

E. W. Wain's Copy 4-4 Fall 1976

THE SIBERIAN IRIS



The Siberian Iris

Fall 1976

Volume 4 Number 4

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Membership in this Society is open to members of the American
Iris Society living in Canada and the United States, and to
interested iris enthusiasts elsewhere. Dues: Annual Single
\$2; Annual Family, \$2.50; Triennial Single, \$5; Triennial
Family, \$6.

The President's Page

My Siberian season is not quite over as I write this on July 18 because I have a fairly large number of rebloom flowers appearing. Since I do have a large interest in Siberians this has been a good year. Over the bloom season I saw a wide range of lovely Siberians in many forms and colors. An important explanation for my very satisfactory season is a factor of the decision made by the Society for Siberian Irises that it would not follow the tall bearded group in their decision to select one ideal form and impose that form on all classes of new TB irises.

In contrast we decided that Siberians could and should have a variety of excellent shapes. The arched slender parts of the dark flowers that are typical of the many clones of I. chrysographes are correctly judged by us to be beautiful along with the wider petalled, breeze-fluttering, less formal flowers of the lovely GATINEAU. WHITE SWIRL with its starchy white trumpet-shaped flowers is as different from those just mentioned as form can be; but, in spite of the wide approval WHITE SWIRL justifiably won, its form did not become the model-THE FORM- for all new Siberians. Newer and other beautiful forms continue to appear but their appearance does not result in the loss of approval for older but equally beautiful Siberian flower forms.

Note carefully that this appreciation of this richness of variety in form does not at all mean that the Society has any toleration for the idea that anything goes. Flower forms that are not beautiful receive no approval. Since too much of anything becomes a bore, even things once judged to be beautiful can become mundane and no longer beautiful.

For me, the excitement I once knew from Tall Bearded irises has turned to boredom. They now all have the same shape and I am tired of it. Over a lifetime, and in contrast, I have had many lovely women among my friends. Thanks be that they varied and still vary in form. They continue to interest me. If all had been 'blessed' with some IDEAL form I certainly would not give a darn about seeing them.

The TBs once produced excitement for me. I can easily regain my first feelings of pleasure at the sight of the tailored beauty of the TB MARY E. NICHOLLS. MARY E. was a winner of the Gold Florin in the Florence Competition at about the time of the first World War. Due to the carelessness of a garden helper I lost this lovely. I would count myself lucky if I could buy it again at a good price. I can also remember

very clearly the pleasure and excitement that suffused me when I saw DEEP BLACK and DARK BOATMAN for the first time at the Ontario Convention. This was a reaction not just to their color but also to their beautiful forms which were held gracefully-- and still are--on plants that are individually more interesting than the great majority of the dark flowered TBs that have received places in the lists of 'best' tall bearded of today.

Why, you may ask, do I discuss tall bearded in The Siberian Iris? I do so for a number of reasons. First, in congratulation to the Society for having the good taste to avoid the trap of some one 'best' form. Second, as an explanation of why American irises--other than tall bearded--make such slow progress toward the top award. (In passing, Siberian hybridizers could easily produce Siberians that have The Shape and would bloom at the height of the TB season. I would regard such an event as the destruction of the integrity of the Society.) Third and finally, I write this as a preface to a criticism of the prevalent point-judging system which I am convinced is largely responsible for the increasing--and for me boring--degree of likeness in form of all the new tall bearded. This process is one that the Society of Siberian Irises should avoid as its members would want to avoid an atomic war.

Beo

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES

Ira E. Wood, Secretary pro tem.

The annual meeting of the Society for Siberian Irises was held on the afternoon of June 5th in the Olds-Plaza Hotel in Lansing, Michigan.

President McGarvey stated that a change in the bylaws would be needed to permit the terms for officers to be increased from two to three years. A notice will be printed in TSI.

A panel discussion on Judging Standards was attended by nearly one-fourth of all Convention registrants--about 150 people. McGarvey, Wadekamper and Wood each spoke briefly and then answered questions from the floor. Interest in Siberian irises is increasing.

Mr. Ben Hager urged all Sections representing the various beardless irises to petition the AIS Board for a change in the waiting period now required between introduction and HM eligibility. This is desirable since none of the beardless irises produce typical bloom on plants blooming the first season after transplanting.

Mr. Steve Varner recommended that all guest Siberians should be sent to Convention gardens three years before the convention instead of two. He concurred in the recommendation that HM awards should not be made on one-year plants which are not apt to be typical.

After a showing of slides the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Ira

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ira E. Wood, Secretary pro tem.

Following the annual meeting of the Society, the Board of Directors met. Those present were Edwards, McGarvey, Varner and Wood. President McGarvey stated that all appointees would continue to serve for another year.

Under new business it was moved and seconded that the Society for Siberian Irises should petition the AIS Board of Directors to change the eligibility requirement for the HM awards for Siberian irises as follows: a period of two years after introduction, instead of one year, shall be required before any introduced cultivar is eligible for the HM award. The motion was passed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Ira

GUEST IRISES FOR THE HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION

The 1979 Convention Tour Gardens are prepared to accept guest plants beginning this fall and early winter.

Hybridizers should get in touch with the Guest Iris Chairman, Mr. T. A. Gilliam, 2022 Rodgers Dr., N. E., Huntsville, Alabama, 35811, Telephone 205-536-8777.
(2¢ worth: I'm sure we are all glad to see this idea, proposed at Lansing, taken up at the earliest opportunity. It does mean that the Apogons have a better chance of making a good show.)

The Apogon Auction

Barbara Whitehouse

It was a small but jolly group that gathered at Bee and Frank Warburton's in Westborough, Mass., on August 29th to look at slides, get a lesson in entomology, eat, and spend money at the annual Apogon Auction in Region 1. Although only 20 members and guests attended, they came from New Jersey, New York, Maine, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and many fine plants had been donated and the bidding was brisk. As a result the SSI Treasury is richer by \$364.30. Region 1 also received a token payment of \$25, and the Society for Japanese Irises received \$46, as a result of the auction. A total of 13 varieties of Japanese irises, 48 varieties of Siberians, 11 different apogon species, several seedlings, and five hostas were offered, and bids ranged from 50¢ to \$8.00 (for EARTHSHINE and MAGGIE SMITH, the latter to be introduced by Dr. McGarvey in 1977). Ira Wood was the lucky winner of a pair of beautifully embroidered pillowcases (with an iris design, naturally) which were raffled off prior to the auction.

Morning activities included slides shown by Dr. McEwen, Betty and Ira Wood, and Dr. McGarvey, and a group of slides of Japanese irises sent by Eleanor Westmeyer, plus an animated discussion of the 'critters' which get into Siberian buds and eat the styles and stamens before the blooms open. Sarah Tiffney identified the fly whose larva is responsible and had several examples, preserved in alcohol for us to examine. She also had sample larvae. She remarked that the larva is apparently light shy, disappearing as soon as the ravaged bloom opens. A little detective work disclosed that it retreats to the spathe below the bloom and hides there. Sarah had also found a small borer at work within Siberian buds, and others confirmed that they, too, had had similar experiences with borers in blossoms. Bee Warburton had also been on a witch hunt for insects injurious to irises and had a container of iris weevils and verbena bud moths found in seed pods. One member remarked that treating iris plants with Cygon in the fall, after cleanup, had significantly reduced the borer population the following year.

After a pot-luck buffet lunch topped off with some of Frank Warburton's delicious fresh-picked corn-on-the-cob, the group was ready to part with their money urged on by auctioneer Allan McConnell, assisted by President McGarvey, Wendy Shaw and Barbara Whitehouse served as clerks. A hard summer shower drove us into the spacious Warburton garage but failed to

dampen the spirits of the bidders. Conspicuous by his absence was the founder of the Apogon Auction, Kevin Vaughn, who had already left for Texas 'A & M, where he will be working for his Master's degree in genetics. Kevin, we missed you!

If you happen to be in Massachusetts on the last Sunday in August, be sure to take in the annual Apogon Auction. If you live too far away to get here, why not sponsor an apogon auction of your own? It offers an opportunity to obtain apogon irises at tremendous bargains and is a lot of fun too!

HOW TO PUT ONE ON

Peg Edwards

I suppose I'm a fine one to talk; though I've attended all the auctions that have been put on at Warburtons' I really have not been involved in the planning. But a modicum of observation can be almost as useful as being on the committee--maybe more, because in my experience the more I get involved in a committee the less I understand of what really was decided on. And anyhow they will probably change the plan at the next meeting.

The first thing is to decide where the auction will be held. If it is reasonably near a couple of decent motels you can perhaps expand the radius of the guest list to about 300 miles; otherwise keep the area as small as will allow getting there before 10 AM and getting home after 4:30 or 5 PM without anyone being too pooped out to drive safely. In the latter case about three hours' drive is maximum; each way, that is. You'll all have plenty of rest between coming and going, except of course for the 'staff' who had better be fairly local. Get out a map of your area and mark the site. With a pair of compasses run a circle around it at the mileage you have decided is best for your group. Check the membership lists--both AIS and the Apogon groups, which the Secretary of any of the Sections will be delighted to send you if you offer a fair share of the profits to the Section. Prepare your list of addresses, but don't send out notices yet!

The next step is to get a speaker on some subject of interest to apogon fanciers: What's New in Siberians, Care and Feeding of Japanese Irises, A Short History of Spurias--something that will be of interest not only to the ones who grow them locally, but also to those who don't but would like to know a little about them. Plan also on having a couple of short talks on other apogons or other aspects of the same kind of apogon, with a few slides. The whole session should not take more than an hour and a half and should start not earlier than 10:30.

Now draw up your circular. It should tell when--time, date, where (with a map if it is out of town) and what is

included in the program--speakers, lunch, what kinds of plants are to be auctioned, and approximately when it will end. Pick the best possible time for digging and planting in your area--compatible with everyone in the area being too busy digging and planting their own just that weekend. Get some volunteers to agree to divide some of their larger clumps and bring two or three moderate-size divisions of each. Generally about 60 varieties will be the most you can auction within the limitations of time and the endurance of the human rear in contact with a folding chair.

You may be able to persuade a few top hybridizers to donate a division of a new introduction; as some of these may prefer to send stock at a later date you can auction postcards addressed to the hybridizer instead of the plants themselves, but it is nice to have a few spandy new Japs or Siberians or Spurias on hand to tempt the bidders to go hog wild. I have noticed at our auctions--and this is as true of the local "general iris" auctions--that the bidding is apt to be rather timid at first, with irises catalogued at \$15 going for \$2.75. But as soon as something new is offered--maybe a 'hit' seedling or bran-new introduction at that spring's AIS Convention--there will be three or four people who want it and the bidding gets lively. After the ice has been broken prices tend to be better for all kinds of things. There will certainly be some older varieties which can be sold at fixed prices, low enough to entice the inexperienced into trying a few to see how they do for him.

Now you have all the basics. Fold, staple, stamp and address your circulars and get them in the mail about a month before the set date. If your local group has frequent meetings an announcement can be made at the last meeting prior to the auction, and you can usually get other nearby groups to do the same. Maybe you can even get a notice into your Regional publication and those of adjacent Regions enough before the date to entice a few people into coming to town the night before and going home the next day.

The next item is food. Keep it fairly simple--not too many kinds of things to choose from. You want them reasonable well fed but not so stuffed they will fall asleep in the middle of the sale. If someone in your group has some very special food--an unusual vegetable, like Frank Warburton's fresh eatin' corn, an old family recipe for baked ham, a super-cake--make that the feature of the meal. Then, if the auction is enough of a success and you have the strength to run another the next year, you can mention that 'that fabulous baked ham will be available again', and it will bring back everyone who remembers it and some who heard about it. Home-made bread seems to go well too. Your group will have to decide whether to reimburse each cook for his or her expenses or regard these as the contributions of the cooks to the total event. After all good food is quite as important to the success of an auction as a good assortment of healthy divis-

ions of plants or a good speaker. At the Westborough auction we donate the food. Region 1 which sponsors the whole thing does, I believe, provide soda pop but this is an expense which is deducted from the take before dividing up the profits.

I have mentioned that it would be a good thing to set a limit on how many plants are to be auctioned. But it is advisable to have some older varieties available in fair quantity to sell at bargain table at fixed prices--old but still good varieties such as GATINEAU, SUMMER SKY, TYCOON, which you might sell at 25¢ or 50¢ during the lunch hour. Someone should be at the sale table to make note of what kinds were sold this way and how many of each. Then when the auction begins, someone should keep track of the prices of the various cultivars and species--on paper, with mention that, say, STRUT AND FLOURISH went for \$3.50 and four divisions were sold. This is going to be very useful in determining how much of the take should go to each Section involved. We have a staff of two recording the results of the auction; they use large cards to list what each customer buys--one for each buyer--so that at the end of the day each person can pay the total bill, without having to run up to the cashier after each purchase. The clerks also note on separate sheets of paper, one for Siberians, one for Japs, one for other kinds of plants, the name of the variety or species, the price and how many were sold. After the auction is over and the total take has been added up, expenses are deducted, and the results divided on the basis of what percentage of sales came from each of the sponsoring Sections' kind of plant. Thus if sales of Siberians and Japs split 65% for Siberians and 35% for Japs, the whole profit is divided between them 65-35, including that resulting from the sale of several choice clones of versicolor, pseudacorus, ensata, and maybe some Hostas or Hemerocallis.

How do you decide how to go about offering the divisions? There are two ways and I've attended auctions using both methods. I really can't say which is better. In the Region 2 auctions we only disclose the presence of one rhizome of a variety before starting the bidding on that variety; after the plant is sold, the auctioneer then announces that there are two more available and the other bidders, working down from the second-highest bidder, can buy them at the final sale price. Sometimes of course there are no more; sometimes we have had four or five extras. At the Apogon auction, in accordance with Region 1 practices, the auctioneer tells how many divisions are available and the high bidder gets first choice of the clumps. On the face of it the Region 2 way ought to bring in higher prices but I can't see that it actually works out this way; the presence of five bidders for four divisions can work up quite as fine a frenzy.

And oh yes, the crucial person: the auctioneer. You might feel things would go better with two, spelling each other at about half-hour intervals. In any case they do not have to be high-pressure salesmen; but they should be able to keep things

moving along fairly briskly, and it helps if they can spot the moment when the bidding is slowing down and break it off fast with a sale, then go quickly to the next variety. And do resist the temptation to get the price higher than the catalogs offer it for; this may raise the take but it can create hard feelings later. On the rare occasions when a variety seems to be heading for that ceiling we usually cut off at 25¢ under catalog for the older and less expensive things and 50¢ for the newer ones.

The auctioneer should have one or two assistants to 'deliver' the divisions to the buyers. These aides also keep the clerks posted on who bought what. If there are three or four divisions of a variety they will carry the whole batch to the winning bidder to choose the one he wants, then on down the line to the other bidders to pick theirs out. This is a good job for the Junior members if you have any available--they are apt to be quicker on their feet than some of us old folks. And speed is rather important; if you want to sell as much as 60 varieties in the space of three hours (the outside limit) this allows just 3 minutes for each, and some varieties will generate enough bidding to run four and five minutes, especially with something new that is catalogued at \$20 or \$25 when the bidders are upping the price by 25¢ in the early stages of bidding.

A couple of weeks before the date of the auction, it can be a good idea to get a story in the local papers about the auction and mention that there will be a bargain table and visitors will be welcome; maybe you can even get a local radio station to run a couple of announcements a day or two before. These can bring in people 'off the street' who just might get interested enough to wind up joining AIS, and even if you don't increase your membership that way, their money is as good as anyone's as far as the profits go. The stories should mention that anyone who wants to stay for the auction should bring folding chairs, and that there will be a program in the morning and that those who come for the whole affair will be welcome for the lunch. If you plan to welcome such visitors it would be advisable to have some kind of name tags available for everyone; but you should make sure that the picnickers are out of sight of the bargain table if at all possible because if the general public gets the idea that they can get a free lunch by buying a couple of bucks worth of irises, there won't be much profit. Anyhow--have fun!

Q. & A.

Questions by Dot Hujzak; Answers by Jean Witt

Q. When hybridizing Siberians of Californicae, do you have to tear off the standards and/or the falls? I hate doing this. Can't I just close the flower again with fine wire after removing the stamens and pollinating? If so, how long should I keep it closed?

A. Californicae have very dry pollen which pops off the anther as it opens, so buds must be opened and anthers removed to prevent self-pollination; Siberians do not shed their pollen quite so readily. Keep petals closed until the flower wilts and will no longer attract bees.

Q. After opening the flower, on removing the stamens, can I pollinate right off?

A. Yes. This is sometimes difficult as the stigmatic lip may still be in a closed position, rather than turned down; but with practice you can pry it back enough to load it with pollen.

Q. How long will pollen stay viable when saved in paper packets?

A. If frozen, TB pollen keeps until the following spring. There is no real information on other types. I have found Californicae pollen in packets will keep 2 to 3 weeks in a tightly covered jar in the refrigerator (not frozen.)

Q. Some Siberians, like WHITE SWIRL and VI LUIHN, don't seem to have any pollen even a little while after the stamens have been put in the packets. I have tried bending and breaking them but with no luck so far as I can tell. What can I do?

A. When pollen looks poor or seems meager, I sometimes leave the anther sticking between the two style-arm tips on the chance that there may be a few good grains. The two tips tend to overlap and you'll find you can catch the anther between them on or near the lip.

Q. In the case of Cal-Sibe, do you pronounce Sibe with a long I?

A. Yes, I do. I feel 'sib' can be confused with 'sib'-for-sibling and most of us in the U.S. say "Sigh-birica". I put this term into use as a spoken word in the Northwest, though this designation had appeared in print much earlier.

Q. Do you have any idea on how long it takes for fertilization after daubing the pollen on the stigmatic lip? Why do hot and cold weather, rain and high humidity affect hybridizing adversely?

A. Garden Irises gives details of the fertilization process, but not the time. It takes maybe 12 to 24 hours--you can see that the ovary has begun to swell in a matter of a very few days. Hot weather and drying winds dry out the secretions on the stigmatic lip. Rain bursts the pollen grains, and may dilute the stigmatic secretions too. I also feel that spring freezes that occur as the fans of leaves begin to grow in the spring can kill or damage pollen and/or ovules, reducing viability.

Q. A beautiful Cal-Sibe seedling entered in our show was dismissed by our TB judges as 'nothing unusual'. What criteria does one use for judging Cal-Sibes?

A. In judging Cal-Sibes (since we don't really know entirely what standards we should have, as yet) I'd say good color first, and a look halfway between the two parents for form.

Q. You say most of the named Siberians of I. sibirica type are hard to cross with the Californicae. Why is this?

A. Most of the named garden Siberians--GATINEAU, WHITE SWIRL, etc.--have 28 chromosomes and are descendants of I. sibirica and I. sanguinea. There is a second group of species known as the '40's' which might be called SinO-siberians, since they come from Western China and the Himalayas, which have 40 chromosomes and are much less common in American gardens; these include I. chrysographes, I. forrestii, etc. Because the Californicae also have 40 chromosomes, they seem to match better with the 40's than with the 28's, though crosses with the latter do exist. There are many named clones of 28's among garden Siberians, but few named clones of 40's--PUGET POLKA, TIGGER, GOLD-MARCH, FORETELL.

Q. When the Siberian flower bud is swelling and I pick it open with my fingers in order to remove the stamens, etc., how do I know that the pollen hasn't already dropped onto the stigmatic lip? How can I be very, very sure it hasn't? Sometimes I see little red insects crawling around inside--how do I know that they haven't already messed up my cross?

A. Preferably, one catches the bud early enough that the anthers have not split open. (In Californicae anthers do sometimes split open before the flower unfolds.) You could examine the stigmatic lip with a magnifying glass, to be sure there is no pollen on it. The insects might mess up your cross. Perhaps you could use insecticide the day before you plan to pollinate, or else avoid flowers with insects in them unless selfing.

Q. Is there ever a case when you plant iris seed that you get a seedling that looks just like the parent? I planted seed of WISLEY WHITE and several of the seedlings bloomed purple; I. versicolor CLARET CUP produced seedlings just like CLARET CUP and I. versicolor white with pale lavender veins produced seedlings just like itself; but none of my named Siberians pods produced

seedlings just like the parents. Why is this?

A. How like seedlings are to their parents varies a good bit even within a single species. I suspect that both CLARET CUP and the white I. versicolor are recessive to the common blue type; they were probably self-pollinated and hence breed true and duplicate themselves. I don't know for sure about WISLEY WHITE, but as a guess: if it was carefully selfed and gave purples that would mean it was a dominant white carrying purple as a recessive, but it is more likely that it is a recessive white cross pollinated by neighboring dominant purples. Your named Siberians are diverse enough in background that they are heterozygous for many traits. Most TBs are highly varied in background-- few breed true today. Where many varieties are grown in close proximity, much mixing occurs. The reason the Seed Exchange gives out 'mixed 40's' is that species and hybrids are all in the same bed and we can stand and watch bees mixing them further. Some will come true as I. forrestii or I. chrysographes but many are certainly cross-pollinated.

MORE ABOUT ORRIS POWDER

Irene Van De Water sends a quote from a book, Man and Mystery in Asia, by E. Ossendowski, 1924:

"Yellow, white, and purple Japanese iris, with flowers of from eight to twelve inches in length, grown in clusters beautifully detaching themselves from the green carpet of the prairie abound here and have a subtle violet scent, which their roots possess in an even stronger degree. These roots when dried and pulverized, hold this scent for a number of years and are not only much used in Asia, but are also the well-known orris root of Western commerce. The women of Asia put the little bags, sui generis sachet, of this powder in their dresses and sprinkle it in their hair; while the men add it to their snuff-boxes or to the tobacco used for their pipes."

Irene comments that the 'Japanese' iris is probably wrong as far as orris powder is concerned; but one might wonder what irises are used in the East for this scented powder. Seems to me there are three possibilities. It might be I. tectorum or laevigata; I haven't grown the latter but sometimes I have detected a faint violetty fragrance from tectorum; it might be sanguinea, which was fairly widespread in the far East--anyone care to go around smelling the Siberians? And it might be that some of the Japanese irises have fragrance, though I've never found any in the few varieties I grow. I must say that the iris described in the quotation, if we substitute 'width' for 'length' in the second line, would come closer to a Jap than to anything else. Of course it is possible that we don't know about making orris powder from anything other than the ones grown for the purpose simply because we haven't tried, but con-

sidering how long the perfume makers have been hunting up things to make fragrances out of, I'd be surprised if nobody in Grasse had tried some other kinds of iris!

Would anyone like to try grinding and drying and powdering various kinds of iris roots to see what they get, and then tell us about it next fall?

Peg-

SOME COMMENTS ON VARIETIES

Lucy Delany, from Nelson, New Zealand:

The seedling I remember most in 1976 was one labelled 'Mirza Citronella'--the first of three to flower. I think these were second-generation seedlings. The first and best was a real light citron yellow with flared falls--no branch. The others were deep blue; each had a branch, but the form was not good. I saved seed from the first flower of the yellow one, as it was out before any of the others, and there were no other Siberians near.

DEWFUL, SUPEREGO, and EGO all do well here now, and this spring I hope to see flowers on some that Currier McEwen kindly sent my last September. They all appear to have accepted this upside down world, and are sending up new shoots as is usual at this time of year here.

Hazel Malcolm, a friend who lives here in Richmond, had some beautiful displays of many of the new ones she has imported during the last few years. Some I liked were ANNIVERSARY, CAMBRIDGE, SWANK and DREAMING SPIRES.

Peg Edwards, from the Convention:

67-8V (A. Miller) Rather nice blue-violet, some white markings on the haft. No yellow blaze but a hint of yellow on the sides of the haft. Loose, open form, but the falls are not hangdog. Branched, 3 buds.

DARK DESIRE (Varner) Slightly darker than the Miller sdlg.; almost no markings, and a lighter blue style. No side buds.

EARLY BLUEBIRD (McEwen) Another of the dark blue-violets. I didn't like the flower quite as well as DARK DESIRE, but it has branches--plural!

The tetraploids, CLEVE DODGE, NAVY BRASS and SNOW BOUNTY, were rather propellor-shaped, but they had some very good points too.

The color of CLEVE DODGE was a very striking purple; there is no doubt that doubling the chromosomes does give greater depth and luster to the colors. SNOW BOUNTY was very vigorous and the white was very velvety to my eyes. NAVY BRASS is stunning until it is fully open, then the shape kind of spoils it for me; yet I suspect if I had a good clump of it I could overlook that for that very brassy trim on the deep blue.

TEMPER TANTRUM (McGarvey) I liked the colors of this well-named Siberian: red-violet with blue-violet veining on the falls, and slightly lighter red with a blue streak up the middle.

(2¢ worth: I do wish more of you would send us comments and notes on how the Siberians did in your area, what you saw at the National and at Regional Conventions, seedlings you saw in the gardens of local hybridizers (if any) or in your own garden. Pretty please with sugar on it?)

Hybridizing Ancestors

Betty Wood

The Mc's hybridize the Siberians
With a little help from the Lord.
There's McGarvey--that's plain--and McEwen from Maine
And from Muncie there's Forrest McCord.

They all have to get there ahead of the bees;
They sure have to know what they're doin'.
Producing Siberians destined to please:
McGarvey, McCord and McEwen.

Poor Warburton, Varner and Briscoe! You see
They haven't a chance and that's certain.
Their names don't begin with the magic M-C.
Poor Briscoe; poor Varner, Warburton.

And other Siberian crossers as well
Are just as unlucky as those.
Without an M.C. we have, for e. g.,
Hollingsworth, Hager, DuBose.

So come you McTavishes, come you McQuinns,
Come McIntosh and you McWheerians!
You're sure to produce a McIris that wins
So start hybridizing Siberians.

A SALUTE TO JULIUS WADEKAMPER

Currier McEwen

(This originally appeared in The News and Views of the Iris Society of Minnesota. We were delighted to get their permission to reprint it.)

All readers of News and Views know who Julius is but perhaps do not recognize SSI, so let me say at once that those letters stand for the Society for Siberian Irises, one of the organizations so fortunate as to have Julius' strong interest and support.

Julius has been a member of SSI since 1969 and in the seven years since then has served the Society in many capacities. Among other activities he has helped organize the annual Siberian Iris Section meetings at AIS Conventions and has participated in those programs. In 1970 he accepted the chairmanship of SSI's Display Garden Committee. Under his guidance rules for Siberian Iris display gardens were developed. His deft touch is well illustrated by the 'rules' themselves for they are happily light and flexible yet serve the Society's needs admirably. During his term as chairman some eight or more display gardens have been designated in the United States and he has encouraged efforts to establish others in Europe.

Julius has brought to irises in general as well as to the Siberians in particular not only his love of these flowers but also his scientific background and skills. All who grow irises are indebted to him for his research on plant diseases with particular attention to 'scorch'.

In 1972 he was appointed SSI representative to the Bulletin of the American Iris Society. At that time he began attending meetings of the SSI Board of Directors as member ex-officio and three years later became an elected member. During these years he has attended every Board meeting. This may not seem remarkable to those of you who do not know the problem which a comparatively small society with members scattered all over the nation has in mustering a quorum or, indeed, in just getting Board members together to work out problems and make plans.

In 1975 he was elected First Vice President and President-Elect and shortly will start his two-year term as sixth president of the Society. The Society for Siberian Irises salutes him and joins with his friends in the Iris Society of Minnesota in wishing him all the best.

THE CHECK LIST--A FINAL REPORT

Peg Edwards

The Check List of Siberian Irises is finally being prepared for the printers as I write this--pity poor Carol who is busy with that horrible typing! It may get to the printer even before this issue, but as the issue has priority it may be mid-November before the C.L. is ready for mailing, and as that would put us into the holiday mailing period we have decided to hold off the mailing till after the first of the year. However we will accept orders as soon as you want to send them. The publication runs to 60 pages and the price for pre-publication orders will be \$2.75. This price was based on the costs of publication for the Spring 1976 issue of TSI, and it is possible that costs will have gone up to where we might have to raise the price, but we will not do so without notification in the Spring 1977 issue. We will accept orders at the quoted price up to April 1, 1977; if you delay until after that date (order received by me) you should wait for the Spring TSI and check the price there.

And what's in it? Not as much as we had hoped when this project was first discussed. We had hoped to have pictures of the various species, articles about some of the early hybridizers, maybe even a short history of the Siberian irises, and descriptions of their habitats. But space limited us; to be exact, 60 pages plus cover was what we could expect the printer to handle within the compass of his stapling machine. Anything larger would involve going to a book-binder which would raise the costs excessively.

Still, you'll find plenty of useful information in the Check List as it stands. Here is the Index:

- President's Foreword
- A Thank-You
- How to Read this Check List
- Section I--28 Chromosome Origin
- Section II--40 Chromosome Origin and 28 x 40 Hybrids
- Section III--Hybrids between Siberians and Other Irises
- Why Register Plants, Anyhow?
- Winners of Major Awards
- Notes: Some Classic Siberians and their Producers
- Editor's Notes and Comments

This last, in line with my known weakness for sticking in my 2¢ worth here and there, pops up in various spaces left when a portion of the basic material doesn't fill a page. Thrifty, that's me.

Material we had planned to use, and had actually collected or started to, will not go to waste, of course; it will be used here and there, now and then, to eke out a skinny issue of TSI. To start us off I'd like at this point to present my explanation of the choice of cut-off date for what may be called the Classic Period of Siberian irises:

In trying to draw a line between the older garden Siberians and the modern ones my first impulse was to use World War II as the boundary line. But as I went over the names, dates, and numbers registered I found myself becoming convinced that the most logical time to choose was the date of the American Iris Society Convention at Syracuse, N. Y. On that occasion two Siberians, ROYAL ENSIGN (Hall, i. 1951) and WHITE SWIRL (Cassebeer i. 1957) made their Convention debuts; both they, and that Convention, have had a role in the growing interest in Siberians, and both have proven to be potent ancestors of new strains of garden Siberians. So let us operate on the assumption that breeders (both those who actually hybridized and those who grew bee pods and selected the best of the resulting seedlings) who were active primarily before that date fell within the province of that article; those who did the bulk of their work after that occasion are to be considered moderns. Of course this kind of leaves H. F. Hall, who created ROYAL ENSIGN, up in the air; he had died before the Convention, and this was apparently the only Siberian he ever considered introducing. But his effect on the small world of Siberians has come entirely since that time--largely through the work of McGarvey, so far, though in view of what Bill has gotten from his work with ROYAL ENSIGN I suspect that others will get in on the act. There is little need to say anything about the role of WHITE SWIRL in recent breeding.

But the Convention itself played a part too. For many of the visitors it was a first look at Siberians in any quantity. I might add that for many it was also a first look at the newer Median Bearded; this was one of those conventions at which there was a range of weather which allowed various types other than TBs to be seen in fair numbers. Some of the gardens were seen on warm days in a warmish area of north central New York; in at least one garden smudgepots were used the night before to prevent total disaster. I remember my own visit to Tom Hall's garden particularly well because we were the first bus to reach it, and as we started across the grass our footsteps showed in the frost on the grass. At Dr. Randolph's I drank the third cup of coffee of my life. I didn't like the first one and have only had three altogether since, only when it was 'perishing cold' and nothing else hot was immediately available--this was just such an occasion. Here were Medians, TBs, Siberians all growing

together--though perhaps feeling quite as chilly as I did, but like me, not quite friz! Quite a few wonders burst upon us here--the Paul Cook line starting with WHOLE CLOTH, WIDE WORLD, EMMA COOK, which really put good amoenas within the grasp of even the beginning hybridizer; some of the earliest of the new breed of Intermediate Bearded--I believe this was when I first laid eyes on BLUE ASTERISK, among others; and of course, WHITE SWIRL.

I was on the lookout for Siberians. I had grown a few from seed and was debating whether one of them might be good enough to register, but having only my own things to go by I wanted to take this opportunity to compare them with 'the market'--if it just duplicated things that were already in commerce, there was no sense in bothering with it. Also I was wondering why these very attractive irises got so little attention in the convention reports--I hadn't been to any myself but had read about them in the Bulletins of the previous three years, and they seemed to be practically all TBs with a scattering of Table Irises. It turned out I wasn't the only one who went to Syracuse with an eye peeled for Siberians among other things. And there were quite a few other things to look at.

Then on the way home, Bill Peck and Harry Kuesel decided to stop off at the Cassebeer garden to see what was to be seen, and my eyes, at least, were really opened to the Siberians. In fact we all went home with WHITE SWIRL and with our minds full of other Cassebeer Siberians that would soon be introduced.

Yes, I have to consider 1958 as the line between the older ones and the modern Siberians.

The West Branch Auction



L. to - n
Harry Edwards
Bill McFarland
Esther Mac-
Garry
Peg Edwards
(or some of
her!)

SIBERIAN IRISES FROM SUNNYBROOK

Ella Porter McKinney (reprinted from AIS Bulletin 50, 1934)

(Sarah Tiffney brought this to our attention when we were trying to learn something about the early breeders.)

Comprehensive lists from American iris growers show the influence of Mrs. Frances Cleveland's selective work among the Siberian irises. A list before me, out of the 41 items apportioned among nine breeders and selectors, gives Mrs. Cleveland seventeen--over 40% of the list! These range from her first introductions, BUTTERFLY and SUNNYBROOK in 1920, to LITTLE BOY BLUE and MOUNTAIN POOL in 1932.

Among her seedlings are the many-flowered Siberian (*sibirica*) types as well as the two or three or four-flowered orientalis (*sanguinea*) type, sometimes with very tall stems and large flowers. The general excellence of all these is due, without doubt, to the fact that to begin with she had the better types like EMPEROR and PERRY'S BLUE. When I visited her garden in early June of this year she told me that selection from seedlings from seedpods on good parents had been her work, the rest that of nature.

Mrs. Cleveland loves blue, which may or may not account for her early concentration on a branch of the iris family that expresses itself chiefly in blue and white at blossoming time. Among her seedlings the predilection for blue is seen in the names chosen--BLUE HERON, BLUE FLAME, BLUE OWL, BLUE RIDGE, BLUE STAR, BLUE WINGS, LITTLE BOY BLUE, TURQUOISE CUP, PERIWINKLE.

BUTTERFLY and SUNNYBROOK are in many of our gardens. Not so many gardens know well some fine later introductions. BLUE WINGS, two and a half feet, is an exquisite clear light blue of orientalis type. PERIWINKLE carries as many as six flowers to three-foot stem and is of the bluest with great substance and broad foliage. LITTLE BOY BLUE--a velvety blue shading to dark at the edges is one of Mrs. Cleveland's favorites as is TURQUOISE CUP, an enthusiasm that visitors to her garden share.

Averse to naming irises for people but wishing to honor her many friends of Llewellyn Park, West Orange, N. J., she has given the name, LLEWELLYN, to a blue self that carries itself on thin almost sinuous stems. This characteristic gives it delightful possibilities in arrangements for the house.

WHITE DOVE and WHITE EMPRESS are two whites of diverse

form, and tall. These sometimes produce a third and even a fourth flower. There is still an unnamed white which is very frilly in all its parts.

MORNING MAGIC (1932) is a very early pinkish lavender with six or seven flowers to a stalk coming into bloom in mid-May. This earliness makes it valuable as well as its habit of sending up stalks of bloom at the end of the iris season, as reported from some gardens.

Eatontown lies low and quiet in the June sun. Sunnybrook is a level sandy farm and the wide old farmhouse is reached by a lane through wood and field. Mrs. Cleveland is a gracious hostess who takes pride in pointing out this and that rare plant which has found a place in her garden. Her taste for beauty being a catholic one, she adds to her gardening enthusiasms one for silky-haired dogs of fine breed, and another for old furniture and glass from early homes of New Jersey.

That so many Siberian irises have originated from a garden of the sandiest soil is an interesting horticultural observation. Given plenty of moisture and humus in the soil they grow satisfactorily for Mrs. Cleveland. They are, also on entirely level ground. Her success would certainly not be so good on a sandy hillside.

(2¢ worth: Some of the descriptions given in this early article sound like more reinforcements for the theory that many of the Siberians we grow may not in fact be of the actual clone that was introduced by the early breeders/selectors. I've grown MORNING MAGIC since 1960 and never found more than 4 flowers on it, nor has it produced late bloom for me--nor have I heard reports of either characteristic from others who grow it. Still, what I have does bloom early and in other respects answers the description of the variety. If I don't grow the true plant then what I have is a very close relative, possibly a child of the original. Perhaps this would be a good variety to use if one wanted to breed reblooming Siberians or extend the season back into late Median season. From my own experience with it I would think there might be the germ of a line of dwarfs there too. A batch of seedlings which I have had to conclude to be offspring of the MORNING MAGIC I have, have stayed under 20" and indeed one of them was under 15" both times it has bloomed so far--it skipped last year.

As for LLEWELLYN's thin, sinuous stems, well, mine ain't. I don't say they are as thick as a fencepost, but they are fairly sturdy, about as thick as a ball-point-pen.)

Back Talk

I don't know whether I'm the only one who enjoys the comic trips, but I came across one last summer that I really must share with you. I had hoped to be able to have it reproduced in this space but that proved to be impossible--it was a Sunday strip in full color and the background on two of the squares was so dark we'd have only had a dark grey blur. So I'm gonna tell you about it.

Frame 1. Funky Winkerbean, our hero, is sitting in the shade of a tree and watching a bee buzz around a flower--a large yellow daisyish thing.

Frame 2. The flower's stem is all bent and wiggly; rising from among its petals are large violent sounds--SNARL, POW, HISS, CHOKE, plus several exclamation points.

Frame 3. More of the same; by now petals are flying about to the tune of GROWL, PUNCH, SLUG, BAM.

Frame 4. As the battered, disheveled flower tries to straighten up again, and the bee hums off, Funky says, "Boy! That's some of the crossdest pollinating I've ever seen!"

Thank you, Mr. Tom Batiuk, for some new insight into our hobby's most fascinating aspect!

Of course none of our hybridizers would mistreat a flower so violently. We just open them 'before Christmas', so to speak, steal their pollen, tie them up with pieces of yarn, or encase them in bags, inflict on them husbands (if you can call them that) they perhaps wouldn't have picked out themselves, and all round mess up their private lives. We even have been known to make them have unwanted children--unwanted by them, at least. However I have no intention of advocating a 'right to privacy' law for Siberians. I'll probably be out there next June doing more of the same. But in view of the results I've had the last couple of years, I am beginning to wonder if the irises are trying to strike back? The only pods I had this year were set by the bees. This was true not only of the irises but of the day-lilies also. Lilies were a little more amenable to my whims. But not much. Oh well--more room for tomatoes next summer, I guess. Or just maybe I'll plant a couple of the bee pods I saved for a noble purpose: I was going to pass them out to some of the garden club gals so they could get an idea of the variation one can get from one pod of seed. Somehow I have to drive out of their heads the idea that a seedling of WHITE SWIRL, if it is white, is still WHITE SWIRL. They don't really understand about clones and cultivars. Yes, you guessed, I'm horticulture chairman this year.

Now here I go pleading again for material for TSI. And more important--if you do promise material--please get it to us in time, or if something comes up and you just can't get it out (I know these things happen) try to get word to us well before the deadline date so we can at least try to find a replacement. I had three short articles lined up for this issue which simply didn't arrive, even though I was a week late starting to type the first draft (I had some sort of bug which had me sneezing explosively about every two minutes and feeling sort of numb in the brain for four or five days.) Because I had requested these I turned down a couple of other offerings for this issue, though they are scheduled for the Spring issue. Too late, of course, to send out the SOS, so again we have a 24-page TSI.

One reason we have that much is the good pictures Betty Wood sent along of the Westborough Auction--or at least, lunch time at Westborough! Soon after we all had to make a beeline for the garage to get out of the thunderstorm.

Have a good winter--see you next spring!

Peg

The Westborough Auction



E. to n.
E. to n.
Sarah
Tiffany

Proposition For The Amendment of the By-Laws

A proposal has been made to amend Article IV, Section 1, in order to bring the terms of office of the officers of this Society in line with those of our parent Society. If this proposal is approved it will take effect at the conclusion of the term of office of the members then holding office. Votes should be sent to the Election Committee care of Dr. Currier McJwen, South Harpswell, Maine, 04079, as Chairman. A two-thirds vote of all ballots cast is required for passage. The form of proposal follows:

Shall Article IV, Section 1, third sentence, be amended to read:

"All terms, including that of the president, shall be for three years beginning on January 1 and continuing until successors take office. The officers and directors shall serve not more than two terms (following adoption of these bylaws) without interruption of service for at least three years."

*The Westbrook Auction
Alan Cornell, Auctioneer; Howard Davidson*



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