

5 June 1979

Eden's Cove

THE SIBERIAN IRIS



The Siberian Iris

Spring 1979

Volume 4, Number 9

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

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The President's Page

Greetings! We are all looking forward to a great year for the Siberians in 1979. Several things are happening this year! For one thing, our new Invitational leaflet should be ready for the Huntsville convention. Peg Edwards has put a lot of effort into it and it is now ready to go to the printer.

Dr. Currier McEwen has been working hard on the new Siberian Handbook. Copies of the final draft will be ready for review by the Directors at Huntsville and we hope it will be available this summer for you.

Prof. William McGarvey is working on a new Judges' Manual and this too should be ready for the Board to review at Huntsville.

Meanwhile, we continue to see new Siberians and related hybrids developed and registered. There were 15 new registrations in 1977; Dr. McEwen led the list with four, followed by Steve Varner with three, Jean Witt, Ben Hager and Nigel Service of England had two each, and Jerry Flintoff and Mrs. Kokich of New Zealand each registered one. Congratulations to each of you. May your creations find their way into gardens around the world.

I want to take this opportunity to thank, publicly, the committee members who have done and are doing such a wonderful job. To begin with--how about the fall issue of TSI? Wasn't it great? Peg Edwards has been editing TSI for nine years now and we do indeed have the finest of the specialty group publications.

And Currier McEwen, along with the work mentioned above, has brought honor to us all in receiving the Foster Memorial Plaque of the British Iris Society for his work with Siberians. In addition, his SILVER EDGE won the Morgan Award this past year, and in France his Siberian Collection was judged best at the Orleans Competition.

Forrest McCord has been doing outstanding work on the Display Gardens all over the United States, in Canada, and several in Europe. This is truly a great way to make Siberians known.

Our thanks to all the other committee members who are working hard to make the Siberian Iris a well known and much grown perennial.

If you have a suggestion for something you think SSI could be doing better than it does, or an idea of something we haven't tried,

that you feel might be helpful to our members, write me about it as soon as you can. If it gets to me in time we can discuss it at the Board Meeting in Huntsville. The Agenda must go to the Board by mid-April, so there is no time to lose if it is to be discussed this year.

I hope to see as many of you there as possible. We should have a good program planned for you.

Sincerely, *Julius*

AUCTION NOTICE: Tetraploid Siberian Iris Seeds from SIGNA, 1979.

Mary Duvall, Seed Exchange Director.

Dr. Currier McEwen has donated some tetraploid Siberian iris seed to the seed exchange. These have been packaged, 5 seeds to a packet, and some have been reserved for an auction to allow everyone a chance to obtain some.

The auction will take place May 18, 1978 at the monthly meeting of the Iris Society of Minnesota. If you are interested in bidding, forward your bids to me and I will arrange for a proxy bidder for you. Be sure to state the maximum bid you are willing to make for each seed selection you would like. If your bid is high, I will notify you and you can then send the money for the seed.

Send the information to:

Mary Duvall, Seed Exchange Director
Rt. 1, Box 142
Dassel, Minnesota 55325
1 275 2905

Selections:

- No. 202 - Reblooming tetraploid blue T₂75/4 X Bee
- No. 203 - Mixed blue tetraploids
- No. 204 - Mixed white tetraploids
- No. 205 - Tetraploids from red parents
- No. 206 - Very velvety midnight blue tetraploid T⁵75/9 X Bee

(2¢ worth: How about this, kids? Bound to be something good in that lot, wouldn't you say?--Peg)

SIBERIANS IN NORTH TEXAS

Marie Caillet

I must be out of my mind writing an article on Siberians, when I know very little about them, grow only a few, and have grown them for only five years. When I moved my gardening to Denton County in North Texas in 1972, few iris people in the Dallas-Fort Worth area were growing Siberians--mostly because of no interest and not because they can't be grown. The local shows had a few entries, but nothing to promote their cause. I think I may be changing that "no interest" attitude by entering good specimens in the Dallas Show and by passing along a few plants to my friends. I even included the Siberians in an article for the Texas Horticultural Society Magazine on what irises to grow in Texas. My interest came from the Philadelphia Convention in 1973 and from their similar growing conditions to those of the Louisianas. Someone, however, stressing their need for good drainage, almost put me out of the Siberian business that first year, for I didn't begin to give them enough water.

After some trial-and-error methods that first year, my Siberians are growing beautifully under the same conditions as the Louisianas--in a loose sandy soil full of compost and manure, soil sulphur added for an acid condition, two or three inches of mulch (ground oak leaves and pine straw), and all the water I can provide in this hot, dry climate. Those planted where there is more clay than sand have not grown or bloomed as well. Those in partial shade have also done better than those in full sun. This, too, agrees with my culture of Louisianas. One must realize that this area of Texas often has months of 100 degrees or over during the summer, and had only 2 inches of rain from May to November this year. Growing in sand only multiplies the problem, for Louisianas can be planted in a plastic-lined bed to conserve moisture, but not the Siberians.

At this time I have twenty-five varieties in the yard, but some varieties are growing in three or four places for comparison of culture and location. The variety that has outgrown and out-bloomed all others is VI LUIHN. I have not lost a plant of it no matter where I put it nor how little care it gets. Next to it would come DREAMING SPIRES, LIGHTS OF PARIS, LIMEHEART, STARSTEPS AND WHITE SWIRL. All have formed thick clumps and have been divided several times. LIGHTS OF PARIS had dozens of tall bloom stalks open at one time this past spring, after being moved (the whole clump) in February. Some more recently planted varieties appear to do equally well in this climate. DARK DESIRE, LETITIA, SUPER EGO, STEVE, ROANOKE'S CHOICE, and MARANATHA are growing and increasing beautifully. EGO, for some reason, just survives. ANNIVERSARY grows beautifully one year and almost dies out the next. It is too

pretty to loose so I just keep trying.

The foliage and bloom stalks are shorter here than I see farther north, but the blooms are excellent. The only pests have been worms that eat the buds, grasshoppers that riddle the foliage, and moles that cause air pockets under roots. Siberians seldom win shows here, but are sure to bring in the blue ribbons! It has been fun to enter them on the predominantly tall bearded shows in Dallas, but even more fun to look out in the back yard and see these bouquets of lovely little iris after most of the tall bearded have bloomed out. I have worked for over thirty-five years to convert people to growing the Louisianas and now am adding the Siberians to my "Why-don't-you-try...." list.

(Mrs. Caillet writes: "I am a charter member of the Society for Louisiana Irises, a member of the Iris Society of Dallas, and an Honorary Judge of A.I.S. I belong to Region 10 (Louisiana) but now live most of the year at Route 1, Frisco, Texas 75034.")

(And, Bravo to her for persuading our Siberians to grow in what is so evidently a difficult climate for them!)

NEW ZEALAND NOTES

Lucy Delaney

I went to our New Zealand Iris Society Convention last month (November 1978) and afterwards spent two days with Lucy Fowler. She had nineteen of her tetraploid Sibiricae seedlings (from McEwen seed) and they were just a picture. One was white, all the rest blues in all shades and with varying colors in the style arms. Some criticism has been made that they are too still and don't "give" in windy conditions, but Lucys took a battering one night from wind and rain, and still looked beautiful. They are such good garden value!

We now have a grower in New Zealand who is importing the newer Sibiricas--Grant Ileo--and I bought most of the new ones he listed. They didn't get a chance this year, but I'm hoping to give them more attention this time, so will hold up reports on them till they flower again.

(Our sympathies go to Lucy; she lost her son last June. Dennis had been ill for several years and had a serious heart condition, and it was this that took him off.)

* - * - * -

Courage is when I dare to do what the fuddy-duddies say can't be done; Foolhardiness is when you do some carzy thing any sensible person knows is impossible.

A VISIT TO THE McEWEN HOME AND GARDEN IN MAINE

William McGarvey

During this past summer Bee and Frank Warburton took me along with them for a weekend in their summer home on Birch Island. It was a lovely visit and lots of nice and interesting things happened; but one of the most enjoyable experiences they gave me was to take me to visit with the McEwens in South Harpswell, which is not far from the Warburtons'.

After Currier retired from his position as Dean of a Medical School, he and Kay moved back to Maine. They have a spot high above the ocean, but directly on it, and their view in some directions is endless ocean, since the bay in front of them opens directly into the ocean. The bay is partly enclosed, so they have some protection from the Nor'easters.

Currier lives across a small country lane from the house where he was born. When he remembers his childhood, the clues are right there to help bolster a memory which seems to be good in any case. His children and grandchildren must enjoy not only knowing about but being able to see some of their roots.

The McEwens do not have a garden, they have gardens. They have one for the growing and display of the things that they have introduced. They have a breeding garden which holds the plants that they plan to use in making crosses. They have a garden for the plants that have been introduced by other hybridizers. They also have at least two seedling gardens. Beyond this, they have a sizable laboratory as an adjunct to their home, where colchicine is applied to the germinating seeds of Siberian irises.

It is in connection with this last facility that the McEwens are likely to be long remembered and respected in the iris world. They have developed some really handsome tetraploid Siberians. I say "they" because even though the primary interest and direction of activity is determined by Currier, he has the kind of support from Kay that, if it were not there, would limit his success in significant ways.

When Currier first told me about some of his early successes in obtaining tetraploid Siberians, my first reactions were more in the order of annoyance than of anything else. I had just had some important successes in getting information from the progeny of two diploid Siberians. After years of making tetraploid TB crosses without getting one single bit of firm information about their genetics, because I had not been able to raise the thousands of progeny required to obtain genetic data with any significance, I had decided to devote my efforts to the evaluation of diploid experiments. Using diploid Siberians, I began to get data of worth from almost

every cross. Knowing how rapidly the bearded irises had been transformed from diploids into tetraploids, I guess I was fearful that a similar disappearance of the Siberian diploids would take place before I could convince hybridizers of the value of my new information.

But when I saw the first tetraploids, I ceased to be concerned because they were not, by my standards, attractive flowers. They were bigger than a lot of Siberian flowers but not as big as many of the diploids from my own experiments. In fact, I had rejected a number of my seedlings because they were too big. The one way in which they did differ from a majority of the Siberians I have known is in being very firm and starchy. They were all very firm of flesh.

When Currier and I were rewriting the Standards For Judging Siberian Irises, he made an interesting and significant statement which was that the tetraploids should be judged by the same standards as the diploids. The recognition of this principle resolved a lot of the problems which had bothered me. It was a recognition of the fact that tetraploid Siberians would not have the same affect on the diploids of these species as the tetraploid TBs had on the diploid TBs--the almost complete elimination of the diploids.

My visit to the McEwen garden convinced me further of the correctness of the decision to judge tetraploid and diploid Siberians by the same standards. But it also introduced me to some of the loveliest Siberian flowers I had ever seen. For me the most interesting McEwen seedlings were tetraploids with lovely form, with heavy velvet standards and falls, and some of them with conspicuous fragrance. I also saw the McEwen BUTTER AND SUGAR growing and blooming under favorable conditions. Currier tells me that the yellow color of the falls of the flower of this plant does not turn to white as the flower matures, so finally we have a 28-chromosome Siberian with good yellow color. I believe I do understand the genetics of this characteristic since I have been making a study of the development of yellow in my own seedlings, but the McEwen progress in achieving the yellow color is obviously better than my own. All in all, my visit to the McEwen garden was a very important one for me. Beyond the pleasure of visiting with two valued friends at the place where they get so much satisfaction, my visit changed my mind in favorable ways and this is growth that I enjoy. I am grateful to the McEwens for the warmth of their hospitality, and to the Warburtons for making it possible.

(2¢ worth: Don't you wish you'd been there too? I don't think there is anything more fascinating than to visit a planting where the plants of the future are being "invented" by people of technical skill and good taste. "Wait till next year," as we used to say in Brooklyn.)

IS THE PUBLIC BECOMING INTERESTED IN "OTHER" IRISES?

Peg Edwards

Do you suppose that the Sections of the American Iris Society are beginning to have an influence on the general iris-loving public? Surely these irises are not just bought by members of the various Sections; there just aren't that many of us to keep all those hybridizers daubing the pollen. I doubt if even the total AIS membership could absorb all the other-than-TBs that are actually introduced each year, over--let's say--their first ten years on the market. Nor would that membership be enough to support all the dealers, fulltime or hobby growers, listed in the Commercial Directory in the Bulletin. The Apogon Auction at Bee Warburton's draws mostly the AIS members; very few people just come in from the road. But I also attended one of the Region 2 auctions last summer, and quite a lot of the bidders were not members of any iris group; they had walked in or driven around on what was rather a nasty day, though the rain had stopped right after lunch and the sun shone during the bidding. They had read a notice in the newspaper, or heard about it from a friend--and they didn't just bid on the TBs. Unfortunately, from the point of view of SSI, there were no Apogons available, but quite a lot of medians were sold, both on the bargain table and at the auction itself, to these visitors. One man who sat near me asked me what a TB was, decided that was the kind of iris he wanted for his small garden, and bid on two of them. They were quite recent introductions --2-3 years on the market--and the selling prices, while somewhat less than the catalogs' were, still were not by any standards cheap, and were certainly more than I'd have paid for an iris I hadn't seen in bloom bred by a hybridizer I didn't know beans about. But to him, these sounded like the kind of iris that would suit his garden.

The woman next to him asked me if there were any of those "pretty little Japanese ones," because she only had the common purple one and she'd like to get some more if they came in other colors. I know from experience that, at least in this neck of the woods, "little Japanese" translates as Siberian. A quick look at a couple of catalogs confirmed that they were what she was after, and she went home with a list of catalogs to send for.

I have had similar experiences at other auctions in the last few years. There is quite evidently a market for smaller irises, different shapes of flowers, plants more suitable for the smaller garden or the garden in exposed places where strong winds can wreak havoc with the TBs, and plants that bloom earlier, or later, than the TBs. We need to pay more attention to these eager and interested gardeners. Many of them would, with a little encouragement, join AIS and then join the one or more Sections--quite possibly ours.

Julius, in his President's Page article in last fall's issue,

asked for someone to volunteer as a Publicity Chairman. And we do need one! But even more, we need each of us to grab the chance when it presents itself to publicize Siberians among the unenlightened. How many of us have ever thought, as Siberian bloom season approached, to get in touch with the garden writer of a local paper and invite him or her to come see them--and to invite the public to visit our planting on a specific day at specific hours? (Give a rain date, too.) Have any of us gotten in touch with a local garden club and invited their members to come and see what is blooming? You don't need six dozen brand-new introductions, or even six dozen oldies. Fifteen or twenty varieties can make quite an imposing show to people who perhaps only know three or four--or none at all. The flower arrangers go mad about Siberians when they are introduced to them--and not only Siberians. Most of the species excite them; they are so much more elegant and so much easier to arrange than the TBs. If you invite people to your garden in season, be sure to have a list of sources available, either a mimeoed list or a handprinted one with a pad of paper and a pencil nearby so they can copy off a few names themselves if they want them.

Another way of promoting our irises is to pot up a few divisions of less expensive varieties in early spring, when they are just beginning to sprout--using a large enough pot to accommodate the plant in bloom and bring these along to the iris show in your area and sell them--in bud or just beginning to open, if possible--for the benefit of the group. Shows cost money to stage; a few bucks can help meet the bills. Make sure they are properly labeled, of course; and maybe you could find someone who could run off a few copies of a brief summary of how to grow them--with a list of sources, perhaps. If anyone--Friends of the Hospital, Friends of the Library, Women's Clubs, a church, or whatever--is holding a fair or bazaar in iris season, you can use the same technique and make a double contribution--what your plants bring helps the good cause, and you may arouse greater interest among the buyers in irises in general and Siberians in particular. You may get word of such a supportive sale too late to pot the plants up in early spring, but don't let that discourage you. I've had excellent results with potting Siberians less than a week before a sale--I have even potted them in full bloom--IF you only remove one division at a time from the plant, and immediately pot up that division and water it; then go cut out the next division you want to take from that or another plant. I have found that if I soak the whole potted plant in a pot of water, by the time I have the next one dug the first one is ready to be taken out and drained. Sometimes I have to add a little more soil to the top of the pot, but another soaking isn't needed. Stand the pots as they are finished somewhere out of the wind and where they are in filtered sunlight if it is on a sunny day; they will recover faster and look better for the sale if they have a little while to rest before they go back into the sunlight.

If you belong to a garden club, you might offer to do a program for the club on irises. We have some slides, and AIS has several sets on irises other than TB; among these you could put together enough to make a program suitable for your climate. Maybe you have slides of your own, and a projector and screen; maybe you'll have to borrow the projector from someone in or out of the club. Some libraries have projecting equipment which they will lend, usually for a fee, if they aren't using the stuff themselves. And believe me, talking about irises is not the tough job you might think it to be. Remember that old saying--an expert doesn't know any more than you do, but he has it organized and has slides to show. You almost certainly know more about irises than anyone in the club. Of course, if there is another iris nut in the gang, rope her or him in on the program! I've been doing this for over twenty years now, on the simple basis that I do know more of what I'm talking about than most of my listeners, they don't expect a formal speech with fine flourishes, and the most important thing is that they consider me to be an expert. People will believe anything you say if they think you are an expert; it is a magic word. What I usually do is show them the slides and tell them a little about each type of flower I show; then stand up in front of them and ask for questions. (It is a good idea to have one or two ringers--maybe the program chairman and another officer of the club, equipped with some simple questions to break the ice.) By answering the questions they ask you, you can give them the information they need to know, and inevitably you will throw in a few other things they ought to know but don't know they ought to. Of course, you aren't going to charge your own club anything except perhaps rental fees for slides and maybe the projecting equipment. But you might find that some visitor from another club wants you to repeat the program for that club, and you are certainly entitled to a fee for doing it. Go to it; join the lecture circuit. It's all good publicity for irises, and of course you will lean rather strongly on the beauty, charm, ease of growth, hardiness and all the other desirable qualities, so it is a benefit for TSI, too. To mention all the other types that do well in your climate--we're all one big family, aren't we?

If you put your mind to it, you might find some other ways of promoting Siberians both among the irisians who haven't caught on to the *Sibiricae* and among the poor souls on the outside. How about flowers for the church altar some Sunday in Siberian season? The ladies who do the altar would probably love to have some to use. Think!

Every Member a Publicity Agent!

BOTRYTIS ROT OF SIBERIAN IRISES

Robert Hollingworth

According to Jackson (1) and Weiler (2), botrytis rot has been observed only in tall bearded irises. Unfortunately it seems we must extend this host range to include the 28-chromosome Siberians. In late May of 1978, after an unusually cool, damp start to spring, it became obvious that at numerous places both in my seedling beds and my named cultivar beds, a disease was causing serious damage to some of the Siberian irises.

Symptoms of the attack were a browning of the outer leaves of the fan, especially at the base, with a brown, patchy, water-soaked rot progressing to the inner layers of the shoot from the outside. The fan often drooped over from their weakened points and collapsed, with the outer leaves brown while the central leaves were still green. A grey-white felt of spores was evident on the brown outer leaves, especially at the base. Less often, rusty brown rectangular lesions appeared higher up on the leaf margins and spread inward causing the leaf to fall over at this point. Typically, the fans in an established clump were attacked one at a time, giving the plant a bedraggled look with some fans brown and collapsed while others were still green and upright. A few badly affected irises were lost and others were damaged more or less severely.

The pathogen responsible for this disease was diagnosed as *Botryotinia convoluta* Whetzel (also known as *Botrytis convoluta* and as *Sclerotinia convoluta*) by Dr. Paul Pecknold, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University. In two Siberian irises in an advanced state of infection, he observed the small, shiny black sclerotia characteristic of this disease on the underside of the rhizomes and leaf bases.

This condition can readily be distinguished from attack by the iris borer, which generally causes browning and loss of the *inner* leaves of the fan initially and leaves characteristic wet, ragged larval feeding damage on the concealed leaf edges. Also, it is distinct from scorch since this also affects the inner leaves first, is very sporadic in its distribution within a group of irises, and is particularly characterized by a severe loss of roots. The roots of the irises attacked by *B. convoluta* seemed reasonably undamaged even at a late stage of infection. Crown rot of iris (*Sclerotium rolfsii*) may not affect Siberians (2) and in any case produces typical mustard-colored sclerotia on the affected rhizomes, is found mainly in the southern states, and is favored by warm weather (2).

It is possible that this Botrytis disease is more common out-

side the bearded irises than has been supposed, and may often be overlooked. Noticeable infestations of Siberians were present in other gardens I visited in Indiana, Ohio and Illinois last Spring. In fact, its presence was quite general. In his taxonomic revision of the *Sclerotiniaceae*, Whetzel (3) shows a photograph of *I. versicolor* infested with *Botryotinia* species, and experimental infection has been achieved with *B. convoluta* in *I. japonica* from the Evansia group.

Several control measures for this disease have been suggested in reference to tall bearded irises, particularly the use of the systemic fungicides such as Benlate, and the soil fungicide Terraclor (PCNB) (1, 4, 5). I saw a good improvement in my own irises after one spray of the affected plants and the surrounding soil with a Benlate/Terraclor mixture. A second spray ten days later completely arrested the progress of the disease, but this may have been attributable to the onset of warmer, drier weather as much as the fungicides. Unfortunately, Botrytis rot is a disease which is likely to recur under the appropriate environmental conditions since the sclerotia may persist on the rhizomes and in the soil for several years, acting as a possible reservoir of infection, although this has been disputed as a significant factor in warmer environments (5). Also, in bearded irises, the infection may remain latent in the rhizome during the summer, causing no apparent symptoms (5). Surface-acting fungicides are ineffective in this case, and the disease may be unwittingly transmitted when divisions of the plant are shipped to others or moved to other parts of the garden as apparently healthy rhizomes.

I would be very interested to hear from anyone else who has observed or diagnosed Botrytis rot in the beardless irises, particularly with respect to its incidence, distribution in the United States, climatic conditions which favored its attack, repetition or infestation in subsequent years, and any remedies which did, or did not, prove effective.

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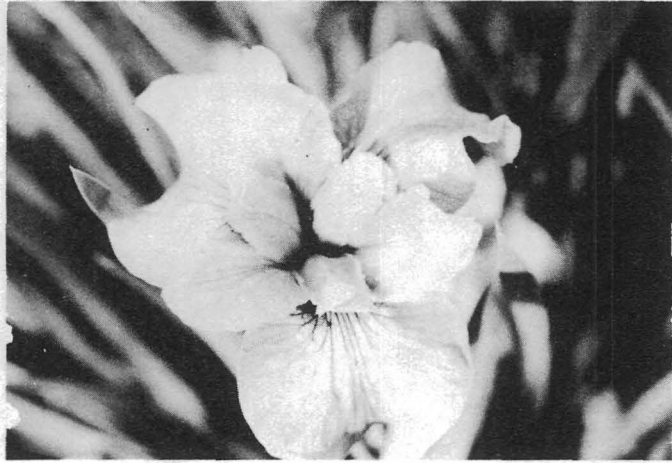
(Correspondence on this subject should be sent directly to Prof. R. M. Hollingworth, 1015 Windwood Lane, West Lafayette, Indiana 47906, and not to the publication office. I hope that anyone who does have any information on this subject will write Prof. Hollingworth about it as this could be a rather serious matter for anyone who grows Siberians and other Apogon species.)

(While still "in touch" with him, I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to Bob for not only misspelling his name in previous issues of TSI, but--what is far, far worse in the academic world--not giving him his proper title! If I had only known, Bob--but then I'm not apt to wander in the w. k. groves, and you never told me.--Peg.)

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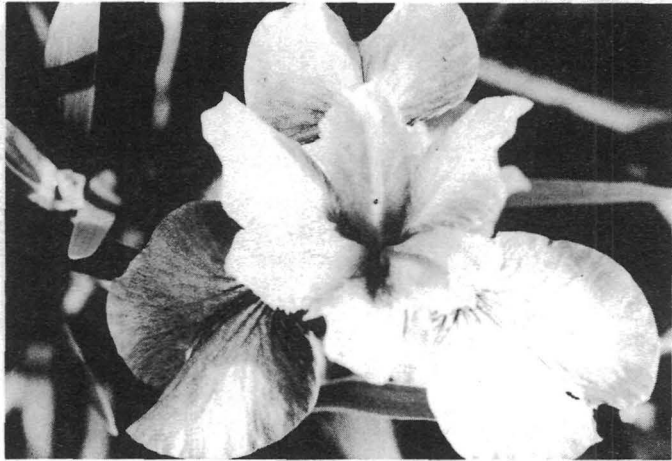
We were very fortunate to have received several excellent photographs from Julius Wadekamper and Tony Ballard of some of the newer Siberians and we are taking advantage of the lack of written material to give you a portfolio which displays the varied shapes our flowers shown. Alas, you will have to guess the colors if you aren't acquainted with the plants and don't have descriptions at hand. What I particularly noticed was the variation in size and shape of the standards and styles. In some the styles are almost as long as the standards, in others scarcely half as long; some standards are about the same width as the styles while others seem to be nearly three times as wide. And look at those dipping, rippling falls! Except for TUNKHANNOCK, which dates from the mid-1940s, all were registered since 1960, and all except TUNKHANNOCK and MARANATHA have WHITE SWIRL as an ancestor. They range from very close-coupled to rather wide-spread, but except for FOURFOLD WHITE which is a tetraploid none of the WHITE SWIRL descendants has falls that hang down very much. It is interesting to see how that shape seems to dominate even into the third and fourth generations. Of course, this isn't wholly true--we don't see the seedlings that didn't make it to registration, and many of these do not have such clear indications of the WHITE SWIRL ancestry.

It would be interesting if someone, or several someones, could take black-and-white pictures of some of the Siberians introduced in the last dozen years or so which do not have WHITE SWIRL as an ancestor--and maybe a few of the old cultivars as well--the Preston and Morgan ones from Canada, the Perry and other English ones, the Cleveland and Scheffy ones from the United States. For purposes of comparison and also to show the variety of forms available, such a portfolio of Siberians would be not only useful, but attractive as well.



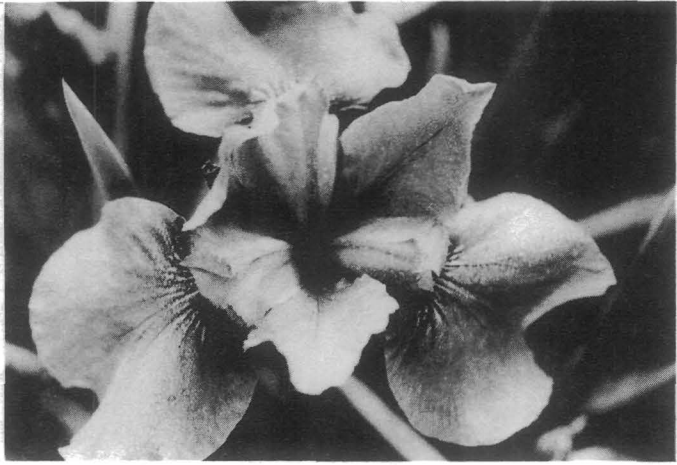
Sally Kerlin

J. W.



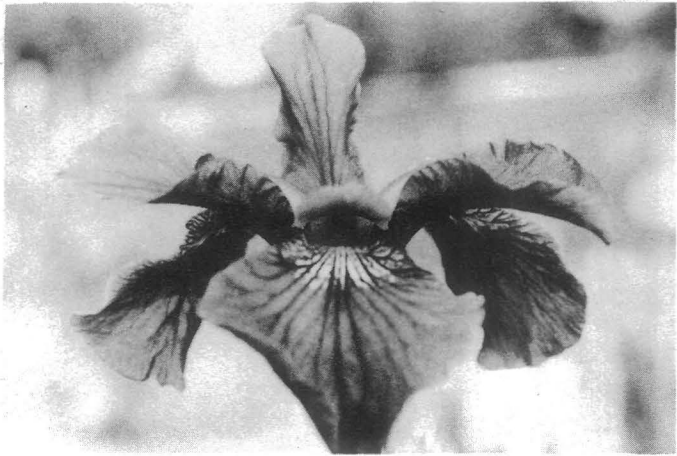
Suehn 290

J. W.



Dreaming Spies

J. W.



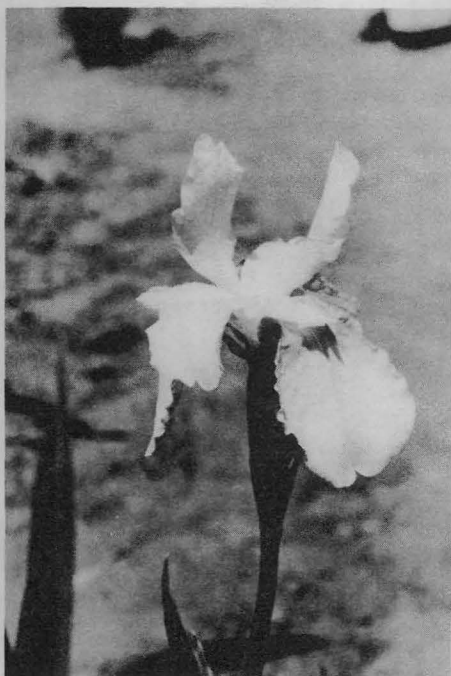
Maranatha

J. W.



Fourfold White

T. B.



Tunkhamock

J. W.



Blue Burn

J. W.

Back talk

Not one of our fatter issues, I'm sorry to say. May I do a little whining and wingeing? Please, if you promise an article for a specific issue, either send it or send a note of explanation at least a couple of weeks before the deadline so that we can try to get someone else to do a quickie to fill the gap. Sometimes I find myself coming up to the date to start typing with not enough material to fill eight pages, even with my known ability to fill pages and pages with my prattle. Promised items have not arrived in time--some never do come--and it is only by luck or someone's lucky hunch that I might like having a spare article, that we are able to turn out something fairly varied and usable.

For this issue we were particularly lucky. Not only did we have the collection of pictures, but the articles by Mrs. Caillet and Professors McGarvey and Hollingworth came unexpectedly, and Julius, in a fit of absentmindedness perhaps, sent me not one but two President's Page pieces which combined very nicely into one longer one. To all of them my sincere thanks. I'd love to thank more of you next time. How about it? Literally anything that has to do with Sibirians, in the garden or as cut flowers, whether it be a discovery, a dilemma, a comment or a question, has a place in these pages. And it doesn't have to be typed; years of experience with my own scrawl and a few others have given me a knack for doping out what is meant by that combination of letters that might be 'cpmeus' or possibly 'ayrem'; it was really 'square'! (What really riles me is when I remember to bring my shopping list and my glasses along when I go to the supermarket, and only after I have fought my way through the checkout and out to the car do I realize that 'gnnvl huffm' was 'peanut butter'.)

I have been wondering lately if there isn't some way that those of us in the "wrong" parts of America could manage to get, and grow, the Cal-Sibes. Some of us can't even make our own with the 40-chr. Siberians because they aren't too happy here (wherever 'here' may be) either. In my experience neither the Cal-Sibes nor the named cultivars of the *Californicae* survive when they are shipped from the west coast in the summer or early fall to my area. Even my own seedling *Californicae* do not tend to live through the winter or even *to* winter if I move them after mid-July, and these are only out of the ground a matter of minutes. And only if they are moved in early spring or in full bloom will they bloom within a year after the move. I know I don't have ideal conditions for them, but once they are established they do quite well. I have made a few crosses between *innominata* or *tenax* and various 28-chr. Siberians, but very few have set seed and of those only three or

four have survived to bloom--but I must admit that when I made these crosses I didn't know very much about growing the offspring. I plan to try making more such crosses this summer; my knowledge, while still not vast, is somewhat more extensive than it was. But I have seen slides of some of the cultivars and I would love to have a few of them. Would anyone consider trying to ship them in April or even late March? I know that if they could stand the trip--and by air they shouldn't mind it--I could pot them up if need be, tuck them into the cold frame, and transfer them into the garden as the weather warms up. But the dealers, understandably, are dubious about early shipments, particularly from a warmer climate to a cooler one which just might be in a freezing spell when the package came. Would somebody like to think about this and maybe come up with an answer?

Connected with this is the question: should we as a Society enter into discussions about the Cal-Sibes with the Society for Pacific Coast Native Irises aimed at propagandizing these little darlings, possibly even finding a way of easing them into the AIS Awards system? Should they come under our wing, SPCNI's, or a pair of wings? I know a lot of our members do grow them; our Society covers one of their parents (alas, they are poor little mules (mixed ancestry and no progeny) and I do think we ought to take some interest in them.

I hope any of you who are interested in growing the species from seed noticed the announcement on p. 88 of the Fall 1978 Bulletin to the effect that seed donations and requests for the species seed list should hereafter be sent to Mary Duvall, Rte. 1, Box 142, Dassel, Minn. 55325. If you want the seed list, send Mary a self-addressed stamped long envelope.

In last spring's issue of TSI we had a Q & A about Siberians as cut flowers for the florist trade. The January 1979 issue of the Newsletter of the Siberian, Spuria and Japanese Iris Group of BIS came in a few days ago, and on p. 5 there is an article by Ray Jeffs in which he says: "My first memory of irises were a long row of a Sibirica hybrid my father grew on his allotment for cut flowers and sale to a florist. I think it was probably 'Perry's Blue'...." If they could do it in England about 50 years ago, maybe something could yet be worked out to use them these days, too.

It is going to be interesting to see how this winter will affect the Siberians, and the other plants in our gardens. It has certainly not been a normal winter (if there really is such a thing) in large parts of the United States and Canada. My husband didn't harvest the last tomatoes from the Sweet 100s he grew in 5-gallon buckets until December 1, long after most of the annuals had been frozen, but an indication that the temperatures had not dropped much below freezing. December and January were cold, with several smallish

snowfalls, and I was beginning to look forward to an early spring. Then the cold came. For over two weeks in February the temperature never got above freezing--New Year's weather here--and Valentine's Day--was bracketed with sub-zero nights. The next day we had 6" of snow, and another 11" on the 19th. Then it warmed up to normal and by the 22nd my pet patch of snowdrops were out in the open and blooming again, and on the 23rd the first snow crocus showed color. By then there was less than 2" of snow left out of all that stuff on the lawns, but it will be awhile before the mounds at the curb vanish. From all we hear, it was a bad winter all over--Atlanta of all places to have its airport snowbound! Freezing in Los Angeles! Disaster in Chicago and elsewhere! Great Grey Owls on Long Island!

However, spring does come eventually, the flowers come out, the Siberians bloom, and we can forget what we went through a few months before. I hope you all have a good season.

Peg -

TREASURER'S REPORT

Gunther Stark

On hand, Checking Account, Jan. 1, 1978.	\$ 597.37
Dues income	\$543.00
Misc. income	9.25
Interest	207.50
Auction net	503.00
Total income	<u>1262.75</u>
	\$1860.12

Expenses

TSI printing and mailing - Spring	\$145.98
TSI printing and mailing - Fall	218.98
TSI typing	98.71
Extra deposit tickets	1.30
Certificate of deposit	1000.00
Total expenses	\$1464.97
On hand, Checking Account, Dec. 31, 1978	<u>395.15</u>
	\$1860.12

(This arrived as I was typing the last page; Gunther had had a bout with the flu and couldn't do anything. He mentions that this has been the worst winter in his area in 50 or 60 years. I believe him.)

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