



THE SIBERIAN IRIS

THE SIBERIAN IRIS

Fall 1973

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Materials may be sent as far in advance as you like- the earlier the better, in case any serious changes, or cuts that might affect the sense of a passage, need to be made, so that there will be time to correspond about them.

Black-and-white photographs, and line drawings in black ink, etc., will be very welcome, subject to the OK of the printer on ability to produce a clear reproduction. Please put your name and address on the back if you want them returned.

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Membership in this Society is open to members of the American Iris Society living in Canada and the United States, and to interested iris enthusiasts elsewhere. Dues are: Annual single, \$2; Annual family, \$2.50; Triennial single, \$5, Triennial family \$6.

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

This has been a good year for our Society and for Siberian irises although the usual story of too little rain in some areas and too much in others has, of course, been heard. Here in Maine the first two-thirds of the season were very foggy so that some vegetable crops rotted, but the Siberians did well and seed set, in contrast to the disaster of 1972, was up to normal.

To me, the highlight of the season was the flowering for the first time of 19 induced tetraploid and chimeral Japanese irises. I hope it is not treason to say such a thing in TSI but when I add that I have been trying without real success since 1960 I think you will understand.

The AIS Convention in Philadelphia was a delightful experience although, as I have noted elsewhere in this issue, it was a bud convention as far as Siberians were concerned. The Siberian Section meeting was the best I have attended. At the brief business meeting our revised by-laws were approved. This was followed by a fine scientific program chaired by Bill McGarvey at which Peg Edwards stole the show with a demonstration of the use of Siberians in arrangements.

The annual Beardless Auction at the Warburtons' in Westboro, Mass., was again a wonderful outing. The receipts while still substantial were less than in recent years due simply to the fact that fewer plants were brought to be auctioned. Certainly that can be corrected next year. Ever since this event was inspired by Kevin Vaughn in 1970 it has been a wonderful success and a financial support to SSI. I hope that each of you who reads this will give thought to the possibility of having such auctions in your area too. If there are not enough 'beardless' enthusiasts to carry such an auction in your section, perhaps it could be combined with the Regional iris auction with proceeds from the sale of Siberians divided between the Region and SSI. Let me add that the success of the Westboro Auction owes much to the fine hospitality of the Warburtons. Indeed I sometimes wonder whether many of those who attend do not do so as much because of Frank's fresh-from-the-garden corn and the delicious things the ladies provide as they do to buy Siberians! But the fact is that they do buy and our treasury is the beneficiary.

I am writing this just two days before I fly to Japan for a meeting concerned with arthritis. It also offers a most welcome opportunity to meet Japanese friends whom I have known thus far only through letters and I am especially pleased that I have been invited to join them in a discussion of Siberian irises.

This brings best wishes from Kay and me to all of you for a fine winter and happy planning for next year's garden.

CONVENTION REPORTS

THE MEETING: From the scribbled notes of Peg Edwards, who does NOT take shorthand!

Dr. McEwen started the meeting by introducing himself to the many visitors who joined those members who were able to make the meeting, and an attendance sheet was passed. He then introduced your correspondent, who had undertaken to make three flower arrangements with Siberians in 20 minutes. I will not go into the quality of the arrangements, but I did finish the last one just 20 minutes after I started. Someone was holding a watch to time me!

Prof. McGarvey then started a Q & A program by asking Harry Kuesel how to make Siberians grow in his part of Colorado; he has heavy clay soil that is quite alkaline. He added peat to lighten the soil, then worked in sulphur and perlite and brought the pH to just under 7. In this remade soil the Siberians seem to have settled in quite well.

This led to a discussion of acid vs. alkaline conditions which left me with the impression that the acidity is not perhaps quite as critical as I had believed. From this the subject moved to a comparison of the needs of the 28-chr. and 40-chr. groups; it was agreed that the 40s seem to need moist humusy soil all year round; the 28s are somewhat more tolerant of drier conditions in their dormant periods.

Next came a question on the pronunciation of chrysographes: should we say 'kris-OG-ra-fees' or 'kris-so-GRAF-fees'? No firm decision was reached; it seems to depend on whose dictionary of botanical terms one uses. Then Sid DuBose and Steve Varner were asked about the best way to ship Siberians; the conclusion was that the bare roots should be wrapped in moist peat and fastened into a plastic bag so the moisture would not be lost- but the foliage must be kept out of the plastic to prevent it rotting. It was agreed that they move best when they have sufficient time to become established before they must endure either the heat of summer or the cold of winter- for most of us this would mean fairly early spring or the first cooler days of early fall.

A slide show followed, which included many new introductions, seedlings of various types, diploids and tetraploids, 28s and 40s. But you really can't describe a slide show, can you?

The business part of the meeting followed and was concerned almost entirely with changes in the proposed new by-laws. If you still have your copy of the proposals you might write in the following changes (the rest was adopted unaltered):

ART. 3; add a category of Youth Membership; correct the phrasing to correspond with the AIS terms of membership; Corresponding and Honorary memberships not to have the voting privilege.

Article 7: Section 2 to be omitted; Section 1 to be changed to limit the quorum to not less than 10%.

(Unfortunately I do not have a copy of the AIS rules to allow me to indicate just what changes are to be made in Article 3.)

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held the day before the Section Meeting. The Secretary asked the Editor to ask members who are about to move to notify her directly of their change of address instead of leaving it to the AIS office in St. Louis to pass on the information. It is a waste of money for Mr. Benson to send off each notification separately as it is received, so he waits until he has enough to make the postage worth using. Meanwhile, perhaps, an edition of TSI goes in the mail and the copy of someone who has moved goes to the old address, and because of the mailing rates used this copy is not forwarded to the new address. So please, if you move, send a note directly to Mrs. Tiffney giving her both the old and the new address.

The Board recommended that the President inquire about obtaining a Second-Class Mailing privilege and also about the possibility of our being entitled to exemption from New York State Sales Tax on our printing bill.

Perhaps the most important action the Board took was to resolve, as follows:

THAT, in view of the many years of valuable service given by her to The Society For Siberian Irises, as Secretary, Vice-President, Editor, and President, and as a member of the Board of Directors, from which she has now retired, this Society owes and hereby proffers its sincere thanks to CHARLOTTE WITHERS. Before the Society was organized she served as our temporary Secretary; as Secretary and as Vice President she Co-Edited our publication from its first issue, doing all the typing, the cutting of stencils, dealing with the printers; as President, from 1966 through 1970, she continued her excellent work and for four of those years she served as sole Editor as well. She had made the handsome cut of a Siberian Iris which adorns our letterheads, and she and Prof. McGarvey underwrote the expenses of our Judging Handbook at a time when our budget was too slim to allow us to publish this necessary booklet. Her good sense, good taste, and discrimination, her generosity of time and effort, were vital in our formative years, and indeed without her this might have been just another of the many organizations that have come into being and then died for lack of vitality.

THANK YOU, CHARLOTTE WITHERS!

THE GARDENS: Betty Rowe.

I was asked to write comments on Siberians seen in the Convention Gardens. I have only one thing to say. I was at the Convention for only two days and I saw few Siberians in bloom. Many people who love Siberians cannot make special trips to see them in other gardens. If we want more Siberians to be seen, then possibly we should breed for earlier bloom-varieties that will bloom with the Tall Bearded season instead of right after the Talls.

Currier McGwen.

The AIS Convention in Philadelphia was a most emphatic success. The hospitality, arrangements, gardens, food and displays of Tall Bearded irises could hardly be surpassed. To those interested in Siberian irises, however, there was a sad lack- very few were in bloom. BLUE BURN was in abundant flower in several gardens and a large clump of SWANK made a fine show in a mixed perennial border at the Chariott garden. Several of Steve Varner's new seedlings also were in good bloom. Of these, two in a wine-pink coloring were especially appealing. One had excellent branching, and a most interesting color effect, with considerable blue in the styles contrasting with the pink falls. In several gardens the first flowers of BLUE WILSON, CAESAR'S BROTHER and CLEVE DODGE had just opened, and a McGwen induced tetraploid (T₁ 63/64), blue with a slight silver edging, was in bloom in the Newhard garden. However, most of the 30 or more guest Siberian irises were still in bud. Another few days would have made a great difference, for the plants were husky with many scapes, but by then the Convention was over.

At Portland last year, notably at the Schreinners' gardens, Siberian and Tall Bearded irises appeared to be in simultaneous bloom and that is true in the gardens I know in Maine. In the Philadelphia area, however, I was told that this year's experience is not an exceptional one and that it is usual for the Siberians there to bloom well after the peak for TBs. This merits careful observation and recording for a few seasons to see whether there are, indeed, sectional differences and if so, why.

This year's experience made clear that more new early-flowering Siberian irises are needed. We in SSI have an advantage over our colleagues who specialize in other beardless irises in the fact that Siberians do bloom with TBs and hence they can be shown at AIS Conventions. To take full advantage of this asset however, we must develop more early bloomers of fine form.

(My Two Cents: Amen! I went back to the Hirsch garden the day after the Convention and saw splendid bloom on a clump that had been in bud the first day. Stretch that Season!)

ARGENTINE REPORT

Monica Poole

I have been growing Siberians for some years and have found them quite easy if I move them in winter though they do take a year to recover; the first year they give few flowers on short stems. They seem to like semi-shade or at least midday shade. My best results came when I planted the seeds in the ground where they were to grow, and kept them well watered.

My biggest disappointment was losing the beautiful plants I received from Fred Cassebeer some years ago- WHITE SWIRL, BLUE BRILLIANT, PIROUETTE, VIOLET FLARE and ERIC THE RED. They arrived in September or October and I planted them in semi-shade, but I think my mistake was in planting them too shallowly in the ground. We were going into summer and that didn't help. I have since heard that ERIC THE RED is a difficult grower! Now I only have WHITE SWIRL left; this grows very well here. I have had beautiful clumps in flower of CAESAR'S BROTHER, a white, possibly SNOW CREST, and an old light blue from England, possibly PERRY'S BLUE. SNOW CREST (?) had grown into a huge clump with masses of flowers and I thought it would not harm it to remove two pieces for friends, but my remaining piece just sulked and died. I was heartbroken, as Siberian irises cannot be bought out here.

Several people are now becoming very interested in various types of irises, after seeing my exhibit of Spurias and Japanese, and they are particularly keen to have some Siberians, so maybe people traveling to the States or England will be able to bring some back- there is no trouble in Customs here. I have heard there is a great deal of trouble getting them out of the U. S. A. and England if one sends an order and it comes by air.

I have now received seed of Siberians from the Canterbury Alpine Society, of New Zealand (a group of us are members) so I will prepare a bed for them with peat and compost and plant them straight into the ground. I hope they have sent good seed and that they produce something exciting.

Over the years I have brought in a great many TB, some Spurias, Louisianas, Japanese, and Siberians; but except for the TBs I now grow them only from seed as I have had too many losses.

I hope that some of this information will be of interest to your members.

(Mrs. Poole lives at Lavallo 150, Temperley, Argentina.)

SIBERIAN PLICATAS?

Kevin Vaughn

Plicata patterns, or patterns resembling plicatas, have been reported in the 40-chr. group for some years, but it has been shown recently that these patterns are also possible in the 28-chr. group.

Vaughn seedlings from BLUE SONG x Elwell 1-68 were all shades of blue with a large white blaze and some blue veining through the blaze. The seedlings are all tall and branchy in the sibirica manner but have broader petals and more flaring form than most of the other sibiricas. Neither parent has this pattern nor any other pattern- both are blue selfs. Patterns similar to these seedlings have occurred before- Mrs. Spofford's SALEM WITCH is one of these.

Two other approaches to a plicata pattern, from the late Gladys Wiswell, and named and introduced this year, are GREEN MOUNTAIN BOY and GLADYS MARTIN WISWELL, from CLARET X TYCOON. Both have an extension of the usual white blaze found in most Siberians- the landscape effect is good. These are lower growing, sanguinea types and are visually, and most likely genetically, distinguishable from the other types described in this article.

The third type is perhaps more akin to the veining found in I. variegata of the bearded irises. The standards of this type are solid in coloration and quite deep-colored; the falls are white with heavy veining of anthocyanin coalescing to a spot at the base of the falls. My group of this type came from FLIGHT OF BUTTERFLIES (which also carries this pattern) X (GATINEAU x self). All of these seedlings had wider falls than the pod parent, indicating that there is no strict linkage between blossom shape and the pattern. There are others of this type- Hazel Bartholomew has a small, very well-branched one from SILVERTIP x Tiffney sdlg., and the old GRANDIS is another.

These three types of Siberians show that it is possible to have a range of patterns that will add considerable variability to our 28-chr. group as has been done for the Bearded irises.

(Comment: a personal note from Mrs. Tiffney indicates that the 'Tiffney sdlg.' mentioned above is probably a form of I. sibirica; there have also been reports that seed of I. sibirica sent from Poland produced plants similar to GRANDIS. And of course YANKEE TRADER is another of these Siberians with the strongly marked falls in blue or violet on a white ground.)

CALIFORNIA COMMENTARY

Bryce Williamson, Special Editor.

1. CULTURAL REFLECTIONS: Vi Luihn.

The winter of '72- the Year of the Big Freeze, the year when Jack Frost left his mark on so much of the plant material- had so many of us, in this part of California, speculating as to how it would affect the irises. And as we grow many types of iris other than the Siberians, we were doubly concerned.

Although we knew that irises are accustomed to being grown in very cold climates, we also knew that our irises, as well as our collection of other plant material, had never had the chance to be subjected to more than a few days of severe frost at any one time. This past winter was the extreme test.

Yes, our irises suffered a bit, but losses, other than a few of the Siberian species, were nil. We noticed sparse bloom on all types of iris with the exception of the dwarfs and medians, which love and thrive in colder climates.

I attributed our sparse bloom and short stems on the Siberians solely to our bad winter, but later observations led me to believe that this was not completely the case. After visiting the Melrose Gardens in Stockton, where I saw gorgeous bloom, and where they divide their Siberians about every other year, I came to the conclusion that Siberians can and should be divided more often than is generally recommended. This was further attested by the bloom on my Siberian bed number 8 which was built and planted just three years ago this fall. Many of the plants were just first-year plants and did not bloom, but second-year plants performed better than the older established clumps in the other beds. So this fall I shall get into those other beds and very ruthlessly divide and eliminate.

I have been asked to discuss briefly the way we grow the Siberians here in the San Francisco Bay area. As we are approximately 25 miles southeast of San Francisco, our summers and falls are generally warm, and we like to receive shipments and do our transplanting as late as possible, in the latter part of October. The preparation of the soil is done several weeks before the irises are to be planted, starting with a deep and very thorough cultivation, and here is where having a husband with not only a very green thumb, but also a good strong back, is extremely helpful. As perfect drainage is a must, any kind of compost, humus, straw, peat moss, leaf mold, needles- anything which will make the soil light and friable- is added. I would not recommend gypsum however, as I feel it would create an alkaline condition, which is the exact opposite of what is wanted.

After the soil has been made as friable as possible, so that perfect drainage is assured, the next step is to lower the pH (if needed) to give it an acid condition, and this is done by applying soil sulphur. Note should be made that soil sulphur is not to be confused with another kind of sulphur, sometimes called flowers of sulphur, which is used for powdery mildew. We sprinkle the soil sulphur on the soil at the rate of one pound per hundred square feet, cultivate thoroughly until it is well worked in, then apply enough water to maintain a moist condition. While the soil is 'conditioning' it is kept moist at all times, in order to activate the soil sulphur. It is best to let this lie for two or three weeks- longer, if possible. Occasionally, if the plants are put in the ground before the soil sulphur has been completely activated, the plants may turn a light yellow after they have started growing. In this case a light nitrogen dressing is recommended.

There are those who advocate shipping or transplanting Siberian irises in the spring as well as in the fall, but my one experience with receiving them in the spring convinced me that it is not advisable in warm climates. Purely on an experimental basis, I received a shipment from the East Coast on May 27, several of them duplicates of those received from the same grower the preceding October, and with but two exceptions all of them died. They just never gave any sign of life after being planted. Needless to say, they were given the more-than-usual tender-loving-care that I give all of the irises I receive, but they, with the exception of the aforementioned two, just never, at any time, showed any indication of growth. And if I needed any further convincing that Siberian irises should not be disturbed in the spring in this area, I have only to look at several two-and-a-half year clumps which were moved from bed number 8 at the same time, to other beds, in order to accommodate the new arrivals. They too did not survive the move. I might add that the irises received last fall were all thriving.

As dedicated members of the American Iris Society, we always anxiously await the results of the annual Judges' voting, and couldn't have been more delighted with the awarding of the Morgan Award this year. We have had the pleasure of growing SWANK since a year or two before its introduction, and can say nothing but good things about it. In my book, it is a very superior iris in every way. And I'm happy to say that Ben Hager is not the only one at Melrose Gardens who is making great strides in hybridizing Siberians, as his partner, Sid DuBose, had some wonderful seedlings blooming this past spring. One of these, a beautiful flaring blue, # SB-1, won Queen of Show at the seedling show at our Regional meeting this past spring, competing against some very superior entries, but its sister, #SB-5, a rich royal violet, had it been blooming at the time, I feel would have given the winner some very stiff competition. Aside from being such a rich and lovely color, and having beautiful flaring form, # SB-5 has the most wonderful branching I have ever seen in a Siberian iris! It is not unusual to have

three beautiful blossoms open at once- marching up and down the tall ramrod stems. It is from a cross of TUNKHANNOCK and SWANK, and certainly combines the best qualities of both parents. It will be introduced by Melrose Gardens next year, and my sincere wish is that it will, in due time, attain the same high award that Swank so richly deserved this year.

2. COMMERCIALLY SPEAKING: Ben Hager.

Enthusiasts for the beautiful Siberian Iris will be elated to know that this iris is really coming into its own as a marketable item. The demand is increasing substantially every year. In fact, whereas it used to be in third place in sales around here, of the four major beardless iris groups, it is now definitely in second place and giving the first-place Spuria a strong nudge. In other words, not only specialists are buying and growing Siberian irises, but the Gardeners of America are doing so too. And that should be good news to any group.

But there are a few clouds on the horizon. For some reason, many of our breeders have gotten the idea that what they have is very valuable. The Siberian irises may be coming up in the Beardless Iris section, but they are not even in hailing distance of the Tall Bearded iris, commercially speaking. Another point is that with any plant that increases as rapidly as the Siberians, the prices being asked in some sectors is positively ridiculous- especially since the Siberian is a poor-risk purchase. The Siberian irises, like their relatives the Californicae, resent transplanting (although not as much); thus, the loss of new plants is always a possibility that is often considered by the purchaser- so he will look twice at the price.

Probably the worst result that could happen (and let this scare you a little bit) is that a situation could arise as has in Daylilies. Today, the daylily introduction is probably the most overpriced of any of the plant specialty groups and this in itself might be the reason that, commercially, it is losing ground. Daylily fanciers are bragging about their fifty- to one hundred-dollar daylilies while there is only one large commercial left in the field- the rest have quietly crept away- and that dealer lists only his own introductions for the major part. He could be saying: "Keep your hundred-dollar introductions. I don't need them." Let's not allow this to happen to the Siberian Iris. You must remember that there is no distribution to speak of without the large commercial dealer.

One breeder complained that it was worth twenty-five dollars just to dig the darned things. In such a case, the breeder could not have been growing commercially acceptable plants. Plants to be sold should be dug from first or second year clumps. These are easy to dig. It took us ten years to learn to grow Siberian iris plants that could be depended on for shipping to other parts of the world. The plants must be well grown.

Divisions should come from first- or second-year clumps; from third-year or older, never! Some varieties increase so rapidly that even two-year clumps do not produce acceptable plants. A well-grown plant stands a 100% better chance of surviving shipping and transplanting. Divisions should be broken down to the individual rhizome. Each rhizome should be an absolute minimum of one-half inch across the butt of the rhizome; one inch is much better. A well-grown first-year plant will produce rhizomes that can be as much as three inches across. These sturdier rhizomes have enough grown-in guts to survive the shock of shipment. I must admit that there are some poorer growers that will not produce such rhizomes for us. ROYAL ENSIGN, for one, which is still worth growing; but I wonder, if this proves true of a new seedling, if it is wise to introduce it.

We may also sympathize with the customer who pays a high price for an introduction and receives two one-half-inch rhizomes for his investment- and don't forget that such a purchase is an investment on which the purchaser expects to accumulate dividends of bloom over the years. We consider that one three-inch rhizome, or two one- to two-inch or four to five one-half inch rhizomes make an adequate division which will let such an investment pay off.

Another factor is to be considered if you are planning to market your introductions. Disease. With the Siberian irises there are a few. There is one that few people realize is there as its effect on the plant is very slow and will probably reduce the vigor of the plant only in quite old clumps; yet it is frowned upon by agricultural departments all over the world. They do not want it distributed even if they already have it in their area. It is that pesky little villain, the nematode. One species, *Praedelincus penetrans*, is nearly endemic in Siberians from some areas. The root knot nematode is also very much present in some plantings and is more debilitating to the plant. It is very difficult to 'clean up' a Siberian iris that is infected with nematode. From one shipment of about two hundred plants infected with root knot nematode, we got exactly seven clean plants; this is all that survived the treatment.

So if you are planning on distributing Siberian iris plants, especially seedlings, it would be wise of you, and greatly appreciated by your future customers, if you would first determine if you have nematode (your State Agriculture Department should help you with this) and if you do, then fumigate the soil in which you plan to plant your seedlings. Then, with watchful care, you can have clean plants to send out.

As we all know, or should, there are two sides to every coin. While the commercial is a very important adjunct to the growing of Siberian irises, the commercial who has been around a while also knows that he owes a great deal to such societies as the Society for Siberian Irises. There is no question whatever in the minds of us who have been growing

and selling Siberian irises over the past few years that the increase in popularity of this iris is directly connected to and has followed the course of the establishment of this society (this is also true of other types of iris and their supporting societies.) The societies have placed emphasis on certain irises, advertised their product, and the good qualities thereof, and the people have listened. So keep up the good work.

3. AFTER THE CHALLENGE COMES THE FUN: Marilyn Holloway.

Growing Siberians was, a few years ago, a challenge for me. A lot of trial and error passed before they found the right garden spot-drainage was the biggest problem. Having solved that problem I have been growing and exhibiting Siberians ever since. The following are some that perform well for me.

ANNIVERSARY (Brummitt 68) This is a magnificent white of the form of **WHITE SWIRL**. Seems to be easier to grow than the parent, at least for me.

SWANK (Hager 69) This medium blue has wide round flaring falls. A group of three garnered a show trophy for me this year. Outstanding.

TEALWOOD (Varner 62) An older variety but still excellent. A dark violet- flat form with very small signal. Gives the appearance of velvet.

GRAND JUNCTION (McCord 69) A very large, wide flower of lavender-blue. This one bloomed during the regular season and then rebloomed a month afterwards. A pleasant surprise. Will be interested to see if it will be consistent, or just happened this year because the weather was favorable.

VIOLET FLARE (Cassebeer 60) Another oldie, but the color is unique. A violet with an orchid cast. Falls flare but have upturned edges. Showy in the garden.

RUBY WINE (Hager 68) An intense ruby color in a neat compact flower of rounded parts.

LIGHTS OF PARIS (Rich 67) Have grown this a number of years. White with yellow at the hafts. Easy to grow.

Notes made on a couple of seedlings seen this year: Look for the 1974 introduction now named **VI LUIHN**, from Melrose Gardens; a sister to this captured the Region 14 seedling show top honor for Sid DuBose; Steve Varner's # 1133- ruby red color with blue styles, looked very good in Philadelphia. Watch for it.

(Marilyn Holloway is RVP, Region 14, a consistent winner in Regional shows, and the Spuria named for her seems headed for a Nies Award.)

4. SIBERIANS OF MANY COLORS: Bryce Williamson.

As Vi Luihn has written, 1973 was the year of the Big Freeze in California- for the first time in my memory the water in the garden cart froze and stayed frozen for almost seven days. While it was not harsh weather in terms of other parts of the country, it was harsh for California and especially hard on plants that had never gone through a solid freeze- such things as my thirty-year-old Jade Plant tree died. As a result of the cold weather I rather expected a better-than-average year with good to great bloom on the Medians and better than average bloom on the Siberians. I was surprised, then, when Median bloom was very poor and the Siberian bloom spotty at best. Thus the comments here are based not only on performances this last year but also on that of the last few years.

For the sake of comparison there may be value in breaking down the comments into color groupings.

White: ANNIVERSARY (Brummitt 68) seems to like California so much better than most of the whites on the market today, but Tell reports that it does not do so well in Utah. Here, though, it establishes itself much better and grows much more strongly than its parent WHITE SWIRL. The latter is still very pretty but it has always been a difficult thing to grow in our warmer climate. Thus ANNIVERSARY, with its wide, fluted flower, looks as though it will be superfine in warmer climates.

Ben Hager's SB-8-A is a cute, shorter white out of WHITE SWIRL-SIBIRICA NANA ALBA. It is not only a pure white with compact form, but has the plus factor of branching- double-budded terminal and two branches. It was hard to believe, but at the Regional seedling show the judges refused to give this one a blue ribbon since it had branching! (They must be reading a different Siberian Judging guideline from the one I have.)

LIGHTS OF PARIS (Rich 67) is not as wide as some in this class, but it grows well and it does have a great deal of yellow-gold at the hafts, which highlights the flower in a very nice and pleasant way. I wonder if it could be used to advantage in breeding with the new WHITE SWIRL-CAMBRIDGE related yellows?

TUNKHANNOCK (Scheffy 44) seems to share a common heritage with WHITE SWIRL since it too has the wide, compact flower form. Difficult to grow here, but it is not only a good flower, but also is a great parent.

Blue: I am not totally sold on CAMBRIDGE (Brummitt 67) in spite of the fact that it is nice to have a Siberian win the Dykes somewhere- anywhere. To my taste the blending of blue shades is a little rough; but it is a decent growing plant and seems to attract a great deal of attention.

DEWFUL (McGarvey 67) overcomes one of the basic problems of too many Siberians in California: this one gets the height that others are

missing in this climate. Since it has a nice form, a good pure dark blue coloring, and lighter styles, it is well worth the effort to try to grow. It has been, though, a slower growing plant in California; it can, and does when established, produce a beautiful clump with stalks about forty inches tall.

EGO (McGarvey 66) has long been my choice of the early McGarvey blues. EGO seems to stay under thirty inches here, but the flowers are great- a wide, chalice form- and the coloring nice with hints of turquoise in the blending of blues. This one seems to like our warmer climate since it grows like a rabbit.

GRAND JUNCTION (McCord 69) is just one of the many fine TUNKHANNOCK children. Here we have a lavender-blue with akimbo standards and very wide, very round falls. While not a heavy increaser, it is a sturdy plant with reasonable increase and good bloom every year.

HALCYON SEAS (McCord 72) is a dark mid-blue with only so-so form; it does, as far as form goes, look a lot like its parent TYCGON. The determining factor for its introduction was that it is the most prolific-growing and blooming Siberian in a warm climate, that has yet been produced.

SWANK (Hager 69) is this year's Morgan Award winner. Like CAMBRIDGE, it is one of those blended blues with darker veining, but this time I don't object to it, since the flower is a darker blue than CAMBRIDGE, I have found, however, that it is necessary to fool with the SWANK planting since it has to have a location it likes in order to thrive. Thus you may have to move it a couple of times before you find the right spot for it.

Violet: AUSABLE RIVER (Cassebeer 69) seems to have attracted little attention since its introduction, a shame considering that this seems to me one of the all-time best Cassebeer introductions. This WHITE SWIRL child has a nice flower- what else would you expect from its parentage?- and a great coloring, a vibrant, rich concord-grape purple. Since this grows well, it should not be overlooked by the public. Perhaps limited distribution hurt it at first, but it is now appearing on many sales listings and at reasonable prices.

Sid DuBose's SB-1 (HC, 1973) is a dark violet of compact, full form. This is the seedling that won the Region 14 seedling show in San Jose this year. In that show there were fine TB seedlings from such people as Keith Keppel, Glenn Corlew, Joe Ghio, etc., so winning was no small feat for any iris let alone a Siberian. This will be introduced next year, but at last account it was still missing a name.

TEALWOOD (Varner 62) is a smaller flower with a flat form and a very dark velvet violet coloring. I have long wondered if this could be used with things like VELVET NIGHT in a breeding push towards 'black'.

VELVET GOWN (Cleveland 38) is an old thing, but a good old thing. This has dark violet-purple falls with light blue styles. Not only is this a color gem due to the contrast of the two colorings, but also it

is a texture treasure due to the contrast of the velvet-plush finished falls and styles against the silky blue styles.

VI LUIHN (DuRose 74) is a sister seedling to Sid's SB-1 and a lighter shade of violet than that seedling. Both of these nice seedlings are from TUNKHANNOCK X SWANK. In this case we find a flower that is very wide with a semi-flat form and with falls and standards forming a compact blaze of violet coloring. In addition to the great flower, it has two branches and terminal. It will, therefore, give a good show in the garden. This won HC for Sid this year, too.

Red: So many of the 'reds' have real problems in California. Something like ERIC THE RED seems to do well for a number of years, but then will die all of a sudden. SPARKLING ROSE' (Hager 68) is one of the better-growing things for us. It has a nice rose' coloring and a flash of blue beneath the style arms.

Ben Hager had potted a seedling of Mrs. Knock's and it was blooming nicely on a first year plant. It was not only very wide with a good, rounded form, but was the darkest wine-red coloring yet seen in a Siberian- almost a port color. We suspect, since it arrived without number or parentage, that it may be related to her nice BETH ELLEN and DARK MARINE and may have ERIC THE RED in the background. This one grew quite well, showing a great deal of promise as a differently colored red with a nice form.

Yellow: As might be expected, the yellow toned things usually die in California. Just about everyone interested in Siberians in California has bought some of the yellow things at one time or another and then found that they quickly lost them. Vi Luihn, though, reported that the new McEwen yellows are living and growing for her. The one yellow-toned Siberian that does well here is PUGET POLKA (Mize-Ruggles 69). It has blended light violet-blue standards and cream-yellow falls dotted in light blue. Though it sounds less than yellow-toned, the effect in the garden is different. It grows well and blooms freely, but it is quite late flowering. In turn, PUGET POLKA selfed has produced YELLOW RUFFLES (Mize-Ruggles 73) and this is said to produce more of a yellow effect in the garden; but it also is said to be slightly harder to grow. A number of us will be seeing how this new one will do, since it is now in the ground.

Here, this year, my big push has been to rebuild the Siberian collection. Last year, with the early rains, so many things did not get moved from the old garden. It is surprising to discover what things can grow and thrive, and what things die. As a result, I have been in the process of adding about twenty 'new-to-me' Siberians to my garden this fall. It does promise an interesting time this coming spring.

(2¢ worth: Many thanks, Bryce, for bringing us these interesting comments.)

REGISTRATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS 1972

- AMAZEMENT (Wiswell r. 1972) SIB, 24", ML, PY/PY. Pale yellow self. Believed to be a hybrid of a cross of a TB (ELSA SASS) and a 28-chr. Siberian (WHITE EMPRESS).
- *BLUE BURGER (McEwen r. 1971) I. 1972, McEwen.
- *BLUE PENNANT (McEwen r. 1971) I. 1972, McEwen.
- CAESAR'S GHOST (Jean Witt r. 1972) SIB, 36-40", M, bw/bw9DO. S. milk white, (palest blue-white); F. milk white faintly veined all over; some brown markings on haft.
- CASTLEGRACE (Mrs. P. Nelson r. 1972) SIB, 32", M, DVELb/DVB. Deep violet-blue self, light blue stylearms. Parentage unknown.
- *DEEP SHADE (Warburton r. 1971) I. 1972 Warburton.
- *FAIR AND FORTY (McEwen r. 1970) I. 1972 McEwen.
- FLIGHT OF BUTTERFLIES (Jean Witt r. 1972) SIB, 30-36", M, FVBrv/W6VB. S. medium violet-blue, stylearms slightly more toward red-violet side; F. white, entirely covered with butterfly wing pattern of violet-blue veins. Parentage unknown.
- HALCYON SEAS (F. McCord r. 1972) # 6876. SIB, 38", M, FB/FVB. S. deep blue; F. same shaded violet. GRAND JUNCTION X TYCOON. I. 1972 Bay View-Sierra Vista.
- *HOLDEN CLOUGH (D. Patton r. 1971) Chrysographes. I. 1972 Linnegar.
- HOWARD'S BIRTHDAY (Mrs. D. Hansford r. 1972) SIB, 36", L, PY/FY. S. pale yellow; F. mid-yellow. CHARM OF FINCHES X CHARM OF FINCHES.
- LIGHTNING (M. Reinhardt r. 1972) # S-72-4. SIB, 34", M, Bbg/Bbg. Medium blue self, no haft markings; stylearms brilliant light turquoise blue. ERIC THE RED X WHITE SWIRL. HC 1972.
- (LIGHTNING, Hahn 1943 TB, declared obsolete and name released.)
- LITTLE DAN (V. Cook r. 1972) SIB, 12", M, DB/DB. Dark blue self. Rex Pearce seed- unknown parentage.
- LOIS J (V. Cook r. 1972) SIB, 22", M, VB/VBSW. Violet-blue with gray-white blaze, velvety texture. Rex Pearce seed- unknown parentage. EC 1969.
- *MARILYN HOLMES (McEwen r. 1968) I. 1972 McEwen.
- MOON DRUMMER (W. Newhard r. 1972) # 579-S. Sib., 32", ML, LV/LV. Violet (RHS 88D) self. TEALWOOD X BLUE BRILLIANT. HC 1972.
- *POLLY DODGE (McEwen r. 1968) I. 1972 McEwen.
- ROB (Mrs. D. Hansford r. 1972) SIB, 36", L, RV/DRW. S. mid-purple; F. dark purple, velvet. Sdlg. X sdlg.
- SEA HORSE (M. Brumitt r. 1972) # 19/2. SIB, 36", L, Bb/5B. S. medium blue; F. mixed shades of blue; blue stylearms, dark stripes. WHITE SWIRL X TYCOON.
- SPLASHDOWN (Mrs. D. Hansford r. 1972) SIB, 36", L, PB/B. S. pale blue; F. blue speckled. I. bulleyana sdlg. X same.
- *STELLAR BLUE (Warburton r. 1971) I. 1972 Warburton.
- TOKAY GRAPES (G. Wiswell r. 1972) SIB, 24", ML, DVR/DVR. Purple-red self. ERIC THE RED X blue sdlg.

*WHIRL (Warburton r. 1971) I. 1972 Warburton.
*WING ON WING (McGarvey r. 1969) I. 1972 Old Brook.

HYBRIDIZERS AND INTRODUCERS 1972

Brummitt, Marjorie: 30 Bloxham Road, Banbury, Oxon, England.
Cook, Verna C.; 6924 Pacific Hwy. East, Tacoma, Wash. 98424.
Hansford, Mrs. D.: Cherrywood, Granville Rd., Orsted, Surrey, England.
Linnegar, Sidney: 5 New Road, Rusecombe, Twyford, Reading, Berks, RG 10, 911, England.
Mcford, Forrest: 208 N. Cook Road, Muncie, Indiana 47303.
McGwen, Dr. and Mrs. Currier; South Harpswell, Maine 04079.
McGarvey, Prof. William G.; State University of New York, Oswego, New York 13126.
Nelson, Mrs. P.: Kauri Point Road, Katikati, New Zealand.
Newhard, William: 26 West Zion Hill Road, Quakertown, Penna. 18951.
Old Brook Gardens: 10 S. Franklin Circle, Littleton, Colo. 80121.
Reinhardt, Mrs. Robert (Mattie): 14151 W. National Ave., New Berlin, Wis. 53151
Warburton, Beatrice A.: 246 E. Main St., Westborough, Mass. 01581.
Wiswell, Gladys Martin (deceased): write to Kevin Vaughn, 2017 S. Athol Rd., Athol, Mass. 01331.
Witt, Mrs. Joseph A (Jean): 16516 25th N. E., Seattle, Wash. 98155

(Comment from Ye Ed: It seems to me that this is the longest list of Registrations, and the longest list of Registrants, we have had since SSI began. Whether it will prove to be the best is of course in the future, and quality counts for more than quantity- but still it is good to see the quantity going up, too. It does mean that more people are sufficiently interested in the improvement of the breed to attempt some of the improving themselves; and improvement of irises, at least those types whose registration is in the care of the American Iris Society, is truly a do-it-yourself project- you can't wait for the Gummint to take it on. So, the more amateurs we have working on it, the wider the range of imaginations will be involved in planning crosses; the wider the climatic possibilities; and the more varied the results. And so, the better for the gardener who wants variety in his planting. There are still many goals to strive for- particularly, better foliage, greater tolerance for being moved and shipped, greater adaptability to climatic variations. But our hybridizers have made a good start on many of the goals we set ourselves when we started. There are now yellows coming out of 28-chr. breeding- and even yellow amoenas; there are tetraploids; 40-chr. varieties are appearing which, while they can't yet be grown well everywhere, have a better range of tolerance than the species had to begin with. The day is no longer so far off when Siberians will grow well just about anywhere in a truly wide range of colors and patterns and forms.

(As you will note, quite a few of the new varieties listed come from overseas. Importing them is not as difficult now as it was in the recent past. So if you would like to try any of them, write to the originator or the introducer, and at the same time write the USDA, Division of Plant Importation, Washington, D. C., for information on what is required to import plants. By all means try to have your plants shipped by air directly to your home; one requirement, as I understand it, is that plants must be washed clean of all soil, and while they can then be packed in a damp sterile medium, still they are better off getting into the ground as fast as possible. Go to it- gamble a little!)



SLIDES- Betty Seibert.

Betty reports that several new slides have been received; but the need for more remains. Please try next spring to take a few shots just for the slide set. Identify each shot on the frame and list all of them on an accompanying sheet of paper with more detailed information- name of variety or seedling, originator, where the picture was taken. Betty has plans for a complete slide program with accompanying commentary to be made available not only to iris groups but also to garden clubs, etc. but until she has the supply of slides there is little point in going into details about it- she'd be flodded with requests for it for next month's meeting!

And while we are at it- couldn't anyone whip out his/her little Brownie and take a few black-and-white snapshots (nice contrasty ones, as close as you can get to the flower, or encompassing a group of local Siberianites) and send them to me for reproduction in TSI?



SIBERIAN AUCTIONS

Peg Edwards



In his letter to us all Dr. McEwen mentions the Auctions that have been held the last four years in Massachusetts, and suggests that maybe your neck of the woods could manage to hold one too. And your first thought is- well, but everybody lives so far apart! So do those of us who have attended the auctions at Bee and Frank Warburton's. Visitors come from all the New England states, New York, New Jersey- even from Delaware, Ohio, Maryland. Some come the night before and stay at a nearby motel; others get up at 5AM on a Sunday morning and get home at 10 that night. But we come because it is A- a good way to acquire new varieties at a bargain; B- it is informational; and C- it is a lot of fun.

The day's program begins at about 10 AM with the gathering of the clan; by 10:30 the program is starting- a talk, with slides, on some

aspect of growing Siberians. About noon a buffet lunch is ready- cold meats and cheese, salads and baked beans and breads; cooling in a chest of ice-water are various canned beverages. Soon after we start, Frank Warburton shows up with platters of his wonderful corn (five minutes from field to platter) with plenty of butter and salt. Then come cakes and cookies and coffee or tea. Finally, sated, we settle under the apple trees and the bidding begins; depending on how much is available, we may be done by 3:30 or go on till 4.

We have been sponsored by Region 1, which includes us in its notices of auctions in the Region; and three of ours have been joint efforts with the Society for Japanese Irises. Each Society keeps records of how many of its kind of iris are sold and for how much, and the profits are divided accordingly. We don't limit ourselves to Siberians and Japanese only; any Apogon that grows within the area is eligible.

If there are as many as 20 SSI members within a radius of 250 miles or if you and another group can count 30 or more within that radius, you have the makings of a successful Apogon Auction. (Add some good simple food, paper 'linens and china' and sufficiently early notice (with clear directions on how to get there) and you are ready to make a real contribution to the SSI treasury.

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If anyone would like to organize an auction, the basic materials are here; admittedly there are members who are too far away from anyone else to manage a one-day get-together; but there are several areas in which a number of people are within reasonable driving from one another. How about studying the list for your state and adjacent ones?

-Peg

BACK TALK

After all my talk over the years about members taking some B&W pictures for this publication, I went off to Philadelphia this year prepared to play Flash Edwards of the Press. Prepared, that is, to the extent of having along a camera and film to take B&W pictures. I forgot to do any practicing! I don't suppose I had taken snapshots in the last ten years- not at least since I became addicted to making color slides with a SLR and a nice assortment of close-up lenses.

What a disaster! I must admit that I got some nice color snaps of TBs- maybe four out of a roll of 20. One shot of a clump of Siberians is quite good as a snapshot, but there is so little dark-to-light contrast that it would never reproduce well in B&W. As for the B&Ws that I took- a-purpose!- well, gack, as Pogo says. Contrast there is. Black on white, or vice versa. No shades of grey, no definition of form, no pattern in the falls. If I had dipped half the irises in black ink and set them against a white sheet, and dunked the rest in white paint and posed them against a panel of black velvet, I'd have just about the same results. Even my attempts at pictures of Siberian People came out as horrors: in one shot, intended to be a picture of Prof. McGarvey admiring one of his own introductions, a white shape roughly resembling a man is defying gravity on a steep hillside by leaning out at about a 35-degree angle from the vertical, behind a similarly inclined black mass which might be a clump of Siberians, but could equally well be a peony, a rosebush, or an exceptionally large hedgehog.

Pride goeth indeed before a fall.

I would like to make a small comment about the California section in this issue- and many thanks to Bryce for collecting these articles and to the writers for writing them, particularly Vi Luihn who, I understand, wrote hers while recovering from a serious illness; for that matter Bryce combined the job with his final efforts toward earning his MA!

What is true of cultural practices in that climate is not true everywhere. Yet I believe it has given me a couple of clues to what I've been doing wrong in my own garden. I don't live in the South, but I do have a warmer climate part of the time than one would really expect in New York, and the cold-winter-moderate-summer treatment I have been giving them may need even more modification than I have so far provided. I remember Fred Cassebeer telling me that he always divided his plants into single rhizomes when he lined them out for sales purposes. And I

also remember that on one occasion when I had planted a new variety the year before I was scheduled to remake my main display bed, that clump took hold much faster after the replanting than did the divisions that came from the older, established clumps. On the other hand, there are a few clumps of Siberians in my front garden that have not been disturbed in several years and that are larger and more floriferous every year. So I may have to accept that some varieties are far more resentful of disturbance than others, that some will benefit from frequent moving while others had best be let alone as long as possible. And that what is true of a variety in my garden is not necessarily true of the same one in another part of America.

I've been working during the summer on the Check List- going over the AIS CLs back to the 1939 issue, which is the oldest I have access to, hunting up any that were missed in the listings that appeared in TSI. I am flabbergasted at how many varieties were either never registered or were registered after being introduced, and at how many are in commerce for which I could find no record of introduction. What is in the past we can't do much about; but I sincerely hope that our hybridizers will make sure that they register their seedlings, then introduce them, making sure that the introduction is properly done under the rules laid down by AIS. Otherwise, they will not be eligible for awards, and it would be a shame if something lovely which in its own right deserves a Morgan Award loses out because Daddy didn't make it official. In hunting up background material on Registration I have found out how this is handled in the case of other genera, and I must say that, by and large, the AIS system is one of the most sensible. Some of the systems used are almost unbelievable to me: with Rhododendrons, for instance, it was the practice (though I understand that some changes are contemplated) that if one seedling from a given cross was registered, all seedlings grown from the same cross, by that originator or by anyone else, went under the same name, as group varieties, though within the group a specific clone could also be registered. There are other systems just about as wild, from our point of view. But of course we must remember that not all kinds of plants can produce such a wide range of seedlings from one cross; also not everything can be vegetatively reproduced as readily as irises. Still, I like our system.

When the Check List will be ready for printing I can't say at this date. There is a lot more to the job than appeared when we first started to work on it. Fortunately there are some skillful volunteers working on it and I think that, among the lot of us, we will be able to produce something that will be of real use not only to hybridizers but to all our members.

Reg—

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