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The Siberian Iris

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Society for Siberian Irises

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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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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE
Charlotte Withers

It was nice to see all of you at Milwaukee and even tho the Siberians were few and far between, we all enjoyed ourselves.

The rock garden area of the Boerner Botanical Garden had the most blooming Siberians seen anywhere but it seemed to me that a couple of the clumps were either misnamed or not given in our current Check List. I am sorry my notes with this information have been mislaid but maybe someone else will remember the ones I am referring to. However, the beauty of the location and the planting will long remain in my memory as a place I would like to visit again.

We had a well attended Siberian Section meeting with over seventy-five in attendance. I had listed 10 points which we should keep in mind to improve our Society. These included such items as a full-time editor for our newsletter, more articles for the AIS Bulletin, slides of the newer Siberians for our slide set, cooperation with our Seed and Pollen Chairman, Mrs. Highley, more hybridizers and DEFINITELY MORE commercial outlets for the newer Siberians, more cooperation and activity in our Robins and of course, Siberian classes should be written into more Flower Show schedules. Publicity is also an area where we could expand and develop. And last but certainly not least, more members and more activity by those we have. One obligation of membership is an active participation in the organization. Don't just 'go along for the ride' or the wagon won't go very far or fast! Have you every used a typewriter with one key not working? Things l k s rt f funny d n't they?

Presently we need members to serve on the Nominating Committee- I am sorry to report the passing in April of Mrs. Burton (Louise) Rice, North Wilmington, Massachusetts. She was a member of our Nominating Committee, along with Mr. Wayne Snook who resigned when moving to the West Coast, and Dr. Irwin Conroe. This means we need new members to fill these two vacancies. Please offer your services (or you may be stuck without officers one of these days). While it is complimentary to be able to hold office year after year, it is not good for our Society so we will eagerly await your offer to serve on one of our several committees or in our elective offices.

The Spring Anniversary issue of our newsletter will be under the gentle care of Peg Edwards and Currier McEwen and this is very fitting and as it should be since the AIS meeting will be held in New York. All articles for this issue should be sent to the co-editors EARLY so they have ample time to assemble and print it and get it into the hands of the members before the meeting.

GARDENING WITH BLACK PLASTIC

Mrs. Ronald F. Miller
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Six years ago we visited Kingwood Gardens during iris bloom season. As they have very large plantings they were trying different mulches. We had tried buckwheat hulls, chopped corn cobs and peat moss. Some were too expenseive for large beds and some were not solving the problem. We noticed that they were using black plastic with corn cobs covering it. My husband and I decided that the corn cobs were keeping too much moisture around the rhizomes and causing some disease problems and did not improve the appearance for us.

We bought a 100 ft. roll of 6 mil black plastic and since we were planting a new bed (perennial--with TB irises, hemerocallis, shastas, lilies, poppies and phlox) we dug the bed, laid the plastic and threw a light coating of soil on the plastic to hold it down and hide the plastic and give it a more natural look. We dug holes through the plastic and planted the bed. This bed is still surviving very well.

With this experience and the problems of keeping rows of iris seedlings weeded, we decided to try planting the Siberian and Japanese iris seedlings using black plastic. The plastic was laid down and slits made and the Siberian iris seedlings that had been planted in a cold frame in the fall of 1967 were lines out in July and September 1968. These plants were planted about 6" apart and the rows about 12" apart. This is a table showing the number of plants and survival.

July 1968	No. of plants June 9, 1968
94--- (67.8)	59
Sept. 1968	
24---(67.9)	11
33---(67.10)	11
53---(67.11)	27 (Used green plastic but it doesn't survive 1 yr without splitting.)

These plants have been in 1 year and most have 5 divisions. A small percentage of these plants bloomed in June 1969. Part of the losses are due to mouse and gopher runs under some or across the rows.

This needs more work to make a very accurate report but it looks good enough to me that I plan to plant this year's seedlings out in the very near future.

WHITE SWIRL SEEDLINGS CONTINUED

Bee Warburton

Twenty years ago I grew some chrysofor (chrysographes X forrestii) hybrids from Rex Pearce seed. They lived long enough to bloom twice and then a bad winter took them. I remember their sprightly blended colors and patterns with love and longing, but I haven't tried to grow them again. After growing irises for twenty-odd years I've learned that it's better not to fight nature. Or perhaps it's because I'm not as young as I was then.

Perhaps I'm craven to settle for WHITE SWIRL hybrids which grow here like there's no pollution. This year two friends have argued passionately that WHITE SWIRL has no grace. They are quite right in a way, I have a 10-foot row of it, and this year it was a breast-high hedge. Frank used a sledge hammer and wedge to chop out a chunk for a friend. Its children, in two places, made two hedges in their first bloom season and it was a battle to extract the numbered ones.

These seedlings, from two crosses, were lined out in 1968 and nearly all bloomed in 1969. The pollen parents were my own seedling from WHITE SWIRL x ERIC THE RED, and Bill McGarvey's seedling from GATINEAU x CAESAR'S BROTHER (lgB-large blue). There wasn't a really bad seedling in the lot, except perhaps some of the white ones, none of which came near equaling WHITE SWIRL itself. The others were all shades of violet and most had the lovely green-blue styles, many of which were wide and fringy, some lying down on the falls to cover all the haft markings and coloring. Some of the flowers had lighter patches in the falls. Mostly I selected for WHITE SWIRL form in rich violet or blue coloring with the aqua to teal green-blues in the styles, but I also selected a few of the smallest for possible dwarf Siberians, some with a hint of red which Bill says will give red in the next generation, and the yellowest of the whites because Bill believes this can be intensified to real yellow.

I crossed many of the seedlings back onto WHITE SWIRL but only two of them set seed in any quantity. I never did find out whether it is worth all this continued hard work with the diploids because I never did get up to Maine to see Currier McEwen's tetraploids; but as Bill McGarvey says, only by working with diploids will we learn the basic genetics of our stocks. And until enough basic tetraploid breeding stock is ready for distribution it should be worth making improved diploids to be doubled with colchicine for future tetraploid work.

Incidentally, the Siberians held up better than any other irises to the Simazine weedkiller. They are so deep-rooted that it would

take a long time to carry any root inhibitors down where it could really injure their growth. They have still almost no weeds though they have grown into immense clumps. New named clones planted in 1968 in treated soil hesitated for a year and then took off. TEAL-WOOD is finally burgeoning, and PIROUETTE is making lusty clumps.

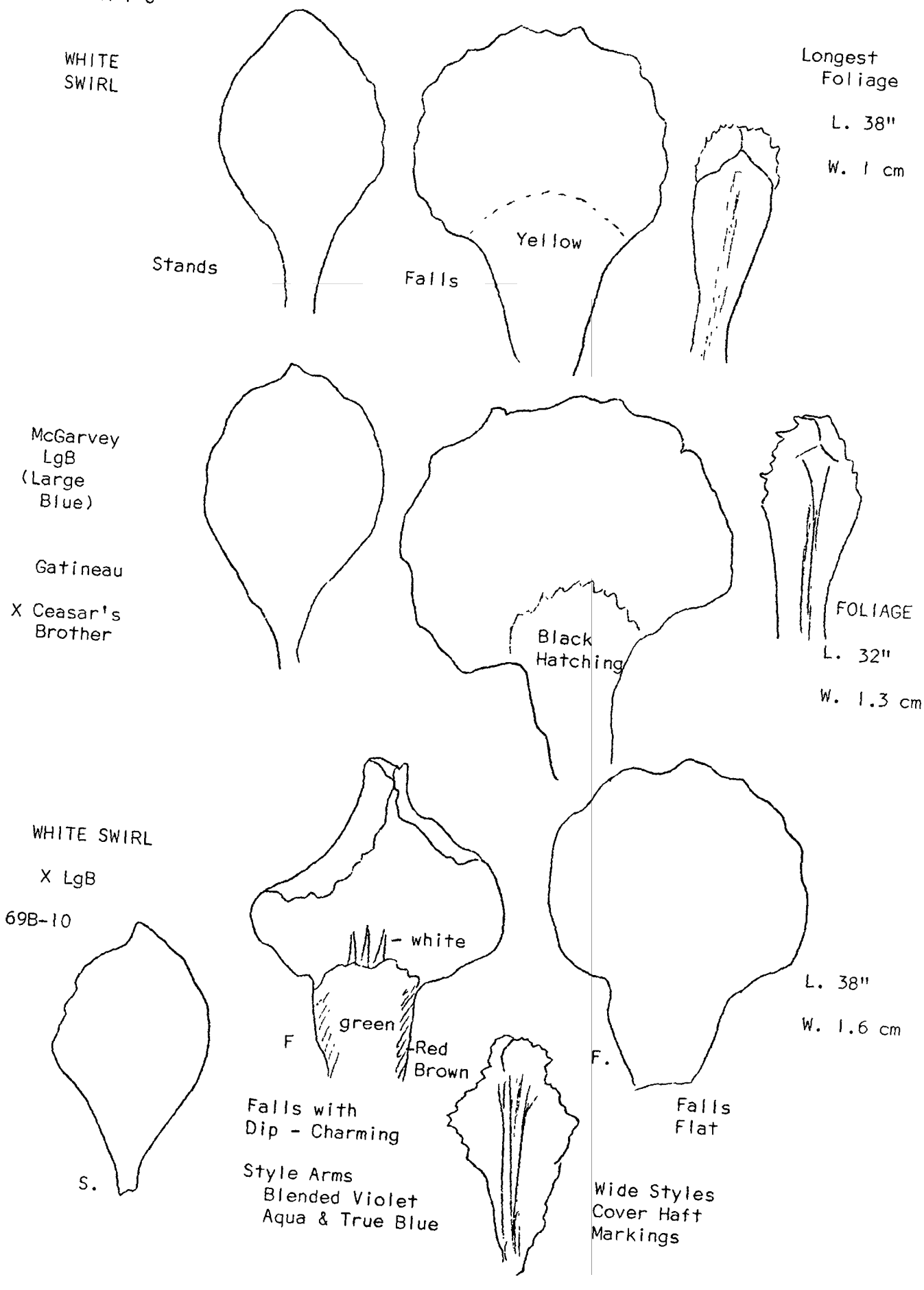
I am slightly concerned about how the seedlings will be for branching in their second year. Although most of them carried a second (lower) stem node, almost none had the second branch that occurs on some, though not all, stalks of WHITE SWIRL (here). There were hundreds of flowers on WHITE SWIRL in my 10-foot row. Every day for two weeks I pollinated between 25 and 50 flowers. (Incidentally, Bombus the humblebee because he hums, is easily executed when he is down despoiling a WHITE SWIRL flower. It takes just a little speed and courage to pinch him between the style arm and the fall when his business end is out of sight. But by cracking the wrapped stands and falls in bud they can easily be removed leaving nothing but naked styles with no danger of contamination).

I put in enough time and effort to have collected 25,000 seeds, but I have less than a thousand, probably because of pollen scarcity inherited from WHITE SWIRL which ordinarily speaking has none. Most of the seeds are from just two of the many seedlings I tried, so at least I found out something about fertilities. I really think it hardly worth growing fewer than 100 seedlings from a cross, but of course I could never discard the small lots. Now, if the trend continues of all these pollen parents giving better childred than themselves, as Bill says CAESAR'S BROTHER and more especially GATINEAU do, perhaps later it won't be necessary to grow so many. At present mine are all being planted around the edges of my iris patch where Frank can get under them with the tractor shovel at discard time.

A few more bits of information from Bill McGarvey: he says that the white-whites and the yellow-whites are sharply distinct. If so, I didn't have any white-whites in these progenies. Some had considerably more yellow in them than WHITE SWIRL does. Bill also says that the pink that should come from watering down the reds is very slow. The selections of seedlings with lighter patches in the falls were partly for such a project.

I thought the style arms of one of the 69B seedlings (69B-10 in the drawing below) were without exception the most beautiful flower part that I have ever examined. They were a rich vibrant violet with ribs of teal-to-aqua green-blue. Below are drawings of petal shapes and some statistics on the three parents involved and some of their offspring.

I R I S

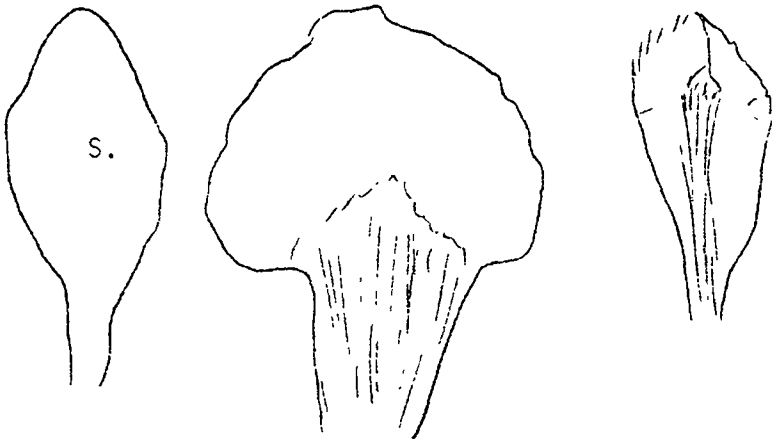


FLOWERS 4 1/2"

SDG
WHITE SWIRL X

ERIC THE
RED

SELECTED FOR
SMALL SIZE
AND AQUA STYLES



FOLIAGE

L. 36"

W. 1.6 cm

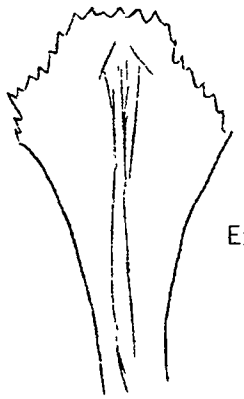
WHITE SWIRL X

WS/ER ABOVE SDG

69A-2

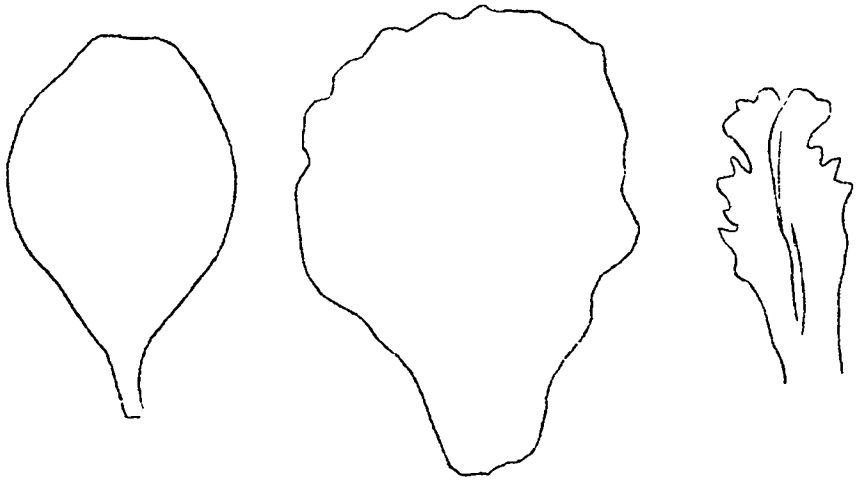
FOLIAGE OF
LARGEST
38"
1.8 cm

SMALLEST
23"
.7 cm



Extra Wide
Styles

69A-19



Very Serrated

SIBERIANS IN SEATTLE 1969

Marjorie Barnes

The 1969 Siberian season here was better than ever--though brief, hurried along as it was by an advance of summer weather, which ended in heavy rain toward the end of May. In case there has not been an article on late-blooming Siberians, I hope someone with considerable experience with a great many varieties will write about the ones that best extend the season. Two of the three Cal-Sibes I have--SWIRLING MIST and an unnamed yellow of Leona Mahood's--bloom after most of the others are done, and I. chrysographes is fairly late here. I have a pod of what I hope will be Cal-Sibe prospects coming on a plant of the Pacific Coast hybrid, GOLDEN NYMPH. As there are no bee-set pods on the plant, it is quite possible that the hand-pollinated cross with I. chrysographes did take. Another year, I'll use the smaller I. chrysographes rubella and either a small yellow innominata or the beautiful little ivory innominata with the bright yellow signal, an introduction, I think, of the late Dr. Riddle, which is called ROGUE.

The following Siberian cultivars and Cal-Sibes bloomed well this year--some for the first time:

MY LOVE - Standards, falls, and style arms azure blue. Pale gold and white marks at haft, reticulated dark violet. Two buds per stalk; seven stalks on a first year clump. 27".

MOUNTAIN LAKE - Very bright azure blue, slightly deeper color than MY LOVE. Style arms lighter blue than falls; standards slightly darker than the falls. Light yellow and white haft marks, but less white than on MY LOVE. Two buds per stalk. 32" tall. Foliage lush and large.

ERIC THE RED - Deep red violet. Open standards. Slightly ruffled falls. Golden and white haft marks, netted and speckled red-violet. Two buds per stalk, and occasionally a lower side branch, carrying a third bud. Frequently has four-parted flowers (would like to know if this tendency appears in ERIC's progeny. For instance, do those interesting new colors of Mr. Kitton's--some derived from ERIC---also show four-parted flowers?) Stalk 34½". Foliage lush.

MORNING MAGIC - Very pale blue with orchid cast. Light yellow and white haft marks; some darker violet veining and dots. There is a darker blue shading along the top of the style arms and in the major vein of each standard. Top of style arms show peculiar and irregular flap-like processes. Stalks carry four buds each and are 41" tall.

MRS. PERRY - Duplicates MORNING MAGIC, except that height is

only 34" and flower is proportionately smaller. Also, the stalk carries only three buds.

HELEN ASTOR - Rosy magenta, much lighter than ERIC THE RED. Flower is smaller and shows more white on the hafts than ERIC. The white and gold haft marks are reticulated and dotted magenta. Blue-violet line down middle of each style arm. Falls and standards orbiculate; style arms blunt. Stalks 28".

VIOLET FLARE - Three-year clump is compact and neat. Seven stalks, 32" high, carrying two buds each. Flowers medium violet, with deeper violet at the center. Style arms, somewhat petal-like, appear as two overlapping halves--on edge rather than horizontal. Greenish effect at haft, with a few white lines and violet reticulations. Falls horizontal, flaring slightly ruffled, and turned in at the tips, giving them a pointed effect. Excellent substance. Lovely bluish-green foliage, with violet-tinted bud spathes and leaf bases.

WHITE SWIRL - The 37" stalks carry three buds each. Flowers ivory with bright gold color well back on the hafts. Under-surface of falls are also gold, which gives an especially bright effect as the flower opens. Upper surface of style arms shows a few of the fleshy flaps noted on MORNING MAGIC and MRS. PERRY. (I later noticed similar tags on the standards of I. ochroleuca). Foliage wide, high and lush. Plant grows rapidly and is dependably floriferous. During our late-May downpour it was the only Siberian in the garden whose stalks fell over from their back-of-the-border position and touched the lawn. One suspects the full, strong substance of the flower parts causes the blossoms to ship more water than the tall stems can hold. (Florence Weed reports a similar experience with WHITE SWIRL in her garden). However, the fallen stalks make fine indoor arrangements, and could no doubt have done well at a show. But the garden effect is disenchanting during or after a heavy rain.

GRANDIS - First year plant 27"; had only one stalk (two buds). Flowers well above neat narrow foliage. Blue-violet stands and style arms. White area on falls are reticulated with blue-violet lines that coalesce at the tips. Flowers small with very upright stands.

WHITE DOVE - Late-blooming ivory white. Similar in all respects, except possibly height, to the old unnamed white I have had for years. Not outstanding at close range but clumps give a good landscaping effect.

SWIRLING MIST - 20" Cal-Sibe. White, with the hint of opalescence one sees on high clouds at dawn. Close-up there is a yellow signal, having a fringe of fine violet lines. Foliage wide ($\frac{1}{2}$")

somewhat glaucous, and quite vertical. A sturdy, compact little plant that flowers dependably (2-4 buds per stalk) year after year and is one of the least demanding irises in the garden.

MAHOOD's yellow Cal-Sibe - Flower stalks about 18" high. Foliage much narrower, shorter, and brighter green than SWIRLING MIST's, and although flowers are about the same size, the stems are more slender, lending a lighter, more delicate aspect to the whole plant. Again, the foliage is very erect--more so than is usually the case with the Californicae I have seen. The flower has light yellow stands and style arms. Falls show the same base color but appear more intense because of the large, bright yellow signal. Blades of the falls are threaded with light brownish violet veins. It is a charming plant--and flower. Only two buds per stem its first year, so the blooming season is brief. Like SWIRLING MIST, it blooms late--too late, so far, for our local Iris Show.

I suppose the Cal-Sibe flowers do resemble Californicae more nearly than they do the Sibiricae, although the "wood-sprite" aspect of the Californicae species has been infused with a measure of dignity. Gardeners in an appropriate climate may prefer the elves and fairies, selecting among the species those having the most erect stems. But, if one's climate is too harsh for the Western Native--and one also wants to extend the Siberian season--these late-blooming Cal-Sibes answer the purpose, and are quite elegant little flowers in their own right.

If West Coast members of The Society for Siberian Irises would make it a point to cross some of their nicest Pacific Coast irises with their best Sibiricae species clones, it might be possible to provide seed for trial in other parts of the country. The Cal-Sibes, of course, are sterile, but a wise choice of parents should give a pleasing F_1.

Regarding Test Gardens, Display Gardens, or whatever they are called, perhaps too highly organized arrangements should be avoided. A lot of us, I think, just want to know where--and when--in our area we can find an "Open Garden", displaying a fairly large collection of Sibiricae species, cultivars, and hybrids. Hopeful hybridizers and intrepid judges heading for Portland, Oregon, in 1972, will not find the Seattle-Tacoma area far off the beaten track.

I am intrigued that The Siberian Iris, May 1969, (p. 309), classes our area in the same "growth belt" as Faribault, Minnesota, and Athol, Massachusetts. Sheer latitude can be misleading (actually we are not even in the same latitude, either). The Puget Sound Region, Western British Columbia, Western Washington, and Western Oregon are in different growth belts from each other, as well as from the eastern sections of their own states and province.

Vancouver, B. C., is Zone 4, Seattle-Tacoma and Oregon's coastal strip are Zone 5, while Portland, Salem and Eugene, Oregon, are Zone 6. Dr. Lee Lenz, I believe, classes*this as a "Mediterranian" climate. Technically, of course, he may be referring to the area just south of Puget Sound where the natural distribution of the Pacific Coast irises begins. Probably the most recent Pleistocene glaciation pushed the irises a bit to the south of us, but they seem to find the situation warm enough now, with a few exceptions, when they are reintroduced here; and there is no question about the Siberians liking it in the above-mentioned western areas.

* I should say "includes it with".

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(Editor's Note: Having been out in this area during bloom time and having inspected gardens both north and south of the Seattle-Tacoma area, I knew that growing conditions and zones were not the same as those of Minnesota and Massachusetts--however, just to see if anyone would correct me I let this detail go into the article. Now I can be sure SOMEONE is keeping an eye on details enough to take time to issue corrections. Thanks for this addition to your article. C. W.)

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A NEW WAY TO DO THINGS

A write-up of a meeting of the Northeastern Indiana Iris Society held in March at Waynedale, Indiana, sent to your editor told of a program which was taped and used with a showing of slides of Siberian irises and arrangements made by our secretary, Mildred Johnson. Mildred also sent along articles on Tips for Preservation of Flowers and Basic Flower Arranging.

This idea of combining slides and a taped program is one which could be used to advantage by many of our garden clubs. Why don't you suggest your club try this. It could fit well into a spring flower show too. If you are a member of a small club and your finances do not allow payment of expenses for a guest designer or arranger, you could use this type of a solution to your program problem. This is a clever idea and I hope many of you will try it out.

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Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle. Abraham Lincoln

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CURRENT STATUS OF TETRAPLOIDY IN SIBERIANS

Currier McEwen

In previous articles in the Yearbook of The British Iris Society (1) and The Siberian Iris (2,3,4) I have commented on the general aspects of tetraploidy, the potential benefits that can be expected from it, the methods used, and the efforts which Mrs. McEwen and I have been making to induce it in Siberian irises. The first step, of course, was to convert diploids into tetraploids by means of colchicine. This was started in 1960 using the method of Griesbach, Fay and Horsfall (5). With beginner's luck four of the few seedlings treated survived and one proved to be a chimera* when it bloomed in 1962. Each year thereafter more induced tetraploids and chimeras were obtained and we now have many of these. As pointed out in previous articles, however, induced tetraploids are somewhat unreliable because they may actually be chimeras and contain some diploid tissue, with the result that a subsequent division may turn out to be diploid. Hence we early decided that we would not introduce any cultivars as tetraploids until we had plants resulting from tetraploid by tetraploid crosses, and therefore, certain to be "pure". This proved difficult to achieve. Year after year we made such crosses only to find that those which resulted in pods came from chimeras and only diploids resulted. Not until the season of 1968 did several second generation, and hence pure, tetraploids appear.

During the 1969 season we have had some 45 second generation plants from four different crosses to work with. This has provided us with an extremely valuable tool because we can now use these for crosses with our many induced chimeras and know that only pure tetraploids will result. It has also provided an opportunity to compare diploids and tetraploids. In each instance thus far the tetraploid flowers are distinctly larger than their sisters from diploid crosses involving the same cultivars. In each instance also the colors have been richer and the substance superior. Indeed the greater substance has been responsible for a difference in form in the case of one type of flower which I find not particularly attractive. I refer to cultivars such as TOWANDA RED FLARE and SNOWY EGRET which have falls which tend to hand down. In that diploid form the flowers are rather compact and graceful; but in the tetraploid form the greater substance causes the falls to stand out horizontally with the result that they are more widely separated from each other, like the blades of an airplane propellor. In flowers of this type the tetraploids have the advantage of greater size and depth of color but lack the airy grace of their diploid sisters. Certainly they are more spectacular as demonstrated by the way in which visitors to our garden are immediately attracted to that section of the bed where they are growing. On the other hand tetraploidy in these flowers has, to my taste, resulted in a loss as well as a gain. Let me now contrast this pendant type of

*Definitions of this and other terms used in this article are given in previous ones (1,2)

diploid with those like WHITE SWIRL and TURQUOISE CUP which flare horizontally but which nevertheless have a compact form because the segments are wider, especially at the hafts, and hence there is little space between them. Our experience thus far indicates that this lovely type of diploid is even finer in the tetraploid state. It retains the same diploid form in a pleasingly fuller and larger flower with a greater purity and intensity of color and superb substance. Some may not consider the greater size an advantage but I suspect that most admirers of Siberians will. Other gross characteristics of the tetraploids are their sturdier and usually somewhat shorter scapes and distinctly larger anthers. The small stem that connects the ovary to the branch terminal also is stouter and sturdier and the seeds are larger than those of diploids. Branching appears to be unaffected and is multiple or not depending on the genetic background of the cultivar.

We will register and introduce this year two of the second generation tetraploids. The first is a light blue flower which I am proud to say will be named ORVILLE FAY. It is derived from two induced tetraploids involving VIOLET FLARE and PIROUETTE. It was Mr. Fay who taught me how to use colchicine to induce tetraploidy and I am greatly pleased that he has permitted this flower to bear his name. The second, from two induced tetraploids derived from WHITE SWIRL and SNOWY EGRET, will be named FOURFOLD WHITE. One other, a rather good large red from TOWANDA RED FLARE, probably will be registered next year if it stands up to another season's observation.

The two to be introduced are not the kind of flowers that I look forward to some day. Both are of the widely flaring propellor-like type and I trust irisarians will reserve final judgment regarding tetraploidy in Siberians until some with WHITE SWIRL type of form become available. Ours of that type are still first generation - i.e. induced-tetraploids and chimeras; but next Spring we will plant seeds from these crossed with ORVILLE FAY and FOURFOLD WHITE and I trust that in another few years some superior flowers will begin to appear. An example of what the future can hold is an induced chimera which we will register this year as DREAMING YELLOW. It is a colchicine treated child of Mrs. L. W. Brummitt's DREAMING SPIRES. It has the form of WHITE SWIRL but is a third again as large and has wider, more ruffled segments; but its most interesting feature is the creamy yellow color throughout the full length of the falls which persists in full sun for the duration of the flower. It will be registered merely as a chimera, but it has set a pod this year with FOURFOLD WHITE and we are eager to see what its pure tetraploid children will be like. By 1971 and 1972 when the plants from this year's seed harvest bloom there should be hundreds of second generation tetraploids from many different crosses to observe and compare. A beginning has been made but a great many crosses by, I hope, a good many hybridizers will have

to be made before the full potential of tetraploid Siberians can be realized and evaluated. Mr. Max Steiger in the Canary Islands, registered and induced tetraploid from I. forrestii in 1964 which he named Tetrafor. In a letter I had from him last fall, however, he told me that all the plants of it had been lost while he was in the hospital with a long illness. Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brummitt in England also are using colchicine to induce tetraploidy in Siberians. To my knowledge they and we are the only ones presently working in this field. If there are others doing so or planning to, I hope they will let me know.

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REFERENCES

(1) Yearbook of British Iris Society for 1966

(2) The Siberian Iris - Vol. 2, page 174 - Nov. 1965

(3) Ibid. Vol. 2, page 214 - Nov. 1966

(4) Ibid. Methods of Inducing Tetraploidy
Vol. 2, page 286 - Oct. 1968

(5) Griesback, R. A., Fay, O.W., and Horsfall, L.:
Induction of polyploidy in newly-germinated
hemerocallis seedlings. The Hemerocallis Journal 17:70,1963

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TEST AND DISPLAY GARDEN

Kevin Vaughn

This is a plea from the director of this area test garden for a few of the newer Siberians. I have added 18 new ones this fall, which with the previously planted ones brings the total to 52. There are some that aren't in the planting that I feel are important to any test garden so if any of the members can add them to this planting I will be glad to receive them. The ones I particularly would like to get are LIGHTS OF PARIS, EGO, SUPER EGO, BLUE BURN, DEWFUL, PRINCE OF WHITES, MITSOU, PIROUETTE, VELVET NIGHT, PLACID WATERS, and any of the newer English varieties. Any hybridizers' special seedlings showing promise would be most welcome.

We have had many visitors this year and hope to increase the number next year. CARRIE LEE was one of the favorites in the plot this year. The season was early here so only the latest were in bloom for the visitors.

HOW DOES IT FEEL.....?

Well, I screeched! My normally female-baritone voice suddenly turned soprano, and a rather bad soprano, at that.

It happened the day of our iris auction. I had left the house before the mail arrived. After the auction, after the visitors had left, while I was finishing my job of tallying the ESIS Acquisition sales, one of our members came up to me and said he believed congratulations were in order. I guess I looked blank, because he asked if I had seen the new Bulletin. 'No, I haven't - it had not come when I left'. In that case he had a pleasant surprise. VELVET NIGHT had won the Morgan Award. This is where the screech came in. Like this:

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            T?  YoumeanIwontheMorgan?
           H
          G
         I
VELVET N
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After that I calmed down somewhat, but all the way home I was afraid I might be stopped on suspicion of driving while under the influence. I managed to stay out of the hands of the police, but when I got home I didn't even say hello - just 'Where's the mail?' and then scrabbled till I found the page, and rushed it into the TV room and thrust it into my husband's hands, pointing with a somewhat shaking finger: 'Look, look - that's me! A ten-year-old could have shown more dignity. But never mind, by next June I'll probably be able to behave fairly normally about it.

The ultimate confession of disgrace: I voted for EGO, myself. Didn't think my baby had a chance.

(Co-Editor's Note: I know we all want to add our congratulations on your happy acquision of the Morgan--and being female, I am also glad to see that the ladies are getting some of the honors. This is a spur for the rest of us to get busy hybridizing--even though Peg is the first to win, we can try can't we?)

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COMMENTS ON SIBERIANS AT MILWAUKEE

Peg Edwards

I think there is no question that if we want Siberians to make a good display at conventions we must send sizable clumps two years in advance. In the display bed at the Botanical Garden there were several large clumps full of bloomstalks which

Charlotte Withers had sent; there were also some smaller clumps which apparently were divisions taken from other clumps she had sent, and these had perhaps one or two bloomstalks. There were also some things that had been sent in 1968; these were mostly little squinchy tufts of foliage with either no bloom or one runty little stalk. Siberians like company - their own company. They also like time to get settled into a new bed. It is already too late to send to Wichita for a good showing; but I do ask that next year any member who has a new, registered Siberian, or a seedling he thinks well of, in sufficient stock to be able to spare a sizable clump, send it to the next convention. Information will appear in the April bulletin in all probability. So follow instructions carefully. It might be worth while to write first and explain just how many decent clumps you can send, and ask just which gardens the Committee would like them sent to, offering to send them direct at a specified time (a good time for shipping Siberians, of course) and begging them NOT to divide the clumps. By doing something on these lines we could perhaps insure (weather permitting of course) a good display of Siberians in 1972.

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Quotation from Dr. Currier McEwen's letter of August 10, 1969:

"..I intended to report to you about the seedlings of WHITE SWIRL x TURQUOISE CUP..About 20 survived colchicine treatment but only one was affected and it was only a chimera. On the other hand it is the nicest of all the seedlings...and the whole batch is unusually good...if the chimera remains true next year we will have something worthwhile. If it doesn't I would like to try that cross again..I have used the hypodermic needle method almost exclusively in 1965-8 and only last fall realized that, while it is less lethal, it also is less effective. This year I went back to the old Griesback-Fay method and I trust I am now back on the move again.

I'll register my first tet x tet seedlings this year...they aren't finished plants yet since they all come from mediocre parents but they are a start."

Comments from Peg E. -"I had seedlings from this same cross which bloomed this year - one I saw and it was a very pretty and shapely form in blue with turquoise spot on the fall and turquoise stripe on the style arm. A second bloomed while I was away for the convention at Milwaukee. Others will bloom next year and I hope I'll be able to report on the whole group next fall. I had mentioned some time ago to Dr. McEwen that on the

basis of shape of flower I wondered if there might be a relationship between WHITE SWIRL and TURQUOISE CUP. He was interested, compared the two visually in a visit to my garden, and agreed that it was a possibility, and as he did not have T.C. he asked me to try to get seed from the cross. After several failures I managed to get two pods - the cross being carefully protected - and sent him half the seed. I have not heard color descriptions of his seedlings, but it is interesting that my one seedling has the turquoise coloring in a larger dose than T.C. has; and also that Bee Warburton had seedlings involving WHITE SWIRL which also show the turquoise color. Next year I hope to be able to sib-cross some of my seedlings and will be curious to see whether they will segregate into white, blue with turquoise, and clear blue in any rational proportion in the F2. I would be interested to hear if anyone has crossed WHITE SWIRL with any of the newer blues and had any seedlings with turquoise markings. I have a small notion that if WHITE SWIRL x blue gives turquoise reasonably consistently it is possible that by selecting those with the largest turquoise spots and selfing them we might get seedlings with large yellow spots on white ground which might in turn be bred to give 28 chromosome Siberians which for practical purposes could be called white and yellow bicolors. I suggest this because of the possibility that the turquoise color is the result of the blue being underlaid in these areas by a different white from that of the rest of the petalage of WHITE SWIRL - one which has the capacity to appear as a yellow. The turquoise spot on the fall of my seedling was not simply the size of area of the usual yellow 'spear' or 'Blaze' seen on so many Siberians; it was more like the thumbprint found on many pumilas which has been developed into the spot pattern of the SDBs. Not that I mean to imply a connection between the pumila spot and this one; I mention that only for comparison.

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Comment from member concerning "look-alikes" being registered:

"I think there are too many Siberian look-alikes being registered and introduced. Couldn't a rule be made that all new plants be grown for x number of years and passed by a number of judges before it can be registered and introduced? I counted 20 new ones in the January 1969 AIS Bulletin. Can there be that many different ones in one year? I've lost interest in the TBs because too many have been introduced and you can't keep up with them."

What is your opinion on this subject? Do you agree there are too many look-alikes in our registrations? Let's have some comments. The lady may have a point--I too,have given up on TBs for about the same reason.

* * * * *

VI LUIHN'S SIBERIANS

Peg Grey

I always thought Dorothy and Tom Foster had about the finest collection of Siberian irises in the San Francisco Bay area. It's certainly one of our most beautiful gardens. You enter through a blue-painted wooden gate with cut-outs of irises, and beneath magnificent valley oakes, set off by brick terraces and walks, are raised beds full of nearly every class of iris in the Genus. You'll never see anything more lovely in the landscape architect's magazines! Their collection does represent the best in Siberian varieties. PIROUETTE is an especially handsome clump. But down the way from Walnut Creek at Hayward, Vi Luihn had the surprise of the decade for me!

Walt Luihn has developed into one of our most talended TB and arilbred hybridizers. I'd been in the garden many, many times, but not being particularly nosy, had never gone clear to the back fence line. We'd spent an afternoon seeing TB seedlings, and later over at Gaulter's Frances said something about Vi's Siberians. I looked at her as if she'd taken leave of her senses. No, I hadn't seen them. I didn't think they had any but perhaps a few fenceline clumps of something decorative. So the next morning I went over and demanded to see this tremendous collection of Siberians Vi was supposed to have, knowing somebody was pulling my leg. There before my eyes was what may very well be one of the most complete collections of Siberian iris species and varieties anywhere in the world, and if it isn't that now, it certainly will be before Vi is finished with it.

It all started in Salt Lake City before the Denver convention about three or four years ago. Vi met Mildred Johnson. Mildred is probably our star promoter for Siberian irises. By the time she was through with Vi, big things were bound to come of it. When Vi gets enthusiastic there's no holding her down.

Right now there are around 136 or 138 varieties in the Luihn's garden. They're growing on the site of an old compost pile. A great deal of hedging had to be removed, and the whole area cultivated. Six large square beds surround an enormous English walnut, around which is a charming old brick sitting area. There are two of each variety in the collection, planted in entirely different locations. The beds are slightly raised and loaded with rich humus. The beds have only been established two years, and most of the imported varieties, mainly from England, now are one year plants. Across the back bed, which is long and narrow, are the species, and the collection here is not nearly complete.

There was so much to see that I couldn't begin to take good notes on everything. I was so unfamiliar with many of the things

that it became a sort of memo to myself on what I, personally, would like to have, and perhaps the notes aren't at all objective.

SEA SHADOWS is one of the later flowering varieties, very smooth, clean foliage gracefully curved over at the tips. The huge flower shows wide standards, bronzed signal, rounded flaring falls.

PIROUETTE was the standout variety here, as well as everywhere I've ever seen it. This is one which just has to be in everyone's garden. It is fairly low growing, about 24", a heavenly blue flower without a signal, quite deep and pure blue. The flower shape is just beautiful, reminiscent of WHITE SWIRL.

CONGO DRUMS is an elegantly poised thing, deep violet with velvety textured falls and silky textured standards, no signal. Its also one which should be in every collection.

So is TEALWOOD. This is rich royal purple, an absolute self, worth every one of its rave notices. Vi had two of Steve Varner's seedlings, 62-1 and 63-3, both of which were the deep purple color, but very much earlier and they didn't give a very good account on one year plants. (They aren't really expected to!)

A beautiful clump with great garden interest was PURPLE MERE, deep purple, velvety, with the coloring clean, bright and intense. The flowers give a nice cascade effect through the clump.

VELVET GOWN is another deep violet with wide apart standards, dark brownish haft lines, a black flush below the signal, and mid-blue styles.

SWANK is a tremendous flower, a round, flared blue with marvelous branching on a great clump. Vi puts this in her "best performer" class. It was very lovely as a light breeze ruffled it on the flexuous stalks.

A most interesting one to me was the illegally named 'THISBE" (Wallace 34). (Thisby is an I. aphylla derivative's legal name. However this Siberian's running around wearing the same name.) It is a beauty, too. Wide, rounded falls are blue, standards are broad and held open to show off white styles veined in blue. The flowers are deeper on opening, then fade so that a clump shows quite a variety of pure blue colors at once. Growth habit is excellent.

WHITE FLARE showed wonderful branching, which gave the up-facing flowers good placement, and quite a different appearance in the garden.

SNOWY EGRET has a very small flower on a lot of tall foliage,

and is, along with CAESAR'S BROTHER, one of the earliest to bloom. That seemed about all it had to recommend it, except as an arranger's curiosity to be grown out of sight someplace.

There were some other more delightful curiosities. Something called "Baxteri", from McCoun, before 1912, looks to be from bulleyana, a dwarf species. This little thing is very stripey looking and a treasure. It has little upright stands, veined falls with that species look, and has quite good branching.

BOB WHITE is a 15" dwarf, branched, with erect deep green foliage and creamy buds which unfold into dainty ivory-white flowers showing buttery yellow in the haft. This went on my Must Get list. ZEST was another, a little deep mauve thing, sort of a violet-lavender color. I also fell heavily for the species I. chrysographes red form, a red-violet self with a yellow signal all sprinkled with dots and dashes. I. forrestii was a tiny yellow, very clean with no signal effect, just deep yellow all over. I think some of the species forms are perfectly charming in themselves. I. bulleyana was erect and branching, with violet spriped falls over cream.

CAMBERLEY, from England, was an interesting new departure in flower form - a smooth mid-violet, round dollar-shaped falls with a round white signal, erect standards, styles closed.

COOL SPRING was a clear blue, flowering above the clump, airy looking with very wide, rounded falls showing a dip at the haft. Blue-white erect standards are held with a graceful curve, are quite broad, and styles are ice blue, down on the blades. The flower opens from a dark medium blue and fades, a very pretty effect. SKYLARK was a bit darker blue, quite tall, flowering just over the foliage, white signal patch, branched nicely, erect standards, and a graceful plant.

The red-violet Siberians were beautiful. RUBY WINE is lighter than ERIC THE RED, and a great refinement over it. ERIC THE RED is a large flower, lots of busy signal, an excellent garden variety, but its improvement is obvious in RUBY WINE. SPARKLING ROSE was excellent everywhere, a little lighter than RUBY WINE.

Tallest of the blues for Vi was MY LOVE. This isn't true for me. It grows much shorter, among the shorter varieties. Perhaps it needs time to get its maximum clump effect. I found the medium blues quite monotonous variations on the same old pattern. So many of them are from similar breeding that this is to be expected. The goal now is to select my personal favorites among them and grow just a few representatives in the class for I don't have the space for all of them and don't like them that well. I counted SILVER TIP, a fine variety in mid blue-violet with pale blue styles, as

not different enough from others I have like MOUNTAIN LAKE, MY LOVE, and others. I did like BLUE STAR, which has narrow deep violet-blue parts and pale styles, opening to give a starry effect.

SUMMER SKIES is a pale little arranger's variety, pale blue with white styles, yellow hafted. I like pale ones, and different ones, and thought, as I viewed them, that MOONSPRITE and FAIRY DAWN looked as if they'd be interesting to work with for improvements. MOON-SPRITE has palest pinky standards, pinkish lavender falls, opening out of a smoky mauve bud. It has a yellow heart and white style arms. FAIRY DAWN had the same white styles, was a lower grower, the foliage was not erect. The flower is paler and earlier to bloom.

TUNKHANNOCK was outstanding in the white class. Very tall, highlighted with a yellow haft as are most white Siberians, Vi noted she liked it's great width of flower parts. The foliage was great and there were many flowers. I also made note of PLACID WATERS, as of slightly different shape from other blues, and shorter. (I obviously enjoy the shorter varieties!). GREY PRINCE was very similar, low on a first year plant, the open top showed light blue styles. TURQUOISE CUP is quite late and there's a definite turquoise tint to the styles.

These notes, the result of two trips to the Luihn's garden to see this outstanding planting, were hastily put together after an SOS from Editor Charlotte Withers. I look forward to next year when the yearling clumps of English imports, including some of the famous Kitton yellows, will be performing. And I look forward to returning to the site where I made this puzzling note: "Looks mohrish, pale grey violet, yellowish bud-back. Ick!" It probably is thoroughly charming, whatever it is!

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WITH APOLOGIES TO JOYCE KILMER

I think that I shall never see
A Siberian clump large as it should be.
An, "Oooh, I wish I had a start of that one I see."
Softens my oath - and I become friendly
And offer a piece of this and of that,
When they're the very ones I swore I'd let grow "fat"
And as each season ends, you know what I mean:
Siberian c l u m p s are just a d r e a m.
- Mildred R. Johnson

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