

Spring 1978 4-7

Eaton's copy

THE SIBERIAN IRIS



The Siberian Iris

Spring 1978

Volume 4, Number 7

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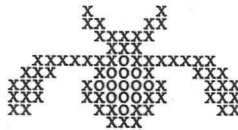
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"Dues due" notice appears on the back cover with the address; in some cases where dues have been paid this happens because of the unavoidable time gap in passing the news along, this can be disregarded.

Dues are: Single Annual, \$2; Triennial, \$5; Family Annual, \$2.50; Triennial, \$6. Membership is open to members of AIS in Canada and the United States and to iris enthusiasts elsewhere.

Back issues, where they are available, are \$1.50 for any issue in Vols. I and II; \$1. for Vols. III and IV. Check List, \$2.75; Judging Standards, \$1. Make checks payable to The Society for Siberian Irises; send to the Editorial office.



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Editor: Mrs. H. L. Edwards

It is with some regret that we no longer list Mrs. James Dawson as our Assistant Editor. She was a great help.

President's Page

Julius Wadekamper

Greetings!

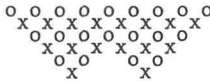
Spring is on the way even here in Minnesota. If snow is beneficial to Siberians we should all have an excellent showing this spring.

The AIS Convention is coming soon and we are likely to see some Siberians in bloom. We will have our annual membership meeting at 5 P.M. on Wednesday, April 26 at Governor's House, rooms C and D. The program is being planned by Jayne Ritchie and will be a good one.

The Board of Directors and Committee Chairmen will meet on Tuesday at 6 P.M.; the room is not yet certain. Anyone who is interested is invited to attend.

I will be arriving on Monday evening. Please look me up--I would like to meet as many Siberian members as possible.

See you in San Jose!



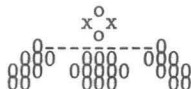
Julius

BOARD AGENDA--April 25, 1978

Topics for the board meeting--most of which will be brought up at the Membership Meeting--are: a tribute to Ira Wood; introduction of the new Board member, Patricia McCallum, who is our new Auction Coordinator; reports of Officers and Committees; report by Jayne Ritchie on the plans for the Wednesday meeting; discussion of difficulties about memberships-listings and coordination with AIS dues, etc.; plans of the AIS Bulletin Editor for the Bulletin for Winter 1978; progress on pending publications and possible future work; appointments to Committees--we need a Publicity Chairman and two members for the Nominating Committee (any volunteers?); discussion of possible means of aiding the newly active Siberian (and other Apogon) Section of the British Iris Society; discussion of possible auctions in other parts of the U.S. and Canada, and the role the auctions play in finances; suggestions about appointment of representatives to promote Siberians in each of the AIS Regions; any other business.

This looks to be a very busy meeting, but these are all rather important matters. The Committee appointments and the auctions are very much so. You will find in this issue some comments about these and other topics that will come up at the Convention meetings. If you plan to go

to San Jose, please, after reading this issue, give some thought to these topics and speak up at the meetings; if you can't attend, I'm sure Julius would be delighted to have a letter from you with your suggestions--and of course anyone volunteering for a job will be welcomed with open arms. It might help to give a second choice of jobs as maybe, perhaps, possibly someone else might have gotten it first?



TREASURER'S REPORT

Gunther Stark

On hand, checking account, Jan. 1977		\$ 891.74
Dues received	\$ 414.50	
Miscellaneous income	87.25	
Interest	117.50	
Eastern auction net	576.00	
Minn. auction net	1213.25	
Total income		<u>2408.50</u>
		\$ 3300.24
Printing, Check List	\$ 321.57	
Printing, TSI	381.30	
2 certificates of deposit	2000.00	
Total expenditures		<u>2702.87</u>
On hand, checking account Feb. 1, 1978		<u>597.37</u>
		\$ 3300.24
On hand, other than checking account		
3 certificates of deposit of \$1000		
2 certificates of deposit of 500		
Our net worth as of Feb. 1, 1978 is	\$4597.37.	

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(2¢ worth: WHEE! And it is going to be needed, as you will see when you read on. There have been few years since our Society was started in which the officers and board members didn't kind of hold their breath till the treasurer's report came to hand; some years we ran in the red, and when the Handbook of Judging was ready for printing it was two of our members, Charlotte Withers and Bill McGarvey, who advanced the money to pay the bill. This was of course repaid as soon as money was available, but it is nice to report that we didn't have to do this for the Check List and will not have to when the new handbook on Siberians and

on our Society, still untitled, is ready sometime this summer or fall. This is aimed mostly at new members, but some of the older ones may also want a copy. And there is a revision of the Judging Standards booklet under way, date not yet certain, and a leaflet being prepared which is aimed mainly at attracting members, to be used at iris meetings, shows, etc. (Nice to have a little cash in the bank, isn't it?)

A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER

Bill Seidl and Peg Edwards

Q.: Perhaps you can pose this question in TSI--or write about it yourself:

To what extent, if any, are Siberian irises in demand as a florist's cut flower? Are the 56-chr. tetraploids better for this purpose than the diploids?

A.: The truthful answer, from me, is: I don't know. As far as I know, nobody has done any research on this matter. I did, after receiving the question, take up the subject with my friendly local florist (he's a real doll, and gives us garden club gals cut rates on stuff for flower shows). He knew of no source of supply for Siberians for florists, and after a little talk--he only had 6 funeral wreaths and a bridal bouquet to get out that afternoon--he was of the opinion that Siberians might be useful if the source of supply was very close at hand and could provide considerable amounts during the season.

One trouble with Siberians is that they must be transported in an upright position if it is to be more than an hour from time of cutting to delivery at the florists' shops. One hour of lying on their sides can result in the necks of the flowerbuds bending into an upright position, from which they will only partly recover when the stalks are returned to an erect posture. This I know from experience; I transported a bunch of Siberians from Long Island to Ithaca for a show some years ago and they all arrived with crooked necks and outfacing flowers. Fresh as daisies, mind you, but not what Siberian blossoms should be. Possibly the tetraploids would resist the force of gravity somewhat longer; to my knowledge nobody has tested them for this possibility. And of course if they are to remain upright while in transit they must be cut at fairly early bud stage or, alternatively, have each flower wrapped so it will not open and become damaged by contact with other blooms. This makes for expensive shipping; flowers which can be shipped lying horizontally in boxes can be stacked box upon box to the roof of the van, but you can't pile another layer on top of a batch standing erect, unless you put in wall-to-wall shelves. And of course, the containers would have to be braced against tipping. More expense. On short hauls most of this expense would be eliminated; but would there be enough florists within reach to provide a market? There is a real question whether Siberians

could profitably be sold in commercial quantities.

Another problem is how they would stand up to refrigeration. I doubt that they would endure the temperature of the usual florist's refrigerator, but out of the fridge they would certainly not stay at bud stage more than a day after cutting. And once they start to open they move fast and will not last more than a couple of days--not as long in fact as they will hold up in the garden.

Which brings up another point. The Siberian season is quite short: is anyone likely to consider them as commercial flowers when they can only be obtained for three or four weeks at most? The successful cut flowers are those which can be had in bloom over a period of three months or more; most of them are as successfully grown in greenhouses under controlled light and temperature and can be had at any time of year. Can Siberians be grown this way? To the best of my knowledge nobody has tried to grow them this way and I suspect it would be a rather expensive process. Don't forget that they need a winter season, of short days and long nights with temperatures going down in the neighborhood of freezing. Even if varieties could be found that were willing to settle into a six-month cycle rather than a 12-month one you'd still need at least six separate units in order to provide the alternate growing and resting periods for continuous succession of bloom. Probably this could be managed by a commercial cut-flower greenhouse operation with the Siberians sharing space with other flowers adaptable to a similar cycle. But there again, if they are grown in sufficient quantity to justify the greenhouse space, we have to return to the problem of transporting.

I believe that they could be made commercially useful on a fairly large scale if some hybridizer were to work to overcome the handicaps of short bloom period, brief interval from bud to gone-by flower, and erect transportation requirements. I also believe that someone with large clumps of three or four standard varieties might be able to supply a local florist with cut stalks on order and make a little money from them. But as things stand now that would probably be the only way they could be sold commercially. Still this might be worth investigating. Certainly the Siberians would be lovely in the usual florist's mixed bouquets when available; I have, a couple of times, supplied my florist with half a dozen stems when he wanted them for a special order in Siberian season.

If anyone has experience in this area I'm sure that we'd be interested in hearing about it. It might be useful too to know whether the tetras are more adaptable than the diploids. I suspect that varieties with branches--but branches held rather closer to the stem than we would like to have in the garden--might be more useful for cut-flower trade than those with one branch or none. Any comments?

PROGRESS FOR SIBERIANS

Julius Wadekamper

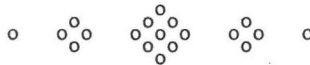
Our prime purpose for existing as a society is to promote the Siberian irises. There are many ways to do this. Publicity is always a good one. We can use all the publicity we can get. Philip Edinger, the editor of the AIS Bulletin, wishes to give us publicity in the Fall 1978 issue of the Bulletin. Dr. Currier McEwen is our Bulletin representative. Please send him lots of original material--cultural practices, varietal comments, hybridizing achievements, Siberian successes and failures, black-and-white pictures, anything at all that speaks of Siberians to those who don't yet grow and know them. Surely we do not want to neglect an opportunity like this to spread the good word about the Siberians.

Another way we can promote Siberians is through auctions and sales. We now have one established here in the upper Midwest to add to the one on the Eastern Seaboard. We are especially grateful to all the growers, hybridizers and gardeners who sent us plants. I can assure you that they were all sold for respectable prices. Several hundred plants were auctioned off and thereby found their way to gardens--some of which perhaps had not had any before. The society is now able to go ahead with several publications that needed printing, and this will further promote the Siberian Iris.

Hybridizers are constantly coming up with new and better seedlings extending the color classes and improving branching. The vigor and growing habits are being improved and the Siberians are becoming better plants for gardens and landscapes

Our journal, The Siberian Iris, continues to be a leader in publications for the beardless irises, thanks to the able editorship of Peg Edwards. This also promotes the Siberians.

Let's all promote added membership in the society to give everyone who is interested a chance to participate in an active and involved group of people who grow and promote the beautiful Siberian irises.



In the last issue lack of space made it necessary to skimp on the addresses of our overseas subscribers. So here they are:

Mrs. Marlene Ahlberg, 3171 Rotgesbuttel, Hohes Feld 22, W. Germany
Herr Eckard Berlin, Kutzbergerweg 2, 795 Biberach/Riss, W. Germany
Miss Waltraud Busbach, Aussere Sulzbacher Str. 18, 85 Nuremberg, W. Germany

Mrs. H. E. Collins, R. D. 1, Tauranga, New Zealand
Mrs. Lucy Delany, 21 Glastone Rd., Richmond, Nelson, New Zealand

Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, Haygarth, Cleeton St. Mary, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster, Worcs., England (for Spuria, Siberian and Japanese Group of BIS)

Mr. Akira Horinake, Manchidani 8-7, Nishinomiya City, Japan (and the Japan Iris Society)

Mr. Bruno Muller, Blavenstr. 1-D, 7847 Badenweiler, Germany

Otago Group, N.Z.I.S. c/o Mrs. J. Robertson, 175 Signal Hill Rd., Dunedin, New Zealand

Dr. G. I. Rodionenko, Botanical Garden, Ul. Popova 2, Leningrad P-22, U.S.S.R.

Mrs. Anne Shillam, Rosewood I. Gardens, P.O. Box 2, Whitfield, Transvaal 1467, South Africa

Mr. Ricj H. Sierperda, 36 Midlumermaan, Harlingen, Holland

British Iris Society, c/o Miss N. Scopes, 68 Somerset Rd., New Barnet, Herts., England

I must add that due to various problems that have arisen in connection with the changes resulting from the discontinuance of the St. Louis office of AIS my list of paid-up members is not yet up to date though we are working on this. If you are a member and were not listed, or if you dropped out and are still on the list, please accept our apologies. It will all come right and those who are owed back copies will get them quite soon.--P.E.

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EDITORIAL

Peg Edwards

I think a few words of explanation (maybe a few hundred) should be given to the members about the very late shipping-out of last fall's TSI. To start with, I was a few days late in starting to type the rough draft partly because my usual date for starting came just one day before our garden club put on its flower show, which meant that, since I was on the committee for staging and was also the chairman for the horticulture section of the show, I was hard at work the day before the show, the day of the show, and the day after the show--writing up a critique of what we did that we should not have done, and what we didn't do that we should have! And the next day was Sunday. So I started four days late. As you all know there was a shortage of material and I delayed in hope of getting one or two more articles in (unfortunately they never materialized). By the time the rough went off to Carol we were already about 10 days late.

Meanwhile, back on the ranch (strictly speaking, the farm) Carol's son had reached the age of going to school all day, so she had returned

to full time work as a social service worker--plus mother, plus farm wife which didn't leave her very much time for typing. She plugged away at it but it took much longer than either she or I expected, and it was almost Thanksgiving before the parcel finally got back here and off to the print shop.

By that time, of course, the printer was up to his ears in filling orders for Christmas Cards, Christmas and post-Christmas sales circulars, etc., all of which were far more "deadline" than TSI. In any case, I would not want to put the issue in the mail during the holiday mailing rush--it is too easy for third-class mail to go astray in the back of the post office. So we agreed to hold off the printing till after Christmas. And then came our ice storm and our first snowstorm, which between them managed to foul up transportation and/or electric supply for most of Long Island. It was not until January 24 that the issue finally got to the post office.

Grateful though I was for Carol's help, there was no denying that in some ways, sending the draft by mail to someone else to be typed, and waiting for its return, had a very delaying effect on getting the issue to its readers. We had not considered having it typed by a professional typist as we felt it would add more to the cost than our dues could well support. But with the delightful effect of having two auctions to raise funds, and the delightful results of that fundraising, it was decided to blow the money (well, some of it) on using the services of a local typist. After checking costs and equipment available fairly nearby, I "gave the contract" to Mrs. Gisela Zabriskie who, besides having a Selectric typewriter, the kind that has interchangeable type balls, is experienced in typing manuscript for serious books and knows how awful a wrong letter can be in a scientific article, for example--and moreover is a gardener herself. Because she has had little use for Italic typeface, she didn't have such a type ball, but she will while she is doing TSI, so we OKed her purchase of one at our expense in return for a slightly lower price per page of typing. I'll be looking forward to the return from the printer of this first issue.

I think we will find that the elapsed time from deadline for copy to mailing of the issue will be quite a bit shorter. After this issue is taken to the post office I may find that we can either have a later deadline or send out the issue earlier; I think most of us might prefer the latter and would be glad to hear, over the summer, any arguments pro or con to help me make the decision. Watch in the next issue for the results of this; it should appear on page 1, down at the bottom, but there may be something in Back Talk about it, too.

While I have your attention there is something else I'd like to speak seriously about. No organization can operate successfully for very long if only 5% of the members take any part in its operation. I know

that a couple of clumps of Siberian irises planted close to the house could still be put in as late as October if watered well; or if she arrived in winter or early spring she could get divisions of Siberians as early as April which would bloom the same year, along with other May and June blooming perennials such as Shasta Daisies, Pyrethrum, Canterbury Bells all of whom bloom quickly from spring plantings. When I mentioned the irises her eyes sparkled--they had been her mother's favorite plants. Certainly a few such perennials will go a long way to brightening up some of the uninspired landscaping of most builders and many landscapers.

"I have found that the Siberians are more tolerant in their requirements as far as planting time goes, than any other iris, and from what you have written in one of your recent letters about new colorings, etc. I think I will find myself recommending them in many cases where I've hesitated to mention irises. Thanks for a useful idea."

(Extract from a letter from a friend)

OBITUARY

Two good friends of this society died this winter. I do not at the time of writing know any of the details of their deaths--I imagine the AIS Bulletin will carry them--but Peggy Burke Grey was one of our charter members, a member of the Board from the beginning, served as First Vice President from October 1968 to January 1971 and then was our President in 1971; Clark Cosgrove joined us during the summer of 1961 and was still a member until, as AIS President, he became an honorary member. In our early years he was helpful in planning some of our Convention meetings.

I met Peggy only once, at the 1970 Convention at which she presided in the absence of our then President, Charlotte Withers; what started out as a conference meeting between the two of us to discuss the business meeting of SSI developed into a long evening in which we practically told each other the story of our lives. She was a very shy person and hated to have to stand up front and visibly run things, but if something "got her Irish up," she could be a fighter.

Clark first really impinged on my conscious at the 1961 Newark Convention when Bee Warburton roped him in to help the two of us to plan our presentations for the Section Meetings--he would be running the Spuria meeting, Bee the Median one, and I the Siberian. Seems to me it was Clarke's idea to have a joint meeting rather than three separate ones and that was what we did, very successfully. But, sitting in the back-seat of the bus, planning it all, I first became aware of Clark as a very witty and warm person.

I will miss them both--so will many of you.

Peg Edwards

There seems to be quite a little interest in dwarf forms of Siberians. I know of two people who are working on their breeding, and I've been thinking about it myself. I have no doubt that there are others. Maybe, for the benefit of those actually working for them, and also for anyone who might turn up a couple in a batch of seedlings, we should come to some sort of agreement on what should be considered a dwarf.

I'm sure nobody would want the term "dwarf Siberian" or "miniature Siberian" to be attached to something with a 4" flower on a 10" stem; this would be badly out of proportion. And a flower of suitably small size on a 20" stem would be equally unsatisfactory. From the few I have seen in bloom there is quite a range of sizes that could properly be called dwarfs, and I offer as a suggestion and a basis for discussion the following:

That a dwarf Siberian should be between 8" and 18" in height (in normal growth) and that the flower on such a plant should be in scale with the plant and not exceeding 2½" in width. That flower shape, branching, foliage and floriferousness be consistent with the lower height of the plant and the resulting difference in angle of vision; that is to say, a flower form best seen in profile would not be satisfactory on a plant so low that it is seen from above; on the shorter plants one branch would be the maximum if bunchiness is to be avoided, though on the taller end of the range two branches might be effective; foliage should be short and rather stiffly erect so that in looking down at the plant one would not get a background of a lot of sprawly leaves just below the flower--or even worse, above them; and while more stems per clump would be desirable this should not be carried to the point that the individual flower is lost in a mass of petals.

Opinions, please?

In connection with this I would like to talk a bit about possible lines of breeding. Among the standard-sized varieties there are a number which have flowers almost too small for the length of the stem, but which would be perfect on a short stalk--SUMMER SKY and MRS. ROWE come to mind. Crossed with some of the available dwarfs such as ACUTA, BLUE CHARM, SIBIRICA NANA, ORIENTALIS NANA, SKEENA--the true form; there is a taller variety going under the same name--and others, these should produce some dwarfs, if not in the first generation at least in the second. Many cultivars which are not in themselves small enough to be called dwarfs may carry a gene for this characteristic and, when selfed, might give a fair number of dwarf seedlings. As far as I know it is not known whether dwarfness is a dominant characteristic, a recessive, or

the effect of blending. It might be a help to our research committee if some brave soul would make various types of crosses aimed at dwarfness and keep good records of the results for two or three generations, and report on the results. But in any case those who are working on this type of Siberian could be helpful if they would report on their results as they go along. My own VELVET NIGHT, and my STAR WHEEL, were both registered as small--about 20", which is how they grow here though I understand they are taller in other places. I crossed them and have had one seedling bloom from this cross, which was also short, if anything a little smaller than the parents. Another cross of several years back, whose label was lost, gave three small plants; one only about 15" tall; as these seedlings germinated before I had ever bloomed a named variety they have to come from previous seedlings and I know that I had none under 20" so apparently one or more of these taller ones had the ability to produce dwarfs. It seems likely that this characteristic is present in other named varieties, and it would be helpful if anyone turning up dwarf seedlings from their crosses would report the parentages of the crosses involved. Even where parents 30" or more tall produce a few in the 20-25" range this might indicate that a gene for dwarfness was present in one or the other parent. If a list could be assembled of varieties known to have produced small offspring it would give people wanting to work in this field the opportunity to choose from such a list those parents that carried other characteristics wanted for some particular result. For example, someone wants to produce a good clean dark violet dwarf; he checks the list to find one or two good clean dark violet tall, and crosses these; his chances of finding the desired seedling are better, results would be likely to come faster, than if he had to cross any good darks with any other good darks, and probably about twice as good as if he tried crossing a good dark tall with a light or white dwarf and then recrossing the best small offspring with the best dark offspring.

In case you can't wait for such a list to be assembled, here are a few suggestions. Choose as parents varieties that have short, thin, healthy foliage, slim, wiry stems, side branches that do not grow as tall as the main stem; clean and vigorous growth habits--no sprawling fans, no thin roots that can break easily and let the plant heave out in winter, no stems that fall sideways in the first gust of wind after the flowers open. Try to choose flowers that have clear, clean color. Having eliminated from consideration all plants that do not fit these qualifications, pick from the rest those that have the smallest flowers, the shortest stems, or both. Cross tall stem with short and large flower with small, if you can't find both combined in one plant! If you do have any real dwarfs do try selfing them, if they are not too deficient in the qualities suggested above. You may find, of course, that some variety that would be excellent material will not cross with other potential parents in your planting--pod or pollen sterility does exist among

the Siberians. In that case you may have to use as one parent a plant that is not fully satisfactory--coarse foliage, thick stem, etc. This will probably mean an extra generation of breeding to get good working stock. But this might take no longer than buying more suitable material and waiting for it to become established.

Which reminds me--it would be helpful if our pollen-daubers would tell us what crosses took for them and what didn't, not only in this area of breeding for dwarfs but in all lines of breeding. If a particular variety turned up on several lists as not podding and on none as having podded, we'd know to steer clear of it; and if a variety turned up on many lists as having podded readily or pollenized other varieties freely--that, if it had good characteristics for breeding, would perhaps become the SABLE of the Siberians.

(2¢ worth: Much of this article seems to be still appropriate. A few new little ones have been introduced since then; not many. We have had no direct reports of any attempt to breed for dwarfs since that time, and my own efforts have so far not amounted to shucks, though I still try to get pods from the seedlings that I had then to work with. Several pods have been grown but nothing worth having turned up, and as the seedlings used are themselves "parentage unknown," there seemed little point in my writing up the results. I can say with some authority that dwarf X dwarf will produce mostly dwarf--but in each batch one or two taller ones also turned up, and also that in my experience dwarf X dwarf produces somewhat fewer seedlings per batch than tall X tall does. Not only is germination poorer but survival over the first winter in the open is lower. Possibly the latter is the result of smaller, shallower root systems on the small plants, producing more heaving. If this is the case it could be improved by mulching; however, my theories of plant breeding call for letting the seedlings face the roughest conditions my climate can produce in an attempt to insure that anything I finally decide is worth introducing will be able to take a wide range of soil and climate conditions. If they can stand up to our hot and humid spells in summer and winters that frequently see temperatures down almost to zero with little or no snow cover (this year being one of the exceptions) they should be able to cope with almost anything that the weather can throw at them. Peg.)

TREASURER'S REPORT, 1961--Gunther will love this!

Balance forward	\$ 34.00
Dues received	46.00
Total	\$ 80.00

Disbursements:

Expenses for The Siberian Iris	9.50
Balance as of October 24, 1961	\$ 70.50

Don't you love it?

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE DONE IS...

Ann O'Nimmo

For starters, how about some new people writing for this publication occasionally? I'm just a little tired of seeing the same names on the articles, aren't you?

And how about the hybridizers including in their descriptions of their new cultivars the note "pod fertile" or "pollen fertile" or even better, "fertile both ways"--a lot of TB breeders have done this in the past and it is useful information that might help us part-time hybridizers to decide between too expensive varieties when we can only afford one of them. It might even be included in the registration information. Surely it isn't much help to the pollen dauber to know the parentage of an iris if it is a dead end. Better a fertile love-child! At least you know what it looks like and can go on from there.

Something that irks me occasionally is going to a public planting of irises and seeing quantities of quite recent introductions of TBs, and even of various types of Medians--but the newest Siberians they have are TYCOON and MY LOVE. Where are the newer ones? Some of these gardens are on such tight budgets they have to depend on gifts to update their plantings. Doesn't anyone in the area have a few new things they could make divisions of for the benefit of the public garden? You could at least ask the director if he'd like some. And maybe if there were some good, fairly new varieties left over at the end of an auction--whether a Siberian one or some regional or local auction--these might be donated instead of being replanted for next year's sale.

I'd like to see more Robin quotes. With our editor always yelling for more material I don't really believe she passes up any that are sent her, unless they are just too awful to repeat; surely the Robin director, or the Robin's designated editor if it has one, doesn't neglect his/her duty. Can it be that nobody in any Robin ever says anything useful that is too specialized for the Bulletin's Flight Lines? I doubt that. So what is the deficiency? Have all the Robins gone to roost?

And I'd like to see more scientific material. I don't always get the hang of it all, but very often I've had the experience of not getting it the first time around, but then a later article on the same subject will tackle it from a slightly different angle and wham! a light goes on. It stuck in my subconscious and now another little piece has been added and they add up to something I can understand. And even when I don't, it's nice to know that there will be some readers who can make use of it to bring us nicer Siberians. I think there should be one serious article--on genetics, or species, or techniques for making true crosses or growing the seed or propagating the clone--in each issue. It needn't be a long

article--a monograph or thesis; three or four pages would do nicely. But something meaty and informative.

I know people don't feel like writing up in the spring what they saw last year as varietal comments, but if enough people did that in the summer, the editor could maybe save some of them for this spring issue, when most of us are still looking forward to seeing the iris season. That would whet our appetites for what is to come. It would also give us an idea of what to look for in other people's gardens when we go visiting.

And wouldn't it be nice to hear from the hybridizers occasionally about their special projects? I realize they don't want to brag about seedlings that maybe will turn out to be not as good as they looked at first, but even telling us about some of the breeding lines that haven't panned out might be helpful to others.

To get of the subject of TSI--there was some talk a few years ago about a medal to go with the Morgan Award. Whatever became of that? Was the cost too much after all? Or is it still under consideration?

I liked the Check List. But there are some errors in it. What is going to be done about correcting these--the ones I noticed and maybe others I missed?

And since so many of the earlier issues are out of print, couldn't someone take on the job of making a sort of Siberian Reader from the best articles in back issues--not just the out of print ones, but maybe our first 15 years? Or would it be better to hold off on this and make a Silver Jubilee issue in 1986? That's a long way off, though.

Do we have enough money to finance a research project into the taxonomy of the Siberian species? I know that some of the bearded species have been investigated through karyotype analysis and their relationships are better understood as a result. Has this been done with the 40-chr. species and if not, why not? Surely someone in the whole world has access to the equipment and knows how to use it to do this. I'm sure that many matters could be cleared up about the relationships among the Siberian species if it were done. Might even find out just how closely the 40s are related to the Californicae as compared to the 28-chr. Siberians.

We have tetraploids from the 28s, and tetraploids from the 40s, I understand. Has anyone tried crossing these to see if the offspring would be fertile among themselves? Or does it take a couple of generations to bring fertility up to a level where this could be tried?

How about an award for the best Siberian seedling annually--maybe on the basis of those shown at the Convention, or maybe the one that got the most votes for HC? If we did set one up, should it be by judges' votes or by members' votes?

HORTICULTURAL TERMINOLOGY--The Inner Meanings

Artistic: peculiar

Bargain: I went without shoes to buy it; it was left over from the auction.

Choice: I have it and you don't, nyah, nyah.

Clone: variety, only more elegant.

Commercial: some people will buy anything; I can't afford it; the originator didn't give me a piece.

Commonplace: I didn't think of it first.

Cultivar: See clone.

Difficult: Takes too much work.

Dog; *real dog*: it stole Best-In-Show from mine; someone else's prize seedling.

Easy: I sweated blood to make it grow.

Effective in the garden: doesn't look too bad at twenty feet.

Expert: doesn't really know any more but is organized and has slides.

Fanatic: someone who prefers TBs, Medians, Spurias, etc.

Fancier: anyone who appreciates Siberians.

Figment of someone's imagination: I haven't seen it yet.

Fine Show Specimen: only two stalks on a three-year clump; very gawky; the color clashes with everything in the garden.

Grooming: blow off the dust; go over the whole thing with a camel's hair brush.

Needs improvement: he really should know better than introduce that.

Normal season: average; never experienced in living memory.

Overpriced: I couldn't afford it.

Perfect form: I got a blue with it in the show; antonym of *Dog*.

Quite nice: can't be rude after that good lunch; we must encourage the beginning hybridizer.

Rarity: everyone else threw it out years ago.

Real gardener: almost as good as I am.

Reverted: I forgot to cut off a seedpod and this came up in the middle.

Slave: better gardener than I am.

Species: not quite as good as a *dog*.

Specimen: I only have one of it.

Standard of Excellence: that big thing I saw last week; the one the judges liked; figment of the imagination.

Terrific: the originator is my best friend, even if his taste is all in his mouth.

True species: it doesn't look quite like the one in the book.

Unavailable: they didn't have it at the dime store.

Valuable antique: someone took it west by covered wagon and it was the only plant that survived.

Note: the editor would appreciate additions to this dictionary.

Back Talk

Peg Edwards

When it became evident that we weren't going to have enough material for this issue, I hauled out my back issues and looked through them for possible reprints. There were many interesting articles; unfortunately most of them were kind of out-of-date. They dealt with matters that have since been overcome or bypassed or they looked toward accomplishments that have been achieved. I did find one that still had a little to say to the present and that is in this issue. I haven't been through the issues since 1970, but if we are too skimpy next time I may do that.

I did find a number of short passages that are worth quoting, and here are some of them:

"...The plain fact is that it is quite impossible for any one person to do more than touch the fringes of what I now believe is a most complicated subject. It is reasonable to think that there must be some rules that apply to this subsection but after twenty years I'm d...d if I know what they are, nor can I guess." (Maurice Kitton, Fall 1961)

How doth the busy little jay
Improve his shining hour?
By stealing labels from my beds
To decorate his bower;

And when his missus carps at lumps
He brings them out once more
But never, never puts them back
Where they had been before. (Peg E., Fall 1963)

"...This season I've taken particular notice of style arms. They seem to me to have the significance a beard does for dwarf and median irises. I had such a variety of colors and patterns; some orchid, some wine red, orchid with a blue ridge, rosy red with blue ridge, rosy pink, blue with a turquoise ridge, pale turquoise, and purple with a bronze influence. Some were short; some long enough to hide all haft markings." (Lucy Delaney, Spring 1964)

"I do not think that enough consideration has been given to style arms in the past in judging Siberians, and I consider them of greater importance than the standards, and almost of equal importance to the falls. They can add contrast both in color and form. (Fred Cassebeer, in the same issue)

(About people who write for our publication) "...3. Not very used to...writing but willing to try. The editor may have to recast the whole thing in difficult cases; he may have to change an (occasional) word, in minor cases. But these are the people I love the best. They have put their heart into what for them is a difficult job, because they

feel they do have something useful to say--and they are right."
(Editor, Spring 1965)

"...The one type of iris which continues to give satisfaction and to increase in popularity is the Siberian. It is my sincere hope that none of the troubles the tallis are prone to will ever turn up in these hardy and almost disease-free plants. My one regret is their slowness in becoming established; still I realize that once over the hump they are for all time (or thereabouts)...As suggested in a recent letter, I have at times tried to start something. Nothing but failures to date. Is it that the gals are ladies and the men are gentlemen?... To your face they will tell the truth, but not in print. (Anyone wanna fight?--Editor)" (Albert Ellis, Spring 1965)

"I note that here and there, there is still some speculation as to the possible parentage of WHITE SWIRL because of its unusual characteristics. Therefore, may I be pardoned if I go into its origin in a little greater detail? In the fall of 1949 we planted at least a bushel of mixed Siberian seeds...from...all the varieties we were growing at the time, namely: CAESAR'S BROTHER, SNOW CREST, TYCOON, HELEN ASTOR, COOL SPRING, GATINEAU and MOUNTAIN LAKE....From the resulting plants which could well have numbered over 5,000, we finally selected six for further propagation. Four of these we subsequently introduced--WHITE SWIRL, VIOLET FLARE, BLUE BRILLIANT and PLACID WATERS...." (Fred Cassebeer, Spring 1965)

"...(Crosses of WHITE SWIRL X SNOW CREST) (gave) all purple seedlings! I find this rather hard to believe. (Maurice Kitton, Spring 1965) (Editor's comment: so do we, all of us, yet Kitton himself made the cross and he was a careful hybridizer.)

As one or two of you may have heard, we have been having a little winter on Long Island. To wit--so far about 40" of snow, after an ice storm that was a disaster. Ice storm and both heavy snows (we also had a couple of light snowfalls) were accompanied by very strong winds, and in between the ice and the first big snow we had rain which melted the last ice from the trees but also produced flooding in some places. In some parts of the Island drifts were up to 8 feet. This is the sort of weather we read about as happening in Monatana, or Wisconsin, or Labrador--not down here in our little sub-tropical paradise. What it will do to the gardens I don't know, but I suspect that aside from broken branches we may find that most things survived quite well--maybe even better than they would have if they had not been protected from the cold by the snow cover which is still with us. Well, mostly. The stuff has melted somewhat from the front of the house and the snowdropes are in bloom. But the end of February and no snow crocus in bloom! Spring will be a little late this year.

If you had a good look at the back cover--but I doubt if you did--you might have noticed that it now reads "Address Correction Requested." This means that if your address has changed since the last issue and I have not been notified of the change, your copy will either be returned to us or it will be discarded and we will be notified that this has been done "and this is the new address; 25¢ please." Then we must send a new copy to the corrected address. Total cost, 39¢. For one third of this you can write a note--for 9¢ you can send a postcard--which will save us the extra cost and will also save you the longer wait to get the issue. Because we send it out by Third Class Mail it cannot be forwarded to you if you are no longer at this address. I am sure that you all notify AIS quite promptly; some of you no doubt drop a line to our Secretary or Treasurer. But they, sensibly, wait till they have enough changes to pass along to me and send them as a bunch. So it is possible for someone to report a change of address to AIS in, say, June, have it get along to Ethel or Gunther in July, along with other matters no doubt, and not get to me until September or even later. So please:

If you move, or if your address is changed in any way by the P.O., let me know by postcard or note immediately so I can change the mailing labeler-card. Notify AIS and/or SSI as well, or course.

We asked for this address-correction because if this isn't done we are never informed of such change by the P.O., and it was only by pure chance that I learned that we had been sending a copy of each issue for a couple of years to someone who was dead. And about the same time I ran into an ex-member who, when I asked why she had dropped out, replied--"I didn't drop out, I was pushed. I never got the last two issues I was entitled to." Turned out she hadn't moved but the P.O. had changed the route and box number for her house; it never occurred to her that this would make a difference. But it did. She got her Bulletins because they are mailed Second Class; but we don't have the postal requirements for Second Class Mailing privilege, so it was treated as junk mail.

If you enjoyed the reprint snippets in this issue, let us know and we can comb out a few more some other time. There is some good stuff in there. Bound to be--this one is our 35th issue! You can't be no-good all the time.

I'm looking forward to spring for another reason this year; we have a new cat, Timothy Tinker Edwards, who was too young last June to be allowed out by himself. He will be seeing the irises and the spring bulbs for the first time. Since he is far more curious than the average cat--and that is going some!--it should be quite interesting. We are considering renting Timmy out to the CIA or someone--he has the instincts of a superspy. He is also passionately interested in bugs.

Have a good spring!

Peg

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