

THE SIBERIAN IRIS



The Siberian Iris

Spring 1977

Volume 4, Number 5

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The Siberian Iris is published semiannually by The Society for Siberian Irises. Editorial offices are at 235 Koehl St., Massapequa Park, N. Y. 11762. Deadlines are February 15 and Sept. 15. Earlier receipt of materials is desirable. Black-and-white drawings and photographs are welcome; please put name and address on back if you want them returned. Reprinting by permission of both writer and editor.

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Dues are: Single Annual, \$2, Triennial, \$5; Family Annual, \$2.50, Triennial, \$6. Membership is open to members of AIS in Canada and the United States, and to iris enthusiasts elsewhere.

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The President's Page

Julius Wadekamper

I pledge myself to serve to the best of my ability and hope to continue to advance the popularity of Siberian irises and the Society for Siberian Irises.

I wish to take this opportunity, in the name of the Society, to thank my immediate predecessors, Dr. William McGarvey and Dr. Currier McEwen, for all they have done for the Society and, especially, to congratulate them on the singular honor of winning the Hybridizers' Award of the American Iris Society. I am sure that one of these years we will see a Siberian iris win the American Dykes Medal.

Some of the things we hope to accomplish are: a new Members Handbook, rejuvenated Display Gardens--this committee will be headed by Forrest McCord who has won two Morgan Awards--, work on judging standards and practices, continued good programs at the annual meetings--the program at the Memphis meeting will be handled by Ira Wood--, and finally, more non-bearded iris auctions around the country such as they have in the Northeast. These auctions have been a good source of income for our Society; in fact we would be in dire financial condition without them. However, we should not expect the members in the East to carry the whole burden. If anyone is interested in the position of Chairman of the Auctions Committee I would very much appreciate hearing from you.

I look forward to your help and contributions in achieving these goals, or any others you might suggest for SSI. I also look forward to hearing from you frequently with your suggestions and constructive criticism.

My best wishes to all for a good garden year,



AWARDS 1976

The Morgan Award went to ORVILLE FAY, with POLLY DODGE and BLUE PENNANT as runners-up, giving the McEwen Stables a clean sweep on the race. For Honorable Mention it was ILLINI CHARM, STEVE, and RED PASSION heading the field in that order. In the Yearling Stakes (High Commendation) there three winning entries; M. Dunn's M-16-73, W. McGarvey's PINK HAZE, and S. Varner's 1150. Our congratulations go to all of them. Now let's set our sights on the Kentucky Derby of Irisdom--the Dykes Medal.

A RECLASSIFICATION OF THE SIBERIAN IRISES

Lee W. Lenz

(This has been reprinted from ALISO, the publication of the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, Claremont, California. It will be found there in Vol. 8, No. 4, Sept. 30, 1976, pp. 379-381.)

Horticulturists and cytologists have long recognized that the species of Iris collectively known as the 'Siberian irises' are composed of two separate and distinct groups of plants which differ morphologically, cytologically and geographically. In the most recent reclassification of the genus (Lawrence, 1953) the two groups are placed in series Sibiricae, subsection Apogon. In order to afford these two groups proper botanical recognition I hereby propose to recognize them as two subseries under series Sibiricae.

In his 1932 paper, Simonet followed Dykes (1913) and used the term "Groupe Sibirica". At the same time Simonet (1932:380) recognized that there were two cytologically distinct groups, "Les Iris Sibirica se divisent en deux Caryologiques: l'un à n eq. 14, l'autre, le plus important, à n eq. 20 comprend toutes les espèces du Yunnan: d'après R. Dykes (1923)..."

By 1934, Simonet had adopted the classification proposed by Diels (1930) and under section Apogon had:

Sous-section Sibiricae Engler (correctly, Diels).

n eq. 14. I. sibirica L., I. orientalis Thunb.

(N. Kazao, 1928; M. Simonet, 1928)

2n eq. 40. I. delavayi Mich., I. wilsoni Wright,
I. forrestii Dykes, I. chrysographes Dykes (n
eq. 20), I. bulleyana Dykes.

In an appendix to the 1934 paper, Simonet creates a new subsection for the 40-chromosome group:

	<u>n</u>	<u>2n</u>
<u>I. delavayi</u> Mich	20	
<u>I. bulleyana</u> Dykes	20	
<u>I. clarkei</u> Baker		40

According to Article 36, International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (Stafleu, 1972), "In order to be validly published, a name of a new taxon of plants...published on or after 1 Jan. 1935 must be accompanied by a Latin description or diagnosis..." The name Chrysographes, at the subsectional level and published in 1934, must, therefore, be considered as validly published.

According to Article 22 of the Code, "When the epithet of a subdivision of a genus is identical with or derived from the epithet of one of its constituent species, this species is the type of the name of the subdivision of the genus unless the orig-

inal author of that name designated another type." Therefore, I. chrysographes Dykes is the type species of subsection Chrysographes.

Although he does not specifically say so, Simonet in 1951 was undoubtedly using the names Sibiricae, Chrysographes and Californicae in the same sense that he had used them in 1934, i. e., as subsections of section Apogon. I believe that his inclusion of I. douglasiana Herb. and I. tenax Dougl. in subsection Chrysographes was a manuscript error since he specifically names the Californicae in the title and nowhere in the publication does he list any member of the Californicae except I. douglasiana and I. tenax.

Lawrence (1953) and Lawrence and Randolph (1959) were obviously unaware of Simonet's papers of 1934 and 1951 when they placed all the 'Siberian irises' in series Sibiricae, subsection Apogon.

Werckmeister (1967:106) in listing "Apogon, Sibiricae" and "Apogon, Chrysographes", failed to follow Article 21 of the Code which states that "The name of a subdivision of a genus is a combination of a generic name and a subdivisional epithet connected by a term (subgenus, section, series, etc.) denoting its rank." By quoting Simonet's 1951 paper it must be assumed that Werckmeister was accepting Simonet's disposition of the groups, i. e., Sibiricae and Chrysographes as subsections of section Apogon.

KEY TO THE SUBSERIES OF IRIS SERIES SIBIRICAE

1. Spathe valves more than 5 cm long; flanges at the base of the sepals large; tops of capsules spiked; capsules thin walled; n eq. 20 (where known)..... subseries Chrysographes
2. Spathe valves short; flanges at base of sepals small; tops of capsules blunt; capsules thick walled; n eq. 14 subseries Sibiricae
1. IRIS subseries Chrysographes (Simonet) Lenz, stat. nov.
 - Iris subsect. Chrysographes Simonet, Ann. Scie. Nat. Bot. Sér. 10, 16:371, 1934 (basionym)
 - Iris sect. Limniris Tausch, pro parte, Hort. Canalius, I, 1823; and Tausch, in Schultes, Additamentum Mantissum, II, p. 369, 1824.
 - Iris subgen. Limniris (Tausch) Spach, pro parte, Ann. Sci. Nat. Bot. Sér. 3, 5:99, 1846; and Hist. Nat. Veg., XIII, p. 36-37, 1846.
 - Iris subsect. Sibiricae Diels, pro parte, Engler und Prantl, Die natürl. Pflanzenfam., Aufl, 2, 15a:501, 1930.
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2. IRIS subseries Sibiricae (Diels) Lenz, stat. nov.
Iris subsect. Sibiricae Diels, pro parte, Engler und Prantl,
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Iris sect. Limniris Tausch, pro parte, Hort. Canalius, I,
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 p. 36-37, 1846.
Iris series Sibiricae (Diels) Lawrence, proparte, Gentes
 Herb. 8:359, 1953.
Type species: Iris sibirica L.
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FINAL REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON NOMENCLATURE

Currier McEwen, Chairman

Because of questions in the minds of many members and growers as regards classification and nomenclature of Siberian irises an ad hoc Committee on Nomenclature was appointed in 1972 to study needs and make recommendations. That committee submitted a preliminary report which was published in *The Siberian Iris* in the Spring of 1973 (1).

The Committee had early agreed that there were two distinct aspects of the problem, namely, that of taxonomy and that of terms for common usage. The Committee was unanimous in the decision that questions of taxonomy were outside its area of competence and must be left to professional taxonomists. Therefore, it devoted its chief attention to common usage terms. It did, however, refer to the two types of classifications of Siberian irises than in existence, i. e. those of Dykes (2), of Lawrence (3,4) and Rodionenko (5) which place all the species of Iris Sibiricae in one group, and that of Simonet (6) which places the species with 2n chromosome numbers of 28 in one group ("sous-section Sibiricae") and those with 40 chromosomes in a separate coequal group ("sous-section Chrysographes"). The Committee recommended that, pending a new taxonomic study, the classification of Lawrence (3) be adhered to, namely, that all ten species be in a single series Sibiricae. The Committee mentioned the possible alternative of separating the Siberians with 28 chromosomes from those with 40 chromosomes in two subseries of a single series. Subsequently reasons supporting such subdivisions were reported on behalf of the Committee at the International Iris Symposium held in Liblice, Czechoslovakia in June 1974 (7). However, in accordance with its decision that such questions must be left to professional taxonomists it made no recommendations for such a change. Subsequently Lenz has studied the evidence and has published his paper "A Reclassification of the Siberian Irises" (8) in which he has divided Iris series Sibiricae into two subseries: 1. Iris subseries Chrysographes consisting of the 40-chromosome species I. chrysographes, I. bulleyana, I. clarkei, I. delavayi, I. dykesii, I. forrestii, I. phragmitetorum, and I. wilsonii, and 2. Iris subseries Sibiricae consisting of the two 28-chromosome species I. sibirica and I. sanguinea. The SSI Committee considers this new classification both scientifically correct and eminently practical and unanimously recommends that it be adopted by the Society.

Whereas Dr. Lenz' reclassification admirably settles the taxonomic question it does not lend itself to providing common usage terms for the two subseries because one subseries name (Sibiricae) is also that of the entire series and also of one of its species and the other (Chrysographes) is also the name of a species. Hence in common usage these terms could be confusing.

In its preliminary report (1) the Committee discussed various possible common usage names and concluded that the use of the chromosome numbers was the best way to distinguish the 20- and 40-chromosome species and cultivars. The Committee abides by that decision. This terminology has the important advantage that it leaves no doubt as to what is meant and is already widely used. Furthermore with the advent of tetraploid cultivars and of hybrids between 28- and 40-chromosome flowers, the use of chromosome numbers can serve conveniently in indicating the types of parents and the probable genetic compatibilities.

A third question considered by the Committee was whether to recommend that in common usage the name of these irises should be written Siberian or siberian. The argument in favor of the latter was that Siberian with a capital S has definite geographic meaning whereas I. sibirica does not occur in Siberia except rarely in its extreme western part (9), the species having been confused with I. sanguinea which occurs widely in eastern and southern Siberia. The argument advanced was that when spelled with a small s, siberian suggests merely a name without the incorrect geographic connection. A majority of the committee favored use of the capital S in writing Siberian irises. Certainly that is the most common practice in the United States. However, as Dr. Lawrence has stated (10) there are no rules regarding this and it is a matter of personal preference whether one uses the capital or small s. The Committee favors "Siberian" but has no strong recommendation since no real confusion results from either usage.

Summary--The Ad Hoc Committee on Nomenclature of the Society for Siberian Irises recommends:

1. that for taxonomic usage the Society adopt the classification of Dr. Lee. W. Lenz which places all Siberian irises in a single series Sibiricae consisting of two subseries: subseries Chrysographes including the species, and their derived cultivars, with 40 chromosomes and subseries Sibiricae including those with 28 chromosomes.
2. that in common usage the term Siberian irises be applied to all members of the series, and that the terms 40-chromosomes and 28-chromosome Siberians or group subseries, species, cultivars, seedlings, etc. be used to designate respectively the species and cultivars of subseries Chrysographes and subseries Sibiricae.

The Ad Hoc Committee believes that this report concludes the duties for which it was appointed and respectfully requests that it be dissolved.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Nomenclature:

Roy Davidson, Peg Edwards, William G. McGarvey, Lorena Reid, Sarah Tiffney, Kevin Vaughn, Julius Wadekamper, Bee Warburton, Jean G. Witt, Currier McEwen, Chairman.

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ALEXANDER RICHARD WILLIAM BACK: AN OBITUARY

(Mr. Back was the organizer of the Sibirica, Spuria and Japanese Group of the British Iris Society, and was in correspondence with several of our members. The following is reprinted by permission of the BIS Year Book.)

Members will have been greatly shocked to learn of the death of Alex Back on August 29 following a road accident. It seems that he was knocked down while crossing the road to post a letter and died without regaining consciousness. He was 73 years of age.

Alex had worked as an inspector for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children...finally in Stoke-on-Trent, where he was living when he joined the BIS in 1961. I first met him when he entered some classes at a Show soon afterwards. He came to see me with a tale of woe and to cancel his entries. It appears that his carefully packed box of iris spikes had vanished from the roof rack of his car somewhere en route to the Hall!

When he retired in 1965 he moved to Ticehurst in Sussex and started to grow irises and gladiolus, together with other irids, both hardy and tender, in quite a large way. At the same time he started his breeding of Sibiricas, Spurias and other beardless irises which has recently begun to yield good results. He had Sibirica seedlings Selected for Trial in 1973 and 74 and a Pacific Coast seedling in 1975. He competed in the shows regularly

from 1967 showing an increasing interest in the species which culminated this year (1976) in his winning of the Christie Miller Challenge Cup.

...This year he was successful in launching a new Group for the encouragement of beardless iris hybrids (particularly those of the *Sibirica*, *Spuria* and Japanese Sections) of which he was elected the first Honorary Secretary.

An enthusiast for all the irids, he grew a wide range of *Gladiolus* species and hybrids...His death occurred just after his successful efforts at the Anniversary Show of the British Gladiolus Society of which he was an enthusiastic and much valued founding member. He was Chairman of the Gladiolus Breeders Association, an affiliated group of the B. G. S.

Alex had been in poor health for some time but this year he had been much better. He was a quiet, kindly and unassuming man and...a lay preacher who was in considerable demand at non-conformist churches. He will be sorely missed by his many friends.

H. R. Jeffs.

REPORT FROM BERLIN (ECKARD, THAT IS)

1. *I. sibirica* X *I. setosa*. This plant came from seed harvested from my own Siberian USO (recently registered) and then treated with colchicine. This plant flowered for the first time in 1973 and had never made capsules; again this year I made over 100 pollinations--no capsules--but the bees did better. From the last flowers I obtained three little pods in which were a few small seed resembling *setosa* seed. When the first frost comes this plant loses its foliage as my *I. setosa* also did in fall. Therefore I am sure that the seedlings will be true hybrids of *sibirica* (28chr.) X *setosa* (38chr) and will be amphidiploids of n eq. 33 chr. (2n eq. 66). IF the seeds will germinate, then we can build surely a new Iris series. The plant grows like a weed!
2. *I. delavayi*-tet or *delavayi*-hybrid-tet. This was to me the greatest surprise! In 1974 I treated mixed seed from all my 40chr. Siberians with colchicine. Out of these came this plant, which grows very slowly--in 1975 it almost died; this year there were only two fans with very thick leaves, only two flowers, two pods--one empty, one with a few bad seed.
- 3-4. Two *forrestii* forms, nearly identical (tet). This year I had 5 tet-*forestii*--these two are the best. Both are reluctant pod-setters. Two others have longer falls, similar to the diploid form, but with much more substance. The one whose picture I sent you last year I had divided--which made two pods, both empty. Last year the same plant had three

Pods with seed; from all these seeds only one plant came up-- the rest rotted. This plant is growing very slowly. This year I have more seed from all the tet-forrestii; sure some will germinate.

5-6. I. pseudacorus-tet.

Both plants have already produced a second tetraploid generation. From this second round I have had a lot of seed and I hope some of these will germinate. Last year I had seed but it all rotted.

7. I. pseudacorus bastardii-tet.

This is ivory-cream with a few brown markings in the throat. This year for the first time I have a few seed (all plants from soaked seed are reluctant seed-setters and mostly only when they have been established for some years.)

8-12. 40-chr. hybrids.

These mostly come from wilsonii seed. All have, under the microscope, typical tetraploid pollen; all have very good substance and thick leaves--but almost no seed set. Surely with the passage of time this will improve.

With these the falls are not as broad as with the forrestii tets. On the contrary, the falls seem longer than in the diploid state (but no wider). These plants have had difficulty in flowering, but they were only one year old. Next year I hope there will be more.

Also next year there will be more colchicine-treated plants to flower, chiefly wilsonii and PUGET POLKA seedlings.

I would say the 40-chr. Siberians do better in my climate than the 28s; but the last 5 years I have not had a severe winter and I will have to wait for one before I can make a reliable estimate of them. In the 28s I had much botrytis this spring in the same soil as the 40s which had none. The 28s do not like much artificial fertilizer, whereas the 40s in the same soil, in the same climate, with the same fertilizer, grow and grow!

(Note: Mr. Berlin sent slides of the irises described above but these cannot be reproduced here, unfortunately. But they are all interesting and some, particularly the pseudacorus, are very handsome plants. When and if they produce second (and further) generations I think we will begin to see some very fine forms with perhaps more hardiness for the gardens where the 40s are at present difficult to grow--Peg.)

QUERY

If the Spuria isn't a phoney,
But the offspring of true matrimony,
And sibirica's not
From that North Asian plot--
Were the botanists fed on bologna?

Evolution —

The Process Described by the Scientific Principle is Always in Operation.

William McGarvey

Theoretical science has the purpose of explaining events that happen in nature in such a way that we can understand them. Why apples fall down rather than up when released, is a good example of such a principle. The theoretical scientist presents his explanations by means of statements in which concepts are combined into sentences called principles. All scientific knowledge is presented this way although the concepts may be expressed in abstract symbols rather than in words.

The applied scientist, on the other hand, does not build principles; he tries to apply those already developed to the solution of immediate problems, usually practical ones. Norbert Weiner of M. I. T. was unusual in that he was both theoretician and applier in his activities. He invented the science of cybernetics and also designed the first comprehensive computer based on his principles. Once developed and understood, a scientific principle can be used by almost anyone. The iris hybridizer who expects to have any reasonable degree of success puts the scientific principles of Darwinian evolution and Mendelian genetics to considerable use.

Evolution is a process which is always in operation. Its effect is the survival and change in living species. The evolutionary process depends on the presence of particular kinds of genes in the chromosomes of some members of each species of living thing, even bacterium. These genes come into action when environmental changes threaten the continuing existence of a species. Those individuals, perhaps just a few, that have genes, and hence characteristics, that make it possible for them to survive in the new conditions of the changed environment are the ones that will be parents of the next surviving generations. Those that lack this adaptability die.

Since the evolution of a given species depends on the operation of the genes and chromosomes carried by its individual members the process operates independently of how it may operate in any other species. Nonetheless, what happens to one species may seriously affect the survival of another. For example, some insects have developed resistance to the lethal effects of the (now banned) DDT. This resulted in the survival of those insect species and the continuing and even increased disadvantage to the human farmer whose plants are attacked by the survivors. The increase or decrease of a food or predator species can influence

what happens to another. If the rabbit disappears from a given area, foxes will starve and die as well.

The changes brought about by the processes of evolution most frequently depend on the fact of sexual reproduction but there are some other possibilities. Pure chance could produce a mutation which would have survival value. But even here sexual reproduction would be required to carry the mutation forward to following generations.

Cloning--the asexual reproduction of a single individual--has advantages and disadvantages. The vegetative increase of the iris plant makes it possible for people all over the world to have my favorite Siberian iris, EGO. Each person who has it has exactly the same plant as every other person has. Newly developed techniques are making it possible to clone animals and eventually it will be possible for exact duplicates of yourself to be created. How we will enjoy the idea of fifty or five thousand duplicates of oneself is still to be considered. But cloning has some sharp disadvantages. An orchard of Mackintosh apples is an orchard of trees from the same clone. All Mackintosh trees could be destroyed in that orchard and in the world, by a disease that is specific to that clone. This is the kind of problem that is a danger to any plant (or animal) which is multiplied by the techniques of cloning.

A majority of the irises in commerce are divisions of clones that for one reason or another were judged to be superior to the other seedlings from the same cross. The chances are high that at the same time that this clone was selected its hybridizer judged it to be better in some ways than all similar irises then in commerce. Plant collectors also select clones from among the wild populations they visit unless, of course, they select seed pods. In fact this is what did happen for many perennial plants such as irises. Frequently only one or two plants from a wild population were brought into domestic cultivation. Obviously the pool of genes resulting from a small number of selections of a species will be sharply smaller than the pool found in the wild population.

For certain iris species the number of collected clones seems to have been very small indeed. Beyond the small number, some of those collected did not find the new environmental condition at all favorable. These clones quickly died. On the other hand, some found the new locations very favorable. These lived and prospered. Among those that died, some lived long enough to produce progeny. It is from this last group and from those that prospered that hybridizers get the seedlings that give them the opportunity to put evolutionary processes to experimental use.

For example, I received a pod of I. fulva which was collected from a wild population in Louisiana, U. S. A. The flowers

on one appeared to me to be a bit better than those on the others though there was small difference among them. I self-pollinated the flowers on that plant and obtained more than one hundred seedlings from this combination. The parent plant, its siblings, and all the new seedlings died over the next few years, except one which has survived. Eventually that one plant was registered and named DEVIL'S ADVOCATE. (Actually, I should be a bit ashamed of myself for naming one of the most interesting plants in my garden with a name that has nasty connotations.) Not only does it survive in the extremes of winter weather we get here in Oswego, N. Y., but it reblooms as well. It is very plain that this deviant from the swamps of Louisiana carries genes (I am sure it carries multiple genes) that make it possible to prosper in an environment that killed off one hundred fifty more of its species. Out of interest I have purchased other clones of fulva and they have all died--usually in the first winter after I plant them.

By depending on the evolutionary processes to do the selecting for me I have the one fulva plant that is fittest to survive in Oswego and one that reblooms to boot.

At a later date I decided to try an even more radical experiment involving the species I. forrestii. After some very unsatisfactory experiences trying to grow 40-chromosome Siberians in conditions suitable for tall bearded irises I accepted the fact that the Siberians are all meadow plants and that the 40-chromosome species must have these conditions. I provided acid (5.3pH) soil, moist and humusy with full sun, and had no more trouble growing the 40-chromosome species and their hybrids. I developed some very good clones of I. chrysographes and I. forrestii. Some of these were good enough to register and to introduce, but the gardeners who grew them did not have too much success with them because they did not provide the meadowy conditions that they required. Recognizing that such conditions are sometimes difficult for gardeners to maintain in the ideal state, I decided to try to see if the evolutionary processes would operate to give me forrestii plants that would grow under ordinary garden conditions.

In 1972 I planted 126 seedlings from KING'S FORREST selfed. KING'S FORREST is pure I. forrestii and is a good example of the species. I registered and introduced it in 1969. It has also been an excellent parent and has produced plants with flowers more handsome than its own. Instead of planting the 126 seedlings in conditions that I now knew were favorable for this 40-chromosome species, I planted them in sandy very well drained soil. My prediction for these seedlings was that all would die promptly. But my results, though almost in line with my predictions, were a bit wrong. Between 1972 and 1976 all but four of these seedlings died. However, I now have four strong and healthy-looking I. forrestii plants growing in conditions that in my experience are

all wrong for them. It is true that the time period between 1972 and 1976 is a bit on the short side to feel certain that I now have a start on upland forrestii but the fact that all the siblings died and that the ones remaining show no signs at all of poor growth almost convinces me I have what I hoped for even though I did predict that I would not get it. It would seem that I. forrestii carried genes that again allowed the survival of the fittest in new and extreme environmental conditions. I shall, of course, report on the present group of survivors at some later date.

It should be noted that those who wish to make similar experiments will be well advised to plant sizable numbers of seedlings, since planting them in adverse conditions does mean that the best prediction for them is that they will all die. But even one survivor from such an attempt means that a previously difficult species may have evolved into a good garden subject.

One of the four survivors of the I. forrestii experiment--if it continues to live--is quite different from a majority of the species beyond the fact that it has shown the ability to survive environmental conditions known to be unfavorable to its species. This plant is shorter than any other of the hundreds of I. forrestii clones I have known. It has consistently been about nine inches tall. It has a pretty flower with flaring arched falls and should be suitable for the front of a mixed border or even be useful in an Alpine garden. So once again I have something more than a mere survivor. It should be remembered that these other characteristics, when favorable, are matters of pure chance since they were not taken into account in the experiment. My use of the words 'mere survival' suggests that survival in this case is not very important. This is misleading since the survival of the group of four seedlings can have a significant influence on the development of I. forrestii plants for general garden use. Since this has not been true in the past for any of the 40-chromosome species my experiment to test the evolutionary potentialities of I. forrestii could prove to be quite a useful one.

It is important for the hybridizer to recognize that the decisions made in planning a cross will bring the theory of evolution into operation whether this is the intention or not. The most obvious example of this point is found in observing the results of breeding programs that emphasize the development of one set of characteristics while ignoring another. The hybridizer's efforts to produce 'better' show-bench hunting dogs was very successful from the point of view held by show people. But from the point of view of the hunting fraternity it was devastatingly destructive. To a significant degree the show-bench hunting dog has lost its hunting characteristics. This result was not sought by the show-bench hybridizers. It came about because the char-

acteristics that are important in the dog actually used for hunting were ignored by the show-bench hybridizer and do not influence the survival of the breeds of dogs involved. If these breeds of dogs had to depend on their hunting faculties to avoid starvation there would be a bias in favor of those characteristics and an evolution produced by a hybridizer's breeding program can be almost as effective as a bias produced by the survival value of specific characteristics.

(2¢ worth: It will be very interesting to learn (Maybe for the Fall issue, Bill?) how well either the fulva or the forrestii group come through this winter. Oswego is right about the middle of the strip of extremely heavy snowfalls from about Buffalo on the west to the Watertown area eastwards. I suspect that there will be a need for quite a lot of replacements of borderline-hardy plants come spring. My experience of trying many kinds of plants grown from seed, and planting many kinds of seedlings, doubtfully hardy here to be left out all winter, indicates quite clearly that among any sizable quantity of seedlings there will be enough variation so that it is possible that one or two will prove to be tolerant of conditions, whether of soil or of climate, quite different from what is normal for the species and usually decidedly harsh for them. But the real test comes when the seedlings from these more tolerant plants are grown. The percentage of seedlings which carry the added tolerance is usually quite low but I did once, with a batch of semperflorens begonias, get almost 100% hardy seedlings. Turned out, though, that they were hardy outdoors only to about 15 F.; last year we went into the upper teens and none survived in the garden. But I have some root rooted cuttings living it up indoors this winter for their second year and these will be tried again for further generations.

And of course, if it all winds up in zilch, I'll have had the fun of trying!)

* - * - *

COMMENT FROM IOWA

Gunther Stark

At present, the ability of Siberian irises to rebloom is closely associated with moisture and temperature. When the temperature stays under 90 F. and abundant moisture is available, Siberians in Iowa will bloom about 2½ months, but when blooming season is not and dry, like last year, the bloom season shortens to about one month.

The 40-chr. varieties of Siberians can be grown in Iowa only if shade is provided during the hot part of the day and additional moisture is provided so that the plants are always in moist soil. FORETELL (McGarvey) a cross between the 28s and 40s

proved very successful in Iowa for a number of years if watered during severe dry spells. While able to withstand drier conditions than the pure 40s, it still is not as hardy here as the 28s no matter how large the clump. It is better to water it whenever the ground gets dry, because if the plant shows signs of distress it will be already too late.

TREASURER'S REPORT 1976-1977

Gunther Stark

On hand 12/31/75, checking account		\$ 803.17
Income		
dues income	508.00	
miscellaneous income . .	60.62	
interest	87.50	
auction net	364.30	
total income		<u>1020.42</u>
		1823.59
Expenses		
TSI expenses	364.35	
other publication	50.00	
membership notices	17.50	
certificate of deposit		
#5532	500.00	
total expenses		931.85
On hand 2/12/77 checking account		<u>891.74</u>
		1823.59
On hand, 1-\$1000 certificate of deposit		
2-\$ 500 certificates of deposit		

* - * - *

SOLVING A PROBLEM IN NEBRASKA?

Larry Harder

I haven't had the time lately to do very much with the Siberians and give them the care that they need in my garden. However I have learned of a way of planting them and will be doing it with more of the new things as they come to the garden.

A friend of mine suggested that I grow them in containers, since they do prefer a somewhat more acid soil than we have here? So we have obtained some cheap plastic wastepaper cans--the larger size--fill them with good compost, peat, etc., and plant the Siberians in these. The rim of the basket helps with the watering, acting just like a large flowerpot sunk into the garden. I think this will work wonders for me; his plants were growing beautifully in this type of container gardening.

VARIETAL AND OTHER COMMENTS

Joan Cooper

When you are asked to make some varietal comments, quick, is the inevitable time you mislay your convention notes; so I must instead refer to my slides and my memory. I especially remember:

TEMPER TANTRUM--in the Copeland garden, a glowingly different blend of almost fluorescent pink to wine.
DREAMING YELLOW--most notable for being only a dream.
DEWFUL--impressive shape and color in the Winske garden.
VI LUIHN--classy, floriferous and beautiful color.
HALCYON SEAS--probably the best clump at the '76 convention and aren't clumps what Siberians are all about?
Varner 1150 sure looked good to me.

One month earlier at the Dwarf Iris Society Convention in Indiana, I was especially impressed with a lovely clump of SUMMER SKY, not large, not tall, but a real eyecatcher and blooming with the SDBs. Also in Indiana, I fell in love with a little gem in Earl and Marge Roberts' garden called sibirica acuta nana. Can anyone give me any background on this?

In my garden, where named Siberians are rather recent, my one well established clump (which I thought was GATINEAU, but may be TURQUOISE CUP, they tell me) was a little drought-stricken and not up to its usual super-self. Not too well established and certainly not clumps--but impressive to me--were EGO (isn't everyone impressed?), TYCOON, and especially ROYAL ENSIGN. Seen in other gardens and much enjoyed were FOURFOLD WHITE and STEVE.

Most exciting, though, were the Sib. 40s, one from Jean Witt, a fabulous black-red-violet with flat, flaring falls and a wildling look, and my own eight 40-chr. seedlings, all from the Species Iris Seed Exchange. I expect many more in years to come. Most notable were a dainty cream color with lavender spots and lovely lavender style arms--this one was 'best seedling' in the Iris Society of Minnesota late show--and in rather similar color a pretty flower that bloomed, and bloomed, and bloomed again for a month, off and on. If you haven't tried the 40s yet, do--a whole new experience is iris where yellow is not a dream.

I'm counting on all my garden Siberians to survive our 'coldest in a hundred years' winter. While it would be rare to lose a September-planted Siberian, I'm wondering why growers do not offer them for spring planting. My own spring divisions of TYCOON, CAESAR'S BROTHER, SNOWY EGRET and MY LOVE hardly realized they had been disturbed. Has anyone else experimented with spring division? I'll always divide my clumps in spring hereafter. They

were easier to divide and recovered faster.

(NOTE: The Siberian Joan mentions as *sibirica acuta nana* is a cultivar properly called ACUTA, a really charming little feller for the front of the border. It was collected from the wild in 1813 by Willdenow and has been listed under quite a few incorrect names, in some very respectable publications, but apparently no recent taxonomist has considered it sufficiently distinct to be entitled to subspecies status.)

(as the older members know, I've long recommended spring planting for Siberians, and quite a few growers will ship in spring if this is particularly requested. Tranquil Lake Nurseries in Rehobeth, Mass. specifically mentions that they will ship in April to June as well as August to October, but I suspect that the reason some nurseries will do this while others prefer not to is that except where plants are being shipped to a garden in the same, or a warmer climate at shipping time is that if freshly dug and shipped plants have to be kept out of the ground for any time--as for instance if the ground is still frozen or too wet to work in--the plants may very well die of the shock; even putting them in pots temporarily means that they will then suffer a second disturbance when finally planted in the ground. Siberians cannot be dug just any old time in spring unless to move a plant from one part of the garden to another--this goes so quickly that there is not much shock involved. But plants dug as soon as the foliage begins to sprout, shipped to a garden where they can be planted as soon as they arrive, will take hold quickly and even in some cases bloom the same spring.--Peg.)

SOME SEED AND WHAT CAME OF IT

Alma Childers

I wanted to try raising as many kinds of iris as possible. In 1970 I ordered seed of ERIC THE RED from the AIS Seed Exchange and TYCOON, WHITE SWIRL and I. forrestii from Laurie's Garden. All of this seed was open-pollinated. TYCOON gave all blue-violet seedlings, light to dark shades. ERIC THE RED gave magenta seedlings. WHITE SWIRL gave all whites--about 2/3 had WHITE SWIRL-type flowers and these were kept; the ones with other types of flower were pulled out.

I also have one clump of I. forrestii, and a row now of I. chrysographes; an especially pretty one looks as though cut from maroon velvet. PUGET POLKA gave seedlings with basically yellow ground pencilled and dotted in blue or lavender, 15 to 18 inches tall. SPARKLING ROSE gave a pretty shade of blue seedling. I have plants that should bloom this year from this blue seedling to see if they will get back to the rose-mauve color.

O knew I had hit the jackpot when the tiny plants I lined out in the spring of 1971 were clumps by spring of 1972. Over half of them bloomed that year. The 28s grew like weeds and have not failed to bloom, good years or bad. The 40s are not as easy to grow here. They don't survive as well after being transplanted but so far they have seemed just as cold-hardy.

I do have plants from one lot of hand-crossed seed, 72J297: CAESAR'S BROTHER sdlg. (very dark) X AUSABLE RIVER. The seed came from the 6th Seed Exchange. They gave seedlings in several different colors--1 white, 1 dark purple, 1 dark blue-violet with light blue styles, a couple in medium blue-violet with patterns on the falls.

I only have two named varieties--ERIC THE RED and WHITE SWIRL, bought because they were mentioned so often in the backgrounds of others. I also have an order written for ACUTA, because it is a dwarf, CAMBRIDGE and FAIRY DAWN.

(NOTE: Mrs. Childers has picked some good varieties if she really wants to have fun crossing Siberians. She has promised to report again on second-generation seedlings from her first batches.--Peg)

TWO SCRAPS OF INFORMATION ON I. phragmitetorum

Roy Davidson

The collection station was Lake Kuyong-hai in Yunnan. Dr. H.-M. (who he?) suggested that it was 'clearly akin to I. clarkei' --this is from C. H. Grey's 'Hardy Bulbs'; E. P. Dutton & Co. NYC 1938, p. 242.

Col. Grey apparently did a great deal of scholarly research as he has all sorts of little tidbits in his discussions. Perhaps he had had correspondence to refer to. It is ponderous and in three volumes. The Irid volume covers all species including all of the Small and Alexander Hexagonae.

(NOTE: What a pity we didn't have this available when the Check List was in preparation! As it was we have nothing on this species (if it is a true species and not just a form of clarkei or some other 40-chr. species.) in the publication. But these nice nourishing bits of information turn up only by pure chance and not just at the moment you are looking for them.--Peg)

There is something to brighten each hour
In the irises' own sunny bower
From the coming of May
(In a rather small way)
To late June when Siberians flower.
Peg

A NOTE ON MIRZA AND MIRZA CITRONELLA

Laurence Neel

Iris MIRZA is supposed to have been raised by George Yeld in 1925 with one parent given as I. delavayi; from this I presume that it was a chance seedling from delavayi. Mirza Citronella is said to have been raised by Wallace around 1943 but no parentage has ever been given. I have grown it from seed and most of the seedlings were of a yellowish range, but there were also a number of deep and medium purples among them; all were heavily striped or reticulated. Mrs. Hansford's bulleyana crosses are very nearly identical to what I had from Mirza Citronella seedlings.

I have always queried the delavayi content of MIRZA, because certainly Mirza Citronella shows none of that long fall so typical of delavayi. My guess, for what it is worth, is that M. C. has one parent either I. wilsonii or forrestii, probably the latter because of the markings, and the original MIRZA as the other; and that MIRZA might have been delavayi (because I think that Yeld kept pretty good records) but more likely he came unstuck with this one and it was bulleyana which would give results such as Mrs. Hansford is getting. Certainly both MIRZA and Mirza Citronella were raised in England. Unfortunately there is no way of checking up on the parentage of either and what went into them is more or less intelligent guesswork.

REPORT FROM ANOTHER PART OF GERMANY

Marlene Ahlburg

First a question: do you know this plant? It looks like my SPARKLING ROSE in color, wine red with a blue flash on the falls, and also the plant habit is nearly the same, but its wine red is brighter, its blue flash is bluer, and the plant is sturdier, a bit as though it were a tetraploid from SPARKLING ROSE. Herr Denkewitz from Hamburg gave it to me some years ago and he received it from America, though he had ordered no red-flowering plant. It had no label. It has two buds and all first buds open simultaneously and so do the second buds. Could it be TOWANDA REDFLARE?

My husband says I am going Siberian-crazy; he is right! I think this year I planted 1490 seedlings. My meadow is two-thirds full, with these and the plants from '73, '74 and '75. This year I had the first flowering season there with the seedlings from '73 and '74. I joined the German Iris and Lily Society in 1973 just when it changed to the German Perennial Society. In our seed exchange list I found mostly seeds of the 40-chr. species and a few bee-set seeds of old 28-chr. varieties, but as I had nothing and did not know anything or anybody, I ordered everything that was labeled Siberian. I have seen no 40-chr. Siberians flowering

except those in the little meadow--and they were beauties! Especially the cross from Dr. Tamberg, I. delavayi X clarkei and the reverse cross which gave me some wonderful plants, as far as I can judge. This year we had no time to take pictures--we were too busy cutting the scapes before they could open and writing their descriptions and labeling the plant and the budstalks to put in vases so they could open undisturbed and unpicked by children, who naturally found them at once! Of course there were a lot of them, at least half nice, even beautiful, and quite different from the 28-chr. seedlings. The most exciting to me were a violet blue with velvety falls and pure white style arms, one with a cattleya-pink color on standards and falls (and styles too, I think) and light green hafts and signal; a third was like a multi-colored exotic animal, with a butterfly-shaped signal. This coming spring we will take pictures of the nicest flowers. I made a long list, describing each plant and its flower, but afterwards you only remember the hits, and you know there were others which were nice, but can't reconstruct the picture by the description. One that I do remember was a beautiful nearly black velvety thumbprint on dark red-violet falls, a characteristic we found on several flowers.

The drawback of the 40-chr. Siberians is that the flower is very short-lived and the leaves become brown very soon; concerning the leaves, the clarkei-delavayi cross is the best as far as I can see from this one year. Perhaps it depends on the climate which species can be crossed best. I. chrysographes gave me some good seedlings also, but not as much so as the delavayi-clarkei cross.

Next spring I hope all the other '72-'74 seedlings which have not yet flowered will do so. Then I'll wait to see if some will perhaps be so kind as to rebloom. If not, the bulk of them will go to the compost heap--only the best ones will stay. Otherwise I shall have to rent another meadow!

ANNOUNCEMENT!!! THE UPPER MIDWEST WILL HOLD A SIBERIAN AUCTION!

The upper midwest region including Minnesota and Wisconsin plans to hold a Siberian Meeting and Auction this year. The tentative date is September 11.

Mrs. Pat McCallum of 2611 Southlawn Drive, St. Paul, Minn. 55109 has agreed to serve as chairman for the auction. This action was motivated by the example of the auction and meeting held in New England and the desire to help the Society for Siberian Irises with financial aid for their proposed projects. Anyone in adjacent regions who might be interested can write Mrs. McCallum at a suitable time--late June or July--for further information.

REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

In behalf of the Nominating Committee the slate of Officers and other elective Board Members for the Society for Siberian Irises has been listed on page 2 of this issue as proposed by the Elections Committee. In accordance with the bylaws, if no additional candidates are nominated by the membership within six weeks of the mailing of this issue of The Siberian Iris the slate will be considered elected.

The Fall 1976 issue of The Siberian Iris contained on page 24 a proposition for the amendment of the bylaws changing all terms of Officers and other Board Members from two years to three. This amendment received only favorable votes and hence has been passed. Therefore these elected officials will hereafter serve for a term of three years.

Kevin Vaughn
Currier McEwen, Chairman,
Elections Committee

(NOTE: If you look, you will find a committee chairmanship or so listed with no name following it. These committees need chairmen so why not commune with your schedule of activities and see if maybe you could take one on? I know our new president would be very happy to hear from any volunteers. Even if you don't feel up to taking on a chairmanship--some of those committees could use more than one member, and someone else who would like to help on a committee just might be nudged into the chairmanship if he or she knew that there would be a helping hand available-Peg)

THE CHECK LIST

Peg Edwards

Well, it is finally done, home from the printer's and ready to send to you. In fact quite a few copies have already gone out and we've had a few compliments on it.

The price given in the Fall 1976 issue of TSI was pretty nearly perfect. If we can sell about 175-200 copies at the price of \$2.75 we will make costs of printing and mailing. All copies are being sent at first class rates. If overseas members want faster service it can be sent airmail for an additional \$1.50 (U.S.) PLEASE make out checks to The Society for Siberian Irises, instead of to me, as I must simply endorse them and send them on to Mr. Stark, and some banks get rather fussy about checks that are not cashed promptly--and after all at 13¢ a letter I'm not about to mail off each check as soon as it come in! Checks to me please, at the address on p. 1 of this issue. I had hoped we could send multiple copies in one envelope but it turns out that it is too bulky to get two in one envelope--so no cut rates!

BACK TALK

On p. 2 the slate of officers and board members has been listed as though elected. I haven't yet heard from either Dr. McEwen or Mr. Wadekamper about a candidate for 2nd V. P. so Mrs. Reid is still, as required by the by-laws, listed in that slot. Part of the trouble in this election was that in the last issue, I listed the wrong names for the Nominating and Elections Committees; those listed acted--or didn't act--accordingly. I should have checked the by-laws but in the confusion of getting out the issue, I forgot to; I have learned better now. Another cause of the trouble was that quite a few people 'went south' this winter and apparently didn't get the letters proposing them, and so the hoped-for acceptances didn't arrive. Our sincere apologies to all concerned.

You can imagine how pleased I was to learn that there would be two auctions this year and that our new president wants to set up an Auctions Committee to encourage the spread of this activity.

And of course I'm delighted to have several short pieces in this issue by people who have not previously written for us. For one thing, I didn't have to write so much for this issue; what is more to the point is that we thereby get a wider range of views and opinions on Siberians. How about joining our authors? I'd love to have pictures of Siberian irises and Siberian people (black and white please) and hope someone with a camera will join Betty Wood in supplying us with shots for publication. See the bottom of p. 1 for details.

A word about back issues: All issues of Vol. III and of Vol. IV to date are available at \$1 a copy. We have some copies of earlier issues at \$1.50: Vol. I, issues 2,3,4 and 7 and Vol. II, nos. 5,6,9 and 10. There are also quite a few copies of the Judging Standards at \$1 each. As with the Check Lists, send checks made out to The Society for Siberian Irises to me, not to the Treasurer or the Secretary; that would only add to the postage bill and the delay in getting your copy.

When I started typing this issue, not quite two weeks ago, we were still locked in the freezer--the coldest winter here in the last 40 years. Today as I write the crocuses are blooming at the south side of the house and snowdrops have started in the shade on the north side. Spring isn't here yet but it is hovering in the wings. I hope none of us will have suffered too many losses from the cold in the east and midwest or the drought in the west. Certainly our plants have been well tested this winter. Have a good spring!

Reg

PUBLISHED BY:
THE SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES
235 KOEHL STREET
MASSAPEQUA PARK, N.Y. 11762

THIRD CLASS MAIL

~~Miss Kay Meigs~~