

Vol. 2, No. 1
April 1965

The
Siberian Iris



Published

by

The

Society for Siberian Irises

Section of American Iris Society

April 1965

C O N T E N T S

Volume 2, Number 1

April 1965

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
List of Officers, Directors and Committees	
The President's Page - Peggy Edwards	145
A Study of Test and Display Gardens - Part Two Bryce Phenis	147
Speaking of a Species - Jim Aultz	149
A Disease of Siberian Irises - Dr. Currier McEwen	151
An Editorial Viewpoint	153
Canadian Capers - Albert Ellis	155
International Robin Excerpts	156
Bits and Pieces	162
A Show of Siberians - Peggy Edwards	163
Financial Report - Dr. William G. McGarvey	165
List of New Members	166

* * * * *

M E M B E R S H I P _ R E Q U I R E M E N T S

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.

* * * * *
* * *
*

SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES

O F F I C E R S

President..... Mrs. H. L. Edwards, 235 Koehl St., Massapequa Park, N.Y.
Vice President..... Mrs. John Withers, Mandan, North Dakota
Secretary..... Mrs. M. R. Johnson
2275 Kensington Ave., Salt Lake City 8, Utah
Treasurer..... Dr. William G. McGarvey, R.D.3, Oswego, New York

D I R E C T O R S

Mrs. Peggy Burke Grey, Rte 1, Box 72-A, Franz Valley Rd., Calistoga, Cal.
Mrs. F. W. Warburton Rte 1, Box 541, Westboro, Massachusetts
Mr. Ben R. Hager Rte 1, Box 466, Stockton, California

C O M M I T T E E S

Membership: Chairman Mrs. Foster Spofford
19 Everett St., Beverly Farms, Mass.

Publicity: Chairman Mrs. M. R. Johnson

Publications: Chairman Mrs. H. L. Edwards

Nominating: Chairman Mr. Wayne Snook
12 Glengariff Drive, Glen Cove, New York
Dr. Irwin Conroe
42 Font Grove Road, Slingerlands, New York
Mrs. Louise S. Rice
18 Dorothy Ave., North Wilmington, Mass.

Elections: Chairman Mrs. M. R. Johnson
Mrs. Foster Spofford
Mrs. John Withers

Pollen and Seed Supply: Chairman Mrs. Troy Westmeyer
Gary Road, Stamford, Conn.

Research: Chairman Mr. Sherman Preece, Jr.
Linda Vista Addition, Rte 3, Missoula, Mont.

Registration and Awards Mrs. Wesley Tiffney
226 Edge Hill Road, Sharon, Mass.

Judging Standards: Chairman Dr. William G. McGarvey
Mrs. William Chambers
202 Forest Road, Merion Station, Pa.
Dr. Currier McEwen
Palisade Ave. at 255th St., New York 71, N.Y.

Slides: Chairman Mrs. Elizabeth H. Rowe
1231 Wightman St., Pittsburgh 17, Pa.

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE
Peggy Edwards

As I write, crocuses are beginning to go by, Daffodils just starting, Iris reticulata in full bloom. It begins to look as though Spring has finally arrived. A longed-for spring, in many parts of the country; after a long drought last summer, a bad winter. I have been told of sleet storms in which the ice remained, unmelting, on the trees, shrubs and plants for as much as six days; deep snows lying on the ground through most of the winter; more snow in early spring after many things had started into growth with the warm spells of early March. We had no deep, longlasting snows here, but active growth on many plants began in February only to be checked by later cold spells, snowfalls and ice. There was a great deal of heaving. (I know I should have mulched but I didn't have the materials) But I find that even in the case of some late-planted Siberians, which were almost half out of the ground when it became possible to walk on the bare earth, new growth has begun. Not one Siberian will be lost from the bad winter, and only one as a result of the drought last summer, and that, poor thing, had spent over a week in transit, arriving just after our last real rain of early summer. The watering can is no substitute for rain in this set of circumstances, I'm afraid. On the other hand, a couple of plants that had been left in the ground when encroaching shade necessitated removal of most of the planting, spent the winter under a thick crop of chickweed (which grows anywhere!) and when I weeded the spot the other day I was amazed at the quantity of sturdy new shoots. Maybe I should use chickweed as a winter mulch.

As many of you know, AIS last year formed a committee of representatives of all the specialized plant groups including the Tall Bearded, and I am representing the Society For Siberian Irises on this committee. We are working on improving the present setup as regards awards and judging and expect to present the result of this cooperative effort at the Memphis meeting. If our proposals are accepted by the AIS Board of Directors you should hear the results before very long. But if they are accepted you members who breed Siberians will have the responsibility of seeing to it that you not only register your choicest seedlings but also that they are placed where judges can see and vote on them, and that they are introduced into commerce so that the general iris public can obtain them. We must by all means uphold standards of quality; but a little quantity would help too. Judges are not going to try very hard to judge our new varieties if it means seeing one plant here, two ten miles away, and another in the next State. In this connection, it might be helpful if members who have large TB gardens regularly visited by 5, 6 or more judges, could let it be known that they would be happy to guest register seedlings of Siberians on terms mutually agreeable to grower and host, pending the setup of some official SSI test or display garden system - or even afterwards. I am asking members who are so situated to write me giving full information - how many judges he gets in a normal season, how many plants he can accomodate and for how long, etc., and we will then publish a summary in the next issue of the Siberian Iris.

I hope that within the year we will be able to announce some definite plan for official display gardens. Also, now is the time for breeders to start thinking about sending choice seedlings to the 1967 convention; possibly if you can send large enough divisions, the 1966 convention would still take them this summer. It would be worth inquiring. For 1966 write Mrs. Jessie Gatty, 5-22 Hazel Place, Fairlawn, New Jersey, 07410; for 1967 write Miss Leah Ralls, 300 East 5th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73034.

And of course, if you haven't tried hybridizing, do! It's the most fun going. Who knows, you might come up with a winner.

Happy growing, everyone, and a good summer.

* * * * *

ELECTION RESULTS

Following the election of 1965 officers for our Society the following members have been selected to serve:

President	Mrs. H. L. Edwards
Vice President	Mrs. John Withers
Secretary	Mrs. M. R. Johnson
Treasurer	Dr. Wm. McGarvey

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, terms expiring December 31, 1966

Mrs. Peggy Burke Grey, Calistoga, California
Mrs. F. W. Warburton, Westboro, Massachusetts
Mr. Ben R. Hager, Stockton, California

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mrs. Louise S. Rice, North Wilmington, Mass.
(Term expires, December 31, 1967)

* * * * *

A STUDY OF TEST AND DISPLAY GARDENS
PART TWO
Bryce Phenix

Since the publication of the first part of this study, I have corresponded with various American Siberian hybridizers and have asked for opinions on possible test gardens. With one exception, their response has been most favorable. The general plan which was presented to them followed these lines:

The establishment of two test gardens. One east in a climate of severity; one west in a mild climate. While it can not be claimed that two gardens would give as wide a sampling as the AIS system of five gardens, the results should prove generally true in most cases. In fact, the accuracy of five test gardens can be questioned. An example is the tall bearded iris ORANGE PARADE which scored 72 in the five gardens and therefore would not be considered to be worthy of introduction. Yet, two-hundred-and-four AIS judges thought it worthy of an Award of Merit; it is even being mentioned as a likely Dykes Medal candidate.

Two test gardens would not deplete precious stock; on an optional basis, it would be asked that a division be sent to an assigned garden for the National Convention.

Further consideration has led to these conclusions. Seedlings would be scored from one to ten. Scores would be based upon results from the two test gardens where varieties would be grown under code. The National Convention plantings would, it is hoped, bring converts and publicity; for this reason all opportunity would be given to the hybridizer for full publicity and public viewing and code would not be used.

In the scoring system, ten would be perfection, seven average, but not an improvement, and in final results everything above 7.5 introducable. However, in judging, only whole numbers would be used. Varieties scoring eight and above would receive awards of recognition. Perhaps this award could be equal to the HC. It might be desirable to have a special award for the seedling scoring the highest. Whatever awards are set up, should be reasonable and attainable. A major complaint, concerning the AIS Test Gardens, is that to date no iris has received an award; it can not be claimed that all iris entered were unworthy.

I personally favor a rating system from one to ten, rather than a system going to one hundred. To my thinking, a result is either 7.5 or 75, which in fact is the same; however, I can see no reasons for 79, 49 or other numbers along this line.

Introduced varieties, that had not been grown previously in the gardens, could be grown under this system. While seedling should be

tested under a code, it would seem unfair to grow introduced varieties under code and deprive the hybridizer of possible business. After all, one of the main goals of test gardens would be to promote further interest in Siberians.

Rating would be based on bloom and quality of the bloom. Growth should be taken into consideration, but the amount of stress needed on this fact is questionable. Disease-free growth would be required, but the rate of increase can be over emphasized.

In any gardens established, there should be grown a small group of good Siberians that would be used as a standard of evaluation; if these varieties were not performing with usual habits, then leniency would be indicated when rating the varieties under study. Needless to say, stock would be returned to the hybridizer on request, although many hybridizers indicated this would be unnecessary.

It would be hoped that in addition to test gardens, people in different parts of the country would continue to open their gardens to the public. This practice could be developed into a display garden system. Perhaps arrangements could be made with the hybridizers, if they did not need stock returned, to distribute the variety to display gardens where they would continue to be grown as guests. This would allow for a wider public viewing.

To avoid present and possible future problems of the AIS Test Garden system, this system should be separate from the AIS gardens. Test gardens for a section would seem to have a better chance to succeed if centrally located and shown with a collection of new and good talls. The AIS gardens' problems of unnecessary disease, mislabeling, poor location, public apathy, and unfavorable growing conditions, which seem to be beyond correction would be avoided by not participating.

In the one unfavorable response to my inquiries among the hybridizers, the reason could be basically stated as a lack of confidence, based on long experience, that test gardens will ever succeed. The hybridizer felt that the problems of getting good care of guests and the difficulty in getting enough judges to come at the right time, are unsolvable; moreover, as an alternative, he proposes that plants be sent to AIS Conventions, as this hybridizer feels this has proven to be reasonably successful, and to visit the originator's garden at the proper flowering time. I would only point out that what has succeeded or failed for talls need not necessarily apply to Siberians.

While the need for both test and display gardens is obvious, the problems should not be overlooked. I attempted to outline these in the first part of this study. The need and the willingness to cooperate on the hybridizers' part should help toward success. This study, I hope, will be of some use in discussion and possible decisions. I again would like to thank everyone for their cooperation.

* * * * *

SPEAKING OF A SPECIES THAT MUST BE SEEN TO BE APPRECIATED
Jim Aultz

Unlike the tall bearded irises, which may be seen almost everywhere, it is a rare garden (at least in these parts) which has even a few Siberians that this grower may observe. Surely, here is a species that must be seen to be appreciated. Where to see them is the question. Mrs. P. says, "I got rid of all of mine except GATINEAU." Mrs. C. rather dispiritedly remarks, "The only one I have is old CAESAR'S DROTHER." While Mrs. S. confides, "The only Siberian I know anything about is ERIC THE RED". So it goes.

This correspondent, who has been somewhat less "faithful" than he might wish, has been urging all who will listen to plant Siberians. Last spring our own Siberians were especially pleasing - hence the special enthusiasm.

Region 4's most active hybridizer of tall bearded irises, according to the number he has registered, is Lloyd A. Zurbrigg, of Radford, Virginia. When Lloyd and wife Margaret visited our garden last summer, we learned that they are quite familiar with Siberians, having seen them in their native Canada, where many are grown. Lloyd has no Siberians of his own origination that we know of, but he did express an interest in getting started with a planting of them in his own garden.

Rather belatedly, in October, we wrote Towne Abercrombie, who lives in Cincinnati, in the neighboring State of Ohio, and had a nice letter from him in reply. As a result, we hope to send some of our surplus Siberians there, at division time, as well as to friends in North Carolina, Arkansas, Virginia and elsewhere.

The Newsletter issued by The Society For Siberian Irises has been a most enjoyable and informative source of information on the species. Until the complete Checklist of Siberians in Commerce was issued, we had been trying to gather this information for ourselves. The number seemed very few, when compared with the TBs. Still, more hybridizers are now working with the Siberians, those much-sought-after "color breaks" are beginning to appear, in the gardens of originators. There they are likely to stay, for the most part, until some system of distributing them for display or evaluation purposes, together with a realistic price scale, is devised.

The names of hybridizers with recent Siberians to their credit in the list of introductions or registrations are still not legion. A check on this fact brought to our attention an even dozen, two of which are English and one a New Zealander.

It has been our distinct pleasure to correspond with Mrs. Foster (Dorothy) Spofford for several years. She keeps us up-to-date on the

latest developments in Siberian iris circles, sends us attractive slides and color pictures of her own registered and introduced Siberians, as well as those of other hybridizers with which she is in close contact. In 1965, Siberian garden "guests" which may be seen here at Green Blades are her new pearl colored seedling #007, her SAILOR'S DELIGHT and MILD-RED PECK, and Mrs. P. E. (Miriam) Corey's COREY'S PINK. These have been placed on the outer edge of the "Island", a bed roughly the shape of a figure eight, in almost the exact center of the garden, where visitors can hardly miss them. Many of our better named ones are there, too. We have chosen to alternate several pinkish-lavender, red, and white ones with the blues and purples for contrast. Variety is certainly the spice of our flower life. Other Siberians are placed close to the fence around the property, to serve with other plants as background material. Approximately thirty-five are named; fifteen others await that happy day when some knowing individual may come along and put a name tag on them. We invite all readers of these lines to visit us, in person, and have a hand at that pleasant activity!

Eventually, we hope to have a much larger garden, with space provided where the full list of Siberians can be properly displayed. Meanwhile, we are learning all we can of the species through the pages of the Newsletter and the A.I.S. Bulletin. Our A.I.S. friends are encouraged to plant Siberians and to join the Society for Siberian Irises, in order to become more familiar with them.

The use of Siberian irises - flower and foliage - in dried or live arrangements we leave to the ladies.

We anticipate personal visits to other gardens where Siberians are featured, in 1965. Make it a point to do this yourself; for truly, (we repeat) here is a species that must be seen to be appreciated.

Note: Green Blades (Hobby) Iris Garden (No sales) is located at 1010 Thirteenth Street, Huntington, West Virginia - a private garden for public enjoyment, flood-lighted for night viewing.

Since no soil test has ever been made, the owner assumed that the soil (on which no special fertilizer is used) is neutral to slightly acid, where the Siberians are planted, for they seem to like it there.

* * * * *

S L I D E S

Let's be sure to have our cameras handy and loaded with colored film for the opportunities that will be yours this spring in the iris gardens. Even though you aren't able to attend the convention in Memphis don't miss the chances to take slides of gardens near you.

* * *

A DISEASE OF SIBERIAN IRISES
Dr. Currier McEwen

I have always thought of Siberian irises as being without diseases and practically impervious to the attack of insects. It was something of a shock, therefore, when, in the late summer and fall of 1962, one of my plants showed a yellowish discoloration of the foliage which gradually grew more pronounced until the entire plant was a dark brown. I dug a portion of the plant and found the roots dried, shortened and obviously dead. Since this happened to only one plant growing among many others, I concluded that possibly it had come in contact with some harmful material and dismissed it from my mind. However, in 1963 another plant in a bed about fifty feet away died in the same way; and in 1964 three plants were similarly affected in a garden half a mile distant where I now have my principle planting of Siberian, Japanese and Louisiana seedlings. This obviously was a cause of real concern, especially since most of these seedlings had been treated with colchicine in the hope of inducing tetraploidy and were being watched with great care.

The changes which occurred in the plants were the same each time. Yellowing of the leaves started at the tips and spread toward the base, and the yellow gradually deepened until the entire mass of foliage was brown and dead by the end of about four or five weeks. All plants thus far affected have been at least one year old. All have been planted in rows nine inches from other plants which have continued to look normal. In each case the plants affected have been my own seedlings. The first plant affected in 1962 was from a cross of ERIC THE RED x TYCOON made in 1957. The victim in 1963 was from a cross of TYCOON x ERIC THE RED made in 1959. Of the three plants affected in 1964 the pod parent of one was BLUE BRILLIANT and of the other two, WHITE SWIRL. The pollen parents of these three seedlings were not known.

In each instance the adjacent plants which remained healthy were sister seedlings. In view of these features it seemed unlikely that the trouble was basically genetic. Similarly, the fact that only a few plants were affected made it highly improbable that the disease was due to a nutritional deficiency. Therefore, some parasitic cause appeared to be most likely and I turned for help to Dr. Jerry T. Walker, Plant Pathologist of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

The first plant which I gave him was completely dead and unsuitable for study. From a second plant which was obviously affected but still living Dr. Walker isolated a number of nematodes of the genus *Ditylenchus*. These nematodes were considered a potential cause of the disease in my seedling; but Dr. Walker also obtained fungus from the diseased roots which proved to be a Fusarium. Since a species of this fungus is a serious pathogen which causes basal rot of tall bearded irises, Dr. Walker has concluded that it, rather than the nematode, is the probable culprit. In the case of bulbous irises the organism enters through

the roots, proliferates through the root tissues, and from them invades the bulb. It is commonly found in many soils and elimination from the soil is unpractical if not impossible. The only control is to treat the plants. Dr. Walker has suggested the following procedure. Dig the plants, wash off all soil thoroughly, and then allow to dry for several days. When well dried, dip the root system in a solution of Ceresan M (ethyl mercury P-toluene sulfonanilide) for five minutes. Ceresan M is a DuPont product. It can be used in a solution made by dissolving five grams in a gallon of water (or in accordance with instructions of the manufacturer). Immediately after the five minute dip, the roots should be dried lightly with absorbent paper and then allowed to dry fully in the air before replanting.

Dr. Walker has called my attention to the fact that the U. S. Department of Agriculture Handbook No. 165 lists Fusarium on bulbous irises and on *I. kaempferi*, but not on *I. sibirica*. In view of the ubiquitousness of Fusarium and their pathogenic potential he thought it would not be surprising that some Siberian varieties might be susceptible to this organism.

It seems highly probable that the Fusarium is the direct cause of disease in my plants. Assuming this to be so, there remains the important question why only certain plants have, thus far, been affected while adjacent ones have remained healthy. Among the possibilities, two impress me as most likely. The first of these is that the Fusarium affects only those with a genetic susceptibility. The other is that plants with roots already damaged by the nematodes are susceptible to the Fusarium whereas the undamaged plants resist it. No information is available regarding the latter possibility, and genetic data are thus far very meager. It can be stated that two of the five plants thus far affected had TYCOON and ERIC THE RED as parents. The pollen parents of the other three are, unfortunately, unknown. The pod parents were BLUE BRILLIANT and WHITE SWIRL, but since their parentage also is unknown, further exploration into their background is not possible. However, both the genetic and nematode theories are susceptible to investigation and suitably designed experiments will be carried out during the next few years to test these hypotheses.

* * * * *

WILL WE SEE YOU IN MEMPHIS?

From letters received by your Editors, we know many of you are planning to attend the AIS Convention in Memphis on May 8,9 and 10.

Look for the Siberian members and attend the Section meetings.

Ask a friend, not now a member, to join the Society for Siberian Irises. Dues are still just one dollar a year.

* * *

AN EDITORIAL VIEWPOINT

From the Editor's chair people divide neatly into two classes: those who write things, and thereby cut down on the amount of work involved in this job, and those who don't write things, thereby making it necessary for ye Editor to do some work instead of putting in long hours day dreaming about next season's crop of seedlings, or how the new bed of Siberians and other perennials will look in full bloom. (One never remembers that they won't all be out at once.)

Both groups can be subdivided. The non-writers split into those who won't write, period, and those who might if they were wheedled, teased, implored or flattered. The writers are somewhat more complicated - which is odd because they are a much smaller group. I would group them thus:

A. The eager beavers who will write anything on any subject whether they know anything about it or not. About 70% of their production lands in someone's wastebasket - but the other 30% may prove to be the backbone of the publication.

B. A very closely related group. These will write anything imaginable on any subject they are acquainted with. What they get down on paper may only represent a small part of their total output; much of their writing is done in the head and never sees paper. Very useful citizens, from our point of view.

C. The 'suggested-topic' writers. In the course of correspondence or conversation, some casual remark inspires the editor to say that this would make a good article. Within hours - days or weeks, the s-t writer sends the article to the editor. Bless their hearts.

D. The On-Call writers. The editor wants an article on a specific subject; he asks one of these to write it; it is accordingly written. No muss, no fuss, no bother. For the editor, that is. Any editor with one of these available should praise Allah daily.

Another classification that cuts across these four groups would be:

1. The highly literate. Editing on these writers' products amounts to trying to cut them down to fit available space without murdering the contents.

2. Average. Some correction of spelling or grammar may be needed. No sweat.

3. Not very used to words and writing but willing to try. The Editor may have to recast the whole thing, in difficult cases; he may have to correct or change about every fifth word, in minor cases. But these are the people I love best. They have put their heart into what is for them a difficult job, because they feel they do have something useful to say - and they are right.

What category do you fit?

* * * * *

HOW ABOUT AN AD?

The up-and-coming business man sets aside a certain amount each year for advertising, how about you? Do you have Siberians for sale? Let our publication help you SELL. Here are our rates for space:

Half page width, one inch of space (5 lines plus separation) \$1.50

Half page width, two inches of space (11 lines, etc.) 3.00

1/2 Page-column, about 24 lines 6.00

Full width, double the price.

Why don't you try one and see the results.

* * * * *

- OUR SYMPATHY -

*

* * *

*

May we take this way of expressing our sincerest sympathy to two of our members, Dorothy Spofford and Peggy Burke Grey in the loss of their husbands.

Words are poor means of carrying to these two members our true feelings. Be assured however, that we all think of you and wish you consolation in the coming days.

*

* * *

*

CANADIAN CAPERS
Albert Ellis

I no longer talk Talls to anyone. In any Horticulture group that I may talk the wee ones to, I am often asked what is good for those maggots that eat the stalk, that rot, those leaf spots. This to me is like talking about a member of the family who has leprosy. Very embarrassing to say the least. Talls, to the average grower, are no longer garden plants. A sad state of affairs. Mind you, the connoisseurs will continue to grow them. They love them for their flamboyant bloom and will forgive all their foibles, like a mother with a spoiled brat. But unless in the near future the bad habits are corrected, as the connoisseurs die off so will the love of these plants.

And trying to keep up with the Jones family in the Talls has been for some time a sport of millionaires. For a person of average income to attempt to is to woo bankruptcy. Recent high prices for some introductions leave one with the idea that the introducer has very little stock to sell or foolishly thinks we have that kind of money lying around loose. Granted the hybridizer is entitled to his reward. He has slaved, in the hot sun or mentally, to bring the new plant into being. But sometimes we weaken and buy one of these new golden marvels to find out at bloom time that it is just another yellow iris. Another black eye for the talls. Seems to me the judges should have a say about what is to be introduced, but unfortunately most of them are ladies and gentlemen and would not condemn a plant that has some redeeming features (faint though they may be). No one likes to offend.

All this explains why I am a Median and Dwarf grower now. You who grow them know that a few do give trouble, but these are very much in the minority; most are vigorous and healthy. I cannot say the same for the Talls, except for the rebloomers, which have to be healthy to produce bloom in the fall.

The one type of iris which continues to give satisfaction and to increase in popularity is the Siberian. It is my sincere hope that none of the troubles of Talls are prone to will ever turn up in these hardy and almost disease-free plants. My one regret is their slowness in becoming established; still I realize that once over the hump they are for all time (or thereabouts). And now that new colors are being developed, it should be just a short time till more hybridizers join the faithful few who have worked with them for years.

* * * * *

Things I would like to know. Gosh, there must be thousands of members who would like to know: Who edits The Siberian Iris? How do we get into a Robin? I will have other questions in the future.

(O.K. Albert - The editors are Peggy Edwards and Charlotte Withers. Write to Dorothy Spofford to join a Robin. Addresses up front.)

As suggested in a recent letter, I have at times tried to start something. Nothing but failures to date. Is it that the gals are ladies and the men are gentlemen? I don't think this is the answer. To your face they will tell the truth, but not in print. (Anyone wanna fight? - Editor)

* * * * *

INTERNATIONAL ROBIN EXCERPTS

Foreword: As Director of this Robin I wish I could publish all of the letters from our members in England, New Zealand and the United States, but of course, this would take up too much space. However, I have 'lifted' parts of the letters to share with you and help you become better acquainted with our friends. Charlotte Withers.

STEVE VARNER, Monticello, Illinois, commenting on high prices for Siberians says: "I think personally, a good Siberian is much more work and time involved for me to produce than an award winning TB. It takes me longer to accumulate stock, and they are more troublesome to ship. Secondly, the high price is not as high or no higher than TB dogs that are being purchased year after year. I feel that guest iris should be valued sufficiently to have the host return them postpaid after two blooming seasons. I shall be very happy to grow up to ten of any hybridizer's best Siberians to see them bloom twice and return all stock postpaid.

I am definitely not in favor of selling Test Garden seedlings to local trade after their test period. First, I think the revenue would be only at give-away prices, and that the breeder would wait longer to send the seedlings, so that he could have as much stock as the total available from tested plants.

I do not feel that Siberians require as much weeding and general care as other types of irises. I am willing to donate my Siberians to public plantings, but tell them I do not have time to write each one to see if they want some."

FRED CASSEBEER, West Nyack, New York, commenting on the unusually bad weather, says: "It is difficult to assess at this time what damage, if any, has been done to the iris plants because of the unprecedented dry spell; and only their performance at flowering season this coming spring will provide the answer. We do know that the TB seedlings set out in the field from the cold frames early in the summer made very little growth, and mature roots of tall bearded irises which were divided and replanted somewhat later together with the guest irises for the 1966 convention, have shown no new leaf growth at all. Also, the foliage

of the Siberian clumps turned yellow and became sere several weeks earlier than usual."

..."I know that the shipping of Siberian iris plants to foreign countries is quite a chore for I have done quite a bit of it. It is made the more difficult because each country has different import restrictions. To obtain the necessary phytosanitary export certificate from the U. S. Department of Agriculture for shipments to England seems to be the most difficult of all. Whenever permitted by the regulations I have found it best to pack the fibrous roots in plastic bags together with some moisture retaining material such as sphagnum or peat moss, so as to prevent any possibility of the roots drying out because of delays in transit. However, be sure to allow the leaves to extend beyond the neck of the plastic bag to prevent rotting. This precaution is especially important in early spring shipments because the succulent young leaves are particularly subject to rot when in contact with moisture for some days."

..."I note that here and there that there is still some speculation as to the possible parentage of WHITE SWIRL because of its unusual characteristics. Therefore, may I be pardoned if I go into its origin in a little greater detail. In the fall of 1949 we planted at least a bushel of mixed Siberian seeds collected from the pods of all the varieties we were growing at the time, namely: CAESAR'S BROTHER, SNOW CREST, TYCOON, HELEN ASTOR, COOL SPRING, GATINEAU and MOUNTAIN LAKE. These were sown in a long field row about 150 feet long and 5 inches wide. From the resulting plants which could well have numbered over 5,000, we finally selected only six for further propagation. Four of these we subsequently introduced, - WHITE SWIRL, VIOLET FLARE, BLUE BRILLIANT and PLACID WATERS. The other two were purples that we felt were not different enough from CAESAR'S BROTHER to merit introduction even though they were improvements on that variety. Our latest introduction PIRQUETTE was not from this original showing but came about in a rather ridiculous fashion. It was a chance seedling that had sprung up in one of our long strips far away from any of the other Siberians. It may have come from a seed that dropped out of our weeding baskets or possibly even have been a seed dropped by a bird in flight. At any rate, we think it is rather a nice Siberian even though it came to be born so haphazardly.

As to seedlings from WHITE SWIRL, so far I have only bloomed a few. Practically all of them retained the form of WHITE SWIRL but in varying shades of medium blue. This year I expect to bloom several hundreds more, and then shall be in a better position to venture a guess as to what the parents of WHITE SWIRL may have been."

Re Test Gardens ..."Every once in a while I read that someone is suggesting that there be a test garden established for Siberian irises. I am dead set against the idea and hope it will never come to pass. Over the years I have never heard of an iris trial or test garden that has been successful for more than a very short time. Usually the failure was due to poor maintenance of the plants in the test gardens or the judges just didn't bother to visit them in sufficient numbers. In some instances so-called test gardens were established by individuals

mostly as a means of obtaining plants for themselves without cost. While we acted as corresponding secretary and editor of the AIS Bulletin in 1940-46 we received many letters from individuals suggesting that the AIS establish official trial grounds in their gardens. No action was taken on any of these requests.

Now I don't put well-kept iris display gardens such as Presby in the same category as test gardens. There are varieties growing there from a great many sources. They are on display, and visitors can make their own judgements as to their relative merits, and they do not have to be officially judged. So I say YES to display gardens, but NO to test gardens for Siberian irises.

I am strongly of the opinion that hybridizers and/or introducers should make or break their reputations on their own good or poor judgements and not rely on others to influence or make the decisions for them. After all the introducer has seen the new varieties he is marketing for a number of years and has lived with them under a variety of conditions. He should be in the position to know best whether the new iris is worth introducing. If he is a poor selector or makes too many mistakes by putting on the market inferior or mediocre new clones then his customers will soon find out about it and they are not likely to buy from him in the future. Of course, he must also acquire the introductions of others in order to be able to make intelligent comparisons with his own and then make his decision to introduce or not to introduce."

..."We all know the painstaking effort that goes into the creation, propagation, and the final selection of a new variety, and it certainly is the introducer's prerogative to charge whatever he pleases. They are fully worth \$20 or more, but as a practical matter I believe \$7.50 to \$10 would be a better figure to launch them on the market. At these prices you will sell a substantial amount the first year and get them well distributed at once without having to give away plants or to send them out as guests. I can't agree that almost everyone values an iris according to the price tag put on them. I find many new \$10 TB irises at least as good as those marked \$25; and furthermore, there are a great many people who love irises dearly and are truly discriminating who just can not afford to buy these \$25 irises; and in many instances these are just the people who ought to have them."

DOROTHY SPOFFORD, Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, has this to say about shipping or ordering from overseas: "The following is the procedure necessarily followed for those who wish to purchase plants from The Orpington Nurseries Co., Lt., 174 Crofton Lane, Orpington, Kent, England. Permits must be obtained from PERMIT SECTION, PLANT QUARANTINE DIVISION, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, 209 River Street, Hoboken, N. J., USA. I would get the permit before it is time to ship. Give all the details regarding the order so that the permit might be issued without having to fill out a form..(they may send it anyway, they love to have us do paper work). Orpington's makes their last shipment about March 1st."

..."I did cross WHITE SWIRL x PSEUDACORUS - got 20 seeds. I was interested to note that the top seeds in the pod were quite fleshy like PSEUDACORUS while the bottom ones were like a Siberian. What does this signify?"

... "I quite agree that Gertie Knock's two introductions are tops. Not only did I find the color really luscious but the form derived no doubt from its pollen parent, ERIC THE RED, outstanding. Due to my greediness I have only seen them once - the first year. I guess I told you that both flowered late (July 15) after everything else. When they set seed I let it mature so no flowers last year. But I do have some nice seedlings which must be either selfs or sibs and will tell what can be expected from the second generation of such a cross (SNOW CREST x ERIC THE RED). If it blooms this year I shall surely get a slide so that others may have an idea of it.

Gertie sent me two seedlings from the reciprocal cross--these she says are reds - first generation. Bernice Shinkle in Robin 5 says the fact that no reds showed up in the other cross is due to SNOW CREST'S being a recessive white--the other colors in the background tend to distort the red of ERIC. As a matter of fact, most whites are recessive as I understand it and I hope I will be corrected otherwise.

I shall be interested to see these reds also the white she sent me from BLUE MOON x WHITE HERON (spuria). Somehow I believe these interspecies crosses have many possibilities. I thought the root system on this one was quite similar to the Siberians but possibly a trifle heavier. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get a white BLUE MOON with that flat form!"

... "I would say that the big job for the Society for Siberian Irises is to educate all gardeners in the ways of the Siberians. This is especially true as to time of planting which is so very different from the bearded types. Many still insist that resetting at the same time as the TBs is good practice but midsummer resetting is iffy and could be disastrous--it takes the plant several years to come back even when it lives and it often does not. I have found that when resetting in the spring that even relocating in a permanent position later in the spring is also bad--lost several of Sarah's 40-chromosome varieties that way. So I believe that instruction via the Robins on this phase of culture is a MUST if we are ever to flourish."

... "TEALWOOD, MANDY MORSE and IVORY MOONLIGHT are all in Mrs. Bauman's garden in Memphis. This particular garden is protected and tends to be early--just hope things will not have gone by Convention time.

I am in the process of making a series of slides showing when to plant and how to do it. I have one slide which is quite good showing the roots with the buds for spring growth which may be felt below the surface of the ground. I also have two seedlings showing sibirica type foliage and sanguinea type. Did you observe that the plants which are to be white have yellow green leaves in the spring where those which are colored will have blue green?"

MAURICE KITTON, Kent, England, says: "Last summer a few crosses from OYSTER BIRD bloomed and if I am honest I will tell you that they were a very mixed lot. The apricot colour of OYSTER BIRD appears to be recessive although it is really too early to say with certainty. In one case only did I have an apricot coloured flower (from a cross on

a yellow flowered seedling) and it seemed to be an improvement - a clearer colour and a better shape than OYSTER BIRD and generally larger and more vigorous. I am very anxious to have another look at it this year.

I think I have mentioned before that the first growth in the spring of OYSTER BIRD is very distinctive, being almost white to begin with before shading to a coppery colour and then passing to a normal shade of green. The whole change from white to green takes some weeks. Naturally, I looked at the early foliage of the seedlings from crosses from OYSTER BIRD to see if this were repeated but there were under 20 instances out of more than ten times that number of plants and in every case it occurred where the seed parent was a yellow flowered plant. The apricot coloured seedling that did bloom was one of these and the only one of the kind to bloom.

If, indeed, the apricot colour is a recessive then it rather looks as though the same recessive is present in some or all of the yellow flowered plants to enable the colour to reappear in the first generation. This is pure surmise and quite likely to be wrong because if there is one thing that I have learnt, it is that I do not understand rules that apply to sibiricas."

(Re crosses of WHITE SWIRL x SNOW CREST)... "all purple seedlings! To put it mildly, I find this hard to believe. Both the whites must presumably be recessive because if one of them was a dominant white then the first generation would also have been white. In fact the seedlings are said to be purple but the purple could not have been in either of the named parents because then - the white being recessive - one of the parents must have been coloured. I suspect a 'mesalliance'. This diatribe comes ill from me because I confess not to know the rules affecting sibiricas but I have done a lot with whites and on this particular point the results have always been uniform - crossing two whites always gives white.

Still on the subject of white, I was very interested to read what Fred Cassebeer had to say about the parentage of WHITE SWIRL. I know it is not precise (I have often done the same sort of thing myself) but it narrows the field and perhaps between all of us we can narrow it a little further. For myself I can say definitely that GATINEAU contains a recessive white whilst in the case of HELEN ASTOR I can say - although perhaps not quite so definitely - that there is no trace of white in it. Some years ago I tried crossing and selfing HELEN ASTOR quite extensively but never had a white or anything like one although I crossed it with white. Can anyone else tell us their experiences with the other possible progenitors that Fred names? From what Philip Hutchison has told me I doubt very much whether there is a white gene in CAESAR'S BROTHER but I cannot say more than that."

Re planting and cultivation.... "I am sure Steve and Dorothy are right but is there such a thing as a universal 'correct cultivation'? It seems to me that our respective conditions are so different that what suits one of us does not suit another. I am wondering whether there are not some fundamental points which are common to all of us? If I had to choose one I would say 'Never fork round a sibirica plant'."

PHYLLIS KOKICH, "Flowervilla", New Zealand, (our newest Robin member):
"We have had much beneficial rain this summer (February) with some flooding in surrounding districts. The warm rains have encouraged extra growth of the many varieties of irises I grow. Blooming has been good generally though spread over longer periods. For instance, a large clump of TB NEW SNOW turned on wonderful display end of January instead of flowering in November. Water lilies and Cannas are at their best now - two months later than usual although started flowering normally in spring. Japanese irises are now giving last of their main blooming, though I will have odd flowers till winter.

A Sanguinea seedling I particularly liked this season with flowers described on Wilson's Color Chart as a Methyl Violet, 17 inch stems, good proportion, texture and lasting qualities I thought would be worth saving the seed from. I have some thirty odd terraces made up from 250 commercial truck loads of volcanic stone on my 3/4 acre hillside garden, interlaced with many rock paths and stepping stones lending itself for dwarf plants giving me added interest in the raising of dwarf Siberians.

In a lower corner of the garden is a natural water seepage and here we made several pools and planted Higos in surrounding beds - these just thrive. A higher terraced border of CAESAR'S BROTHER and CRYSTAL CHARM lend an airy grace - a walk through there is named "Iris Way" and leads on to higher terraces planted with large variety perennials including clumps of CAESAR, FAIRY DAWN, ROYAL HERALD, RED FLARE, DRAGON FLY, AHALYA, SANGUINEA, GEORGE WILSON and BARR'S PURPLE.

Two Siberians I like very much, GEORGE WILSON and MY LOVE are carrying seed pods. These two clumps have diminished greatly in size - suffered from two years neglect while I was overseas. However, I was able to plant out 200 seedlings last spring from MY LOVE with high hopes of pretty blues. Also planted 1,000 seedlings from RED FLARE all O.P. Among other seedlings coming along nicely and causing much interest are Setosa, Orientalis and Sibirica from seed sent over from Leningrad. We eagerly wait next spring to see if Orientalis and Sibirica differ from what we are growing. A lovely border of 24 plants Douglasiana Klanath, several plants Purdyii and Macrosiphon from seed given to me by an American lass at Australian Iris Convention should all flower next season. Another treasure I hope to flower shortly is pot of bulbs grown from seed of Planifolia Alata which I saw growing in mass profusion and presenting a truly remarkable sight for some three miles on Sierra Nevadas in Southern Spain.

Delavayi from seed is growing well, but plants of Wilsonii and Forestii always sulk and die off. Guess they don't like our humid climate. Will buy more plants and grow at my daughter's some forty miles from here - near the coast where soil is rich black loam containing plenty of potash and iron. Siberians I have planted there grow and flower better than any I have seen. My own soil is heavy, sticky clay in winter, then in summer if strong enough one could lift great slabs of concrete hard earth so there is no chance for depth of root run."

LUCY DELANY, Nelson, New Zealand reports: "I have a lovely lot of seedlings from SALEM WITCH this time, also one from MILDRED PECK and some from PLACID WATERS. Quite a number are coming up from the seed sent to

me last year. I think every seed of *I. hookeri* must have germinated. The *Versicolor* and *Ensatas* have germinated too.

I have English irises again this time after many years. They are not grown here in Nelson as much as the Dutch and Spanish ones, but I like them much better. They seem to need a much richer soil and more moisture and perhaps a cooler temperature than the others do. I know they grow well in Southland which has a much shorter summer than we do and a much colder winter. I'm hoping to be able to keep mine going now that I have them again.

My soil is heavy loam over gravel and has always appeared to suit *sibiricas* as long as they had plenty of water in the spring up until flowering time. I have a friend who has a very light gravel soil on a slight slope, excellent drainage of course. Her *sibiricas* always have masses of bloom. She probably uses plenty of mulch, such as clover or barley straw."

..."Scoria is unknown here. Peat is something else we can't get in this part of New Zealand. But I think we must have more limestone than anywhere and by far the largest concentration of minerals - some of them not known yet - in a peculiar formation called the Mineral Belt, that runs from D'Urville Island to the Wairau Valley with no respect for the lie of the country. Some of the rocks along the road-sides are beautiful colours."

(Director's Note: I am sure you have enjoyed reading of problems and conditions under which Siberian irises are grown in other areas and countries. I hated to pass on the Robin - in fact held it up in order to take these excerpts from the letters.)

* * * * *

BITS AND PIECES

~~Comments~~ **Comments on Phenis Article - Editor's comment:** Not everyone will agree completely with the conclusions and suggestions in Mr. Phenis' article. However, it is an excellent basis from which the Society can build its program of Test and Display Gardens. We hope that you will give us your opinions and suggestions too, so that whatever action we take can be based on the wishes of the membership. (Editor #2-says if you have read the above letters from Mr. Cassebeer and Mr. Varner you have some interesting views expressed from the hybridizers' angle.)

Bernice Shinkle reports on Siberians in her area, Dayton, Ohio: "Siberians grow very well in this area but need to be transplanted in early spring so they may become well established before fall. This is due to shallow roots.

SNOW CREST and WHITE SWIRL have proven to be recessive whites to use as hybridizing. I am doing some work with these Siberians but have a long way to go."

* * * * *

A SHOW OF SIBERIANS
Peggy Edwards

One of the most attractive ways of bringing Siberian Irises to general attention is to make them the center of interest in a flower show. It might be rather difficult to 'take over' an iris show, in most of the United States and Canada, since the tall bearded irises are also in bloom and competing for attention; but it would be relatively easy to persuade a garden club to feature the Siberians in a general show at their season. Naturally, the first job facing you is to get yourself appointed to the schedule committee. Volunteer if necessary! - our cause it is just!

Having taken this first step, your next task is to come to the first meeting of the committee armed with a tentative schedule for a complete Siberian section: at least half a dozen classes of horticulture and two or three arrangement classes. If you can show up with a complete show schedule - show title, seasonal horticulture, several arrangement classes with titles nicely integrated to the show title - the chances are the committee will accept them with hosannas, invite you to write the rules too, and settle back happily to enjoy some tea and talk before going home. However, this can be a bit difficult for someone whose imagination doesn't run this way. So it may be better to settle for simply proposing a group of horticultural classes and two or three ideas for arrangement classes that could feature Siberians - titles to be added.

What classes could be presented in horticulture? This will depend on how large a show your group puts on and how many members grow Siberians. A possible minimum Siberian Section might run thus:

1. White Siberians
2. Light blue and lavender Siberians
3. Dark blue and violet Siberians
4. Orchid and red Siberians
5. Bitone and bicolor Siberians
6. Veined and patterned Siberians

Or, if the situation warrants, you might put on a fairly full section such as this:

1. White selfs
2. Pale to light blue selfs
3. Full to dark blue selfs
4. Pale to light lavender selfs
5. Full to dark violet selfs
6. Orchid selfs
7. Red selfs
8. Blue bitones
9. Violet bitones
10. Red bitones
11. White and blue bicolors
12. White and violet bicolors (including lavender)
13. White and red bicolors (including orchid)
14. Blue and violet bicolors

15. Blue and red bicolors
16. Violet and red bicolors
17. White ground falls veined and patterned blue
18. White ground falls veined and patterned violet
19. White ground falls veined and patterned red
20. Any other

This class 20 would be a sort of catchall which people who have yellows, or some of the 'spotted' Chrysofor and other hybrid seedlings could enter. Let us hope that before very long this class would have to be expanded to several classes to accomodate the new types being developed; but it will do for the present.

Now it is unlikely that every member of your group could enter every class; but if there are fifteen people growing Siberians in the group the chances are that you will get 4 or 5 entries in a majority of classes and at least one entry in nearly all classes which makes a good start; the committee can combine similar classes with few entries-classes 6 and 7, for instance, or 11 and 12 - but the mere fact that someone was able to bring an entry to each of 15 or 20 classes would serve as an incentive to members to acquire more Siberians in preparation for the next time such a Siberian Section is included in the show schedule. And it would also show the public attending the show what a range of color and pattern they could have in their gardens with not too much work.

Either of these schedules can be expanded if needed; the larger one could be shortened by combining if you feel that your group wouldn't hold still for more than a dozen classes (this first time, at least!)

Now what could you suggest for arrangement classes? The first thing that comes to mind is an arrangement in the Japanese manner. The Siberians are just about the loveliest of flowers for this type of arrangement, and lend themselves beautifully to any style of Japanese arrangement - formal or informal, low container or tall vase, sparse or fairly full. But remember that you aren't going to have many arrangers who can do a true Japanese arrangement; let the schedule read 'in the Japanese manner' or 'with an Oriental feeling'.

But Siberians are also lovely to use in most of the American styles of line arrangement, especially if you allow the use of foliage to extend the line. It might be a bit difficult to make a Hogarth curve using only Siberians! And some of the more open line-mass styles can readily be used to feature Siberians with other flowers.

What about a group of classes interpreting various countries of the Orient - Japan, China, Thailand, India, Korea? This leaves the arrangers considerable leeway in the kind of arrangement they do - the interpretation could come from the style of the arrangement or from the choice of container and accessory. I could imagine someone interpreting Siberia, for example, with a bit of twisty, windswept-looking juniper, a rough, earth-colored container, - or a cup pinholder concealed behind some rough

stones - with the attention focusing on a few vivid blue Siberians. China might be interpreted by using a Chinese teapot as container, making the arrangement in the pouring line with branches of Chinese holly, and centering it with well-placed blooms of a white Siberian.

Or make your theme a Pacific Cruise; you then have eastern Asia, Australia, New Zealand, the islands of the South Pacific, Hawaii, Alaska, much of Latin America, as well as Canada and the Pacific States to inspire your classes; some of these cry out for flowers like the Siberians. Others would do nicely for other irises, roses, peonies and the rest of the June garden; and those who like to get their stuff from the florist could have a lovely time with tropical and exotic materials.

Maybe it is a little late for this year to put together a major show featuring the Siberians: keep this in mind for next time. But how about persuading your club to have a 'little show' at the June meeting? Half a dozen classes of horticulture and two arrangement classes is a schedule that can be put together quickly and mimeod for the members. This would be a nice time to get someone from your local iris group to come and do oral judging of the horticulture, or a flower show judge to do the same with the arrangements. Oral judging is a wonderful way to learn what you have been doing wrong and how to correct it, and makes a very interesting program.

And who knows - maybe some day some group will put on a complete show of Siberians!

* * * * *

FINANCIAL REPORT

January 27, 1965	Balance on Deposit		\$140.24
Deposits: January 28		\$50.92	
February 18		41.50	
March 26		9.50	101.92
			<u>\$242.16</u>
Disbursements:			
Printing TSI & Postage		28.89	
Election Letter		15.87	
Bank Service Chg.		.98	45.74
			<u>45.74</u>
Balance March 31, 1965			\$196.42

* * * * *

* *

*

It is with great pleasure I take over the duties of Secretary of our SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES. The records Charlotte Withers turned over to me are superb! - we have been fortunate to have had such a conscientious and efficient secretary over these years.

You may now send your dues to me at 2275 Kensington Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108. . . or you may make your payment to AIS when you pay them. They are now taking payments for the sections This will help keep dues on a parallel payment basis. If you keep this in mind, dues payments will be January and July now.

Mildred R. Johnson, Secretary

WELCOME	NEW	MEMBERS	1965:
	Brown, Alta M.		New Address: 12624 84th Avenue N.E. Kirkland, Washington 98033
	Buckley, Mr. Thomas J.		6330 South Damen Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60636
	Blocksom, Mrs. F. W.		P. O. Box 1043 Roswell, New Mexico 88201
	Burge, Mrs. G. W. H.		601 So. Summit Girard, Kansas
	Corey, Mrs. Preston E.		707 Pearl Street (White Oak Farm) Reading, Massachusetts 01867
	Carr, Mr. Franklin E.		27 Mary Street Bordentown, New Jersey 08505
	English, Mrs. John C.		2453 E. 3080 South Salt Lake City, Utah 84117
	Jahnke, Mr. Frederick C.		745 North 3rd Avenue Cedarburg, Wisconsin 53012
	Keenan, Mrs. Jerome		412 East 6th Street Lexington, Nebraska 68850
	Lofton, Leona Glee		3279 So. Franklin St. Englewood, Colorado 80110
	Muhlestein, Mr. Tell		691 East 8th North Provo, Utah 84601
	Mac Kenrick, Mr. W. Harry		Boxerly 2038 Lakeshore East Oakville, Ontario, Canada
	Roe, Mrs. Bernice R.		1051 Bird Avenue San Jose, California 95125
	Tolman, Mr. Bion		4399 Carol Jane Drive Salt Lake City, Utah 84117
	Van Treese, Mr. Harold W.		Box 300 Indianapolis, Indiana 46239
	Yates, Mrs. G. W.		1700 Vincent Street Brownwood, Texas 76801

Gardens Open To Visitors: + + + + +
Maxine Corey, early June
Thomas J. Buckley, anytime for talking