



THE SIBERIAN IRIS

THE SIBERIAN IRIS

Volume 5, Number 2

Fall, 1980

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The Siberian Iris is published semiannually by the Society for Siberian Irises. Editorial and Publication Offices are at 235 Koehl St., Massapequa Park, N.Y. 11762. Deadlines are Feb. 15 and Sept. 15; earlier receipt of material is desirable. Black-and-white photographs and drawings are welcome; please put your name and address on the back if you want them returned. Reprinting is by permission of both editor and writer, with acknowledgement.

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Dues are: Single annual, \$2.50; Triennial, \$6.50; Family Annual, \$3.00; Triennial, \$7.50. Membership is open to AIS members in Canada and the United States, and to all iris enthusiasts elsewhere.

Back Issues: 1970 to current, \$1. each issue; pre-1970, \$1.50 each issue; Check List, \$2.75, Judging Standards, \$1. Checks, payable to the Society for Siberian Irises, should be sent to the Publication Office, as above. Write to the office to determine which pre-1970 issues are available, as supplies of some are non-existent and others rather scant.

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Steve Varner

We had another long season of Siberian beauties, although almost no rain in May and June caused the last blooms to be smaller and less spectacular. Seed harvesting is now in full swing with lots of interesting crosses promising exciting beauty in the years to come. I hope you all enjoyed fine bloom.

At Tulsa, among the official business dealt with by the Society, we established the Distinguished Service Award, and our Editor, Peg Edwards, will be the first recipient. This will not necessarily be given annually, but get your nomination, complete with all relevant data, to the President by April 1 of the year for which you are making the request, so that it can be considered at the spring meeting.

Our membership dues were raised by 50¢ per year for all types of membership, to take effect as of renewal date of January 1, 1981. Starting with the issue for next spring your TSIs will come to you by First-Class Mail with the help of this small increase, and we hope it will mean faster delivery and fewer non-deliveries.

Our request to the ASI Chairman and Board of Directors for an Award of Merit for Siberians, in addition to the Morgan Award, has been rejected after a conference of four officers. Reference to past AIS Board meetings and Bulletin issues that are the basis for this ruling were given me. When I have them all checked out, I will report on this in detail. I still think a fairer number of awards is due.

Pleas for good slides of Siberians, both single blooms and clumps, go unanswered, and so I am going to appoint two members to work with Prof. William McGarvey, Chairman for Slides, specifically to solicit and procure such slides. Won't you share some of your Siberian slides so others can see the beauty of our flowers?

Have a good winter--and don't forget to communicate.



Note from New Zealand: Orris Root. "...easily prepared and I surmise has been...discarded as a failure because of the lack of a little piece of information. It takes two or three years before the characteristic odour of violets develops, but once it has, will persist for years. Occasionally it is necessary to expose the roots or powder to strong sunlight for a couple of hours to rejuvenate the fragrance." From the Bulletin of the New Zealand Iris Society (Inc.), March 1980, Bull. #90.

UPDATE ON REBLOOM -- Currier McEwen

In earlier articles (1, 2) on rebloom in Siberian irises, I have commented on the obviously important role of genetic influences in the development of this characteristic and have speculated that a program of selective breeding would surely lead to a steadily increasing number of rebloomers among one's seedlings. Experience over the past few years has confirmed this. In 1972 two diploid rebloomers were crossed and the resulting sprouted seeds were treated with colchicine. Ten seedlings survived of which 4 were rebloomers of preferential (2) type. Only one, subsequently registered as WELCOME RETURN, proved to be a tetraploid. WELCOME RETURN was selfed in 1975. Of the resulting 9 seedlings all but 2 were preferential rebloomers. In 1977 two of these sisters were crossed and produced 8 seedlings. This season every one of those seedlings has rebloomed preferentially. Thus, in succeeding generations, the percentage of rebloomers resulting from these crosses has increased from 40% in the first generation to 77% in the second and 100% in the third. My knowledge of genetics is meager, but Marlene Ahlburg has written to me that this experience suggests that the inheritance of the capacity to rebloom involves a complex of genes, perhaps all on the same chromosome. I will be glad to have other comments regarding this.

I have made no actual counts of this sort with diploid rebloomers but I expect they would be similar. It is possible, however, that tetraploidy may enhance the tendency to rebloom, as it does some other characteristics such as ruffling and velvety texture.

Another occurrence among rebloomers this season has been a third period of bloom in four plants. Two are diploids, ON AND ON and an attractive blue seedling (70/78), and two are tetraploids, a white induced tetraploid seedling (T₁ 77/212(2)) and WELCOME RETURN. The only one in our garden which did this once before was Mrs. Brummitt's VIOLET REPEAT but it is the only 28-chromosome Siberian I have been unable to grow successfully, having lost it twice. Once it died over the winter, the second time within weeks of planting in early summer. Those two plants came from England and I will now obtain it from an American source hoping it will be better acclimated to this area.

Each of my own 4 plants mentioned above is a preferential rebloomer with second rebloom taller and more abundant than the first. In each instance the third bloom was poor, on low stalks below foliage level, only one stalk with no branching and two buds. In each, second bloom came within two weeks of the first but the third in late August or early September after four to six weeks' rest. I have no explanation why this occurred this year in 4 plants when previously it has been so rare. Three of the plants were mature clumps but the tetra-

plaid seedling was blooming for its first year. Last winter was relatively mild but with very little snow cover and this growing season has been extremely dry. Hence, this phenomenon has occurred under what I would consider poor rather than good growing conditions. Possibly it resulted from my use of fertilizer in the garden this spring for the first time in twelve years.

References:

1. McEwen, C. Reblooming Irises, The Siberian Iris, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 20-21, 1975.
2. McEwen, C. Experience with rebloom in Siberian and Japanese irises, Bull. American Iris Society, No. 233:72-77, 1979.

(2¢ worth: Maybe they tried a third time to set some seed in case they suffered from another bad winter and spring? Not to be anthropomorphic about it, there is some sort of dingbat in many plants that seems to make them "anxious" about providing progeny when they have undergone a perilous experience, or some condition or group of conditions that constitute a shock to the plant or a threat to its continued health. This is, of course, fairly common with annuals but does sometimes occur to biennials and perennials. I have often noticed that if I remember to cut off the flowering stalk of a foxglove when it is nearly finished I get much better side growth than when I forget to cut it back. A few of my azaleas, if I remove the faded flower clusters, will give a lot of autumn bloom; but if I don't bother, there is scant fall bloom, if any. Of course, it could have been the pleasant surprise of getting an extra meal this spring.--Peg.)

AUCTION REPORT -- REGION I--SSI Apogon Auction

The Annual Auction was held on August 24, 1980 at the Shaw-Whitehouse garden in Plainville, Mass. Auctioneer Walter Kotyk presided in the shade of the Norway maple before a group of eager bidders from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York. The irises offered included a dozen varieties of Japanese, thirty of Siberians, and an assortment of Apogon species, including *pseudacorus*, *forrestii*, and *chrysographes*. A total of 94 plants were offered, and 92 of these were sold. The other two were donated to the Case Estates (associated with the Arnold Arboretum) which will host a display garden at the 1983 AIS Convention. A total of \$500 was bid, and after expenses, the Japanese Iris Society is \$108 richer and SSI added \$367 to its coffers. We thank co-hostesses Wendy Shaw and Barbara Whitehouse for the warm hospitality (and good food!) and gratefully acknowledge the weatherman's cooperation in providing a truly beautiful day for the event.

(Cheers! and our thanks to the people who made it a success.)

REPORT ON THE DISPLAY GARDENS OF THE SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES

James J. Foreman, with additions and summations by the Editor.

I am very pleased with the progress made this year in our Display Gardens. Thanks to a lot of hard work by Currier McEwen and Julius Wadekamper, the gardens have increased significantly in both quality and number. At present there are 39 of them dispersed through the United States and Canada.

Seven of the Display Gardeners did report on the number of visitors (as all are asked to do) and it may be of interest, particularly to hybridizers, that the average number of visitors was 224 in addition to known judges--average 13--making a total of 237 visitors to the average garden. These numbers, of course, do not include visitors to the public gardens, such as the Denver Botanic Garden, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, U.S. National Arboretum, River Farm (of the American Horticultural Society) and the Royal Botanical Garden in Hamilton, Ontario, each of which has many thousands of visitors every year.

I believe we have a good mix of private and public display gardens. The public gardens do a wonderful job of placing the irises before many general-interest flower growers and flower lovers. Private gardens, specializing in Siberians, whose visitors are more specifically interested in irises, can be a valuable showplace for the hybridizer. That is, if the 13-judge average holds for all the 39 gardens, a variety placed in each garden would be seen by up to 506 judges. There probably would be some overlapping, though, as judges might very well visit two or more gardens.

Altogether there are 286 named varieties, seedlings under number, and species in the gardens. Some gardens have many of them, some a modest display. A few are still in process of planting; for instance, the garden at River Farm in Mt. Vernon, Va. was mentioned in the News & Views of the American Horticultural Society as one of three beds--each 4' x 20'--being planted in the Farm's Idea Garden. This garden is laid out on an old farm owned by George Washington and is not very far from Washington's home at Mt. Vernon. Its location should make it attractive to visitors to the area. AHS has been in possession for only a few years and many of the plantings are still very young. Some of the other public gardens on the list have had a Siberian planting for some years and possibly could be updated by donation of newer varieties. A few of the gardens are primarily commercial--but as nobody would run a commercial iris planting unless he loved irises, the odds are that these are also loved and coddled, and as extensive as any visitor could wish. It is recommended that visitors phone or write

before visiting any garden. For one thing, not all the gardens are located at the given address which is that of the home of the gardener. For another, some of these gardens are not very large, and if your visit coincided with a garden tour by a local organization, it might overwhelm the garden. You might even arrive and find nobody home!

Here is the list of gardens with address and phone numbers where available:

- American Horticultural Society, River Farm, att.: Mr. Steven Davis;
Mt. Vernon, Va. 22121. (703) 795-8882.
- Melrose Gardens; Mr. Ben Hager, 309 Best Road South, Stockton, Calif.
95205. (209) 465-8578.
- Mrs. Bee Warburton, 2 Warburton Lane, Westborough, Mass. 01581.
(617) 366-2160.
- Dr. & Mrs. Currier McEwen, South Harpswell, Maine 04079. (207)
833-5438.
- Mr. Charles Trommer, Tranquil Lake Nursery, 45 River St., Rehoboth,
Mass. 02769. (617) 252-4310--after dark only.
- Mr. Charles V. Applegate, Rt. 2, Box 163, Perrysville, Ohio 44864
Denver Botanic Garden, 909 York St., Denver, Colo. 80206
- Mr. D. Steve Varner, Monticello, Ill. 61856. (217) 792-3446.
- Mr. Frank Stephens, 4110 Shelby Drive, Amarillo, Tex. 79109.
(806) 352-0508.
- Mr. Forrest McCord, 208 N. Cook Rd., Muncie, INd. 47303. (317) 282-0131.
- Mr. Harry Kuesel, 4 Larkdale Dr., Littleton, Colo. 80123. (303) 795-9718.
- Mr. & Mrs. Harley E. Briscoe, Rt. 1 Box 146, Whitehall, Ill. 62092.
(217) 374-6654.
- Mr. & Mrs. James L. Ennenga, 1621 N. 85th Street, Omaha, Nebr. 68114.
(402) 391-6337.
- Mrs. J. A. Witt, 16516 25th N.E. Seattle, Wash. 98155. (206) 362-9206.
- Mr. & Mrs. James J. Foreman, 1360 W. Michaels Rd., Tipp City, Ohio
45371. (513) 667-2869.
- Mr. Julius Wadekamper, 10078 154th Ave., Elk River, Minn. 55330.
(612) 427-2802.
- Mrs. Kathleen Frey, 6275 Hawarden Dr., Riverside, Calif. 92506.
(513) 686-1848.
- Mr. Karol L. Hujsak, 3227 S. Fulton, Tulsa, Okla. 74135. (918) 747-
6926.
- Mrs. Louise Bellagamba, Bella Vista Garden, 11431 Old St., Charles Rd.,
Bridgeton, Mo. 63044. (314) 739-5413.
- Mr. Larry Harder, Ponca, Nebraska 68770. (402) 755-2615.
- Mrs. Lorena M. Reid, Laurie's Garden; 41886 McKenzie Hwy, Springfield,
Ore. 97477. (503) 896-3756.
- Miss Marie Caillet, Rt. 1 (Oak Pt. area), Frisco, Tex. 75034.
(214) 292-1154.
- Mrs. Marion Vincent, Rt. Box 460, Bonneau, S. Car. 29431. (803) 565-
3236.

Mrs. Martha Wilkins; 7536 Waupun Rd., Oshkosh, Wisc. (414) 589-3742
 Mrs. Phyllis Harrington, 3018 Dirr (P.O.Box 222), Parsons, Kans.67357
 Paul & Louise Watts, 133 King St., Armonk, N.Y. 10504 (914) 273-9478
 Mrs. Joan Brown, Royal Botanical Gardens, P.O.B. 399, Hamilton, Ont.
 Canada L8N 3H8 (416) 527-1158
 Mrs. Rena Crumpler, 2521 Wycliffe Ave. S.W., Roanoke, Va. 24014.
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald F. Miller, 6065 N. 16th Street, Kalamazoo, Mich.
 49007, (616) 349-5934.
 Robert H. Hollingworth, 1015 Windwood La., W. Lafayette, Ind. 47906,
 (317) 463-9165
 Mr. Robert Turley, 1219 Cardinal Lane, Pineville, La. 71360, (318)
 640-4530
 Mrs. Richard Van Valkenburgh, 212 Longwood Dr. S.E., Huntsville, Ala.
 35801 (205) 534-8583
 Mr. Robert Schreiner, Schreiner's Gardens, 3629, Quinaby Road, Salem,
 Or. 97303
 Mrs. Shirley Pope, 39 Highland Avenue, Gorham, Maine 04030, (207)
 839-3054.
 Mr. Sterling U. Innerst, 2700A Oakland Road, Dover, Pa. 17315,
 (717) 764-0281.
 University of Minnesota, Landscape Arboretum, 3675 Arboretum Drive,
 Chaska, Minn. 55318
 Mr. Sylvester G. Marsh, U.S. National Arboretum, 24th & R Sts. N.E.,
 Washington, D.C. 20002, (202) 372-9100.
 Mr. & Mrs. William Belus Jr., 6401 Constance Avenue, Bartlett, Tenn.
 38134, (901) 388-2458.
 Dr. William McGarvey, 1 Etwilla Lane, Rt. 3, Oswego, N.Y. 13126, (315)
 343-4137

(Suggestions: If you have surplus stock of some Siberian species, an antique variety not readily available, or one of the recent introductions not yet in wide distribution, why not write to Jim Foreman and offer to send it to some display garden that would want to have it? None of them carries all 286 of the listed varieties; there are others which none of them have; and some are only at the beginning and could use materials to extend their planting. Not everyone can afford to buy all the plants wanted--botanical gardens are particularly apt to have tight budgets!--and, except for Guest irises, all the Display Gardens must obtain for themselves the plants they make available to visitors. If there is a garden near you, you could contact them directly, but do not feel hurt if they refuse your offer--they may have traded with one of the other DGs, they may be expecting a shipment from another source, or they may be running out of space. Jim's records will indicate who really wants and has room for your offered varieties. List what you can spare.)

COMMENTS ON BLOOM

1. Anna Mae Miller

This has been a great year for gardening where we live--shrubs bloomed their heads off from Forsythia through Lilacs. We have had a busy year besides the gardening. I went to Tulsa for the Convention, I always enjoy visiting with people from all over the country, but for Siberian fans it was rather disappointing. LAVENDER LIGHT did get a bloom out for us to look at, but that was it for Siberians in the flesh. I had a week at home and then went to the Michigan Federated Garden Clubs Convention at Mackinac Island to give a workshop on Flower Show Awards, and was hardly home again when the Siberian seedlings began to bloom, May 23. MANDY MORSE came along on the 27th and bloom was still going on when we left June 15 on vacation. Some hadn't begun by then.

If I had to cut my list down to 15, I'd keep BLUE RIDGE, BUTTER AND SUGAR, DREAMING SPIRES, LIMEHEART, PINK HAZE, RUFFLED VELVET, SUPER EGO, SWANK, TEMPER TANTRUM, TYCOON, VELVET GOWN, WHITE MAGNIFICENCE, WHITE SWIRL, WING ON WING and DREAMING YELLOW. These are the diploids; of tetraploids I'd want to keep EWEN, NAVY BRASS, OUTSET, ORVILLE FAY, SNOW BOUNTY and YANKEE CONSUL.

Ronald and I literally had to tear ourselves away from the garden on the 15th, it was so beautiful, but we were going to visit gardens all the way. Our first day took us to Hamilton, Ont. to the Royal Botanical Garden; there we ran into Hal Stahly and Jack Taylor and others just finishing a Judge's Training course. Whow, what a TB planting! They also have a nice Siberian planting but unfortunately it had been transplanted and not too many were in bloom, but it is certainly worth a stop and we of the SSI should give it our support. The next morning we stopped to see Niagara Falls. The U.S. side had been dry the last time we passed that way so it was a real thrill to see both falls with lots of water. Then we went on to Oswego to Dr. Garvey's. I still have not figured out why his bloom was late--there were some things in bloom, but just beginning. Then we went to Floralties at Montreal. We were just a little disappointed there. There was a very nice perennial garden done by Great Britain and also a perennial planting by France, and some pleasant areas using evergreens, but most of the plantings is based on annuals, and since the season there is behind ours, these were not yet at their best. By the end of July it would be quite colorful. The bog garden was well done but not a great thrill to us as we see them at home. But we had a great time at the Montreal Botanical Gardens--spent seven or eight hours, and made long lists of perennials and evergreens we'd like. They have a wandering

brook planted with huge drifts of Siberians and groups of older German irises--what age I was trying to locate were older varieties I'm not familiar with--and perennials; just beautiful. I feel Jim Foreman should approach the director and see if they would enroll as a display garden for the Siberians; surely some of us could donate plants to make their collection more reflective of the current Siberian irises. Names I was able to find were MRS. PERRY, HEAVENLY BLUE, CAESAR, and I thought I recognized MY LOVE. They were planted in drifts that were 2' x 5'. Their booklet refers to the planting as the Flowery Brook and says it has been recently done. Address: Jardin Botanique de Montreal, 4101 east, Rue Sherbrooke, Montreal, Que. H1X 2B2; Andre Champagne, Directeur or, Pierre Bourque, Horticulteur en Chef.

We then went to Maine, stopped at a Rock Garden Society member's nursery in Litchfield, and then on to Currier McEwen's. He had been in Minnesota for a 3-day program (lucky people) and had had a good time with Julius Wadekemper and said one of the nicest Siberian's to look for is Tamberg's White being introduced by Julius--but not this year. We were very impressed with Currier's garden Saturday afternoon, but they had had a hard rain Friday evening and things were very torn and I was only able to take a few pictures--plus talking! So Sunday morning we went back and found Currier out with his camera, and his hybridizing apron waiting on the ground to pollinate after taking pictures he hoped would be useful for the publication. I took several and feel that I took some good ones--I was using close-up lens #3. We fell in love with DREAMING YELLOW, BUTTER AND SUGAR, PEG EDWARDS and DEAR DELIGHT. We continued to like SNOW BOUNTY, YANKEE CONSUL, RUFFLET VELVET. Things we were not familiar with, and liked, were SHIRLEY POPE, HARPSWELL HAZE and REDDY MAID. He also grows irises from other hybridizers, and we liked a white seedling of Dr. McGarvey's, not introduced, which Currier feels is even better than WING ON WING, also EARTHSHINE and PINK HAZE. Among others, Bee Warburton's ATOLL was fine.

On Monday we stopped at Bee's and had a nice visit with her and Frank--Ronald really enjoyed comparing the vegetable garden with his, and discussing varieties they favored or couldn't agree on. We are still amazed at the size of the planting and the marvelous condition their plants are in. Here again, we saw FORETELL and HOLDEN CLOUGH and liked them quite as well as we had at Currier's. I regret that I did not take as many pictures as I should have--I certainly should have taken her ATOLL as it did show more pattern in her garden than it did in Currier's. However, I did get a good slide of one she plans to introduce in '81, and of McGarvey's SNOWTOP and five species: *II. koreana*, *clarkei*, *prismatica*, *versicolor* and *virginica shrevei*. That

was the last iris garden on the trip; but how nice it was to get acquainted with the McEwens and Warburtons! We went on to visit Weston Nurseries, White Flower Farms, and Lincoln Foster of the American Rock Garden Society, who with his wife had developed a lovely site; such a wealth of knowledge he shared with us as we walked through the garden.

When we came home Siberians were still blooming, and TOWANDA REDFLARE started reblooming July 5.

2. Varietal Notes by Currier McEwen

In spite of bad weather all over, Siberians have flourished here in Maine and elsewhere. I had hoped to see new ones, like FROSTY RIM, at the Tulsa Convention, but, alas, it was a bad convention for the TBs and Siberians. Only one of some 50 Siberians bloomed and that was LAVENDER LIGHT which opened the last day. However, I had, of course, opportunities to visit other gardens later.

Especially rewarding was a visit to Minneapolis in June for a meeting of the Iris Society of Minnesota. There my host was Julius Wadekamper, which provided an excellent chance to see his extensive plantings of true lilies and Siberians. Unquestionably one of the finest Siberians I have seen this year is Julius' BORBELETA, a medium dark blue of exquisite form and ruffling and that indefinable attribute of quality that sets off the truly outstanding flowers from those that are just good. Also seen here was Harley Briscoe's STEVE



RUFFLED VELVET

VARNER, a large lighter blue of flaring, rounded form with veining somewhat like that of SPIDER EGO. It is listed as coming from WHITE SWIRL X BARBARA'S CHOICE, which surprises me as I believe the late Maurice Kitton's BARBARA'S CHOICE, which I have not grown but have seen both in England and at Schreiners,' is a 40-chr. Siberian.

MAGGIE LEE and CHRISTMAS WISH, which I received from Louise Bellagamba two years ago, bloomed this year. The former is a nice shade of pale red, the latter a white of excellent form and crispness. It was planted in a row of seedlings, and I repeatedly spotted it and made note that there was one I must mark to keep only to discover what it really was. Their only fault on these first-year-to-bloom plants was a lack of branching and only two buds, common enough, goodness knows, in many other well-known cultivars including some of my own, and perhaps when established they have better bud count. Another with only two buds in my garden this year was Tomas Tamberg's WIDE WHITE which is probably the first creamy white Siberian I have seen and it makes up for its lack of branching by being a dependable rebloomer. It has the wide petals and firm substance of a tetraploid. Tomas informs me that it had been treated with colchicine and, though its pollen and presumably its ovules are diploid, I suspect it may be tetraploid in layer 3 (from which the 'bone and muscle' of the flower and plant are derived), which would account for its tetraploid appearance. A chromosome count done on a root tip would settle that question but so far as I know this has not yet been done. At all events for breeding purposes it is diploid.

Another West German introduction which I have had for a number of years is Eckard Berlin's LAURENBÜHL. This is a medium blue flower of large size, typical tetraploid character and very fertile.

I must not comment on all of my own introductions but will mention VIOLET JOY which was outstanding for its lovely, huge, deep violet flowers and its great vigor. About a third of the small divisions I lined out in May sent up scapes and bloomed in June, a thing I have never seen before. As I write, on August 31st, they look like plants at least two years old. Among seedlings to introduce next year I will mention two because of their branching. One, LAVENDER BOUNTY, a diploid lavender-pink from AUGURY X LAVENDER LIGHT, has three branches plus terminal with three buds at the latter site plus two at the others for a total of nine. It started very early and bloomed continuously for 38 days, breaking the record for a non-rebloomer in our garden previously held by EARLY BLUEBIRD. The other, PRAIRIE WARBLER, has similar branching and bud count; and this is particularly noteworthy because it is a hybrid of the 40-chr. group, most of which have no branch and only two buds. Its light yellow flowers are pleasing but not great and I look on it as a hybridizer's tool to help bring much-needed branching into this sub-series.

I have limited these comments to newer cultivars which most irishians have not yet had an opportunity to see, and have not mentioned those of Bill McGarvey, Steve Varner and others which are well-known. As Peg Edwards said in the last issue of TSI, the growing number of yearly introductions and of hybridizers of Siberians is wonderful to see. I am eager to have all the new introductions as quickly as I can obtain them.

Finally, just a word about the past. This year I was much impressed with the branching and nice flowers of a tall plant and noted it as a seedling to keep and use in breeding. On closer inspection, its label read DRAGONFLY, a 1923 introduction of Dykes, which I had planted next to a row of 1977 seedlings! Indeed, it will be kept, and it has already been used in crosses this year.

3. 1980 Siberian Bloom at Illini Iris -- Steve Varner.

Several times this season I wished I could have shared the graceful beauty of clumps of my numbered seedlings and named Siberians with those attending the Tulsa Convention. In spite of hail, wind and rain storms, they showed their durability--the ability to continue in beauty for a long period of time. All my introductions liked it here and bloomed well.

ATOLL and AUGURY gave the best performance of non-Verner Siberian irises. RUFFLED VELVET and BEE had outstanding flowers, but not as many per clump as I like.

Seedlings that excited me most: two tet 'pink' amoenas from Dr. McEwen's seeds; V9214 has light lavender-pink falls, and S040 has deeper falls and more ruffling than its sister. These are the first two tet 'pink' amoenas that I have heard of.

V9250, out of MARLYA, was my choice of the dappled bright deep blues, with wide, contrasting light blue styles. Many MARLYA seedlings had patterns of varying degrees of dappling.

BELFAST X STEVE produced V9144 with mottled purple standards, less mottled deeper purple falls, with feathered wide light blue style arms in umbrella flat form. V9210, from the same cross, was similar in form, but with slight flare, in mid-blue with wide contrasting styles.

V964 is a well-branched deep red-purple out of SHOWDOWN X BELFAST. V888 (OUTER LOOP X V637 navy seedling) is a medium deep blue with a hint of dappling and wide elliptical styles of light turquoise-green-blue. A Sib has greener styles but poorer form.

The harmonious balance of stalk and beautifully graceful flowers,

of diverse form and color patterns, enhances the role of Siberians in their increasing use in gardens. The future is exciting!

SPRING PLANTING OF SIBERIANS AND OTHER EXPERIMENTS

Anna Mae Miller

A year ago in May, Bob Hollingworth and I traded some plants, partly as an experiment and partly because we just didn't do it in the fall. One of my friends was going to West Lafayette so the plants did not have to go through the Post Office or UPS. He sent me 12 different plants including 4 tetraploids. 1979 had three droughts and we do not do a lot of supplemental watering. I lost one plant; as I remember, one or two bloomed last year. This year five have bloomed and all have multiplied well.

Last year I also experimented with dividing in August (8/10/79):
 EWEN--I made 3 double and 4 single divisions, watered with a soluble transplanting fertilizer. There was not a drop of rain in September and then it rained in October. This spring there were three blooming fans and 29 others.

NAVY BRASS--3 single fans. None survived; however, we could have disturbed them or a mole might have dug a runway under them.

SUPER EGO--5 single divisions. This spring each had 4 or 5 fans, and three bloomed.

I would say this was quite successful, even though I was disappointed to lose NAVY BRASS.

(2¢ worth: We need more information on the best times to divide and transplant in various climates and differing soil conditions. From my own experiences, I can say that--in my climate and with my soil--the earlier in spring I can move Siberians, Californicae and Japanese, the more readily they will settle in. This is no help, however, when I need to make over the whole iris bed (as I had to do this year) since the bearded irises do not move well at that time. Early spring, when the foliage is 1-2" high, has to be restricted to moving a clump or part of one from one part of the garden to another, and to moving seedlings from the seedling patch to a roomier spot, or for getting new plants for someone who will send them in spring. I have had rather poor results from moving most Apogons in bloom, although *tectorum* and *cristata* take very kindly to it; in fact, I sell divisions in bloom at our plant sale in May--bare root! SDB and IB I can treat the same, but not the taller beardededs. The next best time to move Apogons is within 2 weeks after bloom has stopped--though I suspect this might not be good for extended-bloom varieties. Late August and into September are fairly good, but after Sept. 15 it begins to be iffy. I believe the crucial considerations are: will there be enough growing

season to enable the plants to get their roots into the soil before cold weather; can they settle in before the sun can scorch the surface roots; will they get enough moisture; will moving at this time interfere with the best development of growth points for the next bloom season, and has the soil sufficient warmth for the new growth of roots to take place?

My soil is very sandy, which means it warms up fast in spring and stays warm--indeed, it can get very hot in summer. Because we are near the Atlantic (about 3 miles), air temperatures don't really get extreme, but from late May well into August the sun can make the soil quite hot--and the top growth too. One day in July we noted that our East thermostat registered 115 in the sun, while the West one, in shade, only said 72--at 10 A.M. That was one of the days we didn't even look at noontime! Temperatures rarely drop below 5^oF. in winter and most of the winter it stays in the low 20s--but freezing goes on from late November into late March, with occasional episodes in October and April. Normal summer highs are in the 90s, but most of this heat comes in mid-July to late August. Rain is iffy--one winter we may have no rain or snow worth mentioning and the next, deluges, while we can expect a dry spell of two or three weeks once or twice a summer. This year was a crazy one!--no rain worth mentioning from late July to now (Sept. 17) except for one cloudburst; but we had lots all winter and spring.

I believe that in a climate with warmer winters, spring planting might be done before bloom time with the best results; in colder areas the best time might well be right after bloom. Heavy soils which tend to stay cold and to be soggy would call for late summer moving, or even early fall if temperatures will allow settling in to take place.

But this is all theorizing. We need facts. Anyone who has occasion to move and divide a clump or three could help enormously if a report on such experiments as Anna Mae Miller has done here could be passed along to Bob Hollingworth, our research chairman, or to me for inclusion in TSI. Be sure, if you try a test, to include in your report information about your soil type and climate as well as the weather at the time you ran the test. This is an area in which we can all help. How about it? -- Peg.)

NEW ZEALAND NOTES -- From the Convention at Masterton, Nov. 10, 1979.

At Frances Love's garden, some new Sibiricas from America were doing well in a large tub...one of these that really impressed me was REJOICE ALWAYS, which was quite different to any other red I have seen. It almost gave the impression of being red, white and blue... in another part of the garden was STEVE--named after its breeder, Steve Varner, almost navy with a bright green throat.

THE TULSA CONVENTION 1980

1. Minutes of the Board of Director's Meeting

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society for Siberian Irises was held April 29 at 8:00 P.M., with Steve Varner presiding. Members present were Harry Kuesel, Currier McEwen, Gunther Stark, Julius Wadekamper, Bee Warburton, and Betty Wood.

Gunther Stark reported that the Treasury had certificates of Deposits amounting to \$5500.00 and a balance in the checking account of \$497.11, with one outstanding bill of approximately \$153 remaining to be paid.

The meeting opened with a discussion of payment of expenses incurred by officers and committee members. A motion was made by Steve Varner, seconded by Currier McEwen, that expenses of reasonable and proper nature, incurred in carrying out the duties of the position, should be presented to the treasurer for reimbursement or receipt of donation at the discretion of the officer or committee chairman. The motion was carried.

After a discussion of the cost of mailing The Siberian Iris, a motion to increase dues by 50¢ per year for all classes of membership and to send the publication by First Class Mail was made by Harry Kuesel and seconded by Gunther Stark. The motion was carried. This increase will begin with new and renewal membership as of January 1, 1981.

W. G. Waters gave a report on the manuscript of the Siberian Iris Handbook, by Dr. McEwen. He stated that there is still a need for a listing of Display Gardens and suppliers.

A new AIS Handbook will be published, rather than a revision of the present one. Technically, the material in the present one is correct but it needs updating. Harry Kuesel moved, Julius Wadekamper seconding, that Steve Varner be chairman of a committee to represent the Siberian Section in this work.

There is a need for a more active Slides committee and for updating the slide sets. The Society will reimburse the cost of making duplicates of slides for this purpose.

Jim Foreman moved, Currier McEwen seconding, that a proposal be written to Kenneth Waite, AIS Awards Chairman, concerning an Award-of-Merit status for Siberians. The opinion of the Board was that there should be an award of merit in addition to the Morgan Award. The feeling was that the present situation is not equitable.

There was discussion of a possible award to recognize service to the Society. Dr. McEwen moved, with James Ennerga seconding, that the Society for Siberian Irises establish a Distinguished Service Award to be presented not oftener than annually when the Board deems a candidate worthy of this Award. The Motion was carried. Dr. McEwen then nominated Peg Edwards for the first award, seconded by Julius Wadekamper.

The nominating committee for the coming year will be Harry Kuesel as Chairman, Peg Edwards, Jayne Ritchie and Julius Wadekamper.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

Signed: Ruth Miller

2. The Program of the General Meeting of The Society -- Harry B. Kuesel

The Siberian Iris Program at Tulsa was devoted to the development of better Siberian irises in four basic colors: reds, blues, yellows and pinks. This is not to imply that we don't have good whites--we do. Fred Cassebeer's famous WHITE SWIRL is being widely used as a parent not only for whites but for other colors as well. Bill McGarvey's WING ON WING, named for a method of setting sails, is an excellent example.

Steve Varner opened the program with a slide picture of a bright scarlet daylily. "This is not meant to confuse you. It is being shown to set the stage for what one goal is," he said, "We are aiming for a true red Siberian." He then showed a slide of NEW WINE, a 1979 introduction which is a bright red-wine color, and makes a good clump. This was followed by KISMET, a 1980 Varner introduction a step closer to red which has a nice contrasting white signal and good branching. Next came WINE WINGS--an older approach to red which always makes a fine clump. Trying to improve the branching and number of blooms, Steve is using ILLINI ENCORE and MARANTHA, which have bud counts well above average. Another Varner objective is to enlarge or intensify the white signal. In SHOWDOWN Steve has achieved this goal. BELFAST, introduced last year, has another desirable feature--contrasting style arms.

Dr. McEwen then took over the microphone, and showed a lovely picture of his garden with open water and blue sky in the background. A very restful scene, and the irises seemed to enjoy it. Currier suggested that visitors in bloom season might end up with a lobster dinner as well. Very tempting, isn't it?--His topic was improvement in the blues. He began with GATINEAU, the best of its day, followed by CAESAR'S BROTHER, perhaps the most widely grown Siberian, then BLUE BRILLIANT from Fred Cassebeer, a stepping stone to true blue; CAMBRIDGE from Marjorie Brummitt, a fine light blue and a good parent.

Then he went on to three of his diploids: SALLY KERLIN, mid-blue; MARILYN HOLMES, darker blue; and CLEVE DODGE, darker still with rounder falls. He finished the discussion of improvements in blue by showing DEAR DELIGHT, a CAMBRIDGE seedling which he introduced in 1977. This is the nearest to true light blue to date and beside it CAMBRIDGE looks lavender.

He then switched the discussion to miniature Siberians and LITTLE WHITE--a pure white only 12 to 18" tall, and reblooming Siberians, of which SOFT BLUE, semi-flaring, lightly ruffled blue with darker veins radiating from white signal was an example. He said this is extra early and blooms almost continuously for 45 days in Maine when it is established. Next he showed a score of seedlings from FORETELL, Bill McGarvey's famous yellow hybrid from crossing a 28-chr. and a 40-chr. Siberian. His own yellow amoena, BUTTER AND SUGAR--a cross of two earlier yellows, DREAMING YELLOW which fades to white, and FLOATING ISLAND, which was the only yellow from a batch of CAMBRIDGE children the rest of which were blues and whites.

Next came some tetraploid developments. ORVILLE FAY, Morgan Award winner in 1976, was Currier's first tetraploid Siberian introduction. This is a medium blue with fine branching. His newest tetraploid introduction is VIOLET JOY, a sib of DEAR DIANNE which is a rich and dank blue-violet with no blaze. Then came a slide of SILVER EDGE, Morgan Award winner in 1978 which is a large medium blue completely circled with a fine line of silver. This is intensified in DEAR DIANNE, which Currier considers to be his finest Siberian to date.

In tetraploid rebloomers, he has just introduced BLUE ENCORE, a ruffled medium blue-violet with pleasing yellow and white signals. He thinks his nicest red tetraploid to date is RED MAID, a dark red third-generation tet with the velvety texture of POLLY DODGE and the size and form of his earlier red tet EWEN. In tetraploid whites he showed FOURFOLD WHITE and commented on its propeller shape. As diploid Siberians are converted to tetraploids, the heavier substance and more flaring form tend to leave gaps between the falls. SNOW BOUNTY is an improvement but further work needs to be done to overcome this problem.

Harry Kuesel then filled in for Bill McGarvey who was delayed in Philadelphia by unexpected dental problems. He showed slides of Bill's pink introductions which were derived from the red ROYAL ENSIGN. First we had ROANOKE'S CHOICE, made popular by its performance as a seedling at the 1974 Convention in Roanoke. Next came PINK HAZE, which was well liked at Michigan and Huntsville, and finally the wonderfully ruffled and flaring AUGURY which is the latest winner of the Morgan Award and the new Ira Wood Medal.

3. The First Awarding of the Ira Wood Medals, AIS Awards Banquet--

Harry Kuesel

At the AIS Awards Banquet at Tulsa, Dave Silverberg described the new medal which is being sponsored by Region 19 (New Jersey) and Betty Wood. It is a rather heavy bronze medal, finished in a golden tone, about 3" in diameter. The obverse has a Siberian iris in low relief, with the words "Ira Wood Medal" in capital letters at the top, and at the lower rim "For Siberian Irises"--both in an attractive type style. The reverse, inside a narrow rim, reads "Presented to the Winner of the Morgan Award" below which is incised the surname of the originator, the name of the winning variety and the year in which the Morgan Award was won. It is a handsome piece, of which the Society can be proud; the winners surely will be!

Betty Wood said the medal, which is a wonderful memorial to her late husband, would be presented to all living winners of the Morgan Award this year, after which, beginning with the 1979 Award, one will be given each time a Morgan Award is won. This year it was presented to Sid DuBose for VI LUIHN, Peg Edwards for VELVET NIGHT, Ben Hager for SWANK, Forrest McCord for GRAND JUNCTION and HALCYON SEAS, Currier McEwen for ORVILLE FAY and SILVER EDGE, William McGarvey for EGO, SUPER EGO, and DEWFUL, and Steve Varner for TEALWOOD. This year, Prof. McGarvey won another for AUGURY, the 1979 Morgan Award winner. Harry Kuesel accepted the award for Peg Edwards, and Bee Warburton for Bill McGarvey, neither of whom was able to be present for the ceremony.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT PICTURES THAT WILL REPRODUCE WELL IN TSI:

Peg Edwards

If you will look through recent issues which have illustrations you might notice that they are mostly quite "contrasty"; not quite black and white, but with relatively little of the range of shades from deep dark grey to almost white that can be so effective in a snapshot. In the snapshot your eye can pick out of the object of interest in the face of the competition (if you can't, it's a bum snap!) but the offset camera, producing a picture of a picture, or a second-hand rose (iris) misses the finer nuances. We've had to send back quite a few attractive pictures because they simply would not come out well. We have actually used a few that were borderline cases, and perhaps a brief look at the group on pp. 15, 16, and 17 in the issue for Spring 1979 (Vol. 4, #9) can exemplify what I mean. The picture of SUPER EGO on p. 15, while it has plenty of contrast, gives almost the effect of being a photograph of a white iris with one colored petal. Yet you

can detect a tinge of coloration on the right-hand lower fall, and even a suggestion of it in the top fall. The picture above it, of SALLY KERLIN, appears to be an all-white iris, yet is actually a light blue, except for the dark center. But the snapshots from which these were reproduced did suggest that neither was white. The faint coloring, the paler tints of grey, just did not come through. DREAMING spires, on the next page, looks paler than the original picture. It is difficult to tell from the reproduction that it is a bitone, though the original showed this fairly well. This seems to be because the "color" of the foreground, the center of interest, is drained somewhat by the contrasting dark background. I suspect that if any of these had been shot against a pure white, sunlit background the suggestion of color might have shown up more clearly. So there can be too much contrast.

A safe general rule is to place white flowers against a medium background, dark colors the same, and the lighter middle range against black, the darker middle range against white. In full sun any pale color will do but must really be pale, not just a pretty pastel. I have used for some years a stiff piece of cardboard painted a very light cream on one side, and a charcoal grey on the other--flat paint, of course--which fits into a pair of old-fashioned straight clothespins that I whittled into a rough point; the points are pushed into the ground and the cardboard holds quite well for long enough to get the picture, and can then be moved to the next shot. I swiped it from a carton in which a neighbor's new bookcase was delivered. I'm afraid though that it is getting a bit too frowzy to use much longer! I don't take black-and-white pictures because I'm always being led astray as to the amount of contrast I have in the picture and the results have been disastrous; but the background serves nicely for me when I want to eliminate a confusing background in pictures taken in the garden. When using such a device it is a good idea to set the backpiece in such a way, and take the picture from such an angle, that the sun doesn't cast a shadow on the back where it can confuse the picture. This, after all, is what you are trying to avoid. The flower will be more or less side-lit and usually this makes for a more interesting composition--and also clarifies and emphasizes the form much better than having the light straight onto the flower from over your shoulder.

The backpiece can be placed quite close behind the flower without damage to the total plant if you slide it in carefully--at least, not with Siberian irises. I admit I've run into trouble in getting a portrait of a rose (I wound up scratched and the bush suffered the loss of a few leaves) and generally it is not such a good device when you want pictures of shrubby or woody plants; but most of the time it works well with perennials. If bid enough, it is great for most irises. Some photographers make backgrounds from fabric stretched

over a strong wire frame, or fastened between two stakes. The latter particularly can be useful as it can be rolled up for easier carrying (mine is awkward on a breezy day), but you really need two of them, one dark and one light. If the light one is made of thin enough fabric, that placed before the dark one can produce a fairly good medium tone, e.g., white chiffon or marquisette over black velvet or felt.

As to the composition, in pictures of a single flower you should get close enough so that the flower takes up between three-fifths and two-thirds of the area. If you get closer you may cut off an edge of a petal; if it is taken from further back it will probably be too small to show much detail. A look through the viewfinder can tell you how much of the frame the flower occupies; unfortunately it won't tell you how much detail will turn out in the finished picture. Experience is some help here, though. A trick I've heard of but haven't tried, is to get the view slightly out of focus and see how much comes through--if detail is still sufficient you refocus and snap.

Pictures of clumps are considerably easier to take. Of course you will not get the fine detail of the individual flower, but it is the only way to illustrate the floriferousness of the fine branching of a particular cultivar. Generally, this type of picture is best taken with the camera held so as to make a snap taller than wide, whereas the portrait usually looks better taken crosswise. But do get as close to the clump as you can without cutting off too much of it. Leave some space above the flowers; if you bring them right to the top it has a sort of "wallpaper" look! Groups of people call for much the same treatment--get in quite close; use a vertical frame for one or two, a horizontal frame for five or six or more. Don't try to take a snap of a busload of conventioners--there won't be a face in the whole bunch that is recognizable by the time it is printed in TSI. Side-light them; people with the sun in their eyes invariably squint. But don't put them in the shade either, or you will have a fine collection of white blobs where the faces should be.

The ideal lighting for black-and-white pictures is a day of thin clouds with perhaps a hint that the sun will come through in a few minutes. There will be shadows, but they will not be too strong. However, you can't wait for this sort of lighting--get the picture when the flowers, or the people, are available. We can use it!

Color prints can of course be reproduced in black and white; but it is not easy to judge just how effective the result will be. In full color you can see plainly the difference between a light blue and a slightly darker green, but when the color is replaced by shades of grey they may seem identical--not even a faint line of separation. This is why we don't ask for color prints.

BACK TALK

Would anyone mind if I crab a little about the weather?--or would you all rush to yell AMEN? Everyone I have heard from this year has had some sort of complaint about too much rain, or not enough; too much heat, or not enough; or rain and heat coming at exactly the wrong time. Or not coming when needed.

People in the dairy belt of New York moaned because the cold but very open winter killed off large areas of the perennial grasses their cows grazed on. Apple growers have been complaining lately that the hot weather has delayed the reddening of their apples. We've all heard from the wheat, corn and cattle areas about the prolonged drought and what it did to their crops (and what it will do to the prices we will pay this winter for our food). The Mt. St. Helen's ash-falls can't be blamed on the weather, but they do add to the chorus of mourning.

My own complaints are as follows: we had an open and wet winter --only one snowfall deep enough to require the snowblower to clear the walks. The cold wasn't too severe, but every time it looked like snow coming, it warmed up just enough to rain instead. A lot of insect pests that normally would be decimated by the cold and snow managed to survive, and we had insect woes to add to the general weather troubles. Spring was wet and chilly--as a result I was even more behindhand than usual in the garden work (can't go kneeling on the wet cold ground to pull out the weeds and winter mulch, my knees get all arthriticky). In July it got hot and hotter, and even more so. About the only time I would work outside was after dinner, when there were shadows sufficient to protect me from the sun. (I'm a helophobe!) And by the beginning of August the word drought was being mentioned openly. We did get about 8" of rain that month, but 6" of it came in one three-hour rainstorm and the soil couldn't absorb it all, so most of the water went down the drains. We finally had a rainfall of about 1" the night of September 23, but the drought still isn't really broken. And it is no use talking about running the sprinkler. It is better than nothing, but it just doesn't do as much good as a few nice thunderstorms. Nitrogen, you know.

But I could stand all this--weather is something you really can't do much about. You just have to live through it. What gripes me is that almost every day, the weather boys--radio, TV, daily peper--told us that "showers are expected during the evening" or "6 to 8 inches of snow are expected"--which, of course, would add up to a half inch, immediately turning to rain.

I would like to propose a new law: that whenever the weather people promise us snow in an open winter, or sunshine in wet cloudy weather, or nice thunderstorms in a drought, and we don't get it, we be allowed to deduct 1% from our income taxes, up to a maximum, say, of 40%. It wouldn't improve the weather but it might make the weather folks be a little more careful about raising our hopes and expectations. It would be better if they would tell us there isn't any rain or sunshine, or snow--in sight. That way, if it did come, we might get a pleasant surprise. Anyone want to join me in this crusade?

Having vented my spleen, let's get to other matters. As you read through this issue, did you notice how many colors, patterns and habits of growth are being developed among the Siberians these days? The red get redder, the blues bluer, the stalks branchier (is there such a word? well, there is now!) and all sorts of decorations are being added--edges, dappling, decorative veinings and bicolored blazes. One of these days someone may turn up a really plicata-ish pattern, and with yellow 28-chr. varieties improving, we may even have some variegatas before too long. Ain't nature wonderful, when Man gives it a nudge? Only I do hope that someone will keep on producing some nice old-fashioned siberians with modestly-sized flowers, maybe as many as three blooms to the stalk but jillions of stalks to the clump; just with clearer, purer colors than the old ones had. This year, as usual, the bloomingest clump in my garden was SUMMER SKY; next best was ROYAL HERALD. AMELIA EARHART did pretty well, too. Considering what the weather was (there's that awful subject again!) they all did better than I expected, but it was the vigorous old varieties that were the hits of the show. Oh, well, that's probably why they have stayed in commerce so long.

Again this year I had no success with making crosses. (Weather?) Regretfully I've come to the conclusion that I just can't provide the conditions that are needed for successful hybridizing of Siberians--I have better results with the smaller Median beardededs--because I have too much shade that I can't do anything about--it comes from neighbor's trees and soil too sandy to suit the young plants, and I just can't go on plowing fertilizer and humus into it year after year. Not when it all gets crowded down into the water table by the rising sand and gravel. Except, well, maybe...should I try selfing SUMMER SKY next year? Might be interesting.

Isn't it nice that this year, when we are ending our second decade as a Society and starting our third, we have instituted two new awards--the Ira Wood medal and the Distinguished Service Award? There has been discussion for several years now about having some sort of medal, but the talk always seemed to "peter out" until this time.

Even back when I was president there was talk about a certificate (we had a bank account of slightly over zilch then) but nobody seemed to be able to propose a suitable design. I'm delighted that Betty Wood and Region 19 have provided us with a really beautiful medal and that the Board has decided to award a certificate for distinguished service, though the certificate itself is still to come. I'm sure the Board would love it if anyone who has an idea about how it should look were to write them about it. I'm very proud to be the first one to receive the SDA. Blushing to my ears!

But in truth, anyone who receives either of these awards will owe thanks to many other people whose efforts have made the winning possible. Every hybridizer builds on the work of those who went before. Bill McGarvey would be the first to say that his pinks might never have come to bloom without Tom Hall's ROYAL ENSIGN; Currier McEwen built his tetraploids on the work of experimenters in the breeding of hemerocallis and other plants; Fred Cassebeer owed WHITE SWIRL, VIOLET FLARE, and his other fine Siberians, largely to the industry of the bees and to the many people who bred the plants in his garden. This takes nothing away from the winners; they saw the possibility in some variety and worked to improve it, they used their judgment to select the best seedlings. As for our new award, I know how much I owe to the many people who indicted and even nagged me into the line of action that resulted in our society, and supported my elbows along the way. And of course, editing this publication would be impossible if some of you readers didn't send me the occasional article, and I certainly would have resigned from the task long ago if it weren't for the members who have written me to say, "I liked this issue," or "keep it coming." And I know every winner of the Award will feel and think the same thing.

Which reminds me. How about an article from you? Or some pictures of people and flowers you have seen? It would be a lovely Christmas present for me if I were to get three or four things--even short ones, from people who have never written for us before, along with a few from faithful reporters. And I wouldn't mind at all if they were a little late for the holidays! Check the front page for deadlines.

Now can I wish you all a happy holiday season? And a wonderful year in 1981--with absolutely perfect weather, of course--sun as it is needed, wet at just the right times, a good snow mulch in northern climes and just the right temperatures all the year long.

Reg-

PUBLISHED BY:
THE SOCIETY FOR SIBERIAN IRISES
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