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*The
Siberian Iris*



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*The
Society for Siberian Irises*

Section of American Iris Society

C O N T E N T S

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MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

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.

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SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE
Charlotte Withers

Once upon a time---little did I realize that when I received a letter several years ago from a woman in New York State asking if I would care to belong to a group--all of whom were growers of Siberian irises, I would devote many hours and thoughts to how and where to plant a 'few more' plants in my already over-crowded garden space.

I think we can all look back with pride on the accomplishments of the past years, few as most organizations count theirs, and be glad that people like Peg Edwards, Sarah Tiffney and others had the foresight and courage to attempt the organization of The Society For Siberian Irises.

There were many times when I wondered in my own way if our Society was really going to make the grade and grow to adulthood, but as is so often the case, things were brighter than they seemed and the members of the American Iris Society evidentially were ripe for our special type of organization. For here we are, with members in such far-flung places as England, Poland, Japan and New Zealand, plus our own neighboring country of Canada. Our membership is showing a healthy growth (and from our secretary reports that we have few drop-outs!) and increasing interest being shown in Siberian hybridizing.

Of course, this didn't all 'just happen'--it was the result of much hard work and effort on the part of many people, but I would say, to a very large extent, because our president, Peg Edwards was the type of person she is--one with a keen sense of humor and a way with words, a boundless enthusiasm for irises in any color, variety, or condition. A woman who apparently can't say 'NO' when the job involves irises in any possible manner. Her lively imagination has helped us on the editorial staff over many a bad time when we wondered if the pages would be filled only with our doodling as the deadline came closer and closer without our having received promised articles. True ability such as Peg's is a very valuable asset to any organization and it is a joy to me that she is to continue to write, edit and suggest items for our newsletter.

This brings to mind the fact that we would like to have a few more of our members actively working with us on the editorial staff. We presently have the eastern coast and north central part of our country represented in the continental United States, along with Lucy Delany in New Zealand and Maurice Kitton in England generous with articles of their countries but we should have someone from the Pacific coast area and possibly the central part of the country contributing information on growing of Siberians. Our secretary, Mildred Johnson, has been keeping us informed as to the Salt Lake City area and we appreciate her articles both on growing and on arranging.

I know I speak for all of us when I say to Peg--Thanks for all the hours and days you have served our Society as President. My wish is that I can follow in your footsteps and continue your policies and projects to completion. It is true I don't expect to accomplish the things you did, but I will try to do the best I can. With the cooperation of the members let's make it a wonderful year.

1965 SIBERIAN REGISTRATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS

ANNIVERSARY (Brummitt, R. 1965) Sdlg 17/3. Sibirica, 30", M. Wly. White self, yellowish haft. Wisley White x White Swirl.

BLUE BURN (McGarvey, R. 1965) Sdlg 63-4-2. Siberian, 32", E. Bl. Light blue self, style arm almost white. White Swirl x McGarvey Med-B-Lt-b-sty.

DEWFUL (McGarvey, R. 1965) Sdlg McG 63-4-4. Siberian, 40", ML, Bl. Blue self; style arm very light blue. White Swirl x McGarvey Med-B-Lt-b-Sty. (Gatineau x Caesar's Brother).

EGO (McGarvey, R. 1965) Sdlg 63-4-6. Siberian, 32", ML, Blcm. Blue self with haft pattern. White Swirl x McGarvey Med-B-Lt-B-Sty. (Gatineau x Caesar's Brother)

ID (McGarvey, R. 1965) Sdlg. McG-65-Ch-1. Chrysographes (Siberian species) 20", M. Mlcm. Black self with very small gold vein. From seed obtained from Wisley.

KING'S FORREST (McGarvey, R. 1965) Sdlg. McG-65-For-1. I. Forrestii (Siberian), 20", M, Yl. Clear yellow self; type true to species. McG-62-For-1 x McG-62-For-1.

SUPER EGO (McGarvey, R. 1965). Sdlg. 63-2-2. Siberian, 30", ML, B3. S. very pale blue, giving appearance of white; F. darker blue shading to white at edges. White Swirl x McGarvey Lg-b.

Introduction:

MANDY MORSE (Spofford, Sibirica, R. 1962) Cassebeer, 1965.

Our treasurer seems to dominate the field this year! Do you notice that every 28-chr. registration has White Swirl in it? It's going to be interesting to compare Dr. McGarvey's with Mrs. Brummitt's and see if there is a family resemblance. Now the next question is, when will these be introduced on this continent? Of last year's registrations none have been introduced here (true only two were originated this side of the Atlantic) and the only introduction listed is of a variety that is now over three years old. I guess we will just have to keep pounding away: Hybridizers! If you can't find a commercial grower interested in introducing your registrations, at least let people know where they can buy them. Commercial! Why not get in touch with registrant to see if you can't work out a mutually satisfactory deal? Granted, not every registration is guaranteed to be worth introducing but how can you tell until you investigate?

Maybe most important of all--take them to shows, send them to conventions. If the judges see them and vote for them some commercial grower will be sufficiently interested to put them on his list.

REPORT ON A SIBERIAN SLIDE PROGRAM

T. L. Heston

It was with great pleasure that our Society viewed the slides as we have never in the 20 years of our existence devoted a meeting to the Siberians. In this time I would wager we had seen only about ten Siberian slides. Our audience was most enthusiastic. To help make the program a success I cut a stencil listing the slides to be shown so that members could mark the varieties they liked for future reference; also they did not have to delay the program by asking 'What is that?' and 'How do you spell it?' There was enough light so they could read the list. They were advised to save the lists to refer to when they were checking the new catalogs.

Being mainly a Tall Bearded Society, we oohed and ahed over the slides that showed smooth solid colors. One comment was that the whites seemed to have the best form. We all liked the nice wide falls. Our one arrangement-maker enjoyed older forms because of the delicacy of some forms. On color she liked what the rest of us did.

In the middle of the program a comment was made that the variety being shown grew taller and bigger locally. This brought on a discussion which ended in the conclusion that varieties shown were from alkaline-soil areas; our local soil is very acid. From here on we all watched the soil in the pictures too.

At this point I would like to discuss the fate of TOWANDA REDFLARE in acid soil. It won't grow here. We have discussed this among ourselves in the past. To prove everyone wrong, I have been bringing in plants for several years, trying to make it grow. It won't. My latest attempt was planting three very healthy plants of it that came from a nearby locality with alkaline soil. We will see how these make out. So far it has been my only problem child.

By the way, ERIC THE RED drew the biggest gasp and your slide is an excellent one. The Stephenson seedling caused discussion and we were glad to see the slide. Nobody seemed enthused about STARWHEEL. I think it was wonderful to include the group pictures. Close-up photography is wonderful for advanced groups but it confused rank amateurs as they lose sight of the overall growing situation. I only wish our local slides included a group picture now and then. The ordinary amateur gardener views irises from a distance and values the colors this way - not close up. We have to keep these people in mind all the time and your slide set does help in this.

I have sent a check for three memberships, for the Society, Ron Beattie and myself. Ron should be quite an asset as he has a large garden which has about 100 visitors each year; he is near Chet Tompkins and most visitors see both gardens. He is starting to collect Siberians and has plans to breed WHITE SWIRL if it doesn't wait till July 4th to bloom as it did last year! His garden is toured daily in season by Tompkins, Tom Craig, the Schreiners, and many other judges, so his Siberians will be seen by many

people with votes. I think you will be witnessing a growth of interest in Siberians in the Northwest and who knows, they may be turning up in the color catalogs one of these days.

(Editor's comment - the slides I sent Tom were of plants grown in soil of pH 5.5 to 6; the trouble was drought plus sandy soil, not lack of acid. The Society collection represents many soil types from acid to alkaline.)

* * *

MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mrs. Vay B. Sargo, Hot Springs, Ark.: Reach, Hybridizers, Reach! Since all, or most, irises belong to the class of hardy perennials, and the accent is on 'hardy', and I have found the Siberians among the very easiest - why do the hybridizers not achieve an evergreen-foliaged plant? If there is such in existence I would like to know.

The hybridizers of *hemerocallis* have hoisted themselves mightily in my estimation by producing evergreen plants. In this part of the South we can see a few plants all winter whose greenness reminds of the spring-time abundance to come. It is a cheery sight to see green foliage emerging from a snowdrift. But I see no Siberian foliage.

I have many Siberians edging a meandering path beside the waterway through the low-lying part of my garden. They bloom most cheerfully and regularly each year as the Tall Bearded fade. I could not do without them.

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Charlotte Withers, referring to Ron Beattie's garden mentioned in the article by Tom Heston: The first AIS Convention I attended was held in Portland several years ago and Ron's garden was one of the tour gardens. Because it was one of the few days when a camera could safely be used without protection from rain, I was busily 'snapping' and in looking through these slides recently I came across the slide showing a respectable sized row of Siberians in FULL BLOOM. But, because at that time I thought all Siberians came from Siberia, I didn't bother to look for a name stake. I did, however, greatly admire the way the slender stalks held the flowers so upright--even after about 600 visitors had passed up and down the rows in the garden!

I might mention that Ron also had a large and beautiful collection of china items, all beautifully decorated with irises in varied colors and of various types. Wonder if he still has all the lovely things! As I remember it, his house and garden are in a very nice residential area--how I would like to be his neighbor when the garden is in full bloom.

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To Vay--read the article on 'IRISES ON CHALK SOIL' in which there are several references to 'evergreen foliage on some irises'. Possibly some of these would grow in your climate. Worth experimenting anyway.

A SPRING DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SIBERIAN IRIS
By White Swirl as Told to Mildred R. Johnson

Well, here comes that "eager beaver" again! Nuts, I wonder what she's up to this year? Now, I'll bet she's going to move me again! I wish she'd stop that; I'm so tired of putting down new roots, I could scream. Wish I had prickles like that rose on the right of me. I'd scratch her good if she came near me with that trowel...it's always so cold, and it slides right down my side...brrrr.

Yep, she's got her trowel, and her kneeling pad. I'm in for it again. Oh well, steel yourself, White Swirl, and take it with a grin. Listen to her gab with that woman who just came across the street:

"What are you up to?"

"Just dividing my Siberian WHITE SWIRL so I can give a piece to the President of the Iris Society. He's never grown Siberians."

"Didn't you divide that piece just last year? It hardly seems large enough to be giving away again."

Thatta gal, neighbor, you tell her and maybe she'll leave me in one piece this year.

"Oh yes," that gardener that owns me said, "but everyone seems to want a piece of this one, and I can't resist. I guess I'll never know what a clump with 36 bloom stems looks like. I do well to get three measly ones."

What does she mean measly ones? Gosh, I try! I can't see why she never gives a piece of ERIC THE RED to someone. That relative of mine is the worst.... always showing off with his four falls, while the rest of us work so hard to make our three just right. He's pretty stingy, that ERIC, when it comes to increasing, tho. I keep looking over at COOL SPRING, and I keep thinking what a combination we'd make! Wish that "movin' lady" would introduce us some day when she has her tweezers out. I'll bet we'd show 'em something with our breeding! I saw MANDY MORSE around the corner one day - she's something, too. I could get romantic with either of them, to tell the truth.

If that gardener who owns this place would just come out oftener with her tweezers than with her trowel we'd all love it. I'll bet CAESAR and PERIWINKLE would love to get together. That great big TYCOON would make a grand parent. MRS. PERRY nestling in the corner by the steps is a pretty little thing. I wouldn't be surprised if this garden doesn't turn out to be a maternity ward next year, from the looks of the way this gal is using her tweezers now instead of that cold old trowel. Now, that's the way to do it. The neighbor just left after seeing how crosses were made. I hope she talked her out of dividing me again.

(Cont. on page 194)

A FEW PAGES FROM A HYBRIDIZER'S NOTEBOOK

June 4 - ...and several crosses on the siberians (see crossing record book for details, p. 15-16. Hope they take. Check in a week. Also tried podding one of

June 18 - ...finally checked to see if any pods and there were two on #65-3 and one on...

July 19 - ...are beginning to look sort of whitish so will have to watch carefully and catch them when ripe, probably in another ten days. Hope they are ready before we leave on vacation otherwise I'll cut them and put in water indoors to finish...

August 14 - ...came home early, as I had forgotten the seed pods, but it was o.k. as only one had actually split and spilt the seeds so I could pick them up. As soon as the laundry is done I'll sow them in the little jars in the refrig....

September 3 - ...and finally! - set the seeds to chill. Must remember to pot them up for the coldframe before the end of the month. Probably no germination this fall but at least they'll be ready for....

October 13 - ...but three shows in ten days is rather distracting; however the pots went into the frame this afternoon and now I think I'll take a nice....

November 25 - ...remembered that they'd better be watered before freezing weather and a very good thing as they were rather dry. Left the top off the frame as a little chill won't hurt and they might get some rain. Should have left it till tomorrow though, as the gravy was a bit scorched.

December 16 - ...full of snow, which is no harm at all, but I put the lid on before we get a big one.

March 9 - ...and looked in the frames. One of the pots of seed seems to have been overturned - I suppose the cats were in it that time last fall when I had the frame uncovered. I scooped up most of it and I guess I'll be able to tell if any seeds come up in the ground....

April 15 - germination starting nicely in the iris seeds and look like a good crop. One seed sprouting from the ground but that doesn't surprise me as

June 23 - ...and now the bed is ready to line out the seedlings. Will try to get some of them in this evening and the rest tomorrow....

July 12 - ...not many weeds so one quick raking took care of that and then I set out the seedlings and mulched them....

August 18 - ...looks pretty good considering we haven't had any rain while we were away. George did water some but he doesn't really understand that the seedlings have to be soaked and I suspect he just....

October 12 - ...always feel sentimental about today even if Leif Ericson really did get here first; so I checked on the seedlings and that calmed me down somewhat. Of the siberians six didn't survive the summer and two more look pretty weak but most of them are in pretty good shape and should bloom next year; the SDBs are...

April 23 - ...and more than half the siberians are going to bloom, I would guess. Must notice in another couple of weeks and have some labels ready in case any of them turns out any good...

June 2 - ...first three opened and they are real dogs. I yanked them right out. But there are over a dozen still to bloom.

June 10 - ..the only one worth saving; it isn't really all that good but it is very shapely and in good proportion and on only 11" stalks it should be a good parent...

June 11 - ...White Swirl was all finished blooming but now there is another stalk with a branch so maybe I can get a pod on that one...

June 13 - ...the most beautiful vivid blue - almost marine blue but what it is doing in the middle of White Swirl I don't know and can't imagine - it certainly isn't a sport as it has nothing in common but that nice crisp substance and the broad...

June 14 - ..must be a stray seed from that pod that split white we were away two years ago. Good thing I'm so careful about keeping things in order, cutting off bee pods and so on....

Peg

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A SPRING DAY (Continued from page 192)

Ooooooohhhhh, nope...(giggle, giggle)...owh, that trowel is cold! Gosh, I hope that president of the society likes this piece she's diggin.. he'll probably succumb to Siberian Fever, too. They all do..oh well, it's a nice day for putting down new roots.

* * * * *

The most agreeable thing in life is a worthy accomplishment.

Edgar Howe, American Author.

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COMPANIONABLE SIBERIANS

Peg Edwards

We all know that Siberians look lovely in a bed of their own. But they also get along well with a good many other plants. Why not mix them up a little?

Do you have some rhododendrons or azaleas that get sun half the day? Face them down with blue and white Siberians. Underplant with myrtle (vinca minor), ajuga reptans, galax or perhaps pachysandra. Then as the foliage of the Siberians begins to look frowsy (as it does with so many varieties) you can tuck the leaves among the groundcover where they will be less conspicuous.

Or what about a bed of acid-tolerant perennials? *Asclepias, tuberosa, Achillea, ptarmica, Aster frikartii, Campanulas, Coreopsis, Dicentras,* other irises such as the Japanese, *versicolor* and *pseudacorus, Hemerocallis,* most lilies, *Lythrum,* most Peonies, *Pentstemon, Phlox subulata* and *divaricata, Tradescantia, Trillium,* are all tolerant of acid soil - some prefer it. Most of them will enjoy sunshine for at least half the day. They can give you a flowery bed from May to September in most climates. They will all appreciate the extra watering the Siberians like in early spring.

Perhaps you have a border of shrubs - spireas, forsythia, mockorange, *kolkwitzia* - which look lovely in May but are not so interesting when the flowers are done. Put a few Siberians between, and a little in front, of the shrubs to give you some June bloom, and then face down the whole border with petunias and marigolds for summer color.

Or do you have a foundation planting of needle evergreens? While they are small, you can put Siberians behind them, then as the shrubs grow the Siberians can be brought forward where they will be very effective against the dark green of the mature foliage. By the time the evergreens have grown to this size, the Siberians will be about due for dividing anyway!

Even if you grow the Siberians in a bed of their own - you can give them some company. In the fall, tuck some crocus, snowdrops, miniature daffodils and species tulips between the clumps; in May treat yourself to a bag of mixed gladiolus and put them between the plants. Don't bother to dig them in the fall if you don't want to - you might, in some parts of the country, be surprised to have some of the glads survive the winter. If you have spaced the newly set Siberians properly to leave room for eventual growth, there will be room enough for at least half a dozen glads between the irises. Consider the spring bulbs as semi-permanent, they can be left until they are due for digging, and then if there is room enough some can be returned to the same place. The rest can be tucked into other spots in the garden. Particularly charming are the tiny crocuses such as *korolkowi, sieberi, imperati,* and the chrysanthus varieties such as *Snow Bunting, Cream Beauty, Blue Bird; tomasinianus* and *t. Ruby Giant.* You might also put in some of the fall-flowering crocuses such as *ochroleucus, speciosus, s. alba,* and *zonatus.* To keep these company how about planting some *colchicums* and

sternbergias? But back to the spring bulbs - for daffodils, try to get some of the hoop-petticoats - *bulbocodium obesus* and *conspicuum*, *minus* (properly called *asturiensis*) which is the tiniest trumpet daffodil and very early, Bambi, a 6-inch bicolor trumpet, *triandrus albus*, the Angel's Tears daffodil, Lady Bee, a tiny specimen of the large-cup class. In tulips you might use *kaufmanniana*, the Waterlily Tulip; *Greigii* with its speckled leaves, or its relatively inexpensive hybrids Cape Cod, Gipsy, Tango; the hybrids between *greigii* and *kaufmanniana* which are sometimes sold as Peacock Tulips. For a real 'smack-in-the-eye' effect put in some Red Emperor! And try the little cluster-flowered *turkestanica* which is early and quite hardy; *clusiana*, the Lady Tulip; *hageri*. *Puschkinia* is a tough and very pretty little bulb with tiny white stars striped in blue; very similar to the siberian quill but its flowers are clear blue. And a real charmer is *Triteleia uniflora* (often sold as a *brodiaea* or *milla*) which has upfacing pale milky blue stars about $1\frac{1}{4}$ " across. I passed this one up for years because I was told it would not survive here on Long Island, then finally succumbed and bought a dozen. They have lived here for four winters, increased madly and spread seeds which germinate freely. Now I wouldn't be without them. I hesitate to propose planting *muscaria* among the Siberians as they are almost too prolific, though there is nothing more vivid when they are in bloom. And the tall *scillas*--*campanulata* and its color forms - are best kept in a place where they can't crowd out everything else. Cutting the stalks before they can drop seed is not enough - the bulbs multiply incredibly fast too. Someone described these *scillas* as 'the most beautiful weed in my garden' and I have come to the conclusion that he was right.

And of course the perfect spring bulb to plant among your Siberians in the fall is *reticulata* and its relatives. Treat yourself to some Cantab, Clarette, both light blues; Joyce, a good clear mid-blue; J. S. Dijt in red-violet; Wentworth in deep blue-violet; *I. histrioides major*, a large, brilliant marine blue; *I. danfordiae*, a vivid yellow. *Vartanii alba* has not been successful here so I can't truthfully recommend it - but ask around; maybe your neighborhood will suit it. There are other species and garden forms in this group and if you can find them, by all means try them out.

In all these types of interplanting you should bear in mind that the roots of the various plants will be occupying the same space to some extent. You will probably find it advisable to give extra fertilizer - but don't be too generous, as you might have to dig and divide that much sooner! - and surely they will appreciate extra water. Careful grooming will help to prevent the gone-by plants from spoiling the looks of the ones that are coming into bloom, but if you want bulbs and perennials to come back strong the next year you must, of course, leave the green and growing parts of the plants to store up food for the spring. This is where ground covers are handy - foliage can be bent down to the surface where light, sunshine and water are still available but drying tips are out of sight. With the bulb planting this is not so much of a trouble as the early bulbs will have done their growing by the time the iris foliage begins to fountain outward, and the gladiolus will provide enough greenery to camouflage the worst of the iris leaves' disorder; and by the time glads are browning off you will be

up to your ears in fall cleaning anyhow!

One suggestion I haven't offered because I haven't seen it in action yet, is that of a rose-fancier who planned to put Siberians between her roses. She thought that the soft blue-lavenders would help to prevent some of the more emphatic color-clashes among her roses. Some of the orangy and the red-and-yellow bicolor roses are pretty hard to get along with in a bed that's all roses. I have a suspicion the Siberians might do the trick. I have seen Siberians used in a peony border to very good effect to provide contrast without spoiling the harmonious effect.

Maybe you can't use all of these ideas - but surely one of them will make your garden prettier.

* * * * *

NEWS DEADLINE FALL ISSUE

It has been suggested that we set definite deadlines for our news for both the spring and fall issues.

Deadline for the spring issue will be MARCH FIRST. This will enable us to get the Siberian Iris to our members in time for them to have it handy for the spring bloom season and the AIS Annual Meetings.

Deadline for the fall issue will be OCTOBER FIRST. This will be soon enough to guarantee the delights of your Siberian season will still be fresh in your minds--we hope you will put your thoughts on paper and send them to your editors.

We still ask for suggested topics for discussion in future issues. Are you experimenting with Siberians as to soils, fertilizers, locations in flower beds, or possibly you are a hybridizer--what crosses have you tried and what are the results so far? If you are growing the newer varieties in your garden, what are your thoughts about them--are they doing well in your climate and soil?

If you have Siberians in your garden would you like to display them to members attending an AIS meeting near you? Please drop us a line in time to put a notice in the Siberian Iris. Those who drive to AIS meetings love to take a side trip to see a bed of blooming irises. Be generous and share yours with other gardeners.

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SLIDES

Be sure to take slides and photographs of your irises this spring and summer. Share them with the members of your garden club or friends. Who knows, you may convert someone to raising Siberians.

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IRISEN ON CHALK SOIL
Part Two

Volume 1, Number 3 March 1934

This sketch was perforce broken off last month in the middle of an account of beardless irises. We were considering the large contribution made by North America, and began the tale of these with some plants from the swamps of the Southern States.

We may start again with two other Americans which, though also of more or less marshy provenance, do well enough in the valley. Versicolor in some of the Eastern States abounds under such conditions as the yellow flag of our own water meadows, *I. Pseudacorus*, affects, and it is doubtless a finer thing by the waterside. It varies in colour from a blue to a red-purple. There are many better garden irises, but I should not like to be without the reddish variety, *Kermesina* (called from a gall of the kermes oak, used in dyeing, whence the word, 'crimson'). A very vigorous form, called in America, *virginica*, has flowers really blue, not blue-purple. Even after a summer of exceptional drought I have had to limit the area, claimed by this bog-plant in my dry (but chalky) ground! To call *setosa* American, is not to tell the whole truth; it is found indeed in Maine, Labrador and Alaska, but it leaps Behring Strait and reappears in Kamchatka, Sakhalin, and Siberia, and also in Japan. As might be supposed it has many forms, and the best should be seen, and plant or seed secured. The flower has a curious flat appearance, because the 'standards' hardly exist. More gardeners should know of this pleasant and very floriferous plant, and grow it in a good colony.

Another American group, the Californian section, *tenax*, *Douglasiana*, *bracteata*, etc., shall be passed over lightly, not because I lightly esteem them, but because, though one should not too hastily accept general statements about lime, they are supposed to be lime-haters. I have tried some of them, not without success, giving them plenty of black soil, but not having unlimited room I prefer on the whole to stick to those irises for which my soil is naturally suited. There is however a species, Californian also but not of the Californian grassy-leaved section, which thrives in any soil whatsoever, and should become more popular. This is *longipetala*; here again the choice of a good form is important; the best bears a long succession of china-blue, large flowers, and so is of value for many weeks. Closely allied to it are some other pretty but rather undistinguished smaller western Americans. The best of them, *Montana*, once called *tolmieana*, was crossed by Foster with *longipetala*; and resultant hybrid, *tollong*, is pretty well known and should be more so; it is as hearty a doer as its pollen-parent.

The tale of the valley garden is about complete. There also grow certain other species, *Clarkii*, *caudata*, *prismatica*, besides one or two unnamed new introductions and some hybrids, but most readers will not want a catalogue of a collector's museum.

We now climb again to the hill garden to note a few 'dry' irises which

do not fall under any of the groups mentioned. Now I have always supposed that *ruthenica* which, to quote Dykes, "is quite unlike any other known iris and deserves to be much more widely known", wanted a dry, hot place, and so I cocked it up on one of my chalky banks, where it grows but does not flower. True that some forms of this species have a bad reputation in this respect, but I have long since discarded Foster's form, which gave me nothing but 'grass', and what I now have is Dykes' fine Transylvanian variety, which in other gardens I have seen smothered in April with its dainty flowers; its stature is only a few inches. The cause of failure may be late frost destroying the immature buds, but Mr. F. W. Millard, whose opinion on a matter of cultivation I should never lightly disregard, has recently said that a low-lying position in peaty soil is its fancy. So some were moved last spring (the only time when it can be moved) to a peatbed in the valley garden, where certainly it looks happier. (Dykes, by the way, says, "any good garden soil, that is not too dry"). Any way there seems no reason to suppose that it is a question of lime or its absence.

That joy of winter, the Algerian iris, *unguicularis* (this dreadful name unfortunately claims priority over *stylosa*), is now too familiar and too well understood to call for much remark. A lime-lover, certainly, it rejoices in the driest, poorest soil, whereas in good soil it goes all to leaf. But it does need moisture when starting new growth, viz., after flowering-time. That is the season (April for choice) for planting it, and, if a dry spell follows, it may need watering, and even shading, till it is established. One suggestion may be added; there are many varieties, the plant occurring in a number of local forms from Algeria to the Black Sea, which differ in the time of performance. Whence a good selection should give flowers all in succession through the winter months. Latest of all comes the variety *speciosa*, of very rich colour; *lilacina* is another of the best, and very distinct is the minute *cretensis*. I owe the true plant to a friend who collected it in Crete.

This sketch of the rhizomatous irises may end with one which is homely in the most literal sense, our native *gladwyn*, insulted by its botanical name, *foetidissima*; the smell resides in the rhizome, where it is harmless enough. The wild plant inhabits open woods and chalky downs. The garden use of the typical form, with dingy purplish flowers, is for winter effect; in the winter the evergreen foliage is at its best, and, as no one is likely to have picked the flowers, this is set off from November onwards by the gaping capsules of large vermillion seeds. One more remark; there are at least two varieties with yellow flowers (one pale lemon, the other delicately pencilled with brown), not brilliant, but beautiful on a close inspection, and these have the same gorgeous seeds. Wherefore I have scrapped the type and grow instead these yellows and a giant Algerian form of the ordinary plant. These are things to gladden odd corners in the dead season. Some self-sown seedlings show further interesting variation in the flower; in one it is almost white.

There remain the bulbous irises. These fall into three groups, of which one, the *Junos*, may be left to the specialist. The others belong to the

reticulata section, which flower January to March, and the Xiphium section, for May and June; the name of the latter ('sword') is anything but appropriate; there is nothing sword-like about the leaves. In rounding off these notes with a remark or two on these two sections, we will pass over some species, most of them of marvellous beauty which may be difficult to obtain or are difficult to satisfy. Of the first section, reticulata itself and histrioides need no introduction. They are happy enough on chalk, so far as that goes; but, recalling a dictum of Foster's, that he would rather put such bulbs in a stiffish clay than in a light sandy loam, I am inclined to think that my very light soil is not ideal for them; at all events the medium should be pretty good.

As to the Xiphiums, putting out of account certain rarities, we need only consider the two popular Pyrenean species, xiphium (Spanish iris) from the Spanish, and xiphioides (ridiculously called the English iris) from the French side of the chain. Once more I wish to quote Foster, if only to emphasize again what the present generation of iris growers owes to him; he declared that no garden could expect to grow both species satisfactorily. Now I cannot say that in my experience either is as permanent as I could wish. On the whole, the 'English' which is a meadow plant (you may see its great blue flowers studding the hayfields about Garvarnie) is the better thanks perhaps to the underlying sponge, and I find self-sown seedlings in odd places. Bulbs of the 'Spanish' are very cheap, and I have to buy now and again to keep it going. On the other hand, the bigger, robuster, earlier garden forms sold as 'Dutch' irises are far more satisfactory to one who does not garden on the 'buy and die' principle.

Volume II. No. 7. July 1934 Pages 342-343 IRIS ALBICANS.

This beautiful pure white iris, indispensable to any collection of tall bearded flags, is sometimes confused with florentina, an albina form of germanica, which is not really white, but slightly tinted, while the flower is of less perfect shape. The geographical distribution of albicans is interesting: it occurs in cultivated ground and in a semi-wild state all along the Mediterranean. It closely resembles in several features an Arabian species, I. Madonna, with blue-purple flowers: thus, in both, the tips of the leaves, which persist through winter, are almost invariably touched by frost, and, in both, the falls are of a distinct 'spoon' shape, being 'bluntly pointed'. These details I quote from Dykes, who from these and other resemblances conjectured that albicans is a white form of Madonna, and confirmed his guess by subsequent researches. One year I had flowers of albicans with a 'blue' stripe, which gives further confirmation; similarly flowers of florentina are sometimes splashed with purple. The explanation of the wide distribution of albicans is that the Moslems planted it in their cemeteries; whence it is found wherever the Arab invasion penetrated having been brought originally from its native Arabia. The blue form Madonna is more curious than beautiful. It is worth the while of a gardener traveling in Mediterranean lands to look out for the best forms of albicans, which varies a good deal in stature and in the form of the flower.

I started long ago with forms given me by Sir Michael Foster, which were sent him from Egypt, Greece and Spain: to these I have added others, collected or given: one I begged from the hotel garden of the Villa Politi at Syracuse, which is in the 'quarry' where the captured Athenians starved to death in 413 B. C. Another came from the charming little town of Cordes in the south of France: it stands on an abrupt hill, and you mount to the top of the town by a spiral road: from the platform at the top I descried a fine white iris growing in a garden far below: the job was to localize the garden and get to it: this being accomplished, I begged a rhizome or two, and now Albicans Cordes in my garden rivals Albicans Syracuse. I have other fine forms from Madeira and from Mount Athos, and one of unknown provenance valuable because it blooms late: one wants good whites all the bearded iris season. There are of course, many good whites of hybrid origin. I have myself raised two, Bolingbroke and Thesus (white with a golden throat), and I recall My Own, Athene, Kashmir White, White Knight, White Queen, and a white seedling of flavescens raised by Mr. Bowles. None of these are of quite the pure dead white of albicans. This plant should have as hot and dry a place as possible: it loves such a season as the summer of 1933. It very rarely sets sound seed, though it often produces a capsule. Three seeds which I obtained in 1932 germinated, and I await developments with interest.

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EXCERPTS FROM 'MY GARDEN' By T. A. Stephens

Volume II, No. 7 July 1934 Notes from a Waterside Garden by A. T. Johnson. Pages 350 and 351.

Iris hold an honoured place by the waterside, and in these the sibiricas, including the orientalis, are in high favour with us. They do not like too soggy a soil, but few are more accommodating. With plants of two feet to four feet they present an assortment of SNOW QUEENS, ROYAL PURPLES, SKY BLUES, EMPERORS and EMPRESSES. In slender elegance they have no rivals, and below their sheaves of flowering stems grows such a dense mass of grassy foliage that one of our weediest stream banks has been entirely subjugated by this overwhelming crop. Along with these we run the allied Wilsonii--a yellow-sibirica--the many-hued, versicolor, Monnieri and its hybrids in several lovely yellows, Monspur, no less versatile in its blues, the tall violet Delavayii, the giant ochroleuca with ivory, yellow and white flowers climbing its 5 foot spires and, for really sloppy places or shallow water, the excellent laevigata. I. Kaempferi, monarch of its classic race, demands a culture worthy of its unchallenged dignity, but laevigata--the nearest thing to it--is as willing as sibirica and few will question Dykes opinion when he says it is "the finest blue iris we possess."

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(Editor's note: Again we would like to express our thanks for the above material sent in by Robert Rolland Smith. It required much time and effort to prepare it.)

SIBERIAN SEASON BLUES
Mildred R. Johnson

Do you remember the awful weather of last season? Each year seems to bring its share of good and bad weather to gardeners. To Siberian enthusiasts, it's almost a certainty that the weather can't get too bad or too good. In retrospect, I would venture to say the weather in Salt Lake was at its worst in 1965, but it did not deter the Siberian irises as we enjoyed much bloom while other varieties froze by the wayside.

A record cold on March 19th sent thermometers down to 10°. The irises were just beginning to come to life after a "crazy" winter, so this week of low temperatures didn't harm growth noticeably, except on a few Tall Bearded and Rebloomers that produce bloom early anyway. Some of the Oncos reacted to this week that didn't get above 30°, but the Siberians looked great. Most of the Siberians were still nestled low in their browned leaves and had not progressed to the stage where the weather was a bother. By the 30th of March the temperatures were about 60° and we bravely "unearthed" them, and cut the brown leaves away leaving little green tips. The seeds in the seedbeds were popping up like crazy by the end of March, too. A few good rains grew seedlings four inches in the next week; but we turned on the sprinklers by the first of April as our rainfall is slight at best. This 1965 season surprised us by the amount of moisture we received. Some precipitation was measureable every day from the 1st to the 9th of April. Our usual April 10th snowstorm didn't let us down, and for the next four days it was cold and windy.

While the TB seedlings peeped through in early April, it wasn't until the 22nd that the Siberians in the seedbed made it. The seeds were planted very close together and came up the same. We decided to try leaving one row of COOL SPRING x TYCOON untouched this season; they grew well, and seem to have wintered over well. The row of WHITE SWIRL x TYCOON that we moved reduced its numbers from 36 to 3 plants by the end of the growing season. Winter has treated them all well; and it seems they will make out all right. Perhaps in this cold country it is well to leave them to protect each other through the winter; and the hot summers that take a toll might be cheated by transplanting the second season. We shall do more experimenting in this direction. We have tried this with TB seedlings with incomplete results.

Showed Siberian slides from Dorothy Spofford at the Utah Iris meeting on May 3rd. SALEM WITCH seemed to be the one that took the eyes of the audience, with MANDY MORSE and WHITE SWIRL holding their own. The audience was interested in seeing the slides; we're sure this is a good way to whet the appetite of uninitiated irisarians to the world of Siberica. We included some arrangements made with Siberians (they are wonderful to work with), and the slide show was much appreciated.

May 5th they must have had a fight in the weather department--right over the city of Salt Lake. SNOW, COLD, FREEZE! You name it, we had it. 27° at 7 a.m. and temperature falling. Everything was nipped! The poor TB irises were limp to the rhizome. Only one clump of Siberians was far

enough along to get the deep freeze - MRS. PERRY, and it was frozen along with everything else. Have decided since that the greatest increase on that clump was accounted for by that quick freeze that got the blooms; since it didn't have to finish flowering, it produced new growth. Perhaps that's good. We'll see this year.

After the snow, the rains! It rained day after day during May, accompanied by low temperatures. By the 11th of May the weather seemed normal, and the sun shined. The Siberians began to put up bloom stalks that had been nestling in the bases of the leaves until then. May 15th we went down to Provo where we spent some time at Tell's...just 50 miles south they had missed much of this weather that had ruined 50% to 60% bloom in Salt Lake and 40 miles north into Ogden-Roy area. While his Siberians didn't seem so far along as ours, he had a neat bloom of TB MOURNING HAZE, and some seedlings that showed promise. The rest of the month was like the beginning - threats of storm, rain, cool temperatures, and lots of wind.

A Judges Session at Ogden proved worthwhile, and we managed to find a stalk of WHITE SWIRL, COOL SPRING, and MANDY MORSE to take with us. Since Judges must learn all irises, we were happy that these bloomed at the proper time for our study..May 23rd.

While the Siberians seemed to bloom a little later than usual, they were magnificent. Perhaps it was the great amount of moisture and the cooler temperatures that pleased them. We picked a number of almost-opened blooms on June 9th just before our vacation to the West Coast. These were promptly put into water in the bottom of the refrigerator where they did well and were ready for some arrangements we did on the 23rd of June. We put a piece of plastic over them to insure them of not too low temperatures from an unopened refrigerator..The Siberian blooms kept this way are useable for arrangements long after bloom season.

The middle of July produced a 3 inch stem on MOUNTAIN LAKE, with a full sized bloom. We supposed it had made up its mind to bloom in spite of the weather; and frankly, it was interesting to see it nestling barely above the foliage.

We were happy to discover the guest Siberian we thought was JORETTA was not, as it bloomed 'just another blue'. It turned out to be a sib of JORETTA. SNOW FLARE, which was such a tiny piece in October when we received it, put forth great effort and bloomed. It will be interesting to see it next year - but from this one small bloom, we were interested in it as a new white.

This land of Siberica which surrounds us is a joy to behold as we watch the blooms unfold. It is also a paradise for artistic designers, which we are, as the many sizes and colors lend themselves to many different kinds of designs.

We hope the Weather Tricks for Sixty Six are all good; and that all the "blues" are in the irises, not in our feelings.

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THE BORER AND I
Albert Ellis

For some time I have been naive enough to believe that Siberian irises are insect as well as disease free. This along with their well known hardiness made them the ideal irises for lazy people like myself. They are not, I can assure you, foolproof. Not, with such as I, around.

Last season I had a rude awakening. Borers in my Siberian irises. Leaves dying off, drew my attention to it. Tender young leaves in the centre of the plant. The last few years during the growing season; I have sprayed religiously all irises, excepting the Siberians, with a poison named Sevin. This has been effective and I had the mistaken idea that all was well. When I discovered the eaten off leaves in the Siberian irises you can understand my consternation, if not my language. Granted some kind soul may have given me some eggs along with some of the newer type plants purchased. Then again, was it that; or had a pupa survived the Sevin? This I did not know. As my supply of Sevin was almost used up I purchased another type poison: Cygon. I did this with the thought in mind that if one could not completely eradicate them with a hatchet, let's try an axe. Taking it for granted that one poison is better than another. Just because it is a new one. This type thinking could be all wrong; as to this I cannot say. I found that after this treatment they did disappear. Upon examining the soil around the plant, as well as the roots themselves, nothing in the way of larva or pupa was found. The roots themselves had absolutely no injury. From this I feel the poison had done it's job. These larva or borers had been when found in the leaves a small type about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long. Not the healthy type usually found in irises. As to their actually being the true iris borer I cannot say. They sure looked like a smaller edition of the true borer. New leaves grew and all looked good as the irises went into their winter sleep.

This next season I will spray all and every plant and shrub in the garden. This as well as my neighbor's places on each side of me. They have irises. I gave them to them. Foolish me. I had two limbs go dead on some lilacs in the garden. Sure, borers. Granted these could have come from a Pussy Willow tree that is just lovely to behold right now, but a great borer home the rest of the growing season.

There are those who are against general spraying. I am one of them, at least till now. This type poison may not be as bad as the contact types; at least this is my thinking. The insects have to suck the juices from the plants before the poison works..few birds act as scavengers. They do not pick up dead insects from the ground to eat. In any case most of the birds around here are so fat and lazy they do not fly south in the winter. They stay and wax fat at feeding stations. For a short period they may live off insects. But it is a short period if at all. It is my opinion from what I have observed that they would much sooner starve than work for a living. Fruit trees, peas and other edible things are preferable to insect life. Who in their right mind would try digging out worms from leaves in those irises or

or collect aphids from roses and other plants. Or for that matter chase a moth around in the dark. NOT ME" seems to be their way of thinking. So until the birds decide to get back to their rightful purpose in life, I shall have to spray and pray. At least until then, I shall.

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SIBIRICAS IN NELSON, NEW ZEALAND
November 1965

Spring was late, cold and dry in 1965, so when we left to go to the New Zealand Iris Society Convention at Rotorua, few, if any of the Sibiricas had bloomed. Arriving home after a wonderful weekend, I found they had all burst open and a South West gale battering most of them to pieces. There was more bloom than there was the previous year and I made the following notes on the ones that I thought were more outstanding.

A seedling of AHALYA (only one to bloom)

Lavender blue, with a white spot below the style arms veined the same lavender blue. Falls flared. Height 9 inches.

Seedlings from ERIC THE RED. (Described in an earlier article)

I still like the rosy red colour of these. Only one has blue veining. This seems to me to 'kill' the rosy colour. Of the remainder, one was mid blue, with a white patch veined blue. Wide falls. Styles were blue and orchid lavender.

Another, a clear light blue with purple blue styles and good rounded horizontal falls.

The third lavender blue had pinkish lavender styles. Wide falls that were inclined to droop.

Lastly, one with lavender standards deeper than the falls. Styles with a blue ridge. Good form and different. Short - only 9 inches.

These were all recovering from an unfortunate shift.

There were four seedlings labeled PARENTAGE UNKNOWN.

One was a lovely light blue with veining on the falls that did not quite reach the edge, giving the appearance of a pale border. There was plenty of bloom.

Another was bright blue with deeper standards, and a white line extending from the signal patch. Good form and a lovely colour.

A third was a deep bright blue with wide flaring falls and long, deep orchid-pink style arms. Standards were also wide. Worth watching for next year.

Lastly, a lavender with ruffled standards and wide spoon falls. Pink veining at haft and style arms lighter.

FROM OVERSEAS SEED

Sent by Dorothy Spofford:

1. ZEST X ?
Unusual and lovely. Purple blue. Veining on haft and signal gave the appearance of brocade. Styles more reddish than purple.
2. ROYAL HERALD X ?
Purple blue self, with wide falls and long style arms.
3. SUMMER SKIES X ?
Purple blue with lavender style arms. .

One interesting seedling from seed sent by Maurice Kitton (England) flowered unexpectedly. This was a pale yellow, very much spotted and veined brown.

Some seedlings of 1. chrysographes from various sources were mostly rich deep red blacks with or without gold spots and all lovely.

Lucy Delany

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CONVENTION IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY May 29,30,31 and June 1, 1965

Are you planning to attend the American Iris Society's Annual Meeting in Newark on the above dates? If so, be sure to keep an eye open for Siberians in the tour gardens.

Here is a list of Siberian Irises eligible for the 1966 MORGAN AWARD:

BLUE BRILLIANT
BLUE MOON
COOL SPRING
HELEN ASTOR
MARTHA LAGRAN
MOUNTAIN LAKE
PIROUETTE
PLACID WATERS
ROYAL ENSIGN
SILVER TIP
SNOW FLARE
VELVET NIGHT

Make a list of these and check each garden to see if they are in it.

BE SURE TO VOTE FOR SIBERIANS.

Keep in mind also, that we would like your comments on the meeting for the fall issue of The Siberian Iris. Be sure to attend the Siberian Section meeting.

NEW MEMBERS 1966

Adams, Mrs. Charlotte M.	7802 Kyle Street Sunland, California
Beattie, Mr. Ron	Route 3, Box 535, Canby, Oregon
Bradley, Mr. Charles	768 S. W. Third St. Moore, Oklahoma
Christenson Gardens	R.F.D. #1, Box 181, Marcus, Iowa
Evans, Mr. Francis R.	1117 Half Moon Drive, Modesto, California
Foster, Mr. Thomas W. F.	31 Amberwood Lane, Walnut Creek, California
Greater Portland Iris Society	7135 S. E. Boise, Portland, Oregon
Heston, Mr. T. L.	7135 S. E. Boise, Portland, Oregon
Hirao, Dr. Shuichi	3-14 Yamanone, Zushi, Kanagawa, Japan
Holl, Mr. Earl A.	8812 Nora Lane, Indianapolis, Indiana
Indianapolis Hemerocallis & Iris Society % Mrs. Lee Fischer	3840 East 77th Street, Indianapolis, Ind.
Kindell, Mr. Sherman A.	1900 South 18th Street, Maywood, Illinois
Kummer, Mr. O. L., Librarian for Canadian Iris Society	997 Vine Street, Preston, Ont., Canada
Merz, Mrs. Robert L., Jr.	14206 Oak Shadows, San Antonio, Texas
Reinhardt, Mrs. Robert M.	14151 West National Ave., New Berlin, Wis
Roberts, Mr. Earl R.	5809 Rahnke Road, Indianapolis, Indiana
Schreiner, Mr. Robert	Route #2, Box 301, Salem, Oregon
Scharff, Mr. Jake H.	4818 Normandy Road, Memphis, Tenn.
Shaddix, Mr. Cooper D.	P. O. Box 4305, ACS, Gadsden, Alabama
Steiger, Mr. Max	Finca la Mina, Tacoronte, Tenerife, Islas Canarias, Camino Miranda
Theilin, Mr. Paul B.	1220 Avenue A, Gothenburg, Nebraska
Varnum, Mr. Edward E.	550 South Princeton Ave., Villa Park, Ill.
Wood, Mr. Guy C.	RD #1 Cooperstown, New York
Zurbrigg, Dr. Lloyd	903 Tyler Avenue, Redford, Virginia