3-9 Spring '74

THE SIBERIAN IRIS

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Spring 1974 Volume 3 Number 9

INDEX

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Black-and-white photographs, and line drawings etc. in black ink or crayon, will be very welcome, subject to the printer's judgment that it will provide a clear reproduction. Please put your name and address on the back if you want your picture returned.

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Membership in this Society os 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. Life memberships are available; write the Secretary for information about the requirements for this membership.

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

By the time this issue reaches you Spring will have arrived in Southern states and even those of us in the far North will have begun to feel its urge and will be fighting temptation, as we do every year, to start removing winter mulch too soon. As I write this, however, the beds are covered with snow, "arctic mist" curls up from the ocean, and a cold wind moaning at the windows makes us all the cozier inside.

Our regular time to start seeds here is in mid-March in Multi-pots or Com-Packs under lights in what we call our plant room. For this we use the smallest pots in order to have room for all under the banks of lights and we do not start them before mid-March because if we do the seedlings become so large before they can be planted outdoors that they must be transplanted into larger pots for which there is not enough room. This year, however, we have started one tray in a window in January to see if an earlier start will give still earlier maturity. Making the early start in March and using these special types of 'flats' which keep the roots from intertwining so there is no damage at transplanting time has proved to be of very great value to us. With this method about 6% of our daylily seedlings bloom in the fall of the same year and all bloom the next year. With Siberian irises none has yet bloomed the first year but, like the daylilies, all bloom the second year; and the same is true of the Japanese irises. This not only saves a full year in making crosses but also saves valuable garden space and work because we can now select the seedlings to be kept and dig that section of the garden for the next year's seedlings at the end of the third year instead of the fourth. For those of you in a hurry or just lazy I recommend that you try it.

In this Issue there are inserted some changes in the proposed revision of the by-laws which you received with the Spring 1973 Issue of The Siberian Iris (Vol. 3 No. 7). With them went a statement to the effect that they were being sent to the membership prior to action by the Board of the American Iris Society and that some changes might be required to make our by-laws conform to AIS rules. This proved to be the case but through the expert assistance of Bill Peck and Ira Wood it was possible to make the necessary changes prior to the Siberian Section meeting at the Philadelphia Convention on May 29, 1973. The revised by-laws, with the changes shown on the insert in this Issue, were adopted without dissenting vote at that meeting and subsequently were approved by AIS in November 1973. I realize that, whereas the by-laws are essential for the smooth operation of our Society, they are of small concern to most of our members. However, any member who wishes to have his copy of the by-laws conform to the final revision approved by AIS may attach the insert enclosed with this Issue to the copy distributed with the Spring Issue of 1973.

This brings best greetings from Kay and me and all good wishes for the coming season.

February 13 1974

Currier McEwen

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance from Previous Treasurer			$1214,34
Dues income . . .	455.50		
Miscellaneous income	33.25		
Interest	17.76		
Auction net receipts	353.40		
Total Income		859.90 . .	$2074.24
Expenses			
Refund	2.00		
Publication, Spring	159.73		
" Fall	165.34		
AIS Bulletin ad.	24.00		
Secretarial . . .	75.18		
Presidential . . .	123.01		
Card expenses . .	8.90		
Total Expenses		558.16	
On hand:			
(2) $500, 6 mo. Certificates of Deposit . .		1000.—	
Checking Account		516.08 . .	2074.24

Members will note that there is no banking charge for the checking account. The bank does not make any charge where balance is sufficient.

February 23 1974 (signed) Gunther Stark

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(2¢ worth) In case anyone thinks that- whee, looka all that money, let's cut the dues- let's bear in mind that the Check List will be going to press before very long and that is going to take quite a bit of money for printing bills. In addition, the rise in Postal rates means that most of our expenses- not just for TSI but for executive business as well- will run higher than heretofor. It is possible that the gasoline situation will cut down on possible profits from the Auctions which over the past four years have added so much to our income. In fact, if you will compare our expenses last year with our income outside of the auction net, you will find that we would have been in the red for the year. That auction money has been a cushion which has saved us from having to raise dues again this year. Does this give anyone any ideas?

RESEARCH REPORT

Currier McEwen

In the Spring of 1972, 5 projects for research were listed. The first was a study of the likelihood of pollination occurring in flowers stripped of anthers and falls or anthers and standards but not protected from insects or wind. This had been mentioned briefly in the previous Fall issue (1) and was reported again in the Fall of 1972 but the results were inconclusive (2). Once again the experiment was tried during the 1973 blooming season but again with inconclusive results, for the same reason, namely, that whereas no successful crosses occurred in the test flowers, they also did not occur in the controls, that is, the flowers allowed to open spontaneously and never covered. We must blame the vicissitudes of weather during the past two years in New England where these trials were run. This study will be continued.

The second project was a comparison of Spring versus Fall transplanting and shipping. Only a few trials were made but they indicated clearly that fall is best in hot, arid regions but spring is preferable in the north. As is often the case the trials showed what experienced shippers already knew: 1. there is no single best season for the United States as a whole; 2. spring is best where summers are not too hot and dry and where winters come early and are severe; and 3. fall is best where the winters are mild and the summers very dry and hot.

The third project, designed to evaluate the effect of light and darkness on germination of Siberian iris seeds, was reported in the Fall of 1972 (3) with results that showed somewhat superior germination in the light. In that experiment seeds placed in moist Jiffy-Mix germinated much better than those on moist filter paper. Further experiment in 1973 confirmed the superiority of light over darkness and indicated that moisture probably was the factor that made germination better in the Jiffy-Mix, that is, the seeds absorbed water more readily when surrounded by a moist medium than when lying on a moist surface- the filter paper (4).

Project four, to test the effect on germination of seeds stored at various temperatures, was tried with a few hundred Siberian iris seeds and more extensively with seeds of Japanese irises. Results were similar with both and indicated clearly that: 1. a far higher percentage of those stored at slightly above freezing germinated than of those kept at room temperature, and also germination was faster; and 2. seeds stored in the moist state below freezing were killed (4).

A fifth project designed to learn whether chemical 'fingerprinting' of flower pigments will help distinguish true species and the species in the ancestry of hybrids has not been undertaken. An essential first step is to establish a planting of the known species and this alone has proved

to be a goal not quickly achieved.

Among new projects for the future that should be undertaken are: 1. a study of cultural needs of the species and their hybrids, such as their tolerated range of pH and the optimal pH for their best growth, their needs as to moisture, and their nutritional requirements; and 2. further study of disease and pests and their control. Ben Hager's comments in the last issue (5) regarding nematodes gives sharp point to this problem.

References:

1. The Siberian Iris, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 19, Fall 1971.
2. The Siberian Iris, Vol. 3, No. 6, p. 5, Fall 1972.
3. Ibid p. 6.
4. McEwen, C., Factors Influencing Germination of Japanese Iris Seeds and Health of the Sprouted Seedlings, Bull. Am. Iris Soc. Vol. LV, No. 1 (Series No. 213), April 1974.
5. The Siberian Iris, Vol. 3, No. 8, p. 12, Fall 1973.

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PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Peg Edwards

1. Where did the yellow come from in DREAMING YELLOW and FLOATING ISLAND? The former is from DREAMING SPIRES, which is WHITE SWIRL X TYCOON; the latter is from CAMBRIDGE, which is WHITE SWIRL X GATINEAU. The pollen parents of both are unknown, but quite possibly selfed. They do have one known ancestor in common: WHITE SWIRL. Does this iris, itself of unknown ancestry, perhaps conceal within itself additional potential for producing unusual offspring?- not only the yellow amoena pattern which it is perhaps responsible for in these cases but perhaps even a solid yellow or yellow bitone in the 28 chr. group? Or do GATINEAU and TYCOON both carry the potential for yellow? Or is it present in all of these?

Closely related to this, I believe, is

2. What is the source of the turquoise markings that appear in so many of the offspring of WHITE SWIRL x blue? This same turquoise is present in several other Siberians not from WHITE SWIRL and indeed in some cases much older- TURQUOISE CUP among others. Does this turquoise color perhaps mask a dosage of yellow coloring that cannot otherwise express itself? I admit to being baffled when the color experts start telling me about flavones and anthocyanins, but I have yet to hear of any color-producing chemical which in itself produces blue-green in flowers. But I have a seedling SDB in which two different color patterns are expressed one in the upper layer of cells (top of falls, inside of standards) and the other in the bottom layer (underside of falls, outside of stands)

the upper layer being pale yellow with a wide-oval brown spot, the lower pale blue with a long-oval violet-blue spot. The composite spot looks like a black eye in its coloring; but in the area where the violet-blue spot shows lightly through the yellow ground the color is distinctly blue-green a little on the blue side. This suggests to me that where different color chemicals are restricted to different layers of cells, a yellow and a blue can produce a coloring of the turquoise type. Could this also happen in the case of two different color chemicals within the same layer of cells- perhaps in separate cells of that layer to produce a sort of mosaic-color or perhaps even within the same cells.

Perhaps solving my first problem will also solve the second, or vice versa. There is this added factor: in the white Siberians we know at present yellow markings are only present on the falls in various forms of blaze. But the turquoise markings of TURQUOISE CUP and the many seedlins from WHITE SWIRL appear not only on the falls, and in a wider area of the falls, but also on the styles and stands along the midribs and to some extent spreading out from the ribs. In my own seedlings of this type the color has been quite smooth but I have seen a few from other crosses in which the turquoise runs in veins into the basic blue ground color.

Which leads to

3. Which of the patterns that appear in the 28 chr. Siberians are of sibirica origin, which are of sanguinea origin, and which if any are the effect of combining the two species? Obviously the solution to this depends on the solution of the same problem Dr. McEwen mentions in connection with his fifth project, above: establishing a planting of the pure species in their known natural forms and then breeding each form intensively by selfing and by planned crosses. This is obviously a task for the cooperation of several people with considerable space to devote to the task as well as time. I suspect that if and when this project is undertaken we might get a number of bonuses from it in the way of patterns and even colors not yet known in Siberians. We would certainly be better equipped to plan our crosses involving these two species, which at present are the dominating ones in our garden Siberians. But how long this state of affairs continues will of course depend somewhat on the effect that tetraploid breeding has on the Siberians. With the TBs, tetraploidy resulted in the almost total neglect of the diploids for decades; with daylilies the effect has been different and the diploids are still being bred as intensively as ever, apparently. I suspect that among the Siberians the two types will continue to develop side by side within the next few decades at least, as the two groups do have differing characteristics both of which are desirable in the garden. And so we come to

4. What new patterns and colorings will tetraploidy make available to us? Let us hope that someone- several someones- will set out to make

purely exploratory crosses among the tetraploids and report on each such seedling, good, bad or indifferent. Dogs are not wanted for the garden but they can tell us a lot about the contents of a given plant. With the 'first round' tetras there will probably be rather low fertility, as has been the case with other lines of tetraploid breeding; but this block will be broken in the second and third generations and that is when we will need someone to plunge into the new genetic pool. (Of course I can safely suggest this to someone else; with my small and rather shady garden I can't Do It Myself).

5. Another project that suggests itself to me is to find out which Siberians we now have which have the characteristic of producing good erect foliage and can pass this characteristic along to their offspring. It is possible that the tetraploids will tend to have this habit of growth due to the added stiffness resulting from the larger sized cells of the tetras; but we'd like, I'm sure, to see the diploids tidied up too. In some years the bad habit is worse than in others; but there is never a year in which some plants are not a disgrace to the planting.

Maybe not all of these come under the heading of scientific research but they are matters that ought to be looked into for the eventual benefit of Siberian growers and indeed of gardeners in general.

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HAVE WE THE MAKINGS OF A SIBERIAN YOUTH GROUP?

It would be a matter of interest to the Executive and Board of the Society for Siberian Irises to know how many of our members have young daughters and sons who have been showing interest in our irises. Perhaps if there are enough we could get a Youth Group going. Certainly the AIS youth program has turned up some bright and lively young people who are involved in everything from putting on and winning shows to running test gardens and hybridizing. We have some young adult members who are among our most valuable; from a well set-up Youth Group we might expect to gain more such. And we must always remember that any organization that cannot attract young recruits will eventually die of old age. Who will be the active members of our Society thirty or forty years from now, if we don't start now to interest young people in Siberian irises?

If you have children- or grandchildren- or if you know of any young people who are interested in Siberians- in irises- in gardening- won't you let us know about them? We can then work out some method of encouraging them to join. Remember however that all SSI members in Canada and the U. S. must be AIS members; this includes the young people. It is likely that our Youth Group would be a division of the AIS group but we don't know as yet. Write Dr. McEwen and help to get things started.

GENETIC CONSIDERATIONS

IN THE SIBERIAN IRISES- Kevin Vaughn

It is indeed fortunate that such a concerted effort has been given to the genetic analysis of Siberian Irises while the group is still primarily in diploid form.

Sarah Tiffney's fascinating crosses of sibirica whites with sanguinea whites producing purples exemplify the classis genetic test for complementary genes. Two normally functioning genes are necessary for the production of anthocyanin with each mutant supplying one of the normally- functioning genes to the offspring.

Diagrammatically:

cc WW X CC ww eq. Cc Ww
(sibirica white) (sanguinea white) purple

Both of these normally functioning genes produce an enzyme; these enzymes together produce anthocyanin:

^{C}/enzyme C plus ^{W}/enzyme W gives anthocyanin.

Mutations at either of these loci interrupt or stop the enzymatic pathway:

^{c}/no enzyme plus ^{W}/enzyme W gives no anthocyanin.

It is also known that reds and pinks crossed with the sanguinea type whites produce blues and purples; crossed with reds and pinks produce more reds and pinks; and crossed with sibirica type whites produce pale reds and pinks. We can explain these results using the same gene loci (which of course constitutes the critical test for the first hypothesis.)

$c^{r}c^{r}$ WW X CC ww eq. Cc^{r} Ww
red sanguinea white purple

$c^{r}c^{r}$ WW x ccWW eq. $c^{r}c$ WW
red sibirica white pale red

$c^{p}c^{p}$ WW X cc WW eq. $c^{p}c$ WW
pink sibirica white pale pink

$c^{r}c^{r}$ WW X $c^{p}c^{p}$ WW eq. $c^{r}c^{p}$ WW
red pink red.

The last three crosses are the critical tests for allelism- alternate choices of a gene at any one locus (position in a chromosome) because two mutant (other than the normal gene giving blue-purple) types produced all mutant progeny- no complementation as observed.

A dominance series of the alleles (the various forms a gene may have mutated into) can be written as follows:

$$C > c^r > c^p > c$$

The two intermediate allelic choices (c^r and c^p) either produce less of the enzyme or produce a slightly different type of enzyme from the normally-functioning C. The dominance relationship of the alleles at locus C is a reflection of the amount of enzyme produced by each allele. When only one gene (as in a heterozygous individual) is producing an enzyme, less of the enzyme is produced and a correspondingly lesser amount of anthocyanin is produced (the so-called dosage effect.)

It should be noted that it is likely that none of these genes are involved in the production of any patterning. Patterns are most likely due to genes other than those involved in the production of anthocyanin. Several of these pattern-controlling genes may be from varieties of I. sibirica as a number of irises carrying strong patterns are of similar size and shape to other variants of I. sibirica.

McGarvey (1968) noted that the characters for spatulate shape and white color are linked so closely that they might be considered allelic. Last summer, however, a spatulate blue flowered from seed of Carrie Lee. This indicates that these two genes are separable units although it is possible that the new spatulate blue is a new mutation.

It is hoped that this brief discussion of some of the basics of color genetics may help in the planning of your crosses this spring and will stimulate our minds into studying more of our genetic problems.

References:

McGarvey, William G. 1968. Linked Genes in the Siberian. The Siberian Iris, Vol. 2 # 8, pp. 284-5.

Tiffney, Sarah. 1971. Notes on Hybridizing Siberians. The Siberian Iris, Vol. 3 # 4, pp. 6-12.

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In the note Kevin sent with the above article he made an interesting suggestion we'd like to quote. Opinions please?

"What would you think about the idea of instituting a Morgan Medal? We could perhaps use some of the funds from upcoming auctions for the establishment of it. It is something for us to think about especially now when so many are hybridizing."

My own opinion is that it would be nice to have one- who knows, in another dozen years I might have a candidate myself!- Peg

CULTURAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE MIDWEST

Gunther Stark

The normal for winters here in the Midwest is to be abnormal, with temperatures ranging in the sixties one week, down to twenty-five below just a few days later. All this does not affect the Siberians in the least, with good bloom every year. This past year also proved that the Siberians, at least the older ones, can take just about anything in the way of water. At the place where I work, Des Moines Waterworks Park, we have about thirty large clumps of Siberians planted on the banks of a lagoon. On July 4, 1973, we had the worst flood in our history and these Siberians were completely covered with water for about a week plus being in very soggy soil for some time after that. All TBs were wiped out, plus all other flowers, acres of lawn, and many trees. However the Siberians were not the least affected by all this, the plants retaining their green color and increasing normally in the fall. Perhaps the plants being in a semi-dormant state could have something to do with this as it happened shortly after blooming.

Our culture of Siberians is very simple. They are planted anywhere that bloom is wanted and no attempt is made to acidify the soil. In my own garden where the newer, more expensive cultivars are planted, soil sulphur is tilled into the soil before planting, and I believe that I get faster growth, but the Siberians do quite satisfactorily in ordinary good garden soil.

I have received and done planting of Siberians in the spring and in my experience it is better than planting in the fall. In the spring the Siberians can hardly be kept from growing. I have received plants that had grown an inch or two in transit and then when planted kept right on growing. On larger clumps they even bloomed. In the spring, even the smallest rhizomes will grow; the tiny ones will not grow in the fall.

The growing of the 40 chr. Siberians in the Midwest is quite another matter. They will do well in the spring and the fall, but our hot summers are too much for them. I tried watering them every day during hot weather but it didn't help very much. The only way to grow the 40s here in the Midwest is in the shade. Since the loss of all our large elms, shade here has been limited so I am not able to grow as many of the newer 40s as I would like.

An invaluable planting help for me, for plants received during hot weather, is the use of a burlap shade. The burlap gives enough shade that the plant does not lose too much moisture during hot weather, but still

lets in enough light through the small holes in the weave that the plant does not suffer from lack of light. This burlap shade is made by stretching the fabric over a frame high enough to go over the top of the plant. I have corn crib ventilators available to put the burlap over and these have proved to be ideal for me, but a frame could easily be made using wood poles or slats. I use this technique for all TB, Daylilies, Spurias and Siberians.

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ROBIN QUOTES

(These quotes were taken from two rounds of the Siberian Hybridizing Robin which was started last year. I am sent Xeroxes of any pages that might give me an inspiration for an article by the Robin writer. I certainly have found the geneses for some very good ones in the future but as they depend on the flowering of an interesting cross or group of crosses I have not yet asked the Robineers involved to write them up for me. However I found some interesting quotes to swipe and hope the Robineers will forgive me the liberties I took.)

Sarah Tiffney: ..don't underrate all the old ones; some are quite good, and in any case they form the basic standard against which we should judge the new ones.

I had previously reported crossing sanguinea whites with sibirica whites, 3 or 4 different crosses, and getting all blues. I selfed them; they were not very cooperative about it but I got a few seeds, and they gave both blues and whites in the second generation (one of the whites was quite yellowish, but that is incidental)...this difference between sibirica white and sanguinea white is a real thing and needs further exploration...crosses between 5 sanguinea-type whites and some sibirica-type whites (or maybe they would be better called albinoes, because I trust you know that they are not pure whites but have a little yellowish in the buds and a little lavender-slate color in the throat) and they all made blues...I predict that the behavior of the other colors will be found to differ in the two species, too.

Another thing: my pet theory says that white x red gives blue in the F_1, and selfing these blues segregates out to red, white and blue in the F_2. I have gotten this result in the garden. Well, this year we had something different (I should also say that my theory says pink acts like red, that white x pink gives blue)- this year two crosses of CRYSTAL CHARM (white) x sibirica whites, and one cross of CRYSTAL CHARM x a pale pink, all gave blues and pinks in F_1...So I conclude that CRYSTAL CHARM unlike the other named whites I used, is not a pure sanguinea-type white but has some sibirica-type white in it. Just what the dose of sibirica is and how it got there I have not worked out; I have an uneasy feeling

The New By-Laws

A draft of a proposed revision of SSI by-laws was enclosed with the Spring 1973 issue of The Siberian Iris together with the explanation that it might neew some changes to meet requirements of the American Iris Society. This proved to be the case and the changes shown below were subsequently made. The by-laws with these changes were adopted by the membership of SSI on May 29, 1973, and were formally approved by AIS in November 1973. Any member wishing to have his copy of the by-laws comform to the final version may attach these sheets to the copy distributed a year ago,

CHANGES

Article III, Section 2 was changed as follows:

Section 2. The classes of membership in SSI shall be as follows:

a. Regular membership
b. Family membership
c. Supporting membership
d. Youth membership
e. Triennial memberships of any of the above classes
f. Life membership
g. Corresponding membership. The board of directors of SSI, hereafter referred to as the board, may appoint as corresponding members any persons, especially residents of countries other than Canada and the United States, selected for the interchange of information of value to SSI or to such persons. Corresponding members shall not pay dues, vote or hold office.
h. Honorary membership. The board may grant honorary membership to any person in recognition of distinguished service in the field of SSI's interests. Honorary members shall not pay dues, vote or hold office.
i. Changes in classes and new classes of membership may be made by the board consistent with policy of the American Iris Society.
j. Except for corresponding and honorary members, all members of SSI shall be members in good standing of the American Iris Society and no membership shall exceed in length the current AIS membership of the member. Dues for the various classes shall be set by the board.

Article VI, Section 5, tenth line: Article IX should read Article IV.

Article VII was changed to include only two sections as follows:

Section 1. An annual meeting of SSI shall be held at the time and place of the national convention of the American Iris Society or

at such other time and place as the board may designate. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the board. The president shall call a special meeting upon the request in writing of one-tenth of the membership addressed to the secretary, but not more than one such meeting shall be called in one calendar year. Notice of annual and special meetings shall be mailed either by letter or by means of a regular publication of SSI to the last known address of each member in the records of the secretary at least fifteen days prior to the date of the meeting. Ten percent of the voting members present in person or by proxy shall constitute a quorum for all purposes of such meetings.

Section 2. Any business of the society may be conducted at any special meeting provided that the business to be acted upon shall be stated in the notice of the meeting. Any business requiring action by the members may also be conducted by mail, either by letter or a regular publication of SSI, at the discretion of the board. The procedure for the conduct of such business shall be determined by the board except for procedures prescribed by these by-laws. In any such mail poll a two-thirds vote of all returned ballots in favor of the action moved shall have the same effect as though the question had been voted upon at a meeting.

that it is not going to fit into my theory...CRYSTAL CHARM looks more sibirica-ish than the others (sanguinea whites- P. E.)- tall stems, small flowers, hanging falls, and the anthers before opening have a little lavender-slate color in them, not pure white.

Bee Warburton: (majored in chemistry) If I'd only known when I was at Barnard what was happening among the fruit flies... (how many of us can make the same moan; I was going to be a physicist!)

I don't remember having the diploids set starting pods and then shrivel up, but the tetras seem to be doing this. Do they have to have a minimal number of fertilized ovules before they will keep on growing?...I went out and checked again and sure enough, the started pods have all dried brown except one, a small one with two green sides and the third sunk in and brown. I may have to eat crow, as I've always been a one-stigma pollinator- I plan to make enough pollinations so that the little difference, and I've rarely found any, would be more than made up for, but in this type of pollination it looks as though it would pay to do all three.

(About sibirica and sanguinea) It is odd that these species have not been intercrossed well enough to produce a sort of stable hybrid state like in the beardeds.

Sarah again: I think one good fertilized ovule will keep a pod growing. I got one good seed out of a self-pollinated LONGSIB...seeds can grow to different sizes, then give up (before maturity- P. E.) because they are not perfect.

If you want a progressive series of difficulty, try pollinating Siberians, then versicolor, prismatica, cristata, verna and lacustris. The TB people don't know how easy they have it.

(2¢ worth- In case anyone thinks that Bee and Sarah are the whole Robin- 'tain't so; but what they had to say may find itself in an article one of these days- or two or three articles. Some of the quotes above have a relationship to other material in this issue; some is interesting purely for itself; some may be enlightening to those who think hybridizing our pets is simple enough so why don't we have all these marvelous things turning up in the catalogs? In my own limited experience I have been pleased and happy to get six or seven seedlings from a 'simple' Siberian cross, the only one that took out of a dozen made; for that much work with any of the Bearded types I'd expect at least six pods and a hundred or more seedlings. Try it yourself some time. Have fun.)

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Rule of Thumb: A loose summer mulch is deep enough if it covers the base of your thumb stuck straight down in it.

SOMETHING ABOUT COLOR

Color means different things to different people. So it is natural perhaps that they use different terms to talk about it. Some discuss the whole subject in terms of little numbers attached to chips of various colors on a chart, color fan or color wheel. Others may speak in terms of 'one part Prussian Blue, two parts Aureolin Yellow, ten parts Titanium White'- well mixed of course. And I've heard a hot squabble over whether his Dawn Blush is or is not the same as her Baby Cheek. To my eyes they were both pale pinks with a whisper of yellow. To researchers in the area of flower color color is expressed in some combination of chemicals- or sometimes the absence of some chemical. To children roses are red, violets blue- pumpkins are orange, cats are black, trees are (usually) a poisonous green never seen in nature.

Color can also be considered from two different points of view, both useful to the gardener: as pigment, something inherent in the petal itself and as light, the effect of different kinds of lighting on various substances. You probably all know how the two sides of a rose seem to vary according to which side the sun is shining on; I remember an old IB, RUBY GLOW, which was just an ordinary dark reddish-brownish-violet in most lights but which, when the sun shone through it in late afternoon, turned the most delicious glowing, almost transparent red wine. The pigment was the same; the light changed it. And when I look at the window beside me, I can see that the frame- which I know is white, I painted it myself- is a dark grey compared to theblue sky outside- even compared to the dark grey trunks of the oak trees where they are streaked with sunlight.

There are, however, certain basic terms in which we can talk about color. The three primary terms are HUE, VALUE, and CHROMA, and any color you can see can be described in these three terms (which someone called the three dimensions of color).

Hue is the name of the color itself. Each hue has its own name (or names; my 5R 5/13 Munsell is someone else's Vivid Red. Maybe you call it Fire Engine and your mother calls it Lipstick. They are all the same hue and my color fan and your mother's lipstick laid against the fire truck would match nicely. On a color wheel, a sort of circular spectrum with the red nearest to infrared lying right next to the violet nearest to ultraviolet- in other words the two ends of the visible spectrum swiveled around to meet- each little thin wedge of color is a different hue. Next to a treu blue is a blue that has just a dash of green in it; beyond that is another hue that is still greener, and so around to a blue with a hint of violet, that lies next to that blue we started with.

Value is the term that expresses the amount of light or dark in the color you are looking at. When you add white (light) to the Hue, you lighten the value to a tint of the basic hue. When you add black (darkness) to the Hue, you deepen the value to a shade of the hue.

Chroma might be described as the amount of Pow a color has. It deals with the intensity of the hue. Full chroma is perhaps best described as the purest, least diluted hue, the color itself with no admixture of white, black or any other hue, the purest color as it might be seen in strong clear light. Chroma in itself has little to do with lightness or darkness; in the violet range, for instance, full chroma comes near the black end of the value scale, while the brightest yellow is fairly light.

How does this all apply to your garden? Sometime sit in a garden chair and look at a portion of your border with eyes half shut. Are there a lot of spots of bright color that practically blot out everything else? You probably have too many clumps of flowers of full or nearly full chroma and need to dilute them with softer, more greyed plantings. Do you get an all-over opalescent blur? Not enough chroma- put in a few strongly colored plants. Does it all look rather pale and subdued? Too many tints and not enough shades. If, as in a planting of Siberian irises, squinting at it gives the effect of looking at water- well, maybe that is what your garden needs to make it look cool and refreshing in a hot season- but if you don't live in a hot climate maybe you should interplant your irises with a few pink, rosy or golden flowers that will bloom at the same time, roses perhaps. On the other hand, on a hot day in June, a rose-bed might look too hot; a few blue Siberians would help to cool it off.

Which brings up another point about color. Different hues have different visual effects as regards heat and cold. They also can affect the visual size of a plant, a garden, a room. Pure orange is the warmest and most 'approaching' color; pure blue the coldest and most receding one. A garden planted in tints and shades of blue, from white to deep navy, would look very wide, spacious, and cool; a planting of oranges from cream to deep brownish rust would look cosy, snug, intimate- but rather hot on a soggy afternoon in July. Yellows and reds are still warm and advancing colors but not as much so; greens and lavenders are cool but not to the extent of pure blues. Put an orange-flowered plant in a bed of blues and it will leap out at you; put a few lavender petunias among masses of marigolds and you cool it, fast.

All of this means that you must decide for yourself what you want your garden to do for you, and then pick your plants accordingly. If you want to sit in your garden in the cool of the evening and refresh yourself after the heat of the day you might consider planting only those things that have pale flowers- white, cream, pink. The blues and lavenders, and all the darker shades, will become invisible within a few minutes after sunset. If your garden is where you live most of the day, you can use the more forceful colors. If your garden is small and rather enclosed, you can enlarge it with plantings predominately blue and lavender; if you live on the prairies or in a new suburb, and there isn't a tree for miles or a shrub more than two feet tall, use the warmer colors to wrap yourself

in an illusion of privacy and intimacy.

Ah, but you're a Siberian specialist! Do you only go into your garden when the Siberians are in bloom? What happens all summer when there is nothing to see but the foliage, and maybe a few bloomstalks with tags where you've made some crosses? You could leave a little space between the clumps to tuck in a few petunias or marigolds or other summer-blooming annuals (and do tie up the foliage on those Siberians that <u>will</u> fall over and look messy.)

And when you make those crosses- how about giving some consideration to enriching their color range? Acquire a plant or two of the new 28-chr. yellows and try crossing them with the whites to get more yellows and creams. Try crossing reds and violets in search of maybe <u>one</u> seedling that will have a stronger, richer red-violet or even a redder red, if you are very lucky. You can't make a good seedling plot out of selfing Gatineau forever; you can't make a garden out of only one kind of plant, or one color, or one shape of foliage. Plan your planting so that it gives the effect you want by the use of variations of color, contrasts of color and form, warmth and coolness, things that leap out and yell at you and others that sit quietly in the background. Don't just <u>have</u> color; use it. Put it to work for your enjoyment.

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WE GET QUESTIONS

I have enjoyed my Siberians very much as they seem to be freer of bugs than most irises but lately I have found that some of the blossoms have little holes through the petals. I don't find any bugs on the flowers except an occasional aphid which I don't think can be what does it. It looks almost as if someone had stuck a darning needle through the bud just before it started to open. Any idea what does this?

I haven't had this experience but it just might be the verbena bud moth. I believe these bite into the bud and then lay their eggs inside so that when a seedpod has formed there will be a supply of seeds for the hatching larva to dine on. Actually there seem to be several kinds of bug that attack the buds but most of them will eat quite a lot of the petal; you wouldn't just see a small hole through the petals where they overlap before they have started to unfold. What you can do about it I don't know unless perhaps using Systox spray or other systemic would make the whole plant unpalatable to the bug; even then you'd probably get a few bites before the bug got discouraged. The only advice I can offer is; if you need the flower for a show you might try covering the buds as soon as color starts to show with a piece of soft sheer fabric and not take it off till the petals are really opening out; otherwise, just ignore the holes.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Leroy Davidson

I noticed and appreciated Bee Warburton's comment in a recent issue about the fluttery wind-dance of some irises. It has been rather of concern to me that our striving for better substance, broad compact form, and more manageable plant size and habit might be leading us toward a stereotype, not only in the development of garden Siberians, but in other irises as well. Certainly we need to exploit our materials for as many sorts, sizes and colors as possible, The other expreme would be dozens of clones all from one pattern, alike except for color, which might as well be molded plastic.

Let's not overlook those big fluttering butterfly flowers with the pendant falls. To some eyes they may seem awkward: but they need not tuck under, and they appear to be contrived almost like the leaves of the aspen to tremble in the least breeze and to give a completely delightful garden effect of almost constant movement. Their substance is quite adequate for their purpose and they are only torn in winds of near-hurricane force; so let's have some more of them. They seem to look best on the taller stalks and with lots of branches. I presume this is 'bringing out' the best traits of I. sibirica itself, and why not?

The compact varieties, with heavier substance, are not going to have cascading falls that flutter this way, and they seem to me to look best on shorter stalks, and the individual flowers are most pleasing when looked at from slightly above, or as seen from a slight distance as massed color. These seem to represent the best qualities of I. sanguinea.

I am happy to note that several breeders are giving their attention to the smaller plants, perhaps under two feet tall, with flowers in scale. We need all kinds, big, little, firm and fluttery, short stalks and tall, in every color that can be brought out of their genes.

This is my big crusade with the irises: if and when they all look like highly developed garden flowers they will have lost a lot of their natural grace. I am pleased that smaller cultivars of the Japanese irises are being developed. Perhaps the Siberians and Spurias will have to be exploited to the same degree before we realize we have nothing but the grogeous color. I have noticed the same tendency among our west-coast irises. The bigger the better is not always true.

Wave those Flags!

(2¢ worth) Roy has a point here. Dearly though I love the WHITE SWIRL form I must agree that it isn't the only one available and we should not concentrate on it to the point of ignoring the other forms available to us. I suspect we are sort of 'exploring the pinks' as happened with the TB breeding in the late 1940s and 1950s; we'll get back to the others.

A LOVESOME THING?

"A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot.."
'My Garden', T. E. Brown
"Mine's not!" Parody by Anon.
"So what?" Comment by several Garden Clubbers.

Ann O'Nimmo

In my experience many people hesitate to join garden clubs because they think they couldn't sustain the impeccably- maintained gardens that one expects from a club member. By the same token gardenclubbers are held back from joining a specialty plant society because they don't know enough about that particular kind of plant to maintain the standard of perfectly-groomed show bed they feel they would need to have as members. If it can be shown that the first belief is false, perhaps one could then convince people that the second is equally so?

With this in mind, then, let me report on the conversation that took place at a recent session one morning in the middle of the winter. This was not a meeting of the club; it was a sewing bee attended by several of the members who were acquiring a new technique in order to upgrade the quality of the gift table at the annual plant sale. I should say here that this club is noted for the superior quality of its horticulture even among other garden clubs, and that the annual plant sale is looked forward to as a chance for all interested gardeners to obtain rare, unusual, and distinctive plants not available at local nurseries; it also serves to support the club's community service and civic beautification work. One of those rare financial transactions in which, literally, everyone profits.

Among those present were three members of specialist plant societies- AIS, American Rose Society and the local affiliate of the Chrysanthemum Society. A fourth is an expert in a field so new it doesn't have an organization yet: growing vegetables as ornamental plants.

Since a tape recorder was not used (as gardeners we are against most kinds of bug) I can't report word-for-word; but this is approximately how it went (with occasional interruptions for the next stage of instruction in the technique being taught.)

"I nearly didn't come this morning. When I saw the thermometer was up around 40 I wondered if I hadn't better go out and pick up the tools we forgot to bring in last fall when it got too cold to do any more. I always mean to get everything finished, but somehow the cold weather comes too soon, and I wind up with the annual bed only half dug up, and of course you think there will be some more warm days so you leave the spade standing in the middle of the bed and it gets frozen in. Some year I'd like to have the bed all dug over in the fall and ready to plant come spring."

"Well, if you did, all you'd have is a fine crop of chickweed when you went out to plant it. I got mine all done a couple of years ago because I wanted to put new bulbs in the bed so it would be pretty in the early spring before I could start putting out annuals, and even though I mulched it, it was a horrible mess. I mean, here were the crocuses coming up and the mulch was heaped into little mounds where the squirrels dug for the bulbs and the local cats had used it for a public convenience, and in between the mulch was some of the finest chickweed I ever saw, plus a few nice healthy dandelions. I swear those things grow all winter in spite of the cold. Sometimes I think they ought to develop a cultivated chickweed that you could use as an evergreen groundcover. I suppose if I were a really <u>good</u> gardener I'd have gone out cold weather or no and pulled it out as soon as it appeared, but who's going to be that crazy? But you reminded me, as soon as I go home I'll have to go around and see how many tools we forgot to put away. Last spring Frank had to sand the handles of the spade and two rakes that had been out all winter, and I had to throw away my pet trowel because it fell over and the termites got into the handle."

"Oh gee. I left my kneeling board out in the back yard. I suppose I will just go right through it if I try to kneel on it now. It was the top from an old end-table that someone sat on at a party one night and the legs broke."

"Well, if it was varnished the termites probably won't bother it, they don't seem to like it. Ray varnishes the handles of all our tools as soon as we buy them, because he is always leaving things arouhd and I have quite enough to do fussing with the mums without picking up after him. My mum beds are the tidiest things in the yard. But I must admit that I have a stack of plastic flowerpots sitting outside the kitchen door that I should have taken in and washed months ago so they'd be ready when I start to take cuttings this spring."

"Does Ray take care of everything but the mums?"

"No- he looks after the lawn and the bushes and the tomatoes, but I am supposed to look after the rest of the flowers. Only I don't, at least not very well. I always forget to thin out and divide the prernnials, and sometimes the bulbs don't get lifted till they are pushing each other out of the ground. I was going to do that last summer with the daffs, but by the time I had some free time the foliage was all gone and I was afraid if I just dug for them I'd put the fork right through the clump. Of course I ought to mark them when they are in bloom, but that's just when I seem to be at my busiest when with pulling weeds and cleaning out the leaves we didn't get to in the fall and then starting the cuttings."

"Gee, I always thought your garden looks so neat; not like mine. I

always seem to be about a month behind by May Day and then it just gets worse the rest of the summer. Some years I don't even get the iris seedlings lined out until July because- well you all know how it is, you can't do this job till that is done, and you have to hold up that one till some other thing is finished."

"Yeah, I can't put out the annuals until I've dug out the big clumps of tulips so they can be divided, and the tulips haven't yellowed off by the time the tomato seedlings are ready to go into the ground, and the result is, like last year, some of the tomatoes were making fruit while they were still sitting in the peatpots on the terrace! But I did get the species tulips divided at last. They should have been done two years ago. But you know what I <u>really</u> mind most? It's that just when the ornamental kale is just looking its best, Joe decides we ought to <u>use</u> it. He likes a mess of kale with boiled hamhocks. I think it is awful but that isn't what's bad about it- it's that just when they look so pretty I have to cut half the leaves for cooking."

"Well, it isn't all that pretty when some of the local fans come to see my irises and half the stalks have crossing tags hanging from them. And half the buds are wrapped in white nylon to protect the crosses I'm going to make the next day, or made the day before. I guess you have to decide whether your garden is for looks or for use. Only I'd like it to look nice <u>sometimes</u> in iris season. The only time I seem to be able to just sit back and enjoy it is in the spring when the bulbs are out and I can admire them while resting between bouts of weeding."

"It's just as bad with my roses really. I don't like to prune them in the fall because they seem to come through the winter better if I can leave a couple of seedpods formed from the last flowers. But when I wait till spring to prune them- it's still darn cold when they start to sprout, and from then on there are so many jobs to be done, and sometimes by the time I can prune them they are already making their first buds and then I'm liable to knock them off the stem. The thing about gardening is that you never catch up so it's always a bit of a mess."

"The whole trouble with you kids is you fuss too much. You don't catch me raking up leaves spring and fall. I let them sit and make mulch. And if there are some weeds, so we have weeds. So what? Dandelions are pretty too; I just yank off the seed heads before they can start to blow. Once in a while I miss one. But heck, they are growing all over the place and I don't suppose the ones that escape me make very much difference in the total population. And as for leaving tools around, we don't because the neighbors borrow them, so around about Thanskgiving Phil goes around the block and borrows them back. Of course he just dumps them on the floor of the garage- but we don't put the car inside until it gets real cold, and by then I can get the kids to hang them up. Of course, too, sometimes he borrows back a tool that wasn't his in the first place and then I have

to dope out whose they are. No, the thing that gets me down is, as sure as I make a date to have the relatives over for a barbecue, the roses stop blooming, the marigolds stop blooming, the petunias stop blooming- everything stops, and there we are in our beautiful garden with not a flower except the dandelions, which never stop. So my mother and my mother-in-law as me what I think I'm doing in a garden club, couldn't they teach me just a little bit about making flowers grow? And then the next day everything starts to come out again. And of course when the flowers aren't blooming, the weeds show up so much more. I did once almost have my father-in-law convinced that the mouse-ear chickweed was a very precious new perennial, an Alpine, no less- but Phil had to come up then and yank it out and say he asked me to try to get rid of a few weeds before his parents came to see us."

"What gets me down is, I'm the only one in the block who really has a garden, so of course all the local bugs drop in at mealtime, which is all day every day. So when I want the garden looking good I have to choose between having chewed leaves or dried soapsuds on the foliage. Tommy won't let me use anything but pyrethrum and rotenone. He's a real ecology nut. I'm all in favor of minimizing pollution, but do I have to do it for the whole block? And I know one thing: the best fed plants are the most interesting food to the bugs. The guy next door never uses any fertilizer except a sprinkling of 10-6-4 on the lawn in the spring- and it looks it; all the bushes are sort of stunted-looking and weak, the grass is so thin he only needs to cut it every ten days, and he never has a bug- they find the food better over in our yard. I don't blame them; if I was a bug I'd rather chew on nice lush crunchy foliage."

"Maybe you should throw a little fertilizer over the fence?"

"Not after all the work I put in turning the old leaves and trimmings and stuff into good compost. That and manure is the only fertilizer I get to use. Tommy yells if I buy chemicals."

"I tried composting the garbage once, but- well, you know what it is like if it isn't done exactly right, it can get pretty smelly. So Ray dug a hole in the middle of the vegetable patch and dumped the whole thing in and planted beans on it. Good beans, but I wanted the compost for the flowers. I've never tried it since. Then someone told me about just putting the scraps in the garden bit by bit, with a little soil over each day's deposit, and I thought that would be okay. Only some dogs dropped in after a few days and dug it all up. That was the day the ladies from the bridge club were coming to lunch. And I mean ladies. I don't know how I got into that lot; I have just two dresses to my name, and I wear one to the club one week and the other the next. Nobody could call me a lady the way I go around most of the time. But you can't get all dressed up when you are a gardener. And I never get all the dirt out from under my nails except when I wash my hair. I don't really get my knuckles and

knees clean- not what I call clean- until we've had about two weeks of freezing weather."

"Don't we all? And it's worse for me because I can't stand wearing slacks. So my dresses go through a sort of routine; first they are for good- church and shopping and evenings; then they are degraded to housework; then when they are so faded and raggedy and I can't even patch them because the fabric won't hold, they go out in the garden. Bonnie's garden clothes are a neighborhood joke. Sometimes the garden looks pretty good. But when it does, I don't. I have tried buying pretty things just to garden in, but I'm so conscious of the good clothes that I put off the dirtier jobs till I can change."

"You know what I wish? I wish I knew how Sally manages. I never see her garden looking messy or her either. Sometimes I wonder if she uses long-handled tongs to pull weeds."

"Yes, but when did she last win a blue in horticulture? Her garden is always neat, and so is she, but that's just the overall effect. She has nothing that is really terrific; everything is rather small and if you look at the individual plants they aren't very interesting. I guess you have to choose between the tidy garden of the tidy gardener and the interesting garden of the messy gardener. I think I'd rather be the latter than the former. More work, but also more fun."

And that is how it is, World. The opinion of some experts. A garden may be a lovesome thing at times, but at other times it can get rather hatesome too.

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Tip: Bee Warburton wrote, some time back, and I saved till I needed a small item to fill a gap:

I've been shelling out seed today and find that the only decent seed I have is that on WHITE SWIRL, because the insect pests favor the blue ones and WHITE SWIRL is much cleaner. I found two live weevils and one verbena moth larva, which makes me think perhaps it would be better to shell them out much sooner, even when green...the sensible thing to do, though, would be to specialize in the whites and try to develop the yellow coloring. I kept the plants dusted with Sevin to no effect.

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Another tip: In a letter from a researcher for the USDA, in connection with a problem I had about Impatiens, I found a nice little nylon bag to protect the seeds from spilling after the flower had been pollinated. Now most of you know I have advocated using nylon chiffon to cover the buds before pollination- but lately I haven't been able to buy any. Tragedy. This bag was made from nylon stockings. Whee- I've got jillions.

BACK TALK---- Peggy Edwards ---- BACK TALK

This is a skimpy issue. Has quite a lot of filler in it. Some of it may be useful; some may be interesting. But it hasn't very much to do with Siberian irises. Some more is material that I was sent for a past issue, and had to leave out because there was a lot of material that time. But this doesn't often happen, and this was all I had available.

I'd like to see twenty-eight or even thirty-two pages in every issue. But, as I've said before, I can't print what nobody writes. (Contrary to appearances, that isn't ungrammatical. Look at it a while and you will get the hang of it.)

In addition to a couple of volunteer articles (God bless them) I sent out 15 requests for articles. I got three answers, two of them noes. The other twelve didn't answer at all. I have to assume they had good reasons; dear knows there have been a lot of colds around this past winter (I've had three of them.) And certainly anyone who has been as miserable as I was with mine would be in no frame of mind to write an article. People do have jobs to do, and come home too tired to do anything but look at the box. And in some parts of the country February is the beginning of gardening season. If you don't get that early start you never get caught up. I know about that too.

But-

I can't print what nobody writes.

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It occurs to me that maybe I should give directions for making the little nylon bags mentioned on the previous page. Pick a part of an old stocking or pantyhose that doesn't have any runs or holes; cut out circles of the desirable diameter. For covering the buds of Siberians, eight inches should be enough. Now load a darning needle with a length of sugar-twine or heavy crochet cotton such as is used to make medallions for bedspreads. About four times the diameter of the nylon is about right. Take small stitches around the edge- about a quarter-inch in. When you get back to where you started, carefully draw the needle out of the string, tie the two ends loosely. Now make some more the same way. This is a suitable occupation for evenings when it is too dark to garden. I wouldn't be at all surprised if you could do it while watching TV.

If you are likely to be away when the seeds come ripe, you could put these little bags over the seed pods, and then if the pod should split before you get home, the seeds will be there, in their little sack. Might come in handy some day.

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Betty Seibert still is in the market for good slides, particularly

of the newer Siberians, and of garden groupings. We do need them, kids- they are our best advertisement. And when we are asked for the loan of our slide set, we'd like to think it was a good set.

And of course I could use some nice clear black-and-white snaps. If I'd had half a dozen on hand I could have filled up two pages with Siberians instead of non-Siberian talk. And you could have seen a few plants, or maybe a few Siberian nuts like yourself.

I dono, maybe this sounds like asking a lot of our members- to want them to go out in the garden armed with a slide camera and a snapshot camera (and don't forget a notebook to write down a few comments for TSI!) But a lot of gardeners, maybe most of us, do take a workbasket or portable toolbox when we go out to work. Would a camera or two, or a pad of paper and a marking pen for scribbling, increase the load so very much? And maybe while you are working you will come across something that puzzles you- write down your question and send it to us (We Get Questions, remember?) and maybe we can find the answer. If you don't write it down you may forget all about it until next year when you have more and worse of whatever the trouble is.

I just stopped to look at my plant lamp, which is buzzing away just behind me making the seedlings spring up. There are nine seedlings from my lone pod of WHITE SWIRL x TURQUOISE CUP X self. So it wasn't a dead end cross. Maybe this year some of the sibligns will turn up with both pollen and a willingness to set seed. Then I can investigate some more of the potentials of these parents. It will be interesting to see (in a year or two) whether these nine will produce whites- and how many of them. I don't believe that TURQUOISE CUP garries a gene for white; neigher the seeds I grew nor the ones Dr. McEwen grew produced any whites. Still we were dealing with so few seedlings- I only had six, and he treated his with colchicine and not many survived- that it might be that we just happened to get seedlings just from the blue side of the family. Well, next year will tell a little more.

I got a swarm of seedlings from my white pseudacorus. With them the problem is, where did the pollen come from (a bee did it)- the white itself or the yellow nearby? I sowed both lots of seed without giving them any refrigeration- a technique I have been 'agin' for years; but apparently some kinds of iris can be grown from seed without the chilling that has been the practice. I am speaking of iris species that normally grow where the fallen seed gets a good winter chilling- sometimes almost a deep-freeze treatment. Next year I will try sowing the seeds in August as soon as they are ripe; maybe I can have plants big enough to spend a month in the cold frame- say midMarch to midApril, and get a year's start on bringing them to bloom. A bit rough on the houseplants which think they should have the lamp to themselves all winter. Oh well, they need a little thinning out anyhow.

Peg

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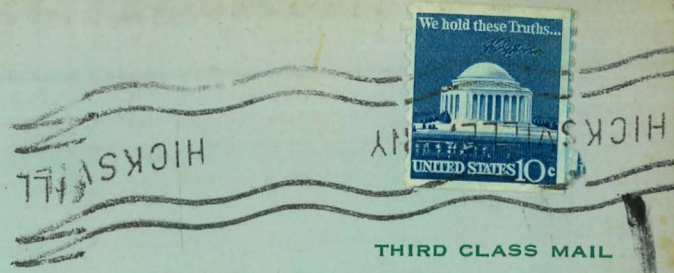

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