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THE SIBERIAN IRIS



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By

The Society For Siberian Irises

March 1963

## C O N T E N T S

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<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
List of Officers, Directors and Committees	
The President's Corner - Peg Edwards	75
Thoughts Beside An Open Fire - Dorothy Spofford	76
Mr. F. Cleveland Morgan - A Last Tribute	77
Election Report	78
Notice - To Be Read Before Sending Dues	78
Annual AIS Meeting at Denver	78
Copy of M. Kitton Letter to Peg Edwards	79
Helping Hand Department	80
Using Siberians in Arrangements - Peg Edwards	81
Propaganda, or Sweet are the Users of Publicity	84
Board of Directors Report	85
Things That Turn Up in the Mail	86
So You Are Going to Take a Picture - C. Withers	87
Comments by Members	88
Preliminary Report of Committee on Standards	89
Treasurer's Report - Dr. William McGarvey	93

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### MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

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All members of this Society residing in the United States and Canada shall be members of the American Iris Society.  
Dues shall be \$1.00 per year.



THE PRESIDENT' CORNER  
Peggy Edwards

There are two items in this issue that interest me particularly. One is sad, the other cheerful.

When I learned of the death of Mr. Morgan I felt a sharp sense of loss. Not because we were friends-the most I could claim was that we were slightly acquainted by mail. No-it was because of the last brief note I had from him in which he told me how glad he was to see the revival of interest in the Siberians. I wish now that we had gotten started sooner. He added that he was planning to make a few crosses himself in bloom season (1962) and wished he had not let his interest in hybridizing Siberians succumb so completely to other affairs. I can't help wondering if he did make those crosses and if he harvested and planted any seed.

The cheerful news is the report from Mr. Kitton about the seedling with the apricot flush. If he keeps on at this rate, maybe in a few years I'll be able to say "I told you so" (see AIS Bulletin #154, July, 1959, page 69). There is nothing quite so cheering to one's good opinion of oneself as to be able to say that! So I shall be waiting impatiently to hear what the next generation of this line of breeding turns up. Here come the pinks!? Seriously, I would not be at all surprised to have reports of real pinks by 1970. I am sure that right there in the 40-chromosome group, is the genetic material to produce any color we now have in the TBs, and quite possibly as wide a range of color-patterns.

There is not as much material in this issue as we would like to see, but we can't print articles that nobody writes! We aim at offering information, so don't worry about literary qualities. The thing that matters in any writing is that it is said by someone who is interested in what he is writing about. You are interested in Siberians or you wouldn't be reading this. So start in! Take up your ball-point and tell us what you have learned from your experiences, what you would like to hear of other people's and problems that you are faced with. I came across a story a few weeks ago that seems somewhat apropos. You have probably heard that publishers like manuscripts to be typed neatly on one side of white typing paper, but they do make allowances for beginners, and they really do read what is sent to them. Still, one publisher's reader was somewhat shocked to be confronted by a large suitcase (or maybe it was a small trunk) full of odd sizes of pieces of brown wrapping paper covered with writing. He (or she) plunged in, however, and that wrapping paper turned out to be "Gone With The Wind"! Imagine if that reader had been persnickety about accepting properly prepared manuscripts!

Good bloom to you all!

## THOUGHTS BESIDE AN OPEN FIRE

Dorothy Spofford

Winter is for dreaming and when in accordance with Nature's laws the days begin to lengthen and the cold begins to strengthen, irisarians everywhere and this Siberianist in particular, let their fancies swing rhythmically between past observations and future hopes.

After studying Sarah Tiffney's wonderful articles in the bulletin, I notice she remarks that for the most part Siberian bee seedlings are self-pollinated but not always. To date all my seedlings have been volunteers. When I consider how all my original stock came from the garden of my mother-in-law, Mildred Peck Spofford, where after thirty years of crossing and re-crossing by bees a series of lavenders, pale blues, oyster whites and other variations developed from original purples and whites, the results serve to prove this point. My only regret is how few of the plants I took in order to rescue them from the bulldozer's clutches for undoubtedly there were others, now gone beyond recall, which were even more lovely.

With the idea that to grow them is to love them, we took some of our very special plants in to the October regional meeting and gave them to those who were interested. One irisarian asked us whether ours were line bred or out crosses. We had to admit that ours were undoubtedly line bred since originally there was nowhere else for the bees to go except right down the line. However, now we are trying to get new blood into our stock I had a successful cross of Mildred Peck X Helen Astor. Thought if I could get the height and size of Mildred Peck with the flaring form of Helen Astor the result might be rather nice. Mildred Peck is apt to be a reluctant parent--some years no bee pods, this year only two pods, one a bee pod and one the controlled cross.

I notice that all my pinkish lavenders and the oyster white, named Sea Turn for the fog that in early summer sweeps in from the sea to blanket these shores, have pods that are entirely different from the others. They are the size and shape of an acorn instead of being 'pencil pods'. Sarah Tiffney tells me this is a throw-back to their ancestors.

I don't know whether it is our sea turns, our cool summers, our acid soil, or the ever present moistness in the air that makes this area so ideal for Siberians but they certainly grow and glow. We have a square garden plot in the frontyard, bordered with Siberians and in June it is a mass of blue fire. People strolling along the sidewalk always remark, "Oh yes, the colors of your Tall Bearded are simply luscious but those drifts of blue are just out of this world--there is so much of it!" And actually where can you find an iris of any sort which from a clump one foot in diameter at the base will give you at least twenty-five bloom stalks. And they keep it up for such a long period too--our Salem Witch for instance, starts here about May 30 (it's one of the first to flower) and keeps blooming away until July 1.

Just what is the story on winter growth? I always thought that it

must be considerable for when I put seedlings with only two or three fans to bed in the fall they always wake up in the spring with seven or eight ready to grow. Is this summer increase which never got beyond the bud stage (if so, I have never observed it) or is it true winter growth?

I am constantly amazed at the tenacity with which Siberians cling to life. When in the summer of 1960 we reorganized our garden and uprooted many great clumps of Siberians we found we really had too much to reset. We gave them away right and left--one girl expressed a wish for plants so I left several divisions out beside the back door--not only were they out of the ground but were exposed to considerable summer sun. Well, you can guess the rest--she never appeared and finally when they were practically hay, I decided to pitch them. But my New England conscience got the better of me and made me reconsider. So I set them in an out of the way spot thinking all the while that there was a foolish gesture indeed. No growth appeared the first summer but the following spring up they came and last June 1962 they blossomed beautifully even with such a pathetic start.

After that experience I never 'give up the ship' when Siberians ordered from nurseries die right down as soon as planted. Nearly always such plants show fully as much spring growth as those that stay green.

And now may your Siberian season be happy and bright and all your seedlings be just right.

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MR. F. CLEVELAND MORGAN

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Mr. Morgan, life member of the AIS, Region 16 and member of C.I.S., hybridizer of Siberians, died October 3, 1962, in Montreal, at the age of 80 years. Mr. Morgan was a Director of Henry Morgan Company as well as a leading authority on Canadian Art.

He was educated in England and Switzerland, receiving an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from McGill University in 1960. At that time he was described as a man who exemplifies that happy and unforced combination between the world of commerce and the humanities. Mr. Morgan was associated with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for 45 years. He served as president for eight years. In 1961 a special exhibition displayed more than 600 items he donated to the museum over the years.

The Morgan Award for Siberian Iris was activated in 1951, honouring F. Cleveland Morgan. The award is given annually to the officially registered and introduced variety receiving the greatest number of votes, at least seven votes being required. Varieties must have received an HM to qualify. Each judge may vote for one variety each year. A wonderful memorial to leave behind.

(The above is taken from the Region 16 Newsletter with their editor's kind permission. We know our members are sorry to hear of Mr. Morgan's death. As you may, or may not know, he was the originator of Caesar, Caesar's Brother, and Tropic Night. He was also one of our Honorary Members.)

## ELECTION REPORT

The Election Committee is pleased to report the reelection of all of the officers. You apparently are well satisfied with the type of work being done by the present officers.

The Nominating Committee elected for 1963 is as follows:

Dr. Irwin Conroe - three years  
Mr. Wayne Snook - to fill unexpired term of Mrs. William Melnick. This term expires Dec. 31, 1963.

Committee on Judging Standards:

Dr. William McGarvey, Chairman  
Mrs. William E. Chambers  
Dr. Currier McEwen

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DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES DUES

The time is again here when we have to ask for your signature on a check to cover your 1963 dues. So--if you haven't sent them by now -- Please do so right now. We dislike asking as much as you dislike being reminded. We hope the day will come when 'everything comes free' but the time isn't here as yet.

### PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE SENDING DUES

When you pay your dues will you be so kind as to tell us which AIS membership group you are in? Memberships due in January are 'A'; April are 'B'; July are 'C'; and October are 'D'. This will help us in correspondence with the AIS secretary as memberships are filed by groups. Don't forget--you must be a member of AIS to retain your membership with us. ALSO - you have to get up that buck, of course! Did YOU remember?

\* \* \* \* \*

---- AIS AT DENVER ----

As you probably noticed in the AIS Bulletin listing the facts about the 1963 meeting in Denver, RESERVATIONS MUST BE IN EARLY. So if you intend to be present at that time and have a roof over your head, please make your reservations as soon as possible.

It is our hope that as many members of the Siberian Iris Society as possible will be there to enjoy their hospitality and see the lovely gardens they have prettied up for you. Not only the gardens, but the whole area is worthy of your attention. We were able to visit this 'Mile High City' and Central City two years ago and enjoyed every minute of the trip. The visit to Central City and surrounding area made us marvel at the courage and tenacity of our ancestors in living and working in such remote places. Determination must have been one of their strongest assets. Along with wonderful irises, the roses of Denver are a sight to see. The City of Denver is to be congratulated on the wonderful parks and gardens. If you live within driving distance be sure to attend.

COPY OF M. KITTON LETTER, NOVEMBER 13, 1962

I am so glad that the Society continues to flourish and I have no doubt that the awakening interest which I have noted - even over here - is only at the beginning. It was nice of you to mention the Hugh Miller Award. I was naturally very pleased to receive it but I was even more pleased that the B.I.S. has a top award for which Sibiricas are eligible. It is a big step forward, and quite a few people are growing Sibiricas who did not do so before. I have even got a few people sowing seed. In the summer I offered a selection of plants of my own seedlings to a section of the B.I.S. membership on the understanding that they would show them and also sow some seed (self set or otherwise) and fourteen accepted and already have the plants. Fourteen doesn't sound many but it was much better than I expected and if they all keep up to it (I think most of them will) there might be some interesting results.

1962 was a difficult season for us - so much so that the B.I.S. show had to be cancelled for the first time (so I believe) in its history. My own plants bloomed over a month late but despite this, seed seems to have ripened normally and some indeed has already germinated. I do not like this happening because in my experience such early germinating seedlings often fail to survive the winter. However it is a comfort to know it is viable.

So far as the seedlings are concerned I have a few things to report that may be of interest.

I bloomed a plant last year (1961) of delavayi-forrestii descent with oyster white falls and the whole of the center of the flower (including the neck of the falls) strongly flushed apricot. It is really very striking and quite unlike anything I have ever seen. I broke it up in 1961 after it had bloomed and had five plants this summer (1962) all of which bloomed freely. I only set seed on one of these and have again broken up the plants and now have thirty-three, most of which show every sign that they will bloom well next year. They should make a good show. Incidentally I have found out the hard way that you can't have seed and growth (i.e. increase) with young plants and even with established clumps cutting off the seed heads after blooming (assuming you don't want them) makes an enormous difference to the subsequent growth.

This year I have had another 'break' of a slightly different descent and the whole bloom is of a diffused coffee colour. I have broken this up and can hardly wait until next year to see it again. In addition I had a number of what looked like very good yellows-absolutely clear of markings, of good habit and shape and vigorous growers. If they fulfil their first promise they will be useful. In the same batch (but why I do not know) was a white with a blue point to the fall and blue reticulations on the body of the fall. It seemed to me extremely pretty and so far as I am concerned was something quite new. I really do think that all the colours can be found in the sibirica subsection provided one has sufficient patience and luck.

I used the pollen from these various breaks and every one seems to be perfectly viable. They should give some really interesting seedlings.

I hope you will be able to read this screed and I also hope that you yourself have lots of interesting seedlings.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### HELPING HAND DEPARTMENT

From Hazel Grapes, Big Spring, Nebraska:

I am searching for a start of Gersdorff's Siberian Iris Skyblue Waters -- does anyone have this? If so, please notify me.

From Jean Witt, 16516 25th N.E., Seattle 55, Washington:

1. Have seen a lovely ? Siberian section species here with Kingdon Ward's name attached - royal blue with a big yellow signal. Does anyone know to which species this thing belongs, or if it has been given a species name? Perhaps it is only a form of Delavayi but it isn't like what I have for that.
2. Will someone take a look at the little picture of "Bulleyana" in my species article, AIS Bulletin, July 1962, and see if they can tell me anything about it? The '?' that was supposed to go with it was 'lost' and I've had a red face ever since. I had expected you Siberian people to scream loudly-hoped you would-but I've received only one polite suggestion that it doesn't look enough like the plate in Dykes to be clonal Bulleyana-and probably it isn't a Bulleyana seedling either.

From Albert Ellis, 19 McClure Avenue, Brantford, Ontario:

I know from nothing about Siberians; I do not have room for any great collection. So I am soliciting from you information in what is the best half dozen at present..Culture..Time of Bloom.. in other words, give a guy a helping hand.

From Peg Edwards, 235 Koehl Street, Massapequa Park, New York:

I am in desperate need of written reports on bloom, growing habits, and garden effect of named varieties of Siberians for publication in the next issue of The Siberian Iris. Also articles on any aspect of growing Siberians. All contributions will be gratefully accepted, and if there are enough, we will have a nice start on the next Spring issue.

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Why don't you ask a friend to join our Society--add a bonus by giving him or her a division of one of your Siberians. No one can resist a bargain like that.

\* \* \* \* \*

## USING SIBERIANS IN ARRANGEMENTS

Peg Edwards

Siberians are perhaps one of the finest garden flowers for arranging, in charming colors and varied shapes, elegant enough for the most formal dinner table yet fitting into the simplest of mixed bouquets; but their effect can be spoilt or completely lost if used wrongly. So before you go out into the garden to cut a few, there are a few things you might consider. Most of these apply whether you are using them for your home, as a gift to a shut-in, or for a flower show.

First consider your background. Choose colors that will show up against the paint or paper of the room where you wish to place the arrangement, or the background provided by the show committee; if, for instance, your living room is painted a soft Williamsburg blue, the light to medium blues such as Blue Ridge and Mountain Lake will be almost invisible unless you can interpose a screen of foliage between flowers and wall. Even in an arrangement standing well away from any wall, as on a dinner or coffee table where it is viewed from all sides, there will be angles from which the wall becomes the background--and a good arrangement must stand out enough for visibility. Now, I don't mean that if you want to pick up your wall color with your flowers you must erect a solid mass of greenery and set a few flowers in front of it; but use a few sprays of foliage in a graceful pattern with the blossoms posed where there is at least a bit of greenery behind enough of the flower to silhouette it. (Siberians just beg to be silhouetted!) Of course it is simpler to use a contrasting color, or a shade of the room color. Against a blue background such as I have mentioned, the darker blue-lavenders, violet, or white would make a lovely effect toned to the room.

Even against different colors it is often advisable to use a contrast of light against dark. Caesar's Brother and the other dark varieties simply vanish against a dark wall whatever the color. Remember, too, that these will also seem to disappear in the less well-lit corners of the room at night. In these situations the pale to light colors are the most effective.

Set before a window, Siberians of any color, used alone or with a few leaves or green branches, can be stunning. Try dark varieties, used sparingly in silhouette, for an oriental effect. Light flowers and glossy foliage seem to absorb the daylight and return it as a glow from inside. A few velvety dark blossoms among these provide a pleasing contrast.

Siberians can mix happily with other flowers, but use a little caution. If you cram too much into the bouquet--whatever its dimensions--no one flower can really show its character; you get just a splodge of color. Even in the looser mass or line-mass arrangement the different flowers set each other off more effectively if they are of different forms: one or two types of spire, such as delphinium (loose) and foxglove (compact); a couple of globular types such as the many-petalled tea roses and the fully double Shasta daisies; something airy such as gypsophila--all accent the open form of the Siberian-- or for that matter many other apogons. But don't use too many kinds of things or you will get a busy effect instead of the restful look

a good bouquet should have.

Another point to consider is that of mixing colors. Too much variety of color is as restless as too many flower-shapes. Try to work out a grouping of harmonizing colors. Generally the pastel tints can be mixed freely--pinks, light blues and lavenders, light yellows shading into cream, the light peachy and sherbet oranges, with white, the whole spiced up with some darker foliage. If you want to use the darker, stronger colors, concentrate on two or three in some definite color-harmony--for example, the complimentary: orange daylilies or the new orange-toned roses with the stronger blue Siberians and blue columbines, or yellow lilies, evening primrose, purple-spotted foxgloves and lavender to deep violet Siberians and dark delphiniums. If these seem a little too gaudy they can be softened with grey-green foliage. If the colors suit your room you can try such analogous harmonies as the reddish Siberians - Helen Astor, Royal Ensign - with the deeper rose-to-red pyrethrums and a sharp accent of coral lily, or perhaps the darker blue and violet Siberians with the intense blues of some of the veronicas, anchasas, campanulas, or perhaps some bearded irises, all gentled down with blue-green foliage.

Another effective color scheme is the monochromatic, using white spirea at the top and outer parts, working down and in through light and deep lavenders to dark violet at the center: white snapdragons, pale Siberians, lavender campanulas, the old fashioned "lilac-colored" lilacs and at the heart the lovely dark Royal Herald.

In making show arrangements you are more limited both in form and in color. If the schedule calls for "all blue" or a monochromatic harmony, don't mix together all the bluish-toned Siberians you have; try to take all from one variety, or a light and a darker--and be sure the hues are definitely and equally on the blue side or the lavender, not one of each! Generally, in line arrangements, it is advisable to stick to one or two kinds of flower, of two different shapes; with Siberians have the second form a spire, a ball, or perhaps a flat daisylike bloom, decidedly larger or smaller than the Siberians. Not that Siberians need the support of other flowers. In a line arrangement, try developing the line with foliage and use the Siberians as the focus, with perhaps a bud or two carrying the color out into the line. For an oriental feeling, three stems of Siberians, all the same variety but of varying lengths, with a few rough stones or a fistful of stone chips or polished pebbles to cover the "works" - the pin-holder and floral clay--can be stunning; such arrangements have taken the blue ribbon away from some very elegant ( and expensive) flowers.

For a tall vase or a compote a very effective arrangement can result from using an upward-curving branch of juniper, scotch broom, eucalyptus, or other easily swayed material, with another curving down over the lip of the container, and from three to five stems of Summer Skies, Silvertip, Grandis or some other Siberian having sharp contrast in color-pattern or veining. Or try using one of these with a self-colored Siberian that picks up one of the colors in the patterned iris.

In flower shows, distinction counts in the point-score, and the uncommon shapes and color patterns help pile up these valuable points. White Swirl, with its unusual shape, Turquoise Cup with its odd greenish tinge and wide standards, and the doubles such as Blue Moon, will also catch the eye of the judge. There is no sense in entering a flower show if you don't go in fighting--that is, make every effort, using every legitimate means, to win. This does not mean spending a lot of money on expensive containers or out-of-season flowers: it does mean avoiding the commonplace and using some imagination.

A word about containers: make sure yours will not overwhelm or fight with the flowers. A flower show is NOT a pottery display, and an elaborately decorated vase, a precious (and impressive) antique bronze usubata, or an obviously unique bowl can actually defeat you. Within reasonable limits the simplest and most subdued container is the best. This doesn't mean that you should confine yourself to a dull green soup plate! Sometimes a concocted container will carry through the line of the arrangement or tie in to the theme of the class. But the important thing to remember is that in an arrangement it is the flowers that count - THEY must be the center of interest - they must attract and hold the judge's eye. They must harmonize with each other, fit the requirements of the schedule, create a pleasing or dramatic line or pattern - extend perhaps by foliage - and above all they must be in perfect condition, which means they must look fresh, clean, healthy, and free of spots, tears, pinholes and stray bugs, and they must look to the judges as if they will go on looking that way till the show closes.

In your own home you needn't be so strict. A flower with a damaged petal can be set among the others so the damage doesn't show. An aphid or a ladybug is not fatal. If you have a bowl on which Grandma hand-painted a bouquet of roses, and which you cherish, go ahead and use it--it's your house and your bouquet! You don't have to fuss with flower-show requirements to make your house brighter with the products of your garden. In fact, if your aesthetic sense is not too delicate, you can mix violet and blue-violet Siberians, orange daylilies, red-and-white streaked Gallica roses and pale pink floribundas, magenta foxgloves and yellow lilies. But I believe that if you try working with color harmonies, and fit the container to the flowers, you will get extra satisfaction from your home flower-pieces. And if you adapt the formal patterns of show arrangements to informal home use so as to let each flower show its charm and individuality at this close range you will see new beauty both in your Siberians and the companions you give them.

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#### Hokku For Siberians

Fluttering on their green wands  
Vegetable moths  
Spread their blue and lilac wings.

## PROPAGANDA

or

### Sweet Are The Users of Publicity

Yes, dears, I know we have a Publicity Chairman. But she can't exactly do it all herself. You can help her. How? Well, f'rinstance:

What do you do with surplus divisions - press them on neighbors who maybe have their own surpluses to find homes for, or are perhaps not interested in gardening and would rather spend their time on their own hobbies? Take a good look around town. Maybe a local garden club, church or civic group runs an annual plant sale to raise funds for a good cause. I'll bet they would appreciate a donation of a few freshly-dug, nicely wrapped and labeled clumps. Or perhaps there is a newly built church, school, library, firehouse or whatever, with landscaping to be done and a somewhat flattened budget. Don't just stand there with the clumps in your hands; offer them, plus the knowhow of planting them properly. What about the new house in the next block? Maybe the new owners would love a few divisions to help start their garden. Best of all, perhaps (from our point of view), if your local iris group holds an auction, bring a few divisions of good varieties and get them into the hands and gardens of those poor benighted souls who still think that the genus Iris really begins and ends with the TBs.

Perhaps you don't have divisions to dispose of but could spare some cut stalks. Offer them to some of the local churches. Go through the proper channels, of course--don't just hand them to the minister on Saturday night on your way to the movies! Find out well in advance who is in charge of flowers for the altar and make the offer to her, specifying the colors and quantities you will have available. (Maybe if you invite her to come and select what she can use, right in your garden, you can make a convert of her.) Be sure that you cut unflawed blooms; don't give the Lord your leftovers. And too, in many churches it is the custom to send the altar flowers to ill and convalescent parishioners, so cut stalks that have just opened and will last a while. If a local flower show coincides with Siberian season you might offer the members cut Siberians for arrangement classes, in which it is not usually required that the flowers be grown by the exhibitor. And if your local iris group is having a show, you might win the undying gratitude of the Arrangement Section Chairman by making it possible to inveigle arrangers into entering by the offer of free fresh flowers.

What about having an "open garden" day? Pick a date when you will have the best display of Siberians - preferably a Saturday, Sunday or holiday-with an alternate in case of rain, specify the hours at which guests will be welcome, and invite your iris friends, garden clubs, and neighbors to come see. Send a notice to the local papers at least ten days in advance; have the garden well groomed, the Siberians clearly marked, the lawn chairs clean and dry; make a bowl of cookies and have iced tea, punch or coffee if it is cool, and by all means, have a guest book and pen handy. An ordinary school notebook with lined paper will serve the purpose. Have your camera loaded for snapshots; if any "names" come - a garden club president, an AIS judge, the head of the local iris group, and you can have photographs of them admiring your Siberians-and get them to the papers promptly! They can be

the basis of a follow-up, or at least they could accompany next year's story. Because of course you will do it again. Don't be surprised if you only have three or four guests the first time. If the few who came liked what they saw, they'll be back next time with their friends.

These are a few possible steps in the right direction. Perhaps you will think of some others. Do tell us about them!

Peg Edwards

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#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors has discussed the question of quotations from The Siberian Iris appearing in other publications and is in agreement that where due credit is given to the publication and the author of the article it is permissible. The Board has also authorized the exchange of publications with other iris organizations. The question of overseas memberships (other than the Corresponding and Honorary memberships) arose and it was decided that such members will be welcome, at the standard rate of \$1.00 per year, but that because of the mailing problems involved they will not be considered eligible to vote in elections, etc. No revision of the By-Laws is needed for this.

Add projects needing some industrious worker: pollen. Bee Warburton reports that last season she found all the Siberian pollen caked and hard, and that someone else had the same trouble and asked her about it, and she didn't know the answer. Would some energetic researcher like to investigate this? - in fact, the whole subject of when pollen is at its best and what causes it to misbehave in various ways? It's a simple little job: shouldn't take more than seven or eight years!

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#### SLIDES - AGAIN AND AGAIN

As you read in a previous issue of The Siberian Iris, we have a set of Siberian slides available through the thoughtfulness and generosity of our fellow members. If you have any inquiries, please contact Betty Rowe and she will try to help you. If you have slides you would like to add to our set, list them and send the list to Betty. DON'T SEND THE SLIDES UNTIL SHE LET'S YOU KNOW WHICH SHE CAN USE. Duplication of certain varieties is bound to happen unless she is given a list for her selection.

THANKS!

## THINGS THAT TURN UP IN THE MAIL

"I have no idea why Eric the Red - Forrestii set viable seed. I can only repeat what I have no doubt said to you before, that this sub-section seems to apply its own rules...One of the greatest mysteries to me is Eric itself and I should dearly like to know how it arose because it does seem to possess qualities not present in most other Sibiricae." Maurice Kitton

"The things I'd like to know about Siberians no one knows, I guess. Parentages of the varieties in my garden, breeding behavior or individual clones, good varietal evaluations... I had not realized before I began to grow them that Siberians and Japs are so easy to grow. I have had considerably less trouble with them than with tall bearded, both as seedlings and mature plants. I did not realize either that Delavayi was easy to grow, for the catalog descriptions always say that it absolutely requires constant moisture and cool growing conditions..I have found so far that spring planting of apogons will give 1000% better results than fall planting. Siberians and Japs for me have bloomed the same season from spring planting, while Japs fall-planted died before spring in spite of the best of care, and fall-planted Siberians made only sickly growth for a year after." Gale Whitsett

"..regarding vegetable propagation..possibly one of my experiences might be of interest. Two years ago I decided to revamp my garden a bit and took out some of my Siberians, which were a bit overgrown, for division. As always I had a lot too much to plant. I gave a great deal of the excess away and the rest I told my neighbors they could have it they came and got them. As is often the case, they never did and the clumps being out of the ground just got drier and drier. When they were really bone dry I gave up and composted most of the 'hay'. But my New England conscience got the best of me and I set out seven of the dried-up clumps in a spot that looked as though it needed a little filling in. New growth appeared that fall (it was August when I planted them). Imagine my surprise when every one showed growth in the spring. This year they are blossoming only one year behind the ones I planted directly from one garden spot to the other. Of course I don't believe this would be a recommended practice but it might show that the Siberians are not quite as susceptible to drying out as is usually believed." Dorothy Spofford.

(Let Gale and Dorothy fight it out! Actually both are right, to a considerable extent. Others have reported that spring-planted Siberians have done better for them; and I'm sure that many of us have found that they will survive a lot more dryness than "the book says", both in and out of the ground.)

\* \* \* \* \*

## SO YOU ARE GOING TO TAKE A PICTURE

Well, the size, type and cost of the camera doesn't mean a thing but a little knowledge does. Some of the best slides and pictures I have seen are those where some shutter-bug has turned the camera in the general direction of the posie and clicked! That's all well and good BUT...let's remember that you may really want that particular slide or print to be a reminder at a future date of exactly what you saw. Here are a few simple rules for using your camera:

1. No matter what type of camera you own and use give it a little consideration. Try to keep it in a dust-free storage bag or container. Use a plastic bag if necessary. Keep the lens capped when not in use. Don't leave a camera in a closed car where the temperature is apt to rise abnormally high. If it becomes necessary to clean the lens on your camera use a bulb type of syringe and DRAW the dust away from the lens-do not rub or breath on the lens. Rubbing causes minute scratches on the lens surface.
2. Don't buy a large supply of film unless you know you will be using it within a reasonable length of time. You risk losing some of your pictures or slides through use of old film. Always load a camera in the shade. Send to the processor as soon as possible after exposure.
3. Follow the exposure settings as directed by manufacture of your camera. Most cameras are synchronized by the maker to give you the best results for your particular camera and type of film. This is especially true if you are using flash or supplemental lighting.

Here are some tips for better pictures as listed by the Eastman Kodak Company:

- a. Number one fault of poor pictures is NOT WELL FOCUSED. Number two is movement-use a tripod if possible or settle camera on solid base. It is too easy to move camera during shooting if held against body.
- b. Do not have your central point of interest in exact center of a picture. Try this idea out on a landscape and you will find a much more interesting picture.
- c. Choose a pleasing subject--but for better pictures--KEEP IT SIMPLE.
- d. Watch the background of your pictures or slides. Not too busy or unpleasant objects showing. (Use sky for background if unable to avoid unwanted objects or buildings.)
- e. Choose low angle - that is, kneel or sit down if flowers are short rather than stand above and aim down.
- f. In taking slides use F.2 setting which will put background out of focus. This will also help to bring flowers, etc., into a better prominence.
- g. Include people--especially to show perspective. That is, size, compared to other objects in the picture.
- h. Add spot of bright color if surrounding area is of one color, as trees, lawn, foliage. Use a contrasting color for a background to bring out the color of blossoms-for example: light background to show sheen and color of darker Siberians. Use darker ground for paler lavenders, blues and whites.

- i. Control the lighting. Use contrast. Be sure to check the flash batteries just prior to using for series of important flash shots. Use flash to eliminate shadows on your subject. Don't take pictures with light directly at your back. Use side or background lighting to show up the form and texture in flowers. You also add interest and perspective by this type of lighting. Take pictures against the light on leaves-in autumn especially.
- j. Remember - best hours to take pictures are from about 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Oranges more prominent early in the day, reds later in the day.

Tools of the trade should include a Photoguide and I have one which gives about all of the information the average camera fan needs all in one little booklet, entitled, "Kodak Master Photoguide" which sells for \$1.98 and is well worth the investment. It is small enough to fit into your pocket or camera bag.

Another useful item is a light meter. Learn to use it before you try to get those prize snaps or slides at a time when you are rushed and won't be able to return for a second try at the same flowers. In fact, be familiar with all of your equipment before a trip or tour.

A Skylight filter is about the most useful of the filters. It helps to eliminate HAZE which you encounter in mountain and many lake pictures, or on those hazy days which you are apt to encounter when you most want to take good pictures. A polo screen will help to deepen your sky for background or reflections (as water on rocks). For use with black and white film only use the red filter to bring out foreground figures, emphasize clouds, darken skies, eliminate haze.

A good little booklet to refer to is "Adventures in Outdoors Color Slides" -available at Kodak dealers.

So whether you own and use a \$4.98 Brownie or a \$500.00 Leica or one in between, the same rules usually apply -- be kind to your camera, use common sense and TAKE THAT PICTURE, good or bad, so you will be able to look at it when the flowers are all gone and long after the trip is over. Oh heck, take that picture just the way you want to--you will and I do-- AIM AND SNAP !!

From James Aultz, Huntington, West Virginia:

"Shortly after the last issue of The Siberian Iris, I received in the mail a plant of FAIRY DAWN, and three of MY LOVE from Mrs. G. Hubert Johnson. Needless to say, these Siberians were very much appreciated.

On October 30, Mrs. Foster Spofford wrote to me, enclosing a duplicate slide of her seedling MILDRED PECK. She said that the slide was not as good as the original one which showed the lavender color of that variety which the original possessed. Dorothy's letter and generosity were also very much appreciated. I have a feeling that "Pink Siberian" I'm searching for is not too far away after all!!

(We certainly hope you do finally come up with a 'pink' Siberian and when you do, please, I would like a small division of it too.)

## PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS

Since the committee has been unable to complete its deliberations the material on judging systems presented below is tentative. It will be obvious to the reader that the systems described will need to be supported by standards before either can attain maximum usefulness. Such a set of standards is being developed but is not ready for presentation at this time. However, it was the feeling of the committee that our siberian judges and members may wish to experiment with the proposed systems for organizing their judgements and that they could do this by continuing to apply their own standards for the qualities of siberians within the framework of either or both systems.

Points of View. Knowing that a committee is in the process of developing standards it may be of interest to the membership to know a bit about some of the points of view which must be held in mind by the members of a committee charged with the responsibility to develop such standards.

The members of such a committee must, of course, be convinced that a set of standards is both logical and necessary. But its members must also remember that they are responsible to all of the members of the Society for Siberian Irises, and to the International Horticultural Society. Their specific responsibility with respect to standards requires the member of the committee to see themselves as custodians of the siberian species as well as the arbiters of their day of the standards for the garden varieties being developed from the species.

Since many of the collectors of the species were attracted to them by their beauty (not all collectors were botanists, and many botanists have a deep appreciation for beauty) it behoves those who are selected to or who assume responsibility to develop standards for garden varieties, to be modest in advancing their claims to ultimate knowledge of the subject.

This does not mean however, that they must accept the idea that everything found in nature is beautiful. Beauty is a quality which may be imposed by man on anything he perceives. As the result of cumulating experience standards are developed which within a given culture are accepted as describing beauty. No set of such standards has absolute value but, if well formulated, should express both the status and the trend of appreciations in the area where the standards are applied.

Though many of the decisions of a committee on standards have an element of arbitrary in them, or may seem to have, this does not mean that there are no logical explanations for them. One example should make this point clear. An important standard for beauty in garden flowers is that they should maintain their form and color for as long a time as possible. Logically, this standard may be explained as a projection of our own human concern for our own ultimate destinies. Feeling strongly that our being should extend into the future in one way or another we impose this concern on all things we value.

A committee on standards must recognize that beauty, like utility, is more of a decision than a state or condition of things. Hence it is no more illogical for us to decide what we want in the way of beauty than it is to decide that one plant is of use as food and that another is a weed. That we may change our decisions about such qualities is evident. This emphasizes the need to keep standards in such form as to make the process of their change both possible and orderly. For this reason, the Self-Forced-Comparison Technique of the two described below seems to be the more useful because it remains open-ended in the sense that the comparison plants used by those making judgements will change as new and better varieties are introduced.

Committee on Standards

Kathryn Chambers  
Currier McEwen  
William McGarvey, Chairman

## JUDGING SYSTEMS

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There are a number of methods which may be used by judges to aid them in making decisions and/or to aid them in recording their judgements. Two of these will be discussed.

Point System. A point system is based on the theory that 100 points may be used to represent a perfect iris and that this total can be divided according to the importance of the various characteristics of an iris. When an iris is being judged it is measured against the scale which represents a theoretically perfect iris. Some judges report that they find this system useful.

A problem connected with the use of this method deserves mention. This occurs when judges fail to remember that the total number of points assigned to each division (as in 20 points for Constitution) represents perfection in that category. Since perfection in any category seems logically impossible, the judge who assigns all of the points in any division would seem to lack the ability to make discriminations. In the same way the judge who rates many plants as having total points close to 100 would either be overly optimistic or just plain careless.

The judge who uses the point system and who keeps a record of his judgements may find it helpful to compare judgements made at different times. Judgements of the same plant made a year apart may aid a judge to become more logically critical.

Scale of Points for Siberians. Two methods for assigning points can be used. Each and every quality of importance could be listed and some number of points assigned to it. This method appeals to those whose interests are like those of accountants. But a majority of people seem to lack the ability to hold a large number of small evaluations in mind. Most judges prefer to combine qualities into logically related groups to which larger numbers of points are assigned so that a few but more comprehensive judgements are made than are made by the first system. The latter technique is the one presented here.

For siberians the scale of points given below seems to provide a logical distribution in terms of the qualities which should be emphasized to distinguish the siberian from other irises and which distinguish a good siberian from those of smaller virtue. In the scale below a larger number of points was assigned to the categories which seem most important. It must be recognized that all categories are important and that a low score in any category should cause a judge to doubt the total value of the plant which has such a score.

SCALE OF POINTS

<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Points</u>
<u>Garden Effect</u>	(grace, poise of the flower above foliage, proportions of flower and stalk, response to the movement of air, individuality)	35
<u>The Flower</u>	(form, substance, relation between form and substance)	15
	(color, texture, haft pattern)	10
	Total for flower	25
<u>Constitution</u>	(freedom from disease, resistance to adverse weather conditions, length of life of foliage)	20
<u>Habit</u>	(position and branching of stalk, length of bloom period, character of foliage, floriferousness, reliability)	20
	TOTAL	100

Self-Forced Comparison System. This technique for making judgements ignores point values and since it is relatively simple to understand and to use it may be preferred by those judges who dislike to reduce esthetic judgements to number values.

Method:

1. From your previous experience with siberians recall the one which is best for the characteristics under consideration of the siberian you are judging. (If you are evaluating form and substance, think of the siberian that has the best form and substance, remembering that both should be of the same type.)

2. In your mind compare the iris being judged with the one you recalled and ask yourself the question,

Is the one I am judging poorer, just as good as, or better than the one I already know?

You must remember that you are comparing the two for a given set of qualities (for form and substance in the illustration, and not for all qualities).

Continue with this process until all important qualities have been compared. But for each set of qualities select the previously known plant that is best for these qualities. This may mean that you compare four or five plants with the one under judgement.

To illustrate the process up to this point let's take the four major categories, one of which contains two sub-categories, and record some hypothetical judgements.

Garden Effect (+) (the plus mark indicates the plant being judged was considered better than the comparison plant.)

The Flower

Form, substance, etc.

(-) (indicates a poorer flower)

Color, texture, etc.

(=) (indicates flower just as good as the comparison flower for these qualities)

Constitution (≅) (indicates plant equal in quality to comparison plant)

Habit (+) (indicates plant better than comparison plant)

3. In the third step your final judgements are made. To use the judgements from the illustration above, we have a plant that is just as good as the best we know in two ways, it is better than the best in two others, but it is a poorer plant with respect to form and substance. Your final decision concerning the plant being judged can be made by returning again to the characteristics you judged to be poor. The reasoning behind the decision to base judgement on what is finally decided about the poor qualities is, that the other qualities are weighted in favor of the plant being judged and may now be ignored. (two plus values along with two neutral - equal - values indicate a better than average plant)

The question still to be decided is,

Are the bad qualities sufficiently poor to require rejection of the whole plant?

Returning then to the poor qualities of our hypothetical case, let us suppose that though its form is not bad its substance is such that the flower withers after one day in the hot sun. This is a serious fault which warrants rejection of the plant for award.

Decision? Reject the plant for award.

Note. It should be evident that had the judgements described by this method been converted into points and the point system used to make a final decision, there would be greater likelihood for a plant with one serious fault to appear to be as good as a plant with no serious faults because their total points came out even.

Generalizations. A number of generalizations, useful when the Self-forced Comparison system is applied, are possible.

1. No matter how good a siberian in all respects but one, a single serious fault should result in rejecting the plant for awards.
2. A siberian iris equal in all respects to other good siberians but very superior in some one way is worthy of award.
3. A siberian iris equal in all respects to other good siberians is deserving of praise but not deserving of award. Such a plant should not be introduced.
4. A siberian iris superior in all ways to other good siberians is deserving of high praise and high awards.

Immediate Comparisons. When it is possible to have the actual irises being compared before you, it is likely that the system just described will be easier to use than any other. It should be remembered however, that when a new seedling is being judged by this method it should be compared for each set of qualities with a known iris that has these particular qualities in a high degree. There is no point to comparing a new seedling with an old one that is not very good.

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