

SS & J library July 88

NEWSLETTER



OF THE
SIBERIAN SPURIA AND JAPANESE
GROUP
B.I.S.

The Objects of the Group.

1. Communication between Members in Great Britain and Overseas.
2. A means of exchanging ideas, plants and seeds etc.
3. To assist beginners in growing Irises and to help with problems.
4. To report on Hybridisation.

The Group's Officers.

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Mr. Jack Venner is also our Show Reporter.

We value the assistance given by our Regional Representatives, sending in Reports of Shows in their area, also any interesting questions they have had from Members in their area. We hope our Specialist will continue to give our Members the benefit of their experience. Thank you all.

Very pleased to tell you that due to your splendid response in sending in Plants and seeds we are able to keep the Subscription at:-

£1 for 1988/1989.

Newsletters are published in February and July, remember this is your Newsletter, so write in if you have a query, comment or just to say your Irises are growing well, we will do our best to help in any way.

EDITORIAL.The Iris.

The rainbow in the sky
Is a promise from the Lord
That the world no more will die
From waters of a flood.

Then He took the colors
In that self same bow
And put them in the Iris
To cheer us here below.

Iris, Iris growing tall,
You are the fairest flower of all.

Tall and strong and bearded
Short and dainty too,
So many different species
Of every rainbow hue.

Grow them in a garden
And know the joy they bring
Its the reason Iris lovers
Wait for every yearly spring.

Iris, Iris growing tall
You are the fairest flower of all.

Look up and see the rainbow
Put there by His powers
Then thank the Lord in heaven
For the beauty of these flowers.

Betty Worroll December 1987.

I found this beautiful poem in the Newscast A.I.S. Region Four, kindly sent to me by our Member Clarence Mahan of McLean Virginia U.S.A. who is the Editor, and gave me permission to use it. Betty Worroll is the President of the Williamsburg Iris Society, whose 'Rhizome Review' is edited by Anne Lowe. We send thanks to you all.

The late Summer Show at the R.H.S. Hall Westminster really was late this year, but I marvelled at the display Irisarians managed to put on. Siberians and Japanese Irises being well in evidence, with one or two Spurias as well. Walking into the Hall, I felt it was a pity that the huge Delphiniums nearby, although beautiful, in their own right, tended to overpower our slender Irises, they won the day though, by sheer variety of colour and elegance. Congratulations to you all.

It would be difficult to call it an Annual General Meeting, or even a 'Get Together' no opening, no closing and no area in which to read the minutes etc.,. Quite a few Members congregated however, my own late appearance (15 mins.) was due to the fact that we were unable to park close by this year, so I had to track down and back along three streets, as fast as my old legs would let me. I found it rather touching that so many had remembered to come and apologise for the delay, the account published in the July 1987 Newsletter is a summary of the Minutes. Here is a summary of what turned out to be more of a 'seminar' during the afternoon. Most of you came up to the Publication Stand and several discussions took place between Jack Venner (Chairman), Hilda Goodwin (Vice - Chairman), Anne Blanco White (Japanese Specialist), Ian Smith (Reg. Rep. South), Peter Maynard (Secty. B.I.S.) and anyone else who happened to be nearby.....

The consensus of opinion was:- that it was time to hear more about 'how to grow' these lovely new cultivars, I do not know what kind of telepathy is at work, because the same kind of ideas are abroad in the U.S.A. as you will see by the extracts in the Newsletter. Judy Hollingworth the Editor of the 'Siberian' started the ball rolling and has gathered Regional Comments from her Members. We hope to print most of them over a period covering the next few Newsletters.

Where can we buy them? Well! the British Iris Society has a very good Plant Scheme for B.I.S. Members. Over the past 10-12 weeks we have been selling plants and seeds sent in by Members. Sorry! we are sold out of last years' stock, but we do have some new seedlings if you look at the end of the N/L. We are also trying to attract more Nurserymen and women to stock them, progress is being made.

During the afternoon, I found myself explaining how to make a waterfall and bog-ponds to accomodate moisture-loving Irises, not too easy without diagrams and pictures. Anne Blanco White had told me years ago how 'Gerald Darby' likes a 'ditch', and now confirmed again, to this I would add that 'Holden Clough' likes the same conditions. Mine has flowered from early May until now -- Wonderful. I wonder if a leaflet would prove helpful -- let me know.

A Member wishes to thank Jennifer Hewitt for her excellent article, I think this is the first list we have had of some of the New Cultivars and others growing in this country. We have the Spuria List for the U.S.A. maybe we will see one for Gt, Britain soon, and what about the Japanese??

Hugh Humphrey told me that most of his Irises will be moved by the end of the year, but happily they will be with his daughter... If I know anything the guiding(cont)

hand will still be there!

So we faced the traffic jams again (Test Match and Wimbledon I suppose!) and came home safely, thanks to David, how he manages to get through it all, I'll never know --- but then he is young.

We welcome 6 New Members, Mrs. Mary Ramsdale from Gt. Hollingsbury, Bishop's Stortford, who is a friend of Trevor Nottle (Australia). Mr. Brian Castledine of Bilborough, Nottingham, who is going to include Irises in his new planting scheme. Mr. Richard Yates, an Alpine Nurseryman, who lives at Rothley and has a delightful, small Alpine Nursery in the walled garden at Rocliffe Manor, near Woodhouse Eaves, Loughboro'. Derry's Nurseries, Cossington, Leicester, a family business, with many unusual plants & shrubs, Irene and her husband, together with their sons, have built this up in the last eight years, and it is fast becoming a popular rendezvous. Mr. John Antippa lives in West Bridgford, Nottingham and wants to grow more Irises in his garden. Finally Mrs Shirley Ryder from 'Toads Hole Cottage', ~~Cottage~~, Old Rd. Feering, Colchester, Essex. (I just had to print Shirley's delightful address, I expect Ratty and Badger live round the corner!). Shirley 'found us' at the Show, and is interested in growing Water Irises. Do't hesitate to write in and tell us about your gardens and the Irises you grow, we like to hear from you.

Congratulations to all recipients of awards, you will find details under the different headings -- well done!

What a year this is proving to be, after my despairing cry in February, more and more of our Irises are being grown, carry on with the good work...

Joan Trevithick.

Chairman's Letter.

Dear Fellow Members. Looking through reports in previous Newsletters, I notice that each year since 1983, Iris seasons have been described as unusual; strange; erratic; extraordinary etc. This year has proved to be no exception, the trend is the same. Most areas seem to have had excessive rainfall during Spring, leading to a cool June with low night temperatures and even occasional frosts in some gardens. One wonders sometimes what a 'normal season', if there is such a thing, would be like. However, I am sure that Members will consider the 1988 season has, in some respects favoured beardless Irises. Flowers have lasted longer and foliage has been lush, at least for most of us.

Reports coming in show that many new Irises are being bred, so we can anticipate exciting times ahead. The S.S & J. is thriving - Membership is growing. Sales of plants and seeds have been excellent.

As I write the Spurias are in bloom. Some of the newer ones are really good, but the main improvement required is still higher 'bud count'.

Do't forget to let the Hon. Secty. know of any good forms which arise in your various Iris seedlings. Best Wishes to you all.

Jack Venner.

My Irises.

by Coen Jansen of Dalftsen Holland.

About 3 years ago I started a small nursery, devoted to unusual herbaceous perennials, including Irises, of course, in those early days only species, like I. Graminea, I. Ochroleuca (now Orientalis) which sadly refuses to flower and I. Lutescens, collected in Italy. I did not know anything about the abundance of I. Sibirica hybrids, apart from 'Perry's Blue' and a few old German ones, not very impressive really. Things changed when I met Jennifer Hewitt, to whom I owe very much; she showed me her Sibirica hybrids, and she gave me a generous number of plants to start with: 'Harpswell Haze', 'White Swirl', 'Ellesmere' and later very good new ones like 'Hubbard' (it does not flower well, but it has marvellous color), and 'Ruffled Velvet'. My latest acquisitions are 'Circle Round' and Dr. Tamberg's new tetra Calsibs. My customers favourite plants this year are 'Dear Delight', 'Shirley Pope', 'Dear Dianne' and my favourite 'Butter and Sugar'. All Sibiricas are grown on a rather dry sandy soil, enriched with a lot of old mushroom compost, and a lot of additional watering in the Spring. Altogether I grow some 50 different Sibiricas.

In September 1986, my first Spuria hybrids came from Belgium, a group completely unknown to me. Mr. Verswyvee, a Member of the B.I.S. gave me some rhizomes of Spurias, they would not grow for him on his very light sandy soil. The 86/87 winter killed some, those remaining made lots of foliage, but no flowers, quite usual for Spurias, I was.

(cont.)

told. Everybody needs some luck. The owner of a well-known Dutch seed firm saw my Nursery and my Irises, and he decided to 'loan' me a large number of Spurias, to try them in our climate to see if they would be suitable for cutting and if they would grow anyway. So it was a pleasant surprise to receive a large parcel from California last September containing about 60 different Spurias and also some 60 different Louisiana hybrids. It took me two days to unpack and inspect them, but they grew away after planting and, thanks to the very mild Winter, about 35 are flowering in the most fantastic colors. After the first excitement, the time has come to be a bit more critical: I can't like the very colorful yellow and blue ones like 'Pink Candles' and 'Blue Bunting', I'm fond of the brownish-yellow 'Sahara Sands', orange-yellow 'Headway', yellow 'Golden Lady', purple 'Vintage Year' and the very strange 'Highline Coral'.

(Thank you Coen for your interesting account, I share your frustration with non-flowering Spurias. Ed.)

In Memory.

On November 8th 1987 a longtime friend and supporter of our Group William, E. Ouweneel, Bill as we knew him, died at the age of 90. He was Editor of the Review of Society for Japanese Irises for 18 years, until Leland took over in 1983/84. Apart from his beloved Japanese Irises, Bill's interests included wild flowers, which he grew in a ravine at the side of his house. His account of the Japanese Irises growing in his pond at Terre Haute Indiana, published in our Feb. 1984 Newsletter was so vivid, it really came to life. We send our sincere sympathy to his family and friends, and thank his son Richard for writing to tell us of the passing of a fine Irisarian. He will be missed.

Our friends in the Spuria Iris Society are mourning the death of Ila Crawford, who has been a driving force in their Society for many years. We send them sincere condolences in their sad loss.

Siberian and Japanese Iris Update

by Currier McEwen.

Our season is late. As I write this letter on June 12th, only 16 out of about 1,000 Siberians have opened buds, starting with 'Lavender Light' on June 4th. and then 'Lavender Bounty' and diploid and tetraploid children of those two; so right now most of the bloom is in the lavender line.

Thanks for asking about the Japanese Iris book. A second draft (containing corrections and additions, suggested by our twelve member 'committee' after reading the first draft) is finished. Final decisions about the book will be made, I hope, at a meeting of the group to be held during the three days we shall be together for the J.I. Convention in Kalamazoo, Michigan, July 1 - 3rd. It was discussed at our J.I. Board Meeting during the A.I.S. Convention in Oklahoma City a few weeks ago. The Louisiana Iris Group have just put out a book on their special Iris. It is a fine, hard-covered book and we are now looking into the question of cost of a similar sort of job for the J.I. book. A problem with the one I did on Siberian Irises is that the soft cover tears and comes loose with use. If we do it with a hard cover it surely will cost more but, I hope, not too much more. I trust we shall have a possible, tentative publication date after our meeting in Kalamazoo.

I finished planting out the Japanese Iris seedlings from their flats today and start on the Siberians tomorrow. With the Siberian bloom about to peak, it is going to be hard to plant seedlings when mature plants are crying to be crossed! Of the J.I. seedlings just planted some 200 are tetraploids; the most I have had of them to date. They should put on a good show at our J.I. Convention to be in Maine in 1990. I would so like to see some of our English friends here for that event!

All best wishes for a great Siberian, Spuria and Japanese season in Great Britain.

(Thank you Currier, we too wish you a successful season, and look forward to the publication of your new book on Japanese Irises.

Currier's book 'Siberian Irises' can be obtained, personally signed by writing to:-

Dr. Currier McEwen M.D. SOUTH HARPSWELL . MAINE. 04079 U.S.A.

Price 7 dollars (including Postage and Handling.)

Judy Hollingworth the Editor of the Siberian Iris, together with John Coble has been running a 'Grower's Robin', the results of which were printed in their Spring 1988 issue. We start now with some of the results, to answer your request for more information on culture of these beautiful Irises. Many thanks to Judy for allowing us to reprint.

Culture.

After some discussion it was decided to print a simplified culture sheet which beginners will find useful, and that local Iris societies can copy and make available at their Shows and Auctions. Hence the reason for the last three paragraphs, which are, of course unnecessary for S.S.I. Members.

Here is the Culture Sheet, put together by John Coble, which is applicable, in certain particulars to his garden in Zone 5, but covers a good deal of general cultural information:-

Siberian Iris Culture.

Siberian Irises are among the easiest of all types of iris to raise and bloom in the temperate climatic zones. Their graceful stems, blooms, foliage and neat habit of growth make them the most adaptable irises for the perennial border and for landscaping. Their handsome foliage is attractive all year, even after the first frost, when it turns rusty red-brown.

HISTORY:- Our garden varieties of Siberian irises come to us through hybridizers, from two species I.siberica and I.sanguinea which are primarily found in Central Europe and Asia. There they evolved in the rich soils of grassy meadows; very moist in spring, from flooding streams and mountain snow melts; moistened by summer rain on a deep prairie-type soil, and provided with a natural mulch of old foliage and dead grasses, which kept them from drying out.

Soil: Your Siberian irises will perform best for you if you can provide a rich soil, with some composted organic matter if necessary, that will retain some moisture during dry periods, and will also help you attain the mildly acid pH of 6.5 to 7.0, which they prefer. Most garden soils though are satisfactory 'as is', for good Siberian performance.

Fertilizer: This depends on your own soil type and its natural fertility. The plants will respond better with an early spring application of a fertilizer higher in Nitrogen, followed by an additional feeding of a balanced fertilizer just at the end of the bloom season. This is when they are maturing new increase fans and rhizomes.

Sun and Moisture: Siberian irises are very adaptable and hardy plants. they like lots of moisture in the spring, and can survive dry periods in the late summer months, but will be healthier plants and develop into specimen clumps faster if kept moist all summer. Try to plant them with other perennials that you normally irrigate during dry periods in July and August. They love full sun (especially in the northern states), but will grow in light high shade.

Mulch: A mulch of organic matter will benefit the plants in summer by conserving soil moisture and keeping the soil cooler. The mulch is also beneficial in keeping down most weeds: Siberians are very hardy, but a mulch applied after the ground is frozen, helps prevent the heaving and thawing which is responsible for the loss of many perennials over winter.

Pests: Siberians are more resistant to disease than most garden irises. They are, however not immune to the iris borer. If this is a pest in your area, a systemic insecticide spray is necessary for control. The applications of Cygon 2E or Orthene are recommended in the spring, the first, after the first few days of 70 degrees F., when the new fans are 3-4" tall, and the second spray when the fans are 6-8" tall.

Transplanting and Dividing: Opinions differ on this subject and your local climate and gardening practices will influence your preferred time for transplanting, as well as other cultural suggestions made here. A recommended time for digging and dividing older ~~clumps~~ clumps is right after bloom. At this time new root growth is still active. However, keeping transplants moist for the following 6-8 weeks is most important for successful establishment, and hot dry weather may decrease survival; so this approach may work best in the cooler, wetter parts of the country. If watering is not possible at this time, you may prefer early September transplanting when fall rains are somewhat more predictable and the sun's rays less intense. Others have found that early spring transplanting, as new growth is evident, can also be effective. The late spring transplants, if properly cared for will produce more vigorous plants for the next year. Two to four fan divisions are recommended for transplanting, and the roots must be kept moist whilst the plants are out of the ground. Plant the rhizomes one inch deep (slightly deeper in sandy soils). Siberian clumps can grow undisturbed for several years, dividing being necessary (cont.)

when either the clumps become crowded, or when vigor declines and blooms get smaller.

Siberian Irises normally bloom at the end of the Tall Bearded season, 24-34" tall, with foliage that continues to grow after bloom until 36-40" tall. Some varieties are available that bloom around 10-12" tall with neat foliage clumps around 14-16" tall by summer. Hybridizers have produced a palette of colors from purples and blues to white, pink-lavenders and creamy yellows. Bitones and special color patterns of sharp contrast offer great diversity when choosing Siberian irises for special plantings and landscaping. Some varieties have silvery-blue foliage, some a fresh green, that is most attractive all summer in perennial borders.

Members of your local Iris society can answer many of your questions and suggest sources for Siberian Irises.

Regional Comments.

from Clarence Mahan, McLean, Virginia.

With regards to the history of Siberian irises, Brian Mathew out in his excellent book 'The Iris' (Batsford, London, 1981.) the Sibiricae are all Asiatic plants. Although the range of I. siberica extends from Central Europe to Central Asia, I. sanguinea is native only to Asia. The range of the latter species extends from Lake Baikal in the western U.S.S.R. to Manchuria, Korea and Japan. In fact, some of the earliest forms of I. sanguinea introduced into America and European gardens, and subsequently used in hybridizing garden varieties were clones collected in Japan. One of the earliest and loveliest of such irises is one many of us still grow, 'Snow Queen', which was collected in Japan and introduced to commerce by Peter Barr in 1900.

FERTILIZATION: The recommendation that Siberian irises be given early spring application of a high nitrogen fertilizer came as a surprise to me. I have not heard of this practice before and would be wary of it. I have sprayed Siberian irises in spring with liquid 20-20-20 fertilizer in dilute form, and they respond very well; but it would be my suspicion that more than very light applications of high nitrogen fertilizer would stimulate vegetative growth at the expense of bloom. Recommending high nitrogen fertilizer to beginners would thus cause me some concern.

Pests. My garden in Virginia is certainly exposed to the infamous iris borer. Growing over a thousand different cultivars, the 'ol borer has my address. Even when I am diligent and put on three applications of Cygon 2E in the spring, a few bores will be found when summer comes around. But I have never found borers or borer damage on a Siberian iris. Even more than the bearded irises, the borer likes Spurias and Louisianas. It has attacked I. pseudacorus in the pond, the Japanese irises, and just about every other type of iris: I point this out because to me it is one of the great assets of Siberian irises.

TRANSPLANTING AND DIVIDING: This portion of the article causes me more than a small amount of concern. Whereas it does not contain any information that is not true, I really think it could lead to beginners having problems. I will not give or sell Siberian irises before September to people who are not experienced growers. Recommending that digging and dividing be done right after bloom will I fear, be disastrous in many instances. In this southern Mid-Atlantic area, transplanting at any time in the spring and summer requires shading and massive watering to be successful. I strongly recommend that the article emphasizes early fall planting as the preferred practice, and suggest transplanting at other times be tried by only those who are experienced Siberian growers.

Regional Comments

from Shirley Pope, Gorham, Maine.

I think the article is very well written. My only comments would be these: I use a lot of peat moss in the soil and a handful of moist peat in the hole when I plant. Where my soil is sandy I use Miracid foliage feedings several times during the growing season; twice in the spring, just before bloom, just after bloom and again in early September. My frequent waterings would wash away any regular feeding. Pine needle mulch left on all the year round, not only protects the plants during our sometimes open (no snow) winters, but also controls weeds and retains moisture.

A few light sprinkles of cornmeal for cutworms and wood ashes for slugs seems to work well. We seem to have more than one family of borers, so we carefully spray more frequently with a systemic to control them, and also spider mites.

(lots more, from Nebraska, Alabama, Colorado and our old friend Ben Hager of Stockton California in the next Newsletters. Very interesting indeed, thanks Judy!)

While spurias are generally quite free of disease they are susceptible to crown rot, caused by mustard-seed fungus, especially in the southern and western states and where a combination of hot weather and moisture are present. The best protection against mustard-seed fungus is to soak all rhizomes before planting, regardless of source, in a 5 to 10% solution of sodium hypochlorite (Clorox, etc.) and to treat the soil with Terraclor (Benamyl, PCNB). Terraclor is available as a liquid in drums, but for small gardens the 7% wettable powder may be more economical. A light dusting over the planting area, well dug in, should prove adequate, although a further safeguard, used by some growers, is to dust the rhizome itself as well. Benlate is also used by some growers to protect against some other soil-borne fungus. Incidentally, crown rot also attacks T.B's, Japanese and Siberians, so it is best not to let it get started in your beds.

In selecting cultivars for your area probably the most reliable source of information would be other growers in the same area. Lacking such advice, your best bet may be to select those cultivars which have received high ratings in the A.I.S. awards lists. The Eric Nies Award is based on votes of A.I.S. judges from many parts of the world, indicating that a particular variety does well under many conditions. Some of the earlier Nies Award winners may be difficult or impossible to find, but the following should be available from the usual commercial sources:

- 'Golden Lady', a large lemon-yellow self (Nies 1958).
- 'Elixir', a compact orange-yellow (Nies 1963).
- 'Dawn Candle', stds. cream, falls light yellow (Nies 1968).
- 'Baritone', a large brown (Nies 1970).
- 'Highline Lavender', stds. lavender, falls yellow striped lavender (Nies 1971).
- 'Port of Call', mid-violet-blue (Nies 1972).
- 'Archie Owam', ruffled bright yellow self (Nies 1973).
- 'Marilyn Holloway', stds. pale lavender, falls yellow edge-stripped pale lavender, (Nies 1974).
- 'Imperial Bronze', golden yellow veined brown Nies 1975).
- 'Forty Carats', deep yellow self (Nies 1976).
- 'Proverb', deep blue-violet self (Nies 1977).
- 'Clarke Cosgrove', lavender-blue self (Nies 1978).
- 'Ila Crawford', ruffled white self Nies 1979).
- 'Buttered Chocolate', dark brown, yellow markings (Nies 1980).
- 'Imperial Ruby', violet-red self (Nies 1981).
- 'Fergy's Poetry', red-violet bitone (Nies 1982).
- 'Highline Honey', honey yellow with brown markings (Nies 1983).
- 'Adobe Sunset', stds. brown, falls yellow veined brown (Nies 1984).
- 'Imperial Gold', ruffled bright yellow self (Nies 1985).
- 'Betty Cooper', light violet with gold and brown markings (Nies 1986).
- 'Son of Sun', bright yellow self (Nies 1987).

Any listing of sources of spurias would be outdated in a few years, so it is suggested that you check with A.I.S. Bulletins.

The 1985 edition of the Spuria Checklist is available by sending to the following:-

THE SPURIA IRISES, INTRODUCTION AND VARIETAL LISTING,

Floyd W. Wickenkamp, Sec/Treas.

10521 Bellarose Drive,

SUN CITY, AZ. 85351 U.S.A.

By Airmail Europe 7dollars 75.

do Australia & New Zealand

8 dollars 50.

Thank you Floyd for sending this very useful leaflet, and allowing us to use it. We have a copy of the Varietal List in the Library, which you can borrow, by writing to Jennifer Hewitt, address under 'Group Library', don't forget postage.

Latest News from Sun City.

by Floyd Wickenkamp.

April 1988. We are in the middle of the spuria bloom season, and I have been busy making crosses. Do'nt know how many of them will take, but we shall see.. 'Son of SUN' made its usual big display, with more than a dozen lovely stalks on one clump. However, we had a spell of hot weather which was hard on the dark ones, as they started wilting within a day of opening. Today its down in the 50's and has been raining off and on for the past two days. When it finally clears up there should be some good blossoms to (cont.)

photograph. We are trying to get a wide variety of the newer introductions and seedlings on slides for the Annual Meeting of the Spuria Iris Society on May 4th.

Regarding the weather here, it does get hot in the summer and during July and August, it seldom goes below 80 degrees. Summer showers are not uncommon, but usually there is not much rainfall. However, occasionally there is a cloudburst and then we get flooding in the lower areas - not in Sun City, as we are well above the flood plains. During the summer I do my yard work in the early morning, maybe from 6--10 and then hibernate for the rest of the day inside, where the air conditioning keeps the temp. down to 80 deg.

Winters are quite a contrast with frost at times, but it seldom gets below 28 or 30 deg. here in Sun City, and it usually warms up to the sixties in the daytime even in Jan. and Feb. Most of our rainfall is from Dec. to Feb., with an average total for the year of around 7 or 8 inches. However, some years we get as much as 15 or 20 inches.

The above applies only to the area around Phoenix. Tucson runs 5 to 10 deg. cooler summer and winter and areas around Flagstaff up on the high plateau seldom get as high as 80 deg. and in winter they get lots of snow and below zero temps. So you see we have just about every type of climate except the humid, foggy kind.

The Oklahoma City convention is less than two weeks away. I have most of my intros. in gardens there and hope they will be blooming. Usually these events are scheduled for peak T.B. bloom, so the spurias are too late, but we can always hope.

(Thank you Floyd, I am sure Members will be interested to hear of the weather conditions in which you grow your beautiful Spurias. I am still learning here in the Midlands, they have the most favourable warm position, they grow well, one has even flowered, but we just do not get enough sun... Congratulations to Dave Niswonger for the award of the Cook-Douglas medal for 'Little Black Belt' and Awards of Merit for 'Honey Glazed', 'Kayo' and 'Aztec Star'. Best wishes to you all. Ed.)

Spurias in California.

by Helen Grier.

In her May letter Helen also tells of hot weather with very little rain, making, as she says, very high water bills. Temperatures in the 80's and 90's played havoc with the Spuria blooms and making crosses proved very difficult. Many older ones did not flower at all. However a very nice oval, rich cream, and a lovely pale creamy pink over a lighter pink colour, flowered for the first time. Bee crosses were scarce, no bees about, the pollen seemed to be damp and the anthers would not die to release the pollen.

I. spuria 'Fairfield' (Ferguson 1967) had especially broad falls, white with a hint of blue, standards palest lavender. A rampant healthy plant, it looks beautiful in front of a Queen Elizabeth rose, facing West. It is now 3 to 3½ feet tall and has 32 bloom stalks. 'Plain Jane' (Ferguson 1975) has white standards and white bordered yellow falls. The yellow is from the enlarged signal patch. Substance is excellent, but it is a touchy grower, this is my second attempt, 2 to 2½ feet this year, 9 stalks to a clump. 'Airy Fancy' (Hager 1977) bloomed later. 'Tiger Blues' (McCown 1979) almost indigo, did very poorly, but then it was almost crowded out by 'Fairfield' and 'Bold Horizon' (Roe 1974). I am hoping to obtain some of Floyd's dark ones.

At a successful Show arranged by the Horticultural Society of Orange County, held at the Calif. State University Arboretum, I featured some violets, the seeds of which came from Cornwall 50 years ago.

I have just received a copy of Fritz Kühlein's book 'Iris', excellent, with a good analysis of species iris distribution.

Best wishes to you all.

Since receiving these letters from Floyd & Helen, we are hearing of the terrible drought that has hit the states in their area. All gardeners will sympathise with them, especially if you are 'Baling out' as we were yesterday, after all day rain and a cloudburst, we can only pray that the drought will soon break, and save the crops and plants as well. I wonder if it is because we hear World News, more or less as it happens, or are these things on the increase? I believe it is 14 years since our very, very dry summer, when we were advised to save all washing up and bath water, and gadgets were introduced to divert water from waste pipes. Moderation in all things would appear to be the best. I am sure we could spare a few million gallons. (Joan).

Notes on the Wisley Show, 11th and 12th June 1988.

By Eileen and Bob Wise.

With the previous years' experience behind us, we arranged for an extra 60 ft. of staging and so avoided the cluttered look -- or were there less flowers?

About eighteen exhibitors had agonised over their choice of blooms because it appeared that due to the early season the best of their spikes were over. According to the experts the quality was better than last year, which was praise indeed, in view of the heavy showers the flowers had had to withstand.

Jack Grint won the Romney Towndrow Trophy for the first time with a spike of 'Millrace' a pale blue T.B. with ruffled flowers held rather close to the stem, but well spaced.

Sidney Linnegar had a magnificent display on behalf of the Iris Fund for the Blind, with interesting sundries for the public to buy.

Visitors were very impressed by our Show, and Saturday brought the crowds in, however Sunday is now R.H.S. Members only, so the steady stream did not become menacing in its numbers as last year. Speaking as Membership Secretary I grieve to tell you that we only gained ten new members, instead of the 30 in 1987.

Then I handed my note-pad over to the Master (Bob Wise) and told him to walk round the show and list the irises that impressed him most, so the following is his bit:-

In the nine spike class, which Bryan Dodsworth won, 'Bewick Swan' seedling EB 86J (Pale to mid blue) and EB 86H, a pale blue with excellent branching, won the Taylor Trophy.

Harry Foster's Sibirica 2/75/222 (mid blue).

Dr. Ellis' pseudacorus x ensata cross, a large yellow bloom with strong brown haft marks, the bud count and branching on this spike were rather questionable, but a similar version of Dr. Tomas Tamberg's 'Berlin Tiger' (pseudacorus x versicolor) had everything, although the flowers were smaller.

Two excellent T.B. spokes, both from first year plants, 'Elizabeth Poldark', cream with good branching, and 'Dusky Challenger', large violet, very dark, with a well branched stem.

A Louisiana 'Cuisine', an exciting large flower - mauve.

Exceptional Sibiricas --- 'Harpwell Happiness' (white). 'Polly Dodge' (red) in one of Harry Foster's exhibits....

and most exceptional of all a Sibirica such as we've not seen before by T.Burge, Sib. T21/86... mid blue with large circular falls, and when Bob comments -- 'Outstanding', it must be just that!

(Thanks Eileen and Bob.)

B.I.S. Show Report. R.H.S. Hall June 21st. 1988.

by Jack Venner.

Owing to the late date of this show, there were only a few florets of T.B. irises exhibited. It was probably the first time at a B.I.S. Summer Show that beardless irises gained ascendancy over T.B's. Still, it must be said that spikes of T.B's in the third week of June could hardly be expected.

S.S & J. Members who are also B.I.S. Members were the main exhibitors as follows:-
Division 2. Class 7 for 10 spikes of sibiricas. 2 varieties in 2 vases.

Harry Foster won the German Iris Plaque. His exhibit included stems of the white tetraploid sib. 'Harpwell Happiness' and 'Dark Circle' an exceptionally large, deep purple tetraploid (McEwen 1976), very impressive, but I suspect few buds. In this class Jennifer Hewitt had two sib. varieties, new to me -- they were 'Weisse Etagen', White and 'Anne Marie Troeger' a mid blue, both raised by Dr. Tamberg.

... Class 8 for 5 spikes of sibiricas in one or more varieties in one vase.

Jennifer Hewitt won first prize with 'Golden Crimping'; 'Dance Ballerina Dance'; 'Ewen'; 'Silver Edge' and 'Dark Circle'. 'Golden Crimping' was most impressive, it had fine, flaring creamy-white flowers, with crimped yellow edges to the petals. 'Dark Circle' was also a 'standout'.

Peter Hewitt's exhibit had 'Butter and Sugar' - small flowers, but of good light yellow colour; 'Reddy Made' - red-purple, much darker than 'Ewen'; the now, well known 'Navy Brass' and 'Harpwell Happiness', easily the best of this lovely white tetraploid on view.

Harry Foster had 'Lady of Quality' a real classy Violet-blue; 'Dreaming Green' one to stretch the imagination; 'Dreaming Yellow' - a beautiful cream with hints of yellow; 'Harpwell Hallelujah' - violet blue, lovely form and colour. 'Ruffled Velvet'

(cont)

dark purple.

Class 9. for 5 spikes of Chrysographes.

First prize awarded to Jennifer Hewitt. The stems shown were quite tall, but the flowers had incredible markings and showed what can be obtained from Chrysographes seedlings.

I have not reported on classes 10 and 11 for Spurias or class 13 for Japanese Irises. All credit to our Members, who did their best, but obviously it was too early for really good specimens to be available for Show work.

Class 14. 3 spikes of any beardless cultivar.

In this class Dr. Ellis showed a 'Pseudacorus x Ensata' hybrid that created quite a stir and rightly so. The large orange-yellow horizontally-flared flowers were reticulated with bright red-brown; both form and markings were geometrically precise. My information is that this lovely hybrid is fertile, therefore, if distributed, it is sure to be in great demand.

Class 15.

Hilda Goodwin won a first prize and the William Herbert Bowl for a lovely group of I. Brevicaulis - white overlaid light violet-blue. This is one of the few Louisiana Irises which can be successfully flowered in Britain -- it should be grown by all iris lovers.

My final comments are on I. Sibirica 'Pink Haze'. A stem of this variety, shown by Jennifer Hewitt was selected for trial at Wisley. The flower colour is lilac-pink, with a deeper pink cast. Hopefully, it may well prove to be the prelude for true pink sibiricas in the future.

Eastern Region Report.

by Jack Venner.

Owing to health problems, I did not get around much this year. I have had an excellent show of all types of irises in my East Essex garden, and still have the July show of Japanese Irises to look forward to.

What a great Sibirica 'Orville Fay' is: It makes a wonderful clump, although the propeller form of its flowers is often criticised when shown in a vase. The same could be said about the diploid Sibirica 'Ruffled Velvet', its flowers do not always look well on the show bench, but few irises look better as a clump in the garden. On the other hand 'Silver Edge', a favourite at shows, has not shown up well in the garden here. It does not throw up many spikes and is soon over.

Most of the tetraploid irises performed well this year: 'Blue Pennant', 'Harpswell Happiness', 'Yankee Consul' and the early flowering 'Outset' with its mid-blue flowers heavily marked on the falls with white. 'Blue Burgee' dark violet-purple was somewhat disappointing as its fine show of flowers was soon over. 'Cambridge' continues to be one of the finest diploids, its particular shade of blue has yet to be repeated in the newer varieties. 'Sally Kerlin' obtained recently, has bloomed for the first time, I liked it, a nice shade of light blue. 'Dreaming Yellow', well! what can I say, large flowers; wonderful form: masses of creamy blooms on trouble free plants. 'Ruffled Velvet'; 'Swank'; 'Ego' and 'Blue Brilliant' were all great performers, as were many others recently acquired, showing great promise on small plants.

A sibirica 'Flight of Butterflies', which forms a clump of foliage about 8 ins. high, produces thin upright stems with small flowers, has closed violet-blue standards and horizontal white falls veined purple, is very much admired. According to the lists parentage is unknown: it was registered in 1972 by J. Witt. I am surprised that it is not more widely known.

Report on Spuria Irises.

Has any Member seen a 'black' spuria? Well! I have flowered a named variety this year which, from a distance, really does look black. The name is 'Evening Dress' raised by Joe Ghio - registered in 1984, the standards are deep purple-black and the falls are a sooty-black with a brown cast towards the petal edges; it has a small yellow signal.

My favourite spuria is 'Ila Crawford', it has produced many flowering stalks this year. The crisp, white blooms, with yellow overlay on the falls, are horizontally flared with crimped petal edges... lovely.

Ben Hager's early 'Protege' produced a mass of light-blue with white falls veined light blue. It never fails to give a good show, my only criticism is that it is soon over. Adrian Whittaker's 'Harvest Shadows' has two shades of brown and is one of the finest in the light brown colour range. His very promising seedlings are also just coming into flower.

(cont.)

I much admire some of the newer American spurias... 'Penny Bunker' - light tan ; 'Guest Artist' - deep violet-blue with yellow on the falls; 'Cinnamon Stick'- dark tan standards, brown falls marked yellow; 'Destination'-Ben Hagers' gorgeous orange-yellow.

All these are beginning to flower on first year plants.

In conclusion, the Japanese Irises are showing colour, but are too late for this issue of the Newsletter. A full report will be in the Feb. 1989 Eastern Region compilation.

(Thank you Jack for your most interesting and informative account. J.T.)

Regional Report for the North East.

by Ray Wilson.

Much as I expected the mild winter to have some effect upon the timing of the bloom season, I was greatly surprised to see just about everything in the garden growing at an unprecedented rate for this area. And everybody has had a similar experience. Then, remembering that many plants need a low temperature for some time, such as we normally get in winter, to flower successfully; it has been amazing that the number of spikes has been the best ever for both the bearded and beardless irises.

The Dwarf Bearded's started blooming in mid-April followed by the Border Bearded's and Intermediate Bearded's two weeks later, at the same time as the Arilbreds came into flower. Early May saw the D.B's doing famously. On the 14th May T.B. 'Bethany Claire' started to flower, followed by 'English Cottage' and 'Earl of Essex'... then the M.T.B's made their move. 20th May the Setosa started to flower, followed closely by 'kernerana' (spuria) and sibiricas 'Toward Red Flare' and 'Marcus Perry' also some unnamed seedlings. The Pacific Coast irises are in bloom and today (31st May) Versicolor Kermisina is blooming.

All this for a few degrees Centigrade, Celsius or Fahrenheit!! It would have done wonders for my ego had the stand at Glasgow Flower Festival not been cancelled, for I would have been able to provide a good many plants from my own garden. That's Life! You know, I feel these prestigious events could be operated much better. In June, last year I applied for space at the Festival, on behalf of the B.I.S. and the associated Groups, for a period of four days, as per the application form, 26th to 30th May. This would enable me to collect plants from wherever they were available (covering both Bearded and Beardless); the people who had agreed to be available would have had the minimum inconvenience, and we had hopes of a good Bank Holiday crowd. July came, the booking was confirmed, and a start was made on some of the arrangements. However, some weeks (luckily) before the date, I received a letter from the organisers saying that due to overbooking the B.I.S. could not have the dates as promised. An earlier alternative date was offered, but this conflicted with personal arrangements, my bloom time and helpers convenience, so I decided not to go ahead... A great pity, as I understand the Festival is a huge success. (It does sound a bit like a holiday booking, doesn't it?). So sorry that the B.I.S. and its associated Groups could not have had a part in it.

The grumble is now over, but was the phenomenal growth just a function of the temperature? I would like to think it was not. During the last year- a very chilly and soggy one as you will remember - I have had poor blooming and so I decided- once more- to really try and improve the soil, although, we have painfully collected and incorporated, over the past eight years, peat, bark, mushroom compost and according to the needs topped up with hoof and horn, mixed inorganic fertilizer, fish and bone etc. So, if the weather helped to give an early start, I like to think the feeding made good use of it. Just to be sure we are going to repeat the dose again this year. I am now awaiting the later blooming plants and then, who knows, repeat blooming and reblooming.

It could easily be the Year of the Iris.

(Sympathy after all your efforts Ray. A word of warning given to me by Ian Smith, the Forest Bark tends to extract nitrogen from the soil. I am not now using it round irises)

Regional Report for the South.

by Ian Smith.

Weatherwise, as winters go, the South couldn't have had it better -no snow and only a few frosty mornings. This was frustrating for me waiting for a really cold night to awaken dormant Spuria seeds (and before you all rush for pen and paper to tell me about putting them in the fridge or the deep freeze, I've tried that, but my seeds seem to know that its not the real thing and stay steadfastly asleep; though one cold night and a touch of frost - they spring up within a couple of days). Anyway, after a mild (and (cont.)

rather wet December and January, the weather turned quite sunny and in February all the herbaceous plants started to show themselves and daffodils were in bud. All during March the late frosts were anticipated but never arrived, so, by the beginning of April everything was far advanced. Seeds of Sibiricas and Chrysographes which had sprouted at the end of February were now about 3" high, and waiting to be pricked out. Seeds of some remontant T.B's were also showing - so plenty to do!

On April 24th., the Tradescant Trust held its annual Plant Fair, next door to Lambeth Palace in London, where the Kent Group had its usual stand, selling a grand assortment of whatever plants Members could find. Saturday 23rd. found me making the journey to London, car loaded with bits and pieces from the garden. I helped Mary Tubbs and Eunice Frenkel prepare the stand for the following day, which from reports I received was a great success. In the garden, by this time, S.D.B's and F.C.I's were in bloom and the T.B's and Sibiricas were budding up nicely.

The second week in May saw me make my annual trip to Florence in Italy, for the International Iris Concorso. This year was a disaster due to the mild winter, which caused under-development of plants and many pests and fungus diseases. It didn't help matters either, that while England sweltered in a mini heat wave, the Italian weather was cloudy, cold and very damp. Returning on May 17th, I found T.B's and Sibiricas in full bloom, all the water Irises just coming out and the Chrysographes showing colour in the bud.. With the B.I.S. Show at Wisley still 3½ weeks away, it looked as if the only prize that I could possibly win would be one for the best seed pods.

When the Wisley Show finally arrived, I found that I still had a couple of bits which would help to fill the benches. It was there that I found almost everyone had been frustrated by the weather, either too cold or too hot, too wet or too dry... as a result exhibitors had been hard pushed to find top quality spikes in all classes. Somehow or other Harry Foster always manages to find them, and he walked off with the First Prize in both the Sibirica Classes and the Chrysographes Class. His Five Chrysographes seedlings, which, I suspect have Delavayi in their parentage, were most impressive-- tall, stately and branched, with some lovely colour combinations.

In the seedlings division Jack Ellis exhibited his eye-catching hybrid of Pseudacorus x Ensata, a bright yellow flower with wide horizontal falls and mahogany red signals. Ray Jeffs also showed a good hybrid called 'Berlin Tiger' (Pseudacorus x Versicolor) from Tomas Tamberg. It too had yellow flowers but had heavy mahogany veining on the falls, the veining being repeated to a lesser extent on standards and style crests - a very desirable plant (hint, hint to anyone who has a rhizome to spare?)

Considering the season, I think everyone did pretty well and deserve thanks for the great efforts they made to ensure a worthwhile show.

(Thanks Ian, a really busy time. J.T.)

Regional Report for the West Midlands.

by Philip Allery.

Once again the spring and early summer weather in the West Midlands made planning for Show bloom a difficult exercise. Despite the early season, members of the West Midlands Iris Group held a successful Annual Show at the Nurseries of 'Treasures' of Tenbury Wells, on 18th June last. Of particular encouragement West Midlands Iris Group members was the support given by the presence of a large party of B.I.S. members from London and Kent Group. We thank them for their visit and hope they enjoyed their weekend break.

Although the number of entries was reduced by the early season and the absence of three senior members, it was quite noticeable that there is increasing interest in beardless irises. The West Midland Group is particularly fortunate in having Jennifer Hewitt and Harry Foster in friendly rivalry, developing Sibirica hybrids. Both are having well deserved successes.

Of interest too was the success of a new member, Dr. John Beal, who gained B.I.S. Seedling Commendations for Chrysographes sdlg. 85/CHR/1 and spuria sdlg. 84/SP/1. Hybrids and species in which S. S & J. members have a particular interest were more widely exhibited than in previous years. Here are the results of the classes involved.

- In Division III - Class 8 - 1 vase containing 4 spikes of hybrid sibirica (28chrs) irises in one or more varieties.
- the placings were:- 1st. Harry Foster showing 'Dark Circle', 'Harpwell Hallelujah', 'Harpwell Happiness' and 'Lady Of Quality' (this entry won for Harry the award for the best vase.)
- 2nd My entry of 'Anniversary', 'Peg Edwards', 'Silver Edge' and 'Violet Mere'.

(cont.)

In Division III - Class 10 - 1 vase containing up to 5 spikes of beardless hybrid irises not eligible for classes 8 (above) or 9 Pacific Coast hybrids.

1st. Harry Foster and 2nd. Jennifer Hewitt both showed Chrysographes section seedlings.

3rd. Cy Bartlett showed Spuria section seedlings.

In Division III - Class 11 - 1 vase containing up to 5 spikes of one or more Iris or Iridaceous species, bearded or beardless.

1st. Cy Bartlett showing I.Latifolia alba.

2nd. Cy Bartlett showing I.Foetidissima forms.

3rd. Suz. Winspear showing Sisyrinchium striatum.

In Division V - Class 14- 1 spike, raised by the exhibitor, Beardless Iris, a first place was not awarded.

Harry Foster took 2nd. and 3rd. places with seedlings 77/234 & 2/75/24/U. Harry Foster also shared with his wife Maureen, the Batts Trophy for most Show points.

I exhibited two Japanese iris seedlings, one of which the Society's judging panel wish to see again. The other seedling failed on the grounds that its form was not completely regular. However it is a beautiful garden plant, a lavender-blue single (s sibling of seedling 1983/H6/10/AY) and a large clump grown in a pot and positioned at the entrance to the Show drew public interest. My disappointment with the outcome of the judging, which I must accept, has been offset by requests from two visiting members of the Society for divisions of this attractive seedling.

One point I must make, in the interests of newcomers to the Show bench, Hasty preparation, last-minute arrival, and faulty documentation will almost certainly bring about disaster before the judges, as it did to me this year. Be quite single-minded in your preparations and selection of blooms for the show. Read, and re-read the Show schedule, and, if possible, set aside specific periods in the preceeding week for the preparation of your entry. If you need advice, seek it in advance. Chapter 9 of 'Growing Irises' by G.E.Cassidy and S.Linnegar gives useful guidance on this subject.

Those Japanese iris seedlings which I hope to register this year, were just too late for the late June B.I.S.Show at the R.H.S. New Hall. However four seedlings are quite outstanding (in my opinion), and I hope to show them next year. At that time I plan to include blooms from seedlings generously sent to me by Dr. C.McEwen. Three of his seedlings, in particular, are very vigorous tetraploids, and I have Dr. McEwen's specific consent to make seed or pollen available in the future, subject to the usual acknowledgments, for use by others who are interested in the development in the U.K. of Japanese Irises.

One of the problems of showing Japanese irises, which I have experienced over the past two years, is the absence of a judging standard to which a competitor can work in selecting blooms for the Show Bench. This is one of the matters which will occupy my attention over the forthcoming Autumn and Winter months. 'Know your Irises' published by the New Zealand Iris Society helps, and Leland Welsh, published a good article in the Japanese Iris Society 'Review' this Spring. He is, as you will know the Editor.

Have fun with your irises!

(Thank you Philip.)

Regional Report for London.

by Anne Blanco White.

In July 1987 I wrote about I.Ensata (Kaempferi) and non-acid soils, something which Members who grow these Irises and do not have acid soil are very keen to know about. I mentioned Max Steiger's article in the 1959 Year Book (B.I.S.) so, whenever possible (cont)

and space allows, the two, rather lengthy articles will be reprinted by kind permission of the British Iris Society.

This year I have flowered a 'Care' Ensata, in a container (for control) with limestone, it produced a fine big blue bloom. The story continues.....

Lime-resistant Iris kaempferi (now called Ensata) by Max Steiger.

Six years of ^{enthusiastic} work in breeding ten thousand Iris kaempferi seedlings yearly has made it possible to succeed, step by step, in an aim that a few years ago seemed out of reach.

Even the most recent publications dealing with I.kaempferi state that the first requirement is an acid soil free from lime, which is fatal for the Japanese Iris! This hypothesis has had such a discouraging effect that, in spite of the success which Japanese breeders have enjoyed for centuries, the Tall Bearded iris has wholly outdistanced I. kaempferi in popularity.

It is small wonder that most iris-lovers are discouraged if they hear: 'Lime is fatal; acid soil and a plentiful water-supply are indispensable'! Places which satisfy all three conditions are rare, and the few gardeners willing to cope with these difficulties in their desire to see the beauty of I.kaempferi in their own gardens have often met with nothing but disappointment.

I.kaempferi is frequently believed to be an aquatic plant, and as a consequence it has frequently been planted in ponds or in marshy soil, where, however, the plants either perished promptly because of the alternate thawing and freezing which occurs in our Central European spring, or, if they survived, were so stunted that their flowers were never able to attain their full size or their true clear colours.

On the other hand the Japanese, masters of the art of growing these irises, provide moisture in spring only, until the bloom is over, and, later on, never flood the ponds, which have been deepened in order to hold the plants.

When, six years ago, in the autumn of 1953, I began to procure seeds and plants of the latest high-grade varieties, the Higo strain from Japan and the so-called Marhigo strain which Walter Marx, of Oregon U.S.A. had bred from the Higo strain, I was in blissful ignorance of all these prescriptions. At the same time I bought, from various sources in Germany I.kaempferi seeds which came from varieties imported from Japan years ago. The first sowing was done in November in boxes filled with good garden soil, with which the seeds were covered to the depth of about half an inch. After thorough watering these boxes were exposed to the frost for a week and then placed in a warm room. Four weeks later, upon germination, the green of the young plants became visible. With true enthusiasm I inspected the seedlings perhaps a dozen times each day, and when spring came had 300 nice plants, although I had sown three times that number of seeds. Even today I cannot explain why I had such bad results from my first sowing, since, in later years over 90 % germination has been the rule.

My ignorance was so great that I did not hesitate to transfer these pampered plants as early as the beginning of April into a dry sandy soil. Inevitably, this caused the loss of many, but I was able to save about 150 by replanting in good garden soil, with an ample addition of peat, and these thereupon quickly formed a vigorous stock.

(Max then goes on to say about his next sowing in 1954... to follow in February 1989.)
(Thank you Anne, very interesting indeed.)

The Group Library,

Copies of of the following American Books and Publications are obtainable from:-
Hon. Librarian:- Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary CLEOBURY MORTIMER.
KIDDERMINSTER, Wores. DY14 0QU.

Siberian Irises by Currier McEwen.

The Spuria Irises-Introduction & Varietal Listing-1985. Editor James.J.Foreman.

Newsletter of the Spuria Iris Society.

Review of the Society for Japanese Irises.

Journal of the Siberian Iris Society.

The Genus Iris, subsection Sibiricae. B.I.S.

Alphabetical Table and Cultivation Guide to the Species. B.I.S.

All back numbers of the S. S. & J. Newsletters.

Please include Postage when requesting items.

Treasurer's Report.

Your excellent response to the appeal for plants and seeds has confirmed that we are able to keep the Subscription at £1. per annum until 30th June 1989. Every plant and most of the seeds are now sold, but we do have some new seedlings on offer.. See Plant List. Many thanks to all who contributed to the scheme and also for your donations.

I will still continue to practice economy, because costs are rising all the time, and I understand there will be an increase in Postage later on this year, which will affect our running costs greatly.

The Subscription review for 1989/90 will be published in the February 1989 Newsletter

Our financial year is from 1st, July to 30th June. Delayed payments are a liability on the Group's Funds.

For the benefit of Members who pay a commuted Sub. and a reminder, I have enclosed a slip in each Newsletter showing your position.

Please make cheques, postal orders etc. payable to:-

' The S. S & J. Group. B.I.S. '

Please send to:- Mrs. Joan Trevithick, 86a. Grantham Rd., Radcliffe-on-Trent.
NOTTINGHAM. NG12 2HY.

(Please omit 'Hon. Treas.)

Back Numbers of the Newsletters available:-

1976 -- send 33p in stamps. 1981, 1982 & 1983 43p in stamps. 1985 53p in stps.
Feb. 1988 63p in stps.

Member's Letters. etc.

Due to lengthy articles in the February Newsletter I was unable to include these items.

First New Members:- Mr. Bob Bray from Leicester is a Landscape Designer (Architect), a lovely job, by the sound of it. He is going to include more irises in his designs, ca'nt think of anything better, Bob, all the best.

Mr. Norman Berekis, Mrs Joy Cooksey, Mr. and Mrs. Hemmings, Mr. Brian Jewkes, Miss Judith Sandall, Mr. T. Porter who is the Manager of the Hollybush Nursery Ltd., Saredon. Mrs. Maureen Smith, Mrs. J.L.Stokes, Walsall Mutual Gardeners and Mrs Lucy Wilkins. Sorry I was not able to write more about you in the Feb. Newsletter, but perhaps you will write in and let us know how you have fared over the past twelve months. Have your Irises grown well despite 'up and down' weather. I know there are some Flower Arrangers among you, in this area 'Gerald Darby' is much sought after. Let us know!

Mr. Alan Green of Forest Town, Mansfield. has recently moved, grows some Sibiricas, wants to grow more, and having had success with a seed grown I.Orientalis would like to obtain some spuria hybrids. (We are working on this Alan, they are very scarce in this country, importing seems to be the only way, but rather expensive due to exchange rate etc.)

Mr. Alan Harsley of Sherwood is a Park Ranger at Holme Pierrepont Water Centre. Alan is also a well known Ornathologist and prepares Nature Trails for the children. He has planted some of our water irises at this National Centre.

Mrs. Viv Moore, with her husband and his Father and Mother run a family Nursery at Stanton-on-the-Wolds. They sell many Hardy Plants, Roskery Plants and Shrubs. I hope they will find room to grow some Irises.

Mr. Steve York is the foreman at 'Bardell's Roses', he lives at Draycott, Derbyshire. During last Winter he has been very busy extending the nursery, building new greenhouses, he is already starting to build up stocks of Irises.

Mr. Cláudio Nahan of McLean Virginia you have already met, also M. Jean Peyrard of Seyssinet. France and Coen Jansen, Dalfsen. Holland, who is also busy building up his nursery.

To some extent, I think that includes you all who were included in the February N/L.

On to this years account, well! I seem to have had space to give you more in the 'Editorial', but, you know, it sounds much better coming from you personally....

I am so pleased to see more Nursermen and Women taking an interest in growing our Irises. If you have a Show in your local area, why not try and establish a Class for Siberian or Spuria or Japanese irises, this will help to see more of them grown. Our Specialists and Representatives will help when they can. I said this years ago, I hope it will happen soon. (Ed.)

Extracts and Updates from your letters.

Floyd Wickenkamp writing in the first week of June, tells that he has made many crosses of his Spurias, but many of them did not take because of hot weather during peak bloom. However, several buds from his crosses and a lot of 'bee' crosses. He thinks that some of these could be due to 'thrips', crawling around and probably carrying pollen to the stigma. This might be a way to get some of the newer Spurias started in England, since the 'self' crosses would be similar to the pod parent. Floyd hopes to send us some seed later. (Thanks, in advance).

The Oklahoma City Convention was somewhat of a disappointment, no Spuria blooms, in fact no Spurias in evidence at all. My introductions had only two showing bud. Oklahoma City is largely tall bearded country. Very few Louisianas, and I saw only a few clumps of Siberians. Most of the Medians and Arilbreds were through blooming, but there were a few exceptions.

It was one of the larger conventions, with about 730 registrations (100 more than Phoenix.) The T.B.'s in some of the gardens, were as good as I have seen, including the Oregon convention. Paul Black's garden, for example, was a mass of T.B. colour.

Approval has been given on the names for the three Spurias I plan to introduce next year? They are 'Betty My Love' (named in memory of my wife, Betty); 'Sonoran Senorita' (deep gold), and 'Sonoran Caballero' (a near navy blue). I am particularly pleased with 'Betty My Love' because it has such good substance. It is not a large flower, but very attractive, I think.

P.S. If you are wondering why the 'Sonoran' in the names of two of my new ones. I live in the Sonoran Desert. I thought it was time to publicize that fact..

All good wishes Floyd.

Ros. and Nigel Colborn write to say that they have joined the National Garden Scheme and in future their lovely gardens at Careby Manor will be open to visitors on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Congratulations to Nigel on being appointed to the Floral Committee 'A' of the Royal Horticultural Society, this includes Herbaceous and Perennial Plants and Roses.

(We wish you both every success in your venture.)

Clarence Mahan a friend of Ray Wilson, and the Editor of 'Newscast A.I.S.' Region 4. writes to say that they have a dedicated Membership when it comes to Japanese, Siberian and reblooming Irises. They are the only Region which has a 'fall' Show, and they have been having beardless shows for the past three years. Spurias and Arils are not as widely grown, because they do not like our acid soil, and Arils hate our wet summers and autumns. Japanese Irises are very popular, and in 1989 we will host the SJI convention in the Washington DC Baltimore area.

(Thank you Clarence nice to hear your news, all the best.)

Mr. Akiro Horinaka wrote in May to say he was pleased to receive seed from the Seed Distribution. He asked if we had fresh Iris seeds of the following:-

I. variegated leaf form of Laevigata.

do Pallida

do Foetidissima.

for their studies. Unfortunately we were unable to supply, so we ask you, the Members, if you have any of these, will you please send them, either direct to Mr. Horinaka, or to the Seed Distribution, and we will send them on. Thank you.

(Very pleased to hear from you, and we do hope you will be able to write about your Irises very soon. Editor.) Address at back of N/L.

Mrs. Mary Ramsdale wrote to say that having been a Member of the Species Group for a number of years she was gradually becoming more and more a Sib/Spuria fan. As a friend of Trevor Nottle (Australia) she reminded me that Trevor would be coming to England, My regret was that I could not attend the Meetings at which he was speaking. We have been, what I suppose you would call 'pen friends' for 10 years. Hope he enjoyed his trip looking forward to hearing all about it. Also we look forward to hearing about your

(cont)

garden too Mary, the irises you grow, also the irises you would like to grow, we may be able to help.

All the Best, J.T.

Jack Ashford of Nairn responded promptly to the appeal for young trees, and sent a goodly parcel. Anne, unfortunately could not partake of this kind gesture, because the conservation residents in the area had decided to use only replacements from their own area, understandable, I suppose. However, on asking around, we soon had plenty of takers so there was satisfaction all round. Many, many thanks Jack for such a nice gesture.

Mary Fraser, who is now the Secretary of the Species Group, has her hands full at the moment, but I hope she will be able to give us an update of her Irises (of which I know she has many), when the quieter Autumn and Winter months come. Good Luck. Take care.

Myra Geeson of Coach Gap Nurseries is getting back to normal again, after the gales damaged her greenhouses last winter, and the unwanted attention of a light-fingered person or persons. All the best of luck to you.

Norman Payne is very pleased with his display of Japanese Irises this year, and is surprised at the size of some of the clumps, after only twelve months growth. (Must be what you are giving them Norman!!)

List of Plantsmen and Women in our Group.

- Mr. Norman Berekis. 'Valley Nurseries', Erdington Rd. ALDRIDGE.WALSALL. W.M. WS9 OSB.
(sorry Norman I have missed off this description in previous reference.)
- Mr. & Mrs. N. Colborn, Careby Manor Gardens, CAREBY. STAMFORD Lines. FE9 4EA. Nat. Gdns.
- Derry's Nurseries, Main street, COSSINGTON. LEICESTER.
- Mr. H.R.Jeffs, 'Nutfield Nurseries', Crab Hill Lane, S.NUFFIELD. REDHILL. Surrey RH15PG.
- Mrs. Myra Geeson, Coach Gap Nurseries, LANGAR. Notts.
- Mrs. V.Moore, Moore's Nurseries, STANTON-on-the-WOLDS. Notts.
- Mr. T.Porter, Manager, Hollybush Nurseries Ltd., Hollybush Gdn. & Aquatic Centre
Warstone Rd. SAREDON. CHESLYN HAY. WALSALL. W.M.
- Walsall Mutual Gardeners, c/o Mr. P.Taylor, 67, Lydford Rd. SEFTON PARK. BLOXWICH.
WALSALL. WS3 3NT.

- Mr. Richard Yates, Alpine Nursery, Roecliffe Manor, WOODHOUSE EAVES. LOUGHBOROUGH. Leics
- Mr. S.York, 'Bardill's Roses', Toton Lane, STABLEFORD. Notts.

Overseas.

- Mr. & Mrs. T.Abrego, P.O.Box 693. NEWBERG. OREGON. 97132-0693. U.S.A.
- Mr. Ben Hager, 309, Best Road South, STOCKTON. CALIFORNIA. 95205 U.S.A.
- Mr. Clarence Mahan, 7311, Churchill Rd. McLean. VIRGINIA. 22101. U.S.A.
- Dr. Currier McEwen, SOUTH HARPSWELL. MAINE. 04079. U.S.A.
- Mrs. Lorena Reid, 'Laurie's Garden', SPRINGFIELD. OREGON. ~~95131~~. U.S.A.
- Herr. Eberhard Schuster, Post Gadebehn, 2711. Augustenhoff. D.D.R. East Germany.

List of New Members.

- Mr. J.Antippa, 283, Loughborough Rd., West Bridgford. NOTTINGHAM. NG27 EH.
- Mr. B.Castledine, 44, Westwick Rd., BILBOROUGH. NOTTINGHAM.
- Derry's Nurseries, Main Street, COSSINGTON. Leics.
- Mrs. M.T.Ramsdale, Walker's Croft, Start Hill, GT. HALLINGSBURY. BISHOP'S STORTFORD.
Herts. CM22 8TF.
- Mrs. S.Ryder, 'Toadshole Cottage', Old Rd. FEERING. COLCHESTER. ESSEX.
- Mr. R.Yates, 40, Woodfield Rd. ROTHLEY. LEICESTER. LE7 7RE.

(please let me know your code number when you write in. Thank you.)

Contacts in Societies.

- President of the B.I.S. Mr. H.R.Jeffs, 'Nutfield Nurseries, Crab Hill lane, S.Nuffield,
- Secretary of the B.I.S. Mr. P.R.Maynard, 43, Sea Lane, ~~WORTHING~~ WORTHING Sussex BN12 4QD.
- Secretary Of the Species Group. Mrs. M.Fraser, 'Barsham House', Roundwood, Buckler's
Lane, King's Langley Herts WD4 8BE.

U.S.A.

Editor of Spuria N/L. C/O Mr. F.Wickenkamp 10521, Bellarose Drive, SUN CITY AZ. 85351.
Editor of Siberian. Mrs. J.Hollingworth,, 124, Sherwood Rd.E.. WILLIAMSTON.
MI. 48895. U.S.A.

Editor of Japanese Iris
Review. Leland M.Walsh, 7679, West D. Ave. KALAMAZOO. MICHIGAN. 49009 USA.

Groups.
Kent Group Mrs. M. Tubbs, 9, Lingfield Rd. WIMBLEDON COMMON. London SW19 4QA.
Mercian Group Mrs. E.Wise, 197, The Parkway, IVER HEATH. IVER. Bucks. SLO ORQ.
West Midland Group Mrs. P.Foster, 76, Peachfield Rd. GREAT MALVERN. Worcs. WR14 4AF.
Remontant Group. Mr. P.Allery, 199, Walsall Rd. ALDRIDGE. Nr. WALSALL. WS9 0BE.
B.I.S.Publications. Mr. N.Watkins, 31, Larkfield Rd. FARNHAM. Surrey. GU9 7DD.
Mr. A.Horinaka (Pres. Japanese Iris Society) 3-9, Tanimachi, 6 chome MINIMA-KU. OSAKA.
Japan.

Seed Distribution List.

I. Pseudacorus 'E.Turnipseed (cream). I.Versicolor. I.Versicolor Kermesina.
I.Setosa Falias (small quantity) I. Sibirica Mixed. do Mixed shades.

All at 15p. per packet, plus postage.

Please send to Mr. D.Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT. NOTTINGHAM.
NG12 2HY.

Name and address
seeds.....

Plant Scheme:-

These seedlings are available, for despatch in September:-
I.Ensata (Kaempferi) (p). I.Virginica (m). I.Carthalinae. (vs). I. FulvalaArkansas (vs).
I.Sibirica:- 'Anne Marie (Troiger etc.)(m). 'Caesar's Brother'(s). 'Anne Dasch'(vs).
'Emperor'(s). 'Nottingham Lace' (s). 'Outset' (m). 'TowardRedFlare'(s).
I.Chrysographes.(M). I.Chrysographes x Chrysofor(m). I.Forrestii x Chrysographes (s).

These are all at 30p each plus Postage.

(vs) means very small quantity. (s) small. (m) medium and (p) plenty.

although every effort is made to satisfy the demand, there is not, of course a guarantee with these, in exactly the same as with the seeds. That is only possible when a plant is parted. However, to those who do not have any of these Irises, and cannot buy them, especially at this price, from experience, I can tell you that you will be agreeably surprised when they mature and flower. In the case of (vs) and (S) please order substitutes.

Please send to Mrs. J.Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT. NOTTINGHAM
NG12 2HY.

Name and address
Plants required

Do'nt forget if you are parting a clump of Irises this year, we would be pleased to receive them and refund Postage. Also, do'nt think of throwing any seed pods away, think of the Members who would like to grow them and start their own S. S & J. collection.

Finally, so that you do not forget.
SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1988/89 were due on 1st July.

send them in with this slip.
Name and Address.....

Cheerio! all the best. Joan.