of those 'unknown' in the listings of new ones, under parentage? Anyhow, last year, two pods (here) on WHITE SWIRL survived the winter on the stalk, didn't split open, and still seemed firm. So, I did something I've never done before: removed them, dried them, and planted the seeds. Now I have twenty-one seedlings of this planting to watch--just for fun! They may not amount to anything. On the other hand, all crosses of WHITE SWIRL are said to be "superior"...so I shall wait and see.

PINK ORCHID (from seeds sent me by a man in Pennsylvania) finally bloomed this year. A rather attractive plant, but certainly not 'the color of old tall-bearded PINK CAMEO' (as I remember it)--much more orchid than pink. So, I'm still looking for a really pink one. Wish Dr. McGarvey wasn't quite such a perfectionist, and would introduce some of those he obtained several years ago, according to the article he wrote.

How does your garden grow?

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COMMENTS AND NOTES ABOUT MEMBERS

A short letter from Gertie Knock, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, tells of lots of visitors to her garden this summer. Shortage of rain was a problem in her area. She says they had a late frost which took a lot of the buds on the tall-bearded irises but didn't affect the Siberians, hemerocallis or lilies.

She has an outstanding seedling, a light blue with white style arms and a white one that blooms like a Japanese (flat bloom). She, too, is a perfectionist and wonders if either one is "good enough" for registration and introduction.

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Though the Denver AIS meeting had its troubles weatherwise, it did fulfill one requirement of a successful meeting. As usual, everybody was so congenial and sociable that I, for one, felt amply repaid for the trip just to be able to greet old acquaintances and meet new people. Again I had the pleasure of visiting with many of our Siberian Society members, among them Ben Hager, Steve Varner, Vay Sargo of Hot Springs and a first - to meet and visit with our secretary, Mildred Johnson. We didn't quite make connections as well as I would have liked it but we did cooperate on the Siberian Society meeting one evening and found we had much in common. We both felt we probably would have had more members in attendance if this meeting had not been held the evening prior to the opening but then there are always problems as to when to hold these meetings. We were glad to have as many as we did in attendance.

HYBRIDIZING NOTES
Sarah Tiffney

Here are some general conclusions from my hybridizing efforts to date with Siberians.

Blue-purple is dominant, as one would expect from the fact that it is the predominant color in the wild.

White is recessive to blue-purple, in the simple Mendelian ratio in my trials so far. A number of light or medium blue Siberian irises carry recessive white; I wonder if all of them do? This seems to indicate a dosage effect, the recessive white making the blue paler.

White x white makes more whites, in my experience so far.

Red x red gives more reds in all that I have tried. I have not gotten any pinks from them as Dr. McGarvey did (Bulletin of the AIS No. 163, p. 51-53), but my numbers of seedlings were small.

Red x blue-purple gives all blue-purples, or maybe we should say purples, because one interesting thing here is that all the offspring have a reddish tint - another indication of a dosage effect. One would expect of course that the red would be recessive since it is so rare. I have not yet gotten a red back out of a purple, but it ought to be possible.

Pink x pink makes more pinks, some paler than the parents. (All these pinks are really lavender-pink.) Dr. McGarvey, also, found that his pinks made more pinks.

White x red makes all blue-purples. This is true of four different crosses I have tried, and a number of other people have made similar reports. This seems to indicate that two factors must be present to produce blue-purple color; the white parent must carry only one of them, and the red parent the other; when both factors are combined in the seedlings the blue-purple pigment appears. Again, there is definitely a reddish tint in these seedlings, suggesting a dosage effect from the red parent.

White x pink likewise makes all blues, with a reddish tinge; pink behaves just like red in this case.

It may be that not all white Siberian irises behave this way when crossed with red or pink; there have been a few reports of different results. I have long wondered if the white of Iris sanguinea and the white of I. sibirica were the same genetically. Both species have albino forms, but they look rather different. SNOW QUEEN, which is

supposed to be a collected albino form of sanguinea, is pure white with no other color in the flower except the yellow of the blaze. The old variety LACTEA, is, I think, an albino form of sibirica; I do not have it but do have some seedlings which answer its description - their petals carry a little ivory tint at first, and the hafts of the falls have a little bluish or brownish reticulation in addition to the usual yellow blaze - this is the albino form of species sibirica. I suspect that our garden whites are predominantly sanguinea blood, and perhaps these are the ones that combine with reds to give blue offspring. The sibirica type, however, might behave differently, and there have been some reports to indicate this.

It is obvious that we need a great deal more information about the gene content and breeding behavior of our Siberians. We know almost nothing now. Anyone who wants to contribute to this knowledge could do so by self-pollinating a (correctly identified!) iris, then self-pollenating its progeny through several generations, and keeping complete records. Of course he should take considerable care to see that the crosses are true and not mixed up by bees. We also need more collections from the wild, and the studies of such plants.

Here are three specific notes that might be of interest:

Irises with narrow white edges (NORA DISTIN, KENOGAMI, TIFFNEY 58-5) when crossed will make seedlings with white edges, but in two generations the edges have not become any more prominent.

The way to get something very much like ZERITA is to cross RED EMPEROR and GRANDIS! This cross gave me a row of seedlings that were all tall, well-branched, with rather large flowers with blue-purple standards and falls and very reddish purple style arms. The flowers are considerably larger than those of either parent, the first instance of this that I have seen.

There is an odd form that appears sometimes in white seedlings, which I call the "quilled" form. Both petals and falls are very narrow and their edges are rolled in, looking like curved quills. This has appeared only in white flowers; there have been two or three reports of this form in white flowers by others. It seems to be connected somehow with white, but it would be premature to call it a linkage.

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HAIL, HAIL, THE GANG'S ALL...

Mildred R. Johnson

Waterlogged, yes, I think that might be the word to use to explain the condition of us who attended the Denver Convention (the dinner favor was an iris to plant in our gardens named "Colorado Skies" - no matter what it looks like, it will look like "hail" to us.)

We saw no Siberians in "seeable" condition as our trip to the Botanic Gardens was the morning after the Tuesday hail that ripped through the tour gardens and slashed flowers, stalks, and spirits.

However, it was exciting to view the slide show that Charlotte had assembled for the Tuesday evening program. It was wonderful to meet Charlotte, and we might report she is a "doll", and well organized and interested in the Society doings. It's as much fun meeting convention goers as seeing the flowers at these annual meetings, and there were several of our board and members in attendance.

The slides Charlotte had chosen to show were a good combination of aspects of Siberians and those in attendance (spilling out through the doors because of the good number interested in our flower) seemed to be interested in the world of Sibirica. We added some new members and look forward to their participation with us.

We included some "flyers" inviting membership in the Society for Siberian Irises in each convention packet and hope they will continue to obtain new members for us. We have received some new memberships from these, so felt they were a good way of "advertising" our Society.

Why not decide right now to attend an AIS convention when it is near your area sometime...and if you know a weatherman in the neighborhood why not make arrangements for some good weather for each convention.

In spite of hail, though, it's great to see the "gang" and get the iris mood for another year.

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THANKS FOR SLIDES

May we express our thanks to all of those members who so graciously allowed us to use their slides at the Denver meeting. Everybody I contacted sent me slides, which we tried to show to best advantage and also tried to return as soon as possible. By so doing, we felt maybe slide owners would be more agreeable to lending them for future meetings.

THE #&\$%@*? SIBERIAN
Tom Heston

"That's the craziest looking Siberian I have ever seen", I thought as I stuck in the shovel underneath it to throw it into the compost pile. "Of all the wildest looking things and where did I get it from?"

"Its deformed that's what it is". I didn't remember planting it but it must have been something that I planted in a hurry without a name tag and it would be so easy to identify that it would not need a name tag.

"Of all the wildest looking stems". The stem went up and there would be a leaf sticking out from the stem here and there. I lifted the shovel out of the ground changing my mind.

"Maybe I better have someone see this little reversion to something wild, I might really have something here."

I waited the rest of the day and finally Ron Beattie dropped by to see what was in blossom. Breathlessly I took Ron to the back yard to show him "the craziest looking Siberian I have ever seen".

In the backyard I pointed out the monster. "There it is", I pointed with an accusing finger.

"Oh," Ron said, "That's Dorothea K. Williamson, a Louisiana iris you knothead".

"Oh", I said, and then remembered when and where I planted it. "So that's what a Louisiana iris looks like".

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REPORT TO THE SOCIETY
Mildred Johnson

We have 155 members as of August count. These are what is called "paid up members", and is the number we report to AIS. However, we carry 28 members we list as "d" for delinquent. Appreciating the fact that it is difficult to remember dues at \$1 per year when perhaps your AIS is Life or Tri-ennial, or for some other reason, it still is the responsibility of "ourselves" to keep our name on the "paid up" list. We owe that to the rest of the society as their dues must pay for our "d" listing. We will type your membership date with a d after it on the name tape this issue so you will know if you are paid up. We cannot stand to think of losing one of you, but must remove your card if you do not let us hear from you by return mail.

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WHAT TO DO WHEN THE MIND GOES BLANK
or
How Not to Write an Article For the Fall Issue
Peg Edwards

Maybe I should call this a non-article. There are non-books, aren't there? Well, this is a short version.

I had promised myself I'd do a nice, long article for this issue, and back in August I sat down one night with a big wad of paper and a well sharpened pencil to start doodling on possible topics. Hybridizing? Well, no- I'd done that several times one place or another. Arranging- same story. Then what about...no, that's been done too. Well, ...oh heck, I couldn't think of anything I hadn't said again and again.

I put the pad aside and picked up a book.

A few days later while doing the dishes I wondered about writing up some of the new introductions. But I didn't have enough to make a whole article about.

I might report on the splendid-looking seedlings I lined out this spring..but that wouldn't take up much space either. I mean, how far can you pad a ten-line report?

It is now early October and this has been praying on my mind. And don't say 'what mind'? I still can't think of anything. So instead I'm going to tell how I got into the Siberian business.

It started in 1949 when my husband and I, city dwellers of long standing, decided we wanted a house complete with diminishing mortgage instead of those rent receipts. We didn't have much money and after we had made the down payment, paid the closing fees and the deposits on the utilities and practically bought a small moving van, there wasn't much left for landscaping. Our builder had left us with a lawn area on which grass seed had been scattered - after which a drought set in and it didn't rain for two months - three rather weebegone oak trees in the front, five mountain laurels in full sun, and a back yard consisting of solid masses of scrub oak from the back of the house to the property line. While my husband hacked down surplus trees I tried to find inexpensive ways of getting some plants. Seed, of course, is the obvious answer, if you can wait for them to grow. All we had that year was a marvelous crop of portulaca, some nice gladiolus, and the present of a bunch of old iris rhizomes which at least made a bit of green along the east side of the house.

Then we got two nice Christmas presents: a subscription to a garden magazine and the Burpee Catalog. Our front yard, that spring, burst

forth with a lavish assortment of annuals; in May and June the irises bloomed; in July the catalog had ads for irises that made mine look puny, dull and uninteresting. I answered some of the ads and was hooked. I must have blown all of \$6.50 that summer on new irises-- and of course the dealers I bought from sent catalogs. One listed some iris seeds. Seeds! Whee! I could grow jillions of irises from seed and save large green hunks of money. So I got seed of Pink TB, Dwarf Mixed, Tenax, Siberians, Louisianas. Oh boy, fun. I blew a chunk of the grocery money on Dr. Mitchell's book and learned all about growing iris seeds. And sure enough, the next spring I had quite a few nice little green things popping up in the neighborhood of the neat rows I had sown, and the next year I had quite a few blooms, especially on the dwarfs. In fact I had about 30, most of which were immediately recognizable even to me as mutts. I had one TB, which was a dreadful sort of magenta bitone with tangerine beard, which I promptly dubbed Awful-Awful, and kept proudly as an example of sheer horror. (Since then several have been introduced by more respectable growers and some people rave about them. Not me.) One Tenax bloomed - a pretty little thing, and I did just what it said in the book and planted it in light shade, where it promptly died, as did most of that lot. The Siberians did nothing that year but the next, several bloomed out of the batch of 521 that had come out of that 50¢ packet of seed. Fortunately not all survived! By 1955 I had had about 200 plants bloom and had given away most of them; nothing really spectacular but nice things for the garden; and some of them set seed, and innocent little me, I let the seeds fall where they might - all over the flower beds, in the lawn, among the strawberried (by now, of course, the back yard had been pretty well cleared of oaks, and was thoroughly cluttered with all kinds of fruits, vegetables and perennials instead.) One of the seeds that fell came up in the middle of what I regarded as the nicest blue Siberian, and when I saw it I promptly gave it a space to itself. It was a nice dark velvety violet with no markings showing on the falls, and I liked it. But I was much more interested in another seedling that had standards just like the falls, broad, round, and with a lot of veining. I kind of bragged about this one in some of my Robins; Peg Grey caught me in the act and told me to write an article about Siberians (I mean, she didn't just ask me) and that was really the start of our Society. Then Mr. Cassebeer came to see my seedlings, and I proudly showed him my 'double', and he said yes, yes, quite nice - but what about that violet one? That was what really interested him out of all those seedlings. So I named it VELVET NIGHT.

End of story.

And the Moral of That, said the Duchess, is: When Opportunity Knocks Don't Hide From Possible Bill Collectors.

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LOVE IN BLOOM - THE SIBERIAN WAY
Mildred Johnson

May, 1967 was a wet month for gardeners hereabouts. At first we felt bloom season might never begin, but as time wore on we decided flowers are flowers and they will bloom when they're ready in spite of inclement weather. An article we once read said that blossoms by the clock, according to the National Geographic Society, not by the weather was the rule in nature. Rainfall, soil and temperature control the growth and maturing of plants but they have actually little to do with flowering, claim the NGS experts. It's the length of the days and nights that counts the most. Plants that follow nature's timetable refuse to open their buds until they receive their required doses of uninterrupted light and darkness. For instance, a mature cacklebur flowers promptly in autumn when the nights lengthen to 14 hours. Certain plants are especially sensitive to the rhythm of light and darkness, called photoperiodism.

With this in mind, we planted the same variety, MANDY MORSE, on the south side of the house and on the north side. The south side gets daylight and sunlight without trees or houses to interfere while the north plantings receive filtered light through a lilac bush and sunlight after 10 a.m. because of a two-story house on the east. The photoperiodism theory followed by the clump on the south blooming the third week in May, and the north clump putting its blossoms out on the second week in June. We had two distinct bloom periods on this clump and several others we planted with this in mind.

How we love that Siberian bloom. Whether it is in May or June, it's love in bloom - the Siberian way...and science and photoperiodism to the contrary, we like to feel March winds and April showers really do bring our spring flowers.

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A SPECIAL INVITATION TO EACH MEMBER

Because it is impossible for your Editors to write to each one of you individually, please consider this an invitation directed to you to write a few lines about the way your Siberians grow in your area. What type of soil do you have, how much rain which grow best, how do you use them in your landscaping plan, are you an arranger and have you taken any ribbons at flower shows, are you trying your hand at hybridizing and if so, what are your results. Do you have any of the new registrations - English, New Zealand, etc.? See, there are so many areas you can write a few lines about. If you would like to write and lack a topic, drop us a line and we may be able to suggest an area of interest for you. But, please, do it now!

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