



THE SIBERIAN IRIS

Property of The Society for Siberian Irises

THE SIBERIAN IRIS

Volume 5 Number 4

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Steve Varner

Congratulations to Charlotte Withers, our 1981 Distinguished Service Award recipient, and to Currier McEwen for his BUTTER AND SUGAR having received the Morgan Award.

It has been another year of unusual weather, and beautiful Siberian bloom in spite of it. The bloom season here started about ten days early, and Siberians were in good bloom May 11-12, when we had a very hard freeze. The blooms and plants were encased in a 1/16 inch covering of ice. I lost entire clumps of a great many Tall Bearded irises, and all the seed pods on Median crosses. A few days after returning home from the convention, Siberian bloom was normal and continued into early June.

Development of plants that bloom early, and those that bloom late, as well as those with many buds and an extended bloom period, have increased the impact of Siberians in total garden color. Harley Briscoe's STEVE VARNER was a fine blooming clump in at least four Convention gardens and was second runner-up for the Franklin Cook Cup. I believe this is the highest a Siberian has ever placed in the balloting for this award. Congratulations, Harley!

The Siberian Section meeting was well attended with much interest shown. Currier McEwen was busy autographing copies of Siberian Irises. Publication of our book has temporarily put our Society in a financial deficit. Our sincere thanks go to the American Iris Society Foundation which has loaned us \$6500. on our note, and enabled us to pay the publishing bills. I urge you all to become salespersons for our book. If anyone is feeling benevolent, I would like to hear from you. It may be possible to donate to the American Iris Society Foundation specifically to reduce the amount of our indebtedness. I also recommend buying copies of Siberian Irises to present to local Libraries.

We need to establish a slide rental program and a good slide collection of Siberians. At last report, our Society had no slide collection. We need an active, functioning Slide Chairman. In the meantime, if you want to rent Siberian slides for a program and cannot get a satisfactory response from our Slides Chairman, write me personally.

I trust you have sent your Siberians to Washington to be guests at the 1984 Convention. We hope to see you in Colorado in '82! Have a good winter,

Steve

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING, Spring 1981

Ruth Wilder

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society for Siberian Irises was held in the Taft Room of the Marriot Hotel in St. Louis, MO on Tuesday, May 12, and was called to order at 9 PM by President Steve Varner. Those present included Harry Kuesel, Ruth Wilder, Gunther Stark, James Foreman, Julius Wadekamper, Prof. William McGarvey, Dr. Currier McEwen, George Waters, Agnes Waite, Prof. Bob Hollingworth, Virginia Winkler and Anna Mae Miller.

Reports of Officers and Committees were presented.

There are 41 Display Gardens now and these have improved in numbers of Siberians displayed as well as quality of gardens.

Mr. Foreman moved that the mailing labels for the Society for Siberian Irises' newsletter be computer-produced. This he can do at no charge to the Society except for the cost of the paper. The motion was carried.

Agnes Waite reported on introductions of Siberian irises in the past year. The total previously registered and introduced in 1980 was 25. The total registered in 1980, some of which were also introduced, was 17. These were from ten hybridizers.

Mr. Harry Kuesel is Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

After discussion, a motion was made to form a committee to study and recommend a possible change in the By-Laws to remove the offices of Secretary and Treasurer from the requirement of no more than two consecutive terms of office. This motion was carried.

After much discussion it was decided to have a chirographer design the format for the Distinguished Service Award, and that the border have Siberian irises. Harry Kuesel will serve as chairman of this committee. Charlotte Withers will receive this year's award.

The book Siberian Irises by Dr. Currier McEwen is available for sale now. The estimated total cost is \$13,000 with the first outstanding bill amounting to \$4284. A motion was made by Julius Wadekamper that the Siberian Treasury pay this amount and that the Society ask the American Iris Society Foundation to advance the remaining amount. This will be asked for at the Foundation meeting Friday night. This motion was seconded by Harry Kuesel and carried.

The price of the book will be \$5 if purchased at the Convention. For mail sales the cost will be \$7 which includes postage and handling charges. A motion to this effect was made by Gunther Stark and seconded by Julius Wadekamper; the motion was carried. Mail orders are to be sent to Julius Wadekamper as the Publications Office is running out of space.

For a bookstore selling price, George Waters suggested that a 40% discount on the \$5 price be given on lots of 10 or more, with no return given, if we deal directly with the bookstore. Bob Hollingworth offered this motion which was seconded by Gunther Stark. The motion was carried.

Materials have been submitted to AIS for the Siberian Section of the new edition of the Judges' Handbook.

Siberian Auctions have been set for Massachusetts and Minnesota areas. Both auctions need plants for the sales.

Correspondence about the Ira Wood Medal was discussed. Work is continuing on the effort to get an Award of Merit for the Siberian irises.

As no further business was proposed, the meeting was adjourned.

UPPER MIDWEST SIBERIAN AUCTION A HUGE SUCCESS!

Julius Wadekamper

The Upper Midwest Siberian and Other Iris Auction and sale was held Sunday, Sept. 20, 1981 at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chanhassen, Minn. The highly successful event netted a total of \$1,237 after expenses. The income was broken down as follows:

Japanese Irises	\$	57.
Louisiana Irises		46.
Spuria Irises		20.
Species Irises		28.
Siberian Irises		<u>1,086.</u>
Grand Total		\$1,237.

The table sales were held from 11 AM to 4:30 PM. Many good Siberians were donated for the table sales, including TEALWOOD, RUBY WINE, MARANATHA, ANNIVERSARY, SUPER EGO, EGO, TROPIC NIGHT, SWANK, DREAMING SPIRES, SALLY KERLIN, SKY WINGS, SUMMER SKY, LIGHTS OF PARIS, SPARKLING ROSE, HALCYON SEAS, SEA SHADOWS, DREAMING YELLOW, FLOATING ISLAND, EWEN, SAVOIR FAIRE, DEWFUL, as well as many others, old and new. Among the newer offerings on table sales were BORBELETA, SEA GATE, VIOLET SWIRL, STEVE VARNER, BLUE BRIDGE, WING ON WING, EARTHSHINE and WIDE WHITE. Many of these were auctioned off later in the afternoon. The highly successful auction yielded such prices as \$20 for ROANOKE'S CHOICE, \$18 for BUTTER AND SUGAR, \$16 for WIDE WHITE, EARTHSHINE, SILVER EDGE. Many other cultivars sold for \$10 or more. Many people who could not attend the auction had stand-in bidders.

Dr. Donald Koza managed the Siberian part as well as coordinating the whole sale. He obtained many fine plants from Currier McEwen, Melrose Gardens, Steve Varner, Borbeleta Gardens, Louise Bellagamba, and from many other growers. Borbeleta Gardens contributed over 200 plants for the table sales, and many plants were donated by the Arboretum.

The Japanese and Species Sections of the sales were coordinated by Mary Duvall. Dr. Jeffries took care of the Louisiana section, and Joan Cooper handled the Spuria section. Members of the Iris Society of Minnesota helped with the sales, including Dorothy and Stan Rudser who acted as treasurer, Dick Krahn, President of ISM, Dennis Lachowitz, Mike Heger, Mary Duvall and Julius Wadekamper.

The auction included very many interesting items such as Currier McEwen's new seedling T575/35 which is said to be the best white tetraploid to date. Also from Currier came VIOLET JOY, TEAL VELVET, CREME CHANTILLY, BUTTER AND SUGAR, and OUTSET. Louise Bellagamba sent her new introduction (for 1982) BIRDFEEDER, a Siberian of unique form and color, as well as CHRISTMAS WISH and MAGGIE LEE. Pinks were represented by Dr. McGarvey's ROANOKE'S CHOICE, TEMPER TANTRUM and PINK HAZE. Harley Briscoe's Siberians were represented by SEA GATE, BLUE BRIDGE, STEVE VARNER, VIOLET SWIRL and PURPLE TEAL. Ben Hager sent THESPIAN, CHILLED WINE, OTHER WORLDS and STAR CLUSTER. Steve Varner sent ANN DASH, ILLINI CHARM, KISMET and RARE JEWEL. From Germany we had Tomas Tamberg's WIDE WHITE. For old Siberians there was TRUE BLUE (1919) of Fryer (Mr. Fryer operated a nursery in Mantorville, Minn. until his death in 1930-M.F.) There were many other goodies including six Siberian species.

One of the highlights of the occasion was the great number of people, members of neither the local Iris Society nor SSI, who came

and bought plants. Don Koza had made signs giving directions, and giving explanations of the details of Siberians. Several copies of Currier's book, Siberian Irises, were sold.

A great time was had by all who came.

SPEAKING OF THE BOOK--A Roundup of Comments

"We sold over 400 copies of Siberian Irises at the Convention--only 4600 to go."--Julius Wadekamper.

"While I have your ear...the new Siberian Irises, as published by the Society, is pure joy. All you ever wanted to know about Siberians under one cover. I have just sent for an additional five copies at the request of our society librarian and several members."--Jean Erickson.

"Oh wow, what color pictures!"--Me.

And please take note: if you want your copy (copies?) send a check to:

Mr. Julius Wadekamper
10078 154th Avenue
Elk River, MN 55330.

The check should be made out to: The Society for Siberian Irises in the amount of \$7. It's worth it.

SIBERIAN IRIS WINS MINNESOTA IRIS AWARD FOR 1981

Each year, the Iris Society of Minnesota presents the Minnesota Iris Award for outstanding achievement in hybridizing to a Minnesota hybridizer for an iris of his or her origination. This is presented at the annual banquet each fall.

All members vote in the preliminary balloting for their selection of irises introduced by Minnesota hybridizers. Those irises with the required number of votes are then listed on a special ballot for a final vote by the judges of Region 8.

The award for 1981 went to Julius Wadekamper for his Siberian iris BORBELETA. This is the first time a non-bearded iris has won the award.

BORBELETA, a seedling from EGO, is a smooth deep blue iris with no haft markings. The falls have a twist giving the flower a touch of class. The foliage is narrow, blue-green and very erect, presenting a neat clump in the garden all summer.

SIBERIANS SEEN IN ENGLAND 1981

Jennifer Hewitt

There has been plenty to see here this season, though thanks to slugs which specialized in eating off buds on new varieties about to bloom for the first time here, I shall have to possess my soul in patience for another year. Elsewhere, I am glad to say, it has been better and as the B.I.S. held two Shows, on June 6 and June 16/17, not only were there more classes for Siberians but also there were more entries and chances to see many irises which are not widely known. I'm afraid my notes are less than complete--too much time spent talking instead of writing!--but I did also visit some gardens and my impression was that it had been a very good year for Siberians and they are getting better known and appreciated.

Because the date of the main Iris Show is fixed by the Royal Horticultural Society (since it is held in conjunction with the R. H.S. Early Summer Show) and is too late for growers in Southeast England to compete to any great extent, the B.I.S. decided to hold an early show and give them a chance to relieve their frustration. Well, the best-laid plans are often scuppered by the weather and we had it in 1981, after a mostly mild winter and a bitter few days at the end of April (in Shropshire there were 6' deep snowdrifts over my Siberians), a very warm May. And, of course, all the TBs in Southeast England shot up, out and over before early June, so the would-be exhibitors are still gnashing their teeth. However, the Siberians came along early, too, so the class for them on June 6 had six good entries. Most of these contained older irises, still holding their own and looking impressive, but there were also seedlings from some of the few hybridizers. I will not comment on my own, which were not up to much (though it is humbling to see someone else growing my seedlings far better than I do!) but one which I liked very much both at the Show and in its home garden was a pure violet, by which I mean the blue-violet of the Common Dog Violet, *viola riviniana*. Of completely smooth coloring, this was raised by Cy Bartlett; it is a modest flower in size and color but I for one don't wish all the Siberians to be big and assertive. The most interesting Show entry came from Ray Jeffs who included Currier McEwen's SOFT BLUE (welcome for similar qualities to the Bartlett seedling), Tomas Tamberg's KOBALTBIAU which is a dark purple, and one labeled as Eckard Berlin's MOORSEE but which the raiser says is not that. MOORSEE is registered as 'colchichined *I. setosa*'; the plant as seen at the Show and Ray's garden has un-sibirica-like branching but the flowers, which are deep purple with the falls mottled with white, are much more 'sibirica' than 'setosa' in shape and size. At present we don't know what it is, but it is a good garden plant with a noticeable flower--most people either love it or hate it!

Ray also showed VALDA (raised by the late Alex Back) which has done him marvellous service this year, as it also appeared in both his first-prize entries at the main Show. It is another rich purple, very dark and sumptuous, enhanced by a small white signal, and is a good grower and flowers freely.

At the main Show we had the pleasure of the company of a large party of visitors from Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, some of whom helped with judging and also entered classes. It takes a lot of time and trouble to cut, pack and transport irises from one country to another, and these efforts are much appreciated, especially when they add as much to the Show as they did this year. The entries for the species and Apogon classes were, I'm sure, the biggest in number for many years and while we don't want to see all our trophies going overseas, I'm sorry that the irises brought by Marlene Ahlberg, Eckard Berlin, and Tomas and Tina Tamberg didn't travel as well as they have done in the past, and their contributions didn't get the awards they deserved. They did, though, add very considerably to the interest of the Show and caused a lot of comment and discussion. Among them I noted the following:

Tamberg SSTT (shown by Ray Jeffs): dark blue with gold hafts, a very striking flower.

Ahlberg 76 Bl/5 (tetraploid): deep blue with a small white signal, tailored form; not, I'm sure, looking anything like its best but still attractive.

Tamberg S 145 (tetraploid): nicely marked hafts on this one, a deep violet-blue with a few white interveins at the edges of the haft marks instead of a signal. Very wide, especially the standards and style arms, the latter with fringed edges. One of the tets that makes me think the Siberians have got quite big enough--they'll be losing their 'sibirica' character and becoming beardless TBs if they go on getting bigger, and one effect of tetraploidy is to alter the angle of the styles, making them stick up at an angle of 45 degrees and showing a gap between them and the hafts which I don't find attractive. However, I still liked this one overall!

TWO WORLDS (Tamberg): possibly the most interesting flower in the Show. This is from a cross of BERLINER RIESEN (*I. clarkei* x *I. delavayi* X LIMEHEART, i.e. 40-chr. x 28-chr. This flower is illustrated in the B.I.S. Year Book for 1980. The style arms are almost white, with blue midribs. The standards and falls are mottled light and medium blue and the falls have a lighter area at the top veined with dark blue, and are deeper at the tips. Of medium size, the flower has a graceful shape with flaring falls. Unfortunately, it is sterile, but even as an end in itself I think it adds a new and fascinating iris to the family.

Finally, if immodestly, may I mention a win which gave me great

pleasure, that of my vase of 40-chr. Siberians which won the class for hybrids against opposition which included Eckard's diploid and tetraploid varieties of *I. pseudacorus*, Louisiana hybrids, Californians and others. The credit should go to the flowers which emerged from their traveling box and opened up excellently. The more 40-chr. species and hybrids I see and grow, the more I feel that they have great potential and among seedlings blooming for the first time here I've seen beautiful colors, branching, bud counts up to 6, and good form including flaring falls. Not, alas, all on one plant!--but it is the hybridizer's job, and pleasure, to try to bring all these good qualities together.

I must apologize to the growers of irises for all the flowers I have failed to mention, but I must also thank them for all the interest and enjoyment they've given to me and others in 1981. Writing this in early September, there are buds to open shortly on reblooming Siberians and lots of fat, exciting seedpods. Life with Siberians is never dull!!

A NOTE ABOUT 'PAPILLON'

Dorothy Hamilton

The old Siberian, PAPILLON, bloomed heavily last year. Each stalk without exception had three branches and two terminal buds. The bloom was not small!

Later in the season the clump was full of bee pods. It sets seed better than any other Siberian in the garden, new or old. (We have had no bees for some years, since they all smothered, closed in the hives on a hot day. They were awaiting the long-delayed coming of a plane which was to spray the area for mosquitoes.) PAPILLON is the only Siberian iris to have set seeds in profusion for some years.

I am anxious to check its progeny via the Check List, for someone must have recognized its fine traits and used it in a breeding program. It should transmit its fine branching which keeps it in bloom for some weeks.

(2¢ worth: Has anyone tried this one? We'd like to hear!--Peg.)

ROBIN NOTES

Before getting into the Robin itself, we have a comment from Jennifer Hewitt about the note on HOLDEN CLOUGH in the last issue.

"P.S.--Following up Sarah Tiffney's Robin comment on HOLDEN CLOUGH, I have what looks like a good pod on *I. chrysographes* with pollen from *I. pseudacorus var bastardi* (hadn't any *I. p.* itself in bloom this year due to moving things around). No takes with *chrys.* pollen or *I. p. var b.* Also tried various pollen on HOLDEN CLOUGH, and H.C. pollen on *chrysographes* (what little pollen I could find)--no joy anywhere. Progress report on that pod may follow later.

"Meanwhile, noticed today when I trimmed leaves of *I. orientalis (ochroleuca)* to put in a parcel, that it smelt like *I. foetidissima* only less so. Maybe all iris leaves are more or less smelly?"

Bee Warburton: About varieties with two buds in the terminal, have you noticed that these two-budders quite often put on a third terminal bud that is so undeveloped as not to be noted when the first one opens? I think this is quite common.

Green signals--they are indeed all forward rounding--out of the haft; they show up, I think, when there is no other obtrusive haft marking--that is, no white, yellow, or brown lines around the end of the central haft coloring. I am certain this comes from WING ON WING. Harley, you are right about the varieties with many stalks making a better show than varieties with many buds per stalk; but along with the many stalks they must have the habit of successive bloom, I think, or they WILL put on a lovely show for a few days only. Currier has the right idea--repeat bloomers. There will always be plenty for show in regular bloom season, so emphasis might well be on his preferential rebloomers--those with a better display the second showing.

Virginia, I am howling about your problem with digging Siberians. When we took out ours we both leaned on the crowbar, finally gave up and yelled for the backhoe. I remember at our auction, all the men would lean on things trying to dig out plants from my 6' hedge of WHITE SWIRL. We usually managed, but it was painful--they meant to stay where they were, with their roots ten feet down to the water table.

Currier McEwen: A bit more about my little ones. Again, they remained at their previous height and size (ht. some at 7" and some at 12"). However, I want to watch them another year or two. I'll not forget my experience with LITTLE BLUE. After studying about the size of LITTLE WHITE--12"--15"--for 3 years, it took off to 24" the year I introduced it. I no longer list it. EVEN BLUE SNIPPET gets to 15" after about 3 years and then, if divided and replanted, is its 'proper' height again. Also, I'm curious about seed size. The seeds of LITTLE WHITE, NANA, and some other small plants are tiny.

If I cross them with other large ones, the seeds are sometimes large and sometimes small, or a given cross will mix large and small ones. For several years I have intended to check and see whether the small seeds give miniatures and the larger seeds plants of usual Siberian size; but when they bloom 2 or 3 years later, I forget to do it. Have any of you any experience with this? I should add that two miniature Japanese sister seedlings I have also have very small seeds.

Steve, I didn't know you had tetraploid pink seedlings. Are they nice and what is their parentage? I have 4 induced chimeral pink amoenas and 4 second-generation ones from them, but they are not awfully good to my eye. I cross them with others and hope for the best. I do think, however, that I have some nice yellow tets coming at last.

Harley, I agree--what counts is amount and total period of bloom; so a Siberian like EGO, with no branch, but the capacity to keep sending up scapes, may bloom as long as the branchers. Or one like DREAMING YELLOW, with no branch but continuing scapes and then a new crop at rebloom, can be better than a brancher.

Virginia, here, Siberians dug, divided into biggish pieces and replanted at once usually bloom again the next year; but those of shipping size which I receive almost always take 2 years. Japs and daililies are much more likely to rebloom the next year--or sometimes, if spring-planted, even that same year.

Harley Briscoe: I agree that there is considerable margin between Exhibition Judging and Garden Judging. But I do not believe there should be. What is the basic reason for shows? In my opinion, to interest people in growing what is shown. If this is so, then any character that does not promote a good garden plant is not desirable. Consequently, desirable show and garden qualities should be the same as far as possible. Also, I would like to see show specimens judged against an ideal instead of how they do individually. You have to do this when they get to the Queen's Table anyway.

Robert Hollingworth: Sarah, thanks for the question about how to increase things rapidly. It was one I wanted to ask. And thanks for all the useful answers which followed. The ultimate answer is tissue culture which should be able to give you all the divisions you can use within a year and still leave the major part of the plant *in situ* for breeding purposes. I was heartened to learn that Eckard Berlin is working on this, and a couple of years back I got two plants of LIGHTS OF PARIS to regenerate from callus, but haven't had the time to follow it up--hope to try again this year. Incidentally, the poor L. OF P. clones did not survive their entry into this dirty world from their nicely antiseptic birthplace, so I have never flowered them to show that they are really of L.OF P.

Currier: You sent me BLUE SNIPPET a couple of years ago and it grew up to about 18" at once and has remained there, maybe even pushing toward 24", not a dwarf. If plants play possum in the way everyone describes, how long must one wait to register a wee one as a dwarf? I'm very much looking forward to seeing your miniatures. I have used SIBIRICA NANA ALBA quite a bit and can't recall ever seeing a mixture of seed sizes in the pods, though often they are small. I must look carefully next time. Have you got S. NANA itself (described as pinkish lavender) or used it in breeding for miniatures? I have what might be S. NANA--got it from Lorena Reid as 'dwarf pink sibe' a few years ago. It doesn't grow too vigorously but I have had some seed from it as pollen parent. It grows about 6-8" but that could be because it isn't too happy where it is.

Virginia Winkler: Bee, if I may put in my 2¢ worth on the subject of 2 buds vs. many, long bloom periods vs. one spectacular show, I would say keep them all. If we do I'll be able to pick the type of plant I want for a particular area. Each may have his own requirements. I would want to see us hybridize ourselves into a box as has happened with TBs. We are in the enviable position of having something for everyone and I for one want to keep it that way. EGO and WHITE SWIRL, I will agree, have wonderful shapes but I would get bored with the sibes if every one in my garden looked like that. To my eye CAMBRIDGE, AUSABLE RIVER, and TUNKHANNOK are equally as lovely and when the wind blows, as it is known to do here, then they are the prettiest. Broader petals, more colors, more substance, yes: all the same shape, all the same blooming characteristics, NO!

Sarah Tiffney: I have a couple of pieces of good news--one is that my *foetidissima* x *chrysographes* seedling is still of this world--it has 3 leaves, 3" long, a little yellow at the tip but another leaf is coming--it is very slow growing, like Dykes said of *foetidissima*. The other is that my pink seedling has bloomed and is just as pink as I remembered it. But sadly it had a very bad case of botrytis. Bob--I can't remember if I used FAIRY DAWN in crosses--if so, it was long ago and I got nothing from it. My best lavenders came from 36A, which was seed I got from Rex Pearce, crossed with MORNING MAGIC, which I thought was the best (at least deepest color with moderate breadth) of the old lavenders. Crossing F. D. with AUGURY I would expect pinks, and by ANNIVERSARY (white) I would expect blues. If you get pinks from ANNIVERSARY that would show that ANNIVERSARY lacks one of the complementary genes that make blue.

(Kinda fun peeking in on the hybridizing robin, isn't it?--Peg.)

DISPLAY GARDENS--A REPORT

James Foreman, Chairman of the Display Garden Committee

I am personally very pleased with the progress made this year. Thanks to a lot of hard work by Dr. Currier McEwen and Mr. Julius Wadekamper, Display Gardens have increased significantly in both quality and number. At present, there are 41 Display gardens dispersed throughout the United States and Canada. The number of gardens increased by two over the 1980-1981 winter.

Seven of the Gardeners reported on the number of visitors, and it may be of interest to hybridizers who may want to place irises in the Gardens. The average number of visitors was 224, not counting known judges which add another 13 for a grand total of 237 average. These numbers do not include visitors to the public gardens (Denver Botanic Garden, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, U.S. National Arboretum, American Horticultural Society River Farm, Mt. Vernon, Va., and Royal Botanical Garden, Hamilton, Ont.) each of which has many thousands of visitors every year.

I believe we have a reasonable mix of public and private display plantings of high quality. It has taken a great deal of effort on the part of many individuals to bring the Display Gardens to the point of excellence that we currently experience. Each of the gardeners should be congratulated for their gardens' quality, and thanked for their outstanding cooperation.

Public gardens do a wonderful job of placing the irises in front of many general-interest flower growers and lookers. Private gardens, which specialize in Siberian irises and whose visitors are more specifically interested in irises, could be a valuable sounding board for the hybridizer--i.e., if the 13-judge average holds for all the display gardens, a variety in each garden would be seen by up to 507 judges.

With the submission of this report, the Display Garden Committee asks the Board of Directors for guidance as to their desires. Although there is reasonable coverage of the United States, in some geographic areas people must travel a great distance to reach a Display Garden. Is it desirable to continue at the current level, or should this program be expanded? If so, by how much? At present, it is estimated that it will cost SSI nearly \$60 per year to maintain current size and quality. In round numbers, this is \$1.50 a year per garden. Since costs are postage and envelopes, doubling the number of gardens would double the cost, and a 50% increase in numbers would increase costs by 50%.

LUCY DELANY--An Obituary

Many members of our Society who had "met" Lucy Delany by mail, or through the pages of this publication, were saddened to hear of her death, which came on December 23, 1980. She was one of our two corresponding members from the beginning--the other being Maurice Kitton who died many years ago. Lucy reported on Siberian news from New Zealand starting in 1962 in our third issue. Not many of those who read her occasional articles knew of the many things she was involved in besides growing Siberians. With permission of the New Zealand Iris Society, I'd like to quote from their March, 1981 Newsletter:

"Everyone knew Lucy. Her life had been devoted to her family; she looked after an invalid father with her mother, then her mother after her father's death, and finally her invalid son, who died a few years ago. At the same time she taught at the Salisbury School for Girls--girls who had been abandoned by parents or had other difficulties. The same care and devotion she gave to her family, she gave freely to these girls whom she taught and helped so much.

"When she died she was the Convener of the Nelson Group and also th(is) Society's Librarian for the second time. She is best known to Society members as the founder of the Dwarf Iris Group, now the Dwarf and Median Section. Her interest in hybridizing led to much correspondence with experts and authorities all over the world and, through her contacts, she was able to procure, for Zealand members, plants and seeds of many of the newest dwarf introductions from America. She was herself a most successful hybridizer with overseas prizes to her credit. Her FASHION DRAMA won her a third prize for an intermediate dwarf bearded at the French Floralties held in Orleans in 1978. In 1979 in Vienna she won fourth prize for her LIANNE."

Many of us grow her NELSON BLUE; some may have her MOON MOTH. I had the latter, but it didn't like the climate here on Long Island. Lucy's letters liked any climate as long as there were plants to talk about. Always literate, informative, optimistic, they were a joy to receive and to pass along to our membership. We will miss Lucy.

GERALD DARBY--A Note from Jennifer Hewitt

...You may also like to know that the parentage of GERALD DARBY is being questioned over here, as it seems to some of us to bear a very strong resemblance to *I. virginica* or *I. versicolor*. I have a form of *virginica* with deep red young growth and at this time of year it and G.D. are very similar in appearance. The *virginica* also has dark stems.

USING THE BRUMMITT SIBERIANS

Tomas Tamberg

From the German point of view, Marjorie Brummitt's Siberian iris cultivars were a breakthrough to a new dimension in the field of this long-neglected group of irises. The Cassebeer cultivars, with WHITE SWIRL as the most important example, had already given an impression, but they never became as popular (here) as the Brummitt cultivars.

The following Brummitt Siberians came to our garden as gifts from Marjorie Brummitt or were ordered from Orpington Nurseries: CAMBRIDGE, DREAMING SPIRES, SEA SHADOWS, LIMEHEART and ANNIVERSARY. The last died after flowering the first time, but the four others have formed big clumps over the years. Being interested in hybridizing, we have used these outstanding cultivars for numerous crosses during the last ten years and the results were interesting and satisfying.

Following the ideas of McGarvey concerning hybrid vigor we started a number of selfing lines to get highly inbred partners for heterosis crosses. From CAMBRIDGE x self we selected three plants of low and compact growth habit with flowers of CAMBRIDGE type but slightly smaller. One was registered and introduced as CAMBRITA. Another one has bright light blue flowers with a white signal area. From CAMBRITA x self we flowered a group of rather dwarf plants of darker color and again smaller flowers. The form of the flowers was, however, not very pleasing. The next selfing generation, which can be described as ((CAMBRIDGE x self) x self) X self is already planted out but develops slowly. Selfing DREAMING SPIRES was so far done only for one generation. We selected two seedlings of which one, BERLIN VELVET, is a rather low-growing wide-petalled beauty with horizontal falls and no signal. The color is a deep blue with a very pronounced velvety appearance. The other one (SST 117) is a plant of normal height and flower size in dark blue. The hafts of the falls are covered with a kind of black velvet, which is an enhancement of the color distribution shown by DREAMING SPIRES.

For our deep blue KOBALTBLOU (HC, Wisley) our records give CAMBRIDGE x unknown as parentage. Considering the other possible parents flowering at this time in our garden, we assume that the pollen parent was DREAMING SPIRES in this case. The first home-made tetraploid Siberian in our garden was an exciting, large and wide-flowered plant from CAMBRIDGE x WHITE MAGNIFICENCE. Later on this was registered and introduced as WIDE WHITE and is still unsurpassed as far as the single flower is concerned. It seems to be a periclinal

chimera with diploid reproductive parts and has until now produced progeny at the diploid level. Crossing it with DREAMING YELLOW has given us at least one beautiful wide-petalled cream-yellow flower.

Another line of breeding started with a cross of TYCOON x LIMEHEART. There were two wide-petalled plants among the seedlings which, however, did not have flaring, but dropping falls. So one of them was backcrossed to LIMEHEART as the pollen parent. The resulting group of seedlings (Pausback-hybrids) had wider petals of better, flaring shape and much more vigor. One of them was crossed with CAMBRIDGE in the next step and from this cross we flowered two plants with flowers of unbelievably wide and compact parts. One of them will be registered as BLUE ROSEBUD because the width of both falls and standards creates a "rosebud" effect when the buds open. In the meantime we have repeated the cross and have used BLUE ROSEBUD for numerous crosses with other Siberians. It will be interesting to see how seedlings of this type will look at the tetraploid level.

A quite different use of LIMEHEART was made when we tried to produce 40 x 28 chromosome Siberian hybrids. Until now the only result of these efforts is a seedling from BERLINER RIESEN x LIMEHEART, which is sterile so far. It is very much in between the parents as far as color and form are concerned. A chromosome count of 54 suggests a triploid structure ($2n = 40$) + $N = 14$) of this unusual plant, which will be registered as TWO WORLDS.

We have not grown seedlings from SEA SHADOWS until now, but should have done so, because it is the best branched of the Brummitt Siberians. At the Osnabrück Siberian Trials it was the most vigorous and free-flowering variety among the modern cultivars of Siberians. This year we have used SEA SHADOWS as seed parent for a Sibirica x Setosa cross, which is an idea of Eckard Berlin. We got three capsules filled with many small, but healthy-looking seeds.

Looking to the U.S.A. we find an increasing use of the Brummitt Siberians, too. To mention only a few of the descendants: the cream yellow DREAMING YELLOW, FLOATING ISLAND and STAR CLUSTERS; the light blue AVON, SEA GATE and BLUE BRIDGE; the dark PIRATE PRINCE. The first two cultivars, however, were grown from seed sent to the U.S.A. by Marjorie Brummitt.

(This article was reprinted from The Newsletter of the Siberian, Spuria and Japanese Iris Group, No. 8, January 1981. Our thanks to this Group of the British Iris Society, and to the Editor, for permission to use.)

STARTING OUT WITH SIBERIANS

Paul E. Richardson

I have recently retired and so far as Siberians are concerned I am still building a collection. Last season I learned the basics of Siberian hybridizing and carried out enough trials to prove that I can name the father as well as the mother.

Siberians started as very much of a sideline to Dwarf Bearded and Pacific Coast natives, but they seem to insinuate themselves into one's affections! With an annual rainfall of about 55 inches and a comparatively mild climate, Siberians thrive here, although I cannot find a source of supply for CAMBRIDGE which I am told just dies out. I can't help feeling that my growing conditions may well be more conducive to success than those of the main suppliers who live in a hotter climate.

My beds are in the vegetable garden and are lined with plastic to insure adequate summer moisture. I am fortunate to live close to a sewage treatment plant that provides plenty of treated sludge for the cost of cartage only. It is the texture of old cowpats, completely inoffensive, and the plants revel in it. Trying to grow a representative collection of irises in a small suburban garden poses its problems. This last season the Siberians were interplanted with celery and both seemed to enjoy the conditions.

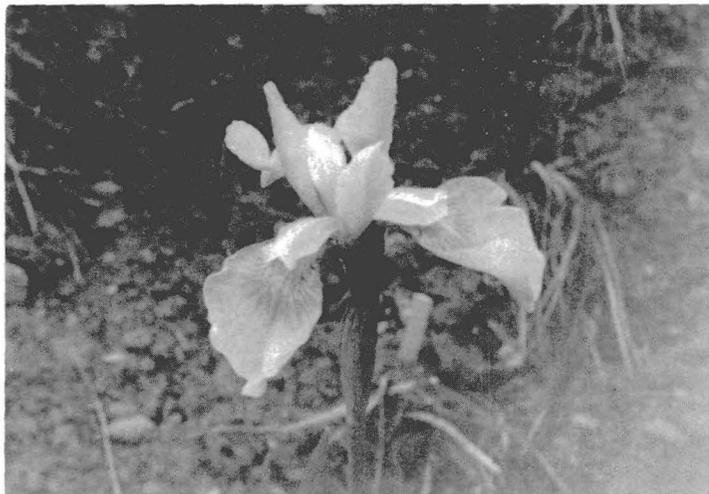
We had plenty of 28s, many hybridized locally, and a fair sprinkling of tetraploids. I have just planted BUTTER AND SUGAR which I guess is the latest arrival in New Zealand. Quite a few people are dabbling with the 40s in our area--particularly *Ii. clarkii*, *delavayi*, *forrestii* crosses.

(Mr. Richardson is a new member who lives in Upper Hutt, New Zealand.)

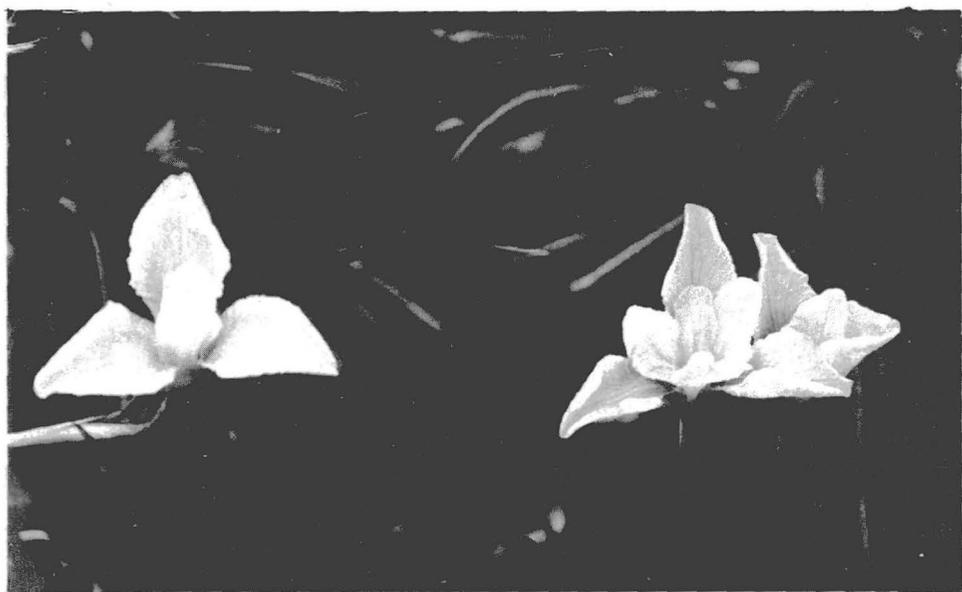
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Anna Mae Miller asks if we can inform members that she has been operating a local nursery for five years and is now hoping to expand into mail operation. She carries 90 varieties of Siberians and plans to add more. Anyone who wants to try her out can write her for a price list. Address: Old Douglas Perennial Garden, Mrs. R. F. Miller, 6065 Old Douglas Rd., Kalamazoo, MI 49007. She is also interested in hybridizing and has been poring over the Check List looking up backgrounds. The more the merrier, Anna Mae!

SNAPSHOTS from Jennifer Hewitt



Soft blue Siberian



Yellow seedlings

SMALLER PLANTS FOR SMALLER GARDENS

Peg Edwards

For many years now I've been hunting for small plants of many kinds for my fairly small garden. In annuals it is fairly easy to find dwarf and minitature types which will provide all the charm of their larger relatives in less space. It is even possible to grow many small versions of one's favorite vegetables. But with most perennials, shrubs, and bulbs you can choose small species and small genera, or try to stunt the growth of the larger ones. And somehow it is the big ones that I love. They are the ones with the spectacular flowers; they provide the masses of color with just a few plants. Who ever heard of a small mass of color?

In bearded irises it is possible to get just this effect on a smaller scale, using the Border, Intermediate, Miniature, Tall and Standard Dwarf types. Not only are they within the range of sizes I want, but also because there are several types with various bloom seasons one can get the effect over a longer period of time than with the Tall Bearded. I confess that, dearly though I love the big beauties, I no longer have a single TB in my garden. But with the Apogons the problem is somewhat different. There are some small Siberians; there are a few Japanese; I hear of small Spurias--but, unfortunately Spurias don't grow very well here. But of any type--a few isn't enough to make a real display. I know that breeding is being done to obtain small Siberians and Japanese, but it will take time to achieve 'quantity production' in this area.

And this is the case not only with irises but with other plants. I also love the Hemerocallis, the Lilies, Rhododendrons and Azaleas-- I know there are miniature Rhodies and have some of them, but I've never come across any of that clan that could be called miniature Azaleas! I think that one of the troubles with my wants vs. the plant breaaders' ideals is basically a matter of terminology. What do we mean by Dwarf and Miniature? Are they the same thing? Not to my mind.

I would call a plant a miniature if it is a scaled-down version of a type of plant normally at least twice the size in all characteristics. Smaller in total size, smaller in leaf, bud, flower and branch. It should look like the normal plant seen through the wrong end of a telescope. A dwarf, to my way of thinking, is a plant which has big flowers on short stalks, or small flowers on tall stalks, which has normal-size leaves around small flowers, or stems too thick for the leaves and blossoms.

As I said, I've been thinking along these lines for many years--

more than a quarter of a century in fact. But recent developments in housing, and comments by friends who have retired from big family homes into smaller quarters, have brought to my attention that I'm not the only one who is thinking along these lines. One old friend, a real demon-gardener, who recently retired to a condominium, now has only a tiny garden, about ten by twelve feet, where she can garden as she likes--everything else, of course, is run by the management (and, in her opinion, not very imaginatively). She had always grown the biggest and splurgiest plants--she loved them. Now her roses, instead of being Hybrid Teas and Climbers, are the smallest of the Miniatures, and she says she is quite happy with them--but she also wants other plants that are in scale with the roses. She is using Snow Crocus instead of the Dutch ones, species tulips instead of Darwins and Parrots, and of course she has SDBs and IBs instead of TBs. No Siberians; no Daylilies, and only a few of the smallest Lilies she could find. She sure could use them if someone bred them. And being on a budget considerably more restricted than she had for her former garden, she will have to wait until new varieties come down to her price level. I've promised her divisions of some of my tinies when they have increased to where I can separate them--but of course she wants them to be on the market now!

Another acquaintance still has the big back yard, but she can no longer take proper care of it all the way she used to. Her perennial beds have been dug up and planted with evergreens and ground covers, and her own garden is a small raised bed beside their terrace where she can work sitting on the edge of the bed. Again--she needs smaller plants to fit the space. Not only that--she needs plants that can be managed entirely by hand--that can be dug and divided with a little hand fork instead of the spading fork she used to use, pruned with a small clipper instead of the loppers, and weeded and fertilized with a small claw instead of a big rake.

A young couple who can't find a house they can afford, nor an apartment in the city that fits their budget, have rented the attic of an older house belonging to a family of enthusiastic gardeners. They are very nice people, and have turned over one small area in their side yard to this couple for their own garden. It has just about enough room for a couple of lawn chairs between the shrubs toward the front of the house and the family vegetable patch, but along the side there is a narrow strip where the kids can garden. Again, only small plants will look well here. The landlord incites them to use it, but he admits he doesn't know where to get the plants they like in the size they need. I've been of some help, but I don't know of any mums, for instance, that look like the big exhibition ones but are only about a half or two-thirds the size. They are also wishing there were Peonies that were smaller and daintier.

And I know that at our garden club plant sales we have little trouble selling dwarf miniature plants even to people who have a big garden. Many of them want smaller plants for the area around the terrace, where plants are viewed more intimately than in the main garden. Quite a few love the smaller specimens simply for their own sakes. I have even been told by some that they want small plants to make a child's garden, or to start one for their children to maintain and, they hope, thereby to make the children into enthusiastic gardeners.

All these reasons are valid, and if my experience is typical (I suspect it is), there is a market waiting for small plants. Who's going to provide them? People like us, mostly. The large commercial growers are not going to set their breeding crews going until they are convinced that the market is big enough to be worth their while--and I might add that some of the kinds of plants wanted by the present market are being bred--even in the normal size--only by specialists and amateurs. The growing market for miniatures among enthusiasts for roses has come to the attention of the large commercial rose nurseries. Many of these places now carry a few smaller bearded irises (mostly older varieties that the devotees would scorn, but to someone who doesn't know the field, they are still lovely little things). But for the most part these wholesalers and big retailers tend to emphasize "big--biggest--broadest"--anything to make the buyer think largely. It will take time to bring them to the idea that bigger isn't necessarily better. How about a motto for us: "Small is Sweet?" - "Little is Lovely?"

What would I like to see in a miniature Siberian? How about this: Stems--not over 16" tall; foliage not over ½" wide, not rising as high as the stalk; flowers 2" to 2½" in their greatest dimension; two or three buds to a stalk, including a possible branch, and of course not all out at once! These, at least, are what I am aiming at--if the darn crosses would ever set (in the last 4 years, out of many crosses made, only one pod set and ripened; weather has been agin it.)

Meanwhile, I've also been fooling around with lilies and hems. I have produced so far just one lily that fits my aims, a rather pretty little yellow dotted with cinnamon, that in its second bloom, had only two buds--quite inadequate--but otherwise OK: 2" across on a rather open flower. The leaves are short and narrow but close enough together to provide adequate foliage for nourishing the bulb. But--it just does not send me; it doesn't have that special something that is the difference between a nice little thing and a good one. I do have hopes--I got a pod on it this year. The others that have bloomed this year are too big, in at least one respect--flowers too wide or too long, stem too tall, foliage too heavy.

So far I have no hem seedlings that have bloomed. Two batches were lined out this year, and I have several pods to sow. I do have a good assortment of potential parents, but which of them will prove to be good at the job? That, of course, is where the fun comes in when you dabble in hybridizing; anything can happen. With luck, and time, maybe two or three will be what I'm after.

And maybe next year I'll even have mini-Siberians to look forward to. After all, for me the irises are the main course. The others are something to do till the irises bloom again. How about you?

Back Talk -

Most of the above article was written before I had all the materials for this issue, so I was pleasantly surprised to find comment on small Siberians in both the Robin notes and the Tamberg article. I've been kind of egging people on about them for some time and maybe I'm part of the cause that they are being bred for.

Something else on my mind: I wish people would tell me if they are not getting the kind of information in this publication that they want to read. Once in a while someone does write to ask why we don't have an article about such-and-such. If it comes from a fairly new member, and we had had something on the subject not long before he or she joined, I can recommend the right back-issue to order. If we have never had anything on the topic I can try someone who could write an article--but everyone I approach may plead ignorance, or someone may promise but it never comes through (in one case, the promiser did write to explain that when he looked into it he decided he was too uninformed to handle it but was trying to learn, but it might be 4-5 years until he felt he could! I'm still waiting.) And sometimes it happens that the information was readily available in other material we have. And, of course, sometimes I do get an article on the subject! But I can't always know what gaps need filling, because it is something I simply take for granted as basic. I must say that if anyone has this kind of problem it would be better to get a copy of Siberian Irises--you're sure to find out what you wanted to know! But, anyhow, do write if you want to know something we haven't discussed in recent issues. The two toughest parts of being an editor are to get material the readers want and turn down unusable material without hurting someone's feelings. (Sore fingers from typing come in third.)

Many of you already have copies of Currier's book. Many don't, yet. To them I would say that it is a real jewel. It is so packed

with good useful information; the pictures are beautiful; the print is pleasant to read; the whole thing is comfortable to take into your hand. The price kind of horrified me when I first heard it, but then I got a copy, and now I say--it is worth the price; it is worth the wait. Très bien, Currier (as Mlle. Bruyere used to say in French class when I got something right.) And très bien for the Morgan Award!

I'm delighted that Charlotte Withers was awarded the Distinguished Service Award, too. During those first years we had a Board Robin going the rounds, but this wasn't enough for Charlotte and me --it was not uncommon for a letter from her to cross one to her in the mail, and sometimes they ran 2 or 3 sheets of paper, single-spaced on both sides. The first letter I ever had from her, when we were just starting to organize, came so beautifully typed on a machine with that charming sans-serif modern type, that even before I read the letter my first thought was--we need someone who can produce such good-looking papers (I was thinking even then of having a publication!). I didn't know what a jewel we were getting when she agreed to be Secretary. But I know now--all the old-timers know. In addition to all she has done for this organization, she organized and planted a Siberian Garden at the International Peace Garden on the Canada-U.S. boundary, between North Dakota and Manitoba. She must have bunned new varieties from all the Siberian breeders then active! Many of the older ones came from her own garden, and others from friends and neighbors in the region. (Apparently out there you're neighbors if you're only two or three hundred miles apart.) And she found time with all the gardening and garden club work--at one time she was President of the North Dakota Federation of Garden Clubs, and I'm not sure it wasn't when she was our President, too--she still found time to do fine needlework and collect china (or was it glass?). Sometimes when she'd mention in one of her letters what she'd been doing since her last one, I'd begin to feel a bit tired myself just from thinking about it!

And now, my wishes for a bearable winter and a lovely spring to all of you--and maybe even an end to that bugaboo, inflation? Yes, let's all aim at that.

Peg —