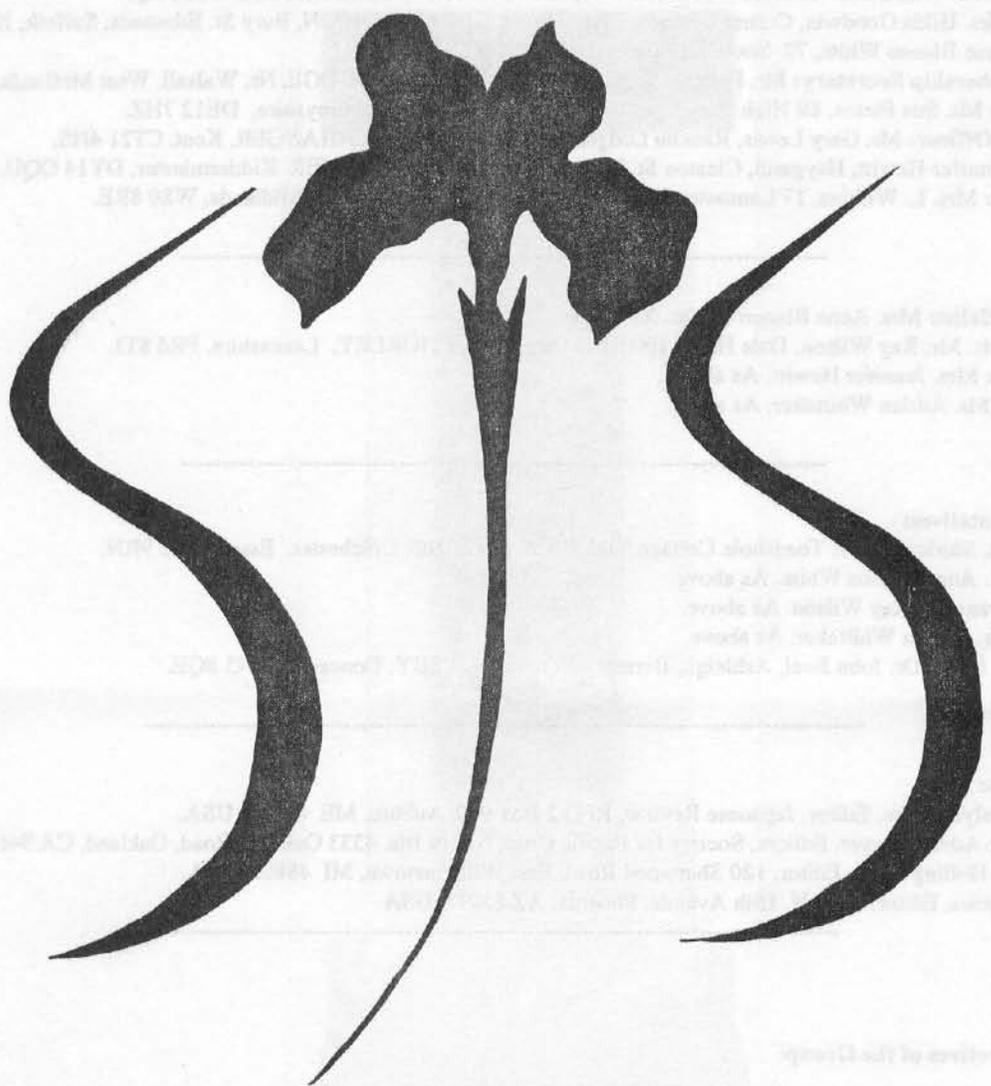


NEWSLETTER



OF THE

**SIBERIAN SPURIA AND JAPANESE GROUP
(INCLUDING PACIFICAS AND WATER IRIS)**

B.I.S.

THE GROUP'S OFFICERS:

Chairman: Mr. Adrian Whittaker, "Chestnuts", Hilden Way, LITTLETON, Winchester, Hants. S022 6QH.
Vice Chairman: Mrs. Hilda Goodwin, Corner Cottage, School Road, GREAT BARTON, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 2RT.
Secretary: Mrs. Anne Blanco White, 72 South Hill Park, London, NW3 2SN.
Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Mr. Philip Allery, 199 Walsall Road, ALDRIDGE, Nr. Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 OBE.
Newsletter Editor: Ms. Sue Pierce, 89 High Street, Measham, SWADLINCOTE, Derbyshire, DE12 7HZ.
Seed Distribution Officer: Mr. Gary Lewis, Ranchu Lodge, Stone Street, WESTENHANGER, Kent, CT21 4HS.
Librarian: Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, Haygarth, Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER, Kidderminster, DY14 0QU.
Honorary Auditor: Mrs. L. Wilkins, 17 Lancaster Avenue, ALDRIDGE, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 8RE.

Japanese Iris Specialist: Mrs. Anne Blanco White. As above.
Pacificas Specialist: Mr. Ray Wilson, Dale Head, 100 Blackburn Road, CHORLEY, Lancashire, PR6 8TJ.
Sibirica Specialist: Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt. As above.
Spuria Specialist: Mr. Adrian Whittaker. As above.

Regional Representatives:

Eastern Area: Mrs. Shirley Ryder, Toadshole Cottage, Old Road, FEERING, Colchester, Essex, CO5 9RN.
London Area: Mrs. Anne Blanco White. As above.
North Western Area: Mr. Ray Wilson. As above.
Southern Area: Mr. Adrian Whittaker. As above.
West & Midlands Area: Dr. John Beal, Ashleigh, Barnsley Road, SCAWSBY, Doncaster, DN5 8QE.

Overseas Contacts:

Japanese: Mrs. Evelyn White, Editor, Japanese Review, RFD 2 Box 980, Auburn, ME 04210, USA.
Pacificas: Lewis & Adele Lawyer, Editors, Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris, 4333 Oak Hill Road, Oakland, CA 94605, USA.
Siberians: Mrs. J. Hollingworth, Editor, 120 Sherwood Road, East Williamstown, MI 48895, USA.
Spurias: Carole Speiss, Editor, 6204 N. 15th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85015, USA

The aims and objectives of the Group:

To foster communication between members in Great Britain and those overseas by the exchange of ideas, seeds and plants;
 to help newcomers with their interests and problems;
 to report on new work in hybridization.

Ah yes,

if you find mistakes in this newsletter,
 please consider that they are there for a purpose.
 I publish something for everyone,
 and some people are always looking for mistakes!!

(Courtesy of Carole Speiss, Spuria Soc..)

CHAIRMAN'S PIECE.

I shall shortly be standing down as Group Chairman. Pressing family and other commitments have meant that I have been unable to devote what I consider an adequate amount of time to the Group this year. Additionally, I do believe that a regular rotation of people filling various posts avoids stagnation. Due to great efforts by your Secretary and Treasurer the Group is once again in good heart and I have every confidence in the future. I should like to thank and acknowledge all those without whose continued support we would not be able to read this Newsletter.

May I end by wishing you all every success in your gardening and with Iris in particular.

Adrian Whittaker.

SECRETARIAL SECTION.

While I really regret Adrian's departure from the Chairmanship of this Group, I can only sympathise. He was a very solid support for Joan over many years and has been extremely helpful to the new officers. He deserves to be relieved of the responsibilities and it isn't as if he were going to disappear entirely because he will continue to advise and comment on the spuria irises and we shall benefit from his expertise in this field.

At the same time, I apologise for the fact that we have no replacement to offer you at the moment. This is partly due to my having been considerably overworked this year. I am sure that by the time of the next issue we shall have a new and enthusiastic office holder.

What does cause me some displeasure is the lack of really good suggestions for a new Group name. Here is a selection to date and somebody must be able to do better than this:

The Beardless Iris Group (think big!)

The Spuria, California and Moisture Preferring Group (scampi)

The Allsorts Iris Group

The Group at the Rainbow's End

The Past and Future Iris Group

The Iris Horizon Group

The Beardless, Bulbous and Evergreen Iris Group

The Other Irises Group

The Pot of Gold Group

The New Developments Group

The Easy Irises Group

The Apogon Group

Remember, we are still offering a year's free subscription for a good title.

Anne Blanco-White.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Income during the period 1st January to 30th June, 1995, amounted to £266.74, made up as follows: 1994 membership arrears - £21.50; 1995 membership subscriptions - £70.50; Advance membership subscriptions - £73.69; and Donations £101.05. These donations were made up of cash gifts - £46.25; plant sales £41.00 and seed sales - £13.80.

The Group's sincere thanks are due in particular to Mrs. Hilda Goodwin, Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, Mrs. Shirley Pope, Mr. R.L. Carter, Mr. Gary Lewis, Mr. Clarence Mahan, Mr. Chris Rose, Mr. Ian Smith and Mr. Adrian Whittaker for cash gifts during this period. Plant sales by Mrs. Anne Blanco White and Mrs. Margaret Criddle made a substantial contribution and seed sales by Mr. Gary Lewis were a useful addition to the funds. Many thanks to you all.

Further income of £27.00 received since 30th June includes a further plants sales donation of £10 from Mrs. Hewitt. Continued support for sales of plants and seeds is essential in maintaining a healthy financial situation and avoiding increases in the rates of membership subscriptions.

The current financial situation is satisfactory. The two deposit accounts have been merged. With a balance of £580.34 and income of approximately £25 outstanding it is unnecessary to increase membership subscriptions for 1996.

U.K. and E.E.C. area membership subscriptions will remain at £2.50. Those who have previously paid a 'mid-year' membership only should pay an extra £1.50 to cover the period to 31st December next. The subscription for overseas members is reduced to £3.00 by eliminating the cost of the 'reminder' element from my calculations. For the future the newsletter address label will include a note of the date on which the member's subscription expires. Unless there is a specific arrangement, further reminders will not be sent.

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THE NEXT MEMBERSHIP YEAR COMMENCES ON THE 1ST JANUARY, 1996, AND THAT EARLY PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTION WOULD BE OF GREAT HELP.

Expenditure for the above period, i.e. up to 30th June last, was £ 121.49, made up as follows:

Newsletter - paper, photocopying charges and postage - £64.22;

Postage - (excluding newsletter costs) - £ 10.65;

Printing - letterheads and contribution towards H.P. Desk -Jet refills - £11.00.

Publicity - leaflets - £11.75; and

Stationery - accountancy record sheets, membership folders and paper - £ 23.87.

The Group's accounts for the period August, 1994 to 31st March, 1995 have been audited.

Small petty cash floats have been paid to the Secretary and the Newsletter editor. These amount to £35.00. Disbursements not yet re-imbursed are anticipated not to exceed £20.00 and advance payments by members are estimated to commit the Group to expenditure of approximately £150. on future newsletter expenses. 18 subscriptions have yet to be paid, either full or in part. The Autumn newsletter is estimated to cost between £100 and £120.

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

Group membership now exceeds 100

A warm welcome is extended to new members Mr. & Mrs. G. Coley of Brownhills, Walsall; Mrs. J.M. Dean of Bloxwich, Walsall; Mr. Mark Frith of Exhall, Coventry; Mr. S.P. Harrison of Dore, Sheffield; Mr. G. Price of Chasetown, Staffs; Mr. John M. Smith of The Water Garden Nursery, Wembworthy, Chumleigh, Devon; Mr. J. Frisby of Burbage, Leics, Mr. B. Sleeman, c/o Waterside Garden Design Ltd of Hexham, Northumberland and Mr. P.G. Setchell of Lutterworth, Leics..

Members will be saddened to learn that the Kobe earthquake earlier this year caused the death of the wife, daughter and grand-child of our new member Mr. Akira Horinaka of Nishinomiya, Japan, and left him with serious injury. The Group records

its sincere condolences. Mrs. Anne Blanco White and Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt are the Group's correspondents with Mr. Horinaka, the author of the recent book on *I. laevigata*.

The membership breakdown by country is U.K. - 62; Europe - 7; Canada - 2; Egypt - 1; Japan - 2; New Zealand - 4; Sweden - 2; U.S.A. - 25, a total of 105. A list of the membership at 31st August, 1995 is included as an appendix.

Your address label indicates the expiry date of your membership. A small circular red label indicates that your membership term has expired and that no further newsletters will be sent until your arrears and subscription for the current year have been paid.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.- The following members have informed me of changes in their addresses, but not necessarily their residences, and up-dated details are given in the Appendix:-

Mrs. Jane Cole of Hungerford, Berkshire; Mrs. Gwenda Harris, Editor of the New Zealand Iris Society, of North Otago, New Zealand; Mrs. Evelyn White, Editor of the Review published by The American Society for Japanese Irises, of Maine, U.S.A.; Mr. Akira Horinaka, previously of Nishinomiya, Japan, who has a temporary address for correspondence; Dr. J.W. Waddick of Kansas City, U.S.A. and Herr A. Winkelmann of Aindling, Germany.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS.- Members' letters over the past twelve months have included the following items which I hope will be of interest to others in the Group:-

Mr. Simon Harrison of Dore, Sheffield, a new member, has a good range of Sibiricas and Water Iris, and would be interested in exchange for unusual *Ensatas*.

Mr. John Smith of The Water Garden Nursery, Wembworthy, Chumleigh, Devon, is seeking to positively identify some cultivars of Japanese iris obtained from an old nursery Champernowne's ? Nr. Tavistock, N. Devon. They are 'Hercule', 'Galatea', 'Oku Bauri' ? , 'Gei-sho-ui', 'Kuwi-Gunjin', 'Moonlight waves', 'Dresden China', ? and 'Purple East'. It is very important that correct names, registered wherever possible, should be given when nurseries offer plants for sale and I am only too happy to help in this matter.

I have found a record of 'Galatea' which I believe to have been registered in the name of Marx - 1961. Members in possession of old nursery literature giving any of these names, or names with similar spelling are asked to inform me, sending a photo-copy of the entry if at all possible. Once collated I intend to send members' comments to Clarence Mahan of McLean, Virginia, a Group member and supplier of many fine irises, who has carried out some outstanding research into many old cultivar names with a view to their registration. His knowledge of the Japanese language in this context is of considerable benefit to Groups such as ours, and his painstaking work is appreciated.

Mr. J. Frisby of Burbage, Leics., a new member, does not have transport and will be pleased to welcome members of the Group if they visit him. He tells me that he has built up an interesting collection of irises over a period of 30 years.

Mark Frith of Exhall, Coventry is anxious to contact any member who can supply *I.versicolor* cultivars 'Mint Fresh' and 'Whodunnit'. He is in contact with Jennifer Hewitt who has supplied me with some excellent plants and has very generously given a substantial donation to the Group from sales of plants this year.

I expect there to be an increased demand for cultivars of *I.versicolor* after the publication of the October issue of 'The Water Gardener', in which it is anticipated that there will be an article on *I.versicolor* by my friend John Carter of Rowden Gardens, Brentor, Nr. Tavistock. I should be glad to hear of any other members able to supply these plants who wish to be included on a list to be sent out to those from whom I have enquiries.

I hope John Carter, an Aquatic and Rare Plant Specialist, who is adopting the policy of "getting the gardening back into water-gardening", will write an article for a future issue of the Group's newsletter. He has some controversial views on the choice of plants for pools. He too has experienced problems in establishing the correct names of plants, and enquiries on his behalf are continuing.

Some new members have said that they look forward to advice on the cultivation of *I. ensata* cultivars. Notes on the care and germination of Japanese iris seed and plant cultivation notes will be sent on receipt of a stamped self-addressed envelope and a separate first class stamp to cover printing/photo-copying costs.

Several overseas members have written saying how much they value their membership of the Group. In these cases a note has been made in their membership records and reminders will be sent to avoid loss of membership should their subscriptions be delayed.

IRISES IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE.- It was not until I received as a gift the book 'Iris of China', co-authors Dr. James W. Waddick and Zhao Yu-tang, that I gave some thought to the origins of the several beardless iris hybrids which we enjoy in our gardens today. It appears that *I. versicolor* from the marshes of Canada is one such plant that is becoming developed to become an attractive cultivar. Surely there could be others in areas of the Northern Hemisphere in which we do not have a member to report on them.

Members with relatives, friends or business contacts in countries in which we do not have members at present are asked to establish whether such persons have an interest in irises and whether they would like to become a member of the Group. Please let me know.

Finally, a note from David Trevithick when paying his subscription - 'I'm glad to see that mother's work is being carried on'. I doubt whether we will achieve that delightful personal touch developed by Joan over the years but I am confident that with the support of all members the Group will continue to flourish and expand.

ADRIAN WHITTAKER - I heard of Adrian's resignation from the office of Chairman of the Group with considerable regret. My work with him since August 1994 has given me an appreciation of his many good qualities and his logical analysis of a problem. My library of newsletters covers the period since I joined the Group in June 1984 and I frequently come across mention of Adrian when I refer to them. Whether as the Southern area representative, or as Spuria Specialist to date, Adrian has always been available with helpful advice. His newsletter items were, and remain, topical, encouraging and very readable.

During the past five years in which he has also served the Group as its Chairman, Adrian has made a valuable contribution to the work of the Group. This was particularly important during the period immediately before and after Joan Trevithick's death, when the future of the Group seemed quite uncertain. With that uncertainty behind us we can only thank Adrian for his very dedicated work on the Group's behalf during that period. Adrian will remain a member of the Group and we look forward to hearing from him with news of his spuria introductions and a report on his work with inter-specie hybrids, the best of which he considers are possible avenues to a wider range of moisture loving iris.

On behalf of the Group can I say "Many thanks Adrian for your work; and all good wishes for the future. We look forward to hearing from you from time to time."

Philip Allery.

EDITORIAL.

First of all I wish to thank Anne and Philip for their generous support. Being as green as they come, I've needed a lot of coaching to get as far as the first issue and they've been there to help whenever it was needed. As you will notice, they have been producing copy for us in an impressive quantity too, and I'm most appreciative of their efforts.

Having been nothing if not an ordinary member prior to taking up the post in the absence of anyone who knew what they were about, as a gesture of respect for Joan Trevithick, I would like to thank all those fellow 'sleepers' who girded their loins and wrote articles in response to my plea, many for the first time. My one wish is that, having jumped in the water, you'll all realise how easy it is really and continue contributing. The Group consists in the vast majority of such as thee and me and if we're to call ourselves such then we need interaction and this is the forum. Anyone who cares to root out my new member's introduction will see what a hash I made of that, due to being overawed by the prospect of being in print, so I am aware of how difficult it is to screw up one's nerve to the sticking point and get that certain something in the post.

Having said that, quite a large proportion of this issue has come to you due to the kind consideration of overseas societies whose Editors thoughtfully allow me to eviscerate their publications before they get to our Librarian. You will notice that some of their members have kindly sent in articles too. Grateful as I am to be allowed to pass on all these gems, this is a daughter group of the British Iris Society so I don't see why the British membership should get all these interesting articles to read whilst contributing very little itself as a whole. No, this doesn't mean that you're going to see reams from me, being an ignorant bod who's only recently appreciated beardless charms and who grows bearded in the main my contribution is mainly to get the rest of you to do so! As I've tried to stress when pursuing the aforementioned Herculean labour, a small article goes a long way when multiplied, another gardeners way is always of interest and none of us know it all anyway, although some are pretty close. So, there's no reason to feel intimidated, it really isn't that strenuous, we've all got something to offer and there's always space to fill in this beast. Philip tells me that to keep the postage costs the same, twenty pages is the maximum and we do try to give you as much as possible for your money. So now you know what you've to aim at. Since more copy makes for a more interesting read for all of us I'm hoping, in an admittedly mildly anxious fashion, that you, the membership, will realise that what you do is of interest to the rest of us and send it in.

Sue Pierce.

A. H. S. HONOURS CURRIER MCEWEN

Ten outstanding members of the American horticultural community were honoured at the American Horticultural Society's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia during June this year. Among them was Dr. Currier McEwen who received the Society's "Luther Burbank Award", recognising his extraordinary achievement in the breeding of irises and hemerocallis. He has introduced 98 sibericas, 34 japanese cultivars and 43 hemerocallis. As many of you will be aware, "Butter and Sugar", the first yellow sibirica, was introduced by him in 1976. As if these efforts weren't enough, he has also proved a prolific writer with many articles and two books on his favorite plant genera and holds an M.D. in medicine from New York University, having been a faculty member until his retirement in 1970. He is now a Professor of Medicine Emeritus and we wish him many active and enjoyable years yet.

A.H.S. Release

S.I.S. DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD.

The highlight for our Society this spring was the presentation of our D.S.A. to Floyd Wickencamp. Floyd has worked tirelessly on our behalf and his generosity has touched all of us who know him. This award is well deserved. Floyd was also presented with a life membership in our society.

Tom Abrego, S.I.S. President. Summer '95 Newsletter.

IN MEMORIAM.

Miss Evelyn Sharland died early this year. Many of you will remember her as the very efficient Hon. Treasurer of the main Society. She was one of the founder members of the Group and was in close contact with Joan until her death. Evelyn had not been a very active member over the last few years partly because of her sister's ill health and later because of her own. However, following an operation for cataracts, she actively took up gardening again and was busy restoring her garden and her collection of historic irises until the end of last year. Her pleasure, in spite of severe osteoporosis, in being able to get down on her knees and weed was an encouragement to all of us as we grow older. We can be thankful that her last weeks were few and painless. A short time before, Philip had a letter from her in which she paid her subscription and wished us well for the future. You will be glad to know that her nephew has made arrangements for the Kent Group to collect her plants and redistribute them so that her work will not be lost.

Anne Blanco-White

It was discovered earlier this year that Mrs. Harry. L. Edwards, founder of the Society for Sibirican Irises, died on the 6th March 1993. Lovingly known as Peg by her friends and by siberian enthusiasts around the world, she was a creative person with a happy ability to get things done. In 1956 on the reorganising of Region 2 of the American Iris Society she was asked to promote

activities on Long Island and did so with her usual enthusiasm and success. She also helped form the Massapequa Park Garden Club and was its first president.

Although never having a large garden she always grew many irises, including siberians which were then just starting to interest iris growers, largely due to the introductions of Fred Cassebeer and William McGarvey. In 1959 her article regarding siberians in the A.I.S. Bulletin aroused so much interest that her discussions with other enthusiasts culminated in the formation of the S.S.I. in 1960 as a section of the A.I.S. Peg Edwards served as the first president and as editor of a newsletter which she developed into the society's bulletin, "The Siberian Iris".

Her witty and informal style was enjoyed by the members of the S.S.I. and other readers for the full 24 years that she continued as editor. It can be no surprise that when the S.S.I. Distinguished Service Award was established, Peg was the first to receive it.

Currier McEwen.

IRIS SPECIES SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE.

A copy of 'Gardening With Iris Species', the proceedings of the International Symposium held at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis in March 1995 has been added to the B.I.S. Library. None of the papers included are definitive, but all are of considerable interest to growers of the apogon irises.

Remember, please, that postage costs should be sent in advance to the B.I.S. Librarian, - address in the Year Book. Proceedings weigh in at 1100gms, so including packaging, the total weight will be around 1500gms; please check the cost of this with your local Post Office and include the appropriate amount when you ask for it from the Librarian. The Librarian is happy to accept the cost in stamps.

For those interested in the beardless irises there is a great deal of useful material to be mined from this publication and it is well worth borrowing it.

Anne Blanco-White.

SIGNA MANUAL OF SPECIES CULTIVARS.

S.I.G.N.A., the American Iris Society Species Group, is building up a Species Manual of Iris Cultivars. This is a cross referenced collection of registered and unregistered species and cultivars of beardless irises. They are anxious to include all the plants which can be included on a database. The natural reaction is "they must have that one" and the chances are that they may not. Please, if there is any plant you feel should be included will you write NOW to: Anne Blanco White, 72 South Hill Park, LONDON NW3 2SN. Yes, it may be in the lists already, but it is equally possible that it is not. For instance, there should be a number of Doris Hansford's putative bulleyana hybrids around still. If you have one we need to know about it. If you think it should be included, I need to know. Too many people who still have historic irises assume that they are well known and THEY ARE NOT. The same applies to old bearded irises too, but if you have an Ancient of Days from the bearded section, please get in touch with Suz Winspear, 63 Park Avenue, Barbourne, Worcester WR3 7AJ.

O.K., so you've got us splendidly muddled up; no matter, send your information to either of us and we'll pass on what we don't want to the other one.

At the moment Bob Pries would like to know more about the plants listed below:

Forms of *I. laevigata*:

Adonis Lilac Time.
Arctic Sea Moorland Mist
Blue Spangles Silver Cloud
Evening Star Sorrento
Gainsborough Newlake hybrids

Pacificas:

Dr. Riddle
Edith Piaf hybrids
Hirao
Reuthe's Bronze (probably self explanatory)
Western American

I. pseudacorus:

Esk

Bear in mind that distinguishing between laevigatas and single ensatas can be tricky; think of *I. Rose Queen*. Have you grown any of these plants? Where did you get them from? When? Have you any suggestions? If you'd like to get in touch with Bob direct he is always happy to discuss irises. Try DWFQ97A@PRODIGY.COM or 6023 Antire road, High Ridge, MO 63049, USA. Alternatively write to Anne Blanco White.

And on a slightly different note, Kim Blaxland who grows species iris on a fair scale also specialises in violas. Can anyone offer genuine, guaranteed seeds of *Viola reichenbachiana*, please? Or suggest a reliable source. This is an English native. Either send direct to her at 509 County Line Road, Radnor, PA 19087, USA. or, again, to Anne Blanco White.

Anne Blanco-White.

JAPANESE IRIS CONVENTION.

The tenth annual convention of the Society for Japanese Irises was held June 22 to 24 in Towson, Maryland, sponsored by the Francis Scott Key Iris Society. Carol served as chairman with Rosalie Figg as co-chairman. They and their various committee chairmen and helpers arranged what this seasoned conventioneer considers one of the most efficiently organised conventions he has ever known. A total of 158 people attended including Mr. and Mrs. Willy Hubleau with two friends from Belgium and Mrs. Mototeru Kamo, Toyokazu Ichie, Kanafu Hegishi, Hiroshi Shimizu and Tsutamo Yabuya from Japan.

Following registration, the activities began in late afternoon with a series of lectures. Dr. Yabuya spoke on flower pigments, Mr. Shimizu on a recently described disease caused by Japanese iris necrotic ring-spot fungus and Mr. Ichie on some practical genetic features controlling various forms and patterns of Japanese irises. Dinner that night was on one's own followed by an evening program devoted to slide presentations by hybridizers showing their new seedlings.

The activities on June 23rd included the Board meeting of the Society to which all were invited, a bus tour to Ladew Topiary Gardens, The Japanese Iris Show, the welcoming dinner and a two hour judges training session. Unfortunately it poured rain much of the day including the hours at Ladew Gardens. Mr. Ladew had spent much of his time in England where he developed a passion for fox hunting and topiary gardening. Examples of the latter on his magnificent estate include a life-sized and life-like pack of hounds after a fox. Because of the rain, only the closest examples of the topiary artist's work were seen by most of us, but nothing will permit a lover of Japanese irises to miss a display like that in the iris beds. Elisabeth and I had with us raincoats, rubbers and umbrellas but most of the tour had not. Most were soaked to the skin by the time the buses returned to the hotel but everyone was smiling and cheerful.

Much of June 24th was devoted to a bus tour to the gardens of Mrs. Rosalie Figge, Bruce Hornstein and Dick Hoge, Sterling and Barbara Innerst (over the state line in Dover, Pennsylvania), and the Draycott Garden of Carol and Andy Warner. 'Draycott' means 'peaceful retreat' and is the name of the village in England where Andy's ancestors lived. Altogether, 146 cultivars of 26 hybridisers were on display as guest plants in the various gardens in addition to the hundreds of other Japanese irises grown in these gardens. It is impossible for me to describe properly the magnificent individual cultivars we saw. But listed below are those that received the largest number of votes in the two categories of awards:

Favorite Guest Iris.

Winner: ROSEWATER (Bauer\Coble R. '95)
1st Runner-up: Lorena Reid's 9J-55-16D
2nd Runner-up: NIAGRA POWER (Rettig '95)
 (Tie) STELLA NIAGRA (Rettig '95)
3rd Runner-up: ABRACO (Innerst '93)
4th Runner-up: PICOTEE PRINCES (REID '92)
 (Tie) Currier McEwen's T6 90\44

Favorite Garden Iris.

Winner: CASCADE CREST (Aitken '88)
1st Runner-up: BUTTERFLIES IN FLIGHT (Aitken '91)
2nd Runner-up: DIOMEDES (Innerst '92)
 (Tie) DOUBLE FIRST (McEwen '86)
3rd Runner-up: JAPANESE PINWHEEL (McEwen '88)
 (Tie) ORIENTAL BOUQUET (Ackerman '91)
 THE GREAT MOGUL (Payne '58)

The formal part of the convention ended on June 24th with the awards banquet followed by a most successful auction at which more than \$5000 was raised for the benefit of the Society for Japanese Irises. One of the substantial reasons for this financial success was the large number of irises kindly brought for the society by Mr. Kamo. The thanks of the society were expressed to him and to all others who provided plants. Particular thanks went to Carol Warner and Rosalie Figge and to all others who made the convention such a happy and successful one.

Currier McEwen

UPDATE OF JAPANESE IRIS REGISTRATION PROJECT.

This month, February, 1995, I have submitted registration applications for 24 additional Japanese irises that are in commerce but which were heretofore unregistered. This brings to a total 155 cultivars I have registered for SJI. In addition, Currier McEwen allowed me to review the registration applications for another 11 cultivars before they were submitted to the AIS registrar. These irises should all appear in the 1995 *Registrations and Introductions*.

The cultivars I registered this year are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1) AKE NARUMI, | 9) HOZAN, | 17) SHORAI, |
| 2) AKI-NO-NISHIKI, | 10) KAIZUIKU, | 18) SOKA-NO-KAORI, |
| 3) ASAHI-NO-YUKI, | 11) KASUMI-NO-KOROMO, | 19) SUWAGORYO, |
| 4) BENI KOSHI | 12) KIRIGAMINE, | 20) UGETSU, |
| 5) BUNGO-NO-KAGAYAKI, | 13) MIZU-NO-HIKARI, | 21) YAE KATSUMI, |
| 6) DEWA-NO-AKEBONO, | 14) MOMIJIGARE, | 22) YATA-NO-KAGAMI, |
| 7) FUNA ASOBI, | 15) MOYOMAZORA, | 23) YOAKE MAE, |
| 8) HARE SUGATA, | 16) SETSUSHU, | 24) YOZAKURA. |

Special attention should be given to the cultivar SETSUSHU. This is a very lovely cultivar introduced in 1980 by Kamo Nurseries. It is also in commerce under the name "Sessyu", and is shown on Kamo JI Color Chart under this latter name. The name of this iris means "Snow Boat", and it is white, but standards have a small band of red violet, and falls have a very slight brushing of the same color. The correct transliteration of the name into English is SETSUSHU, and that is how it has been registered.

Some of the above cultivars are in commerce under misspelled names, the most prominent of which is the iris FUNA ASOBI. This iris has been sold under the strange, and impossible of "Funa Adobe". If you have an iris named "Funa Adobe", please change the name to FUNA ASOBI. FUNA ASOBI means "Boat Ride"... "Funa Adobe" means nothing in Japanese. The 11 irises that I assisted Dr. McEwen in registering are:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1) FUJIGAWA, | 5) KAMIJI-NO-HOMARE, | 9) RYOSEKI, |
| 2) GEISHUNKA, | 6) KOMA TSUNAGI, | 10) SAKURA KOMACHI, |
| 3) HATSUYUME, | 7) MOMOGASUMI, | 11) SEN HIME |
| 4) HEKIKAI, | 8) OGI-NO-MATO, | |

There are two more cultivars that I shall probably be able to submit for registration very soon. These two are KYOKUSHO and KOSHI-NO-TOME. I have had to request information and assistance from Hiroshi Shimizu re these two.

Special thanks to Gigi Hall (Fremont, CA), who furnished valuable information on a number of cultivars, and provided other assistance. As a result of a letter from Gigi, there may be need to revise the registration description of the cultivar MIZUTAMA BOSHI. Is this iris primarily red violet or blue violet? If blue violet, I will have to revise the registration. Thanks also to D.J. Kelly (Virginia Beach, VA), who provided me with valuable information on a number of registrars, and lent me some beautiful color pictures of a number of imports she grows.

And, of course, we are greatly indebted to Keith Keppel for being our Registrar. He does a wonderful job, and is always ready to assist in any way he can. He provided some very useful information from Jennifer Hewitt on a number of cultivars, some of which are historic and were believed to have been lost long ago. AIS is fortunate to have Keith (and we are lucky to have such a friend!)

Clarence Mahan, *The Review*, S. J. I. Vol.32 No.1. Spring 1995.

CHECK IT OUT.

Clarence has been working on the correct identification of import JI's, which has required tedious communications with only a few cooperative hybridizers and growers in Japan. Let's now talk with each other about any of our own domestic problems. Over the past 40 years, through innocent gardening mistakes, nametags have been lost, etc., etc., and wrong irises have been shipped under assumed correct names.

If gardeners don't check new purchases against the Checklist description, mistakes are passed on to whomever you give, trade or sell that plant (catalog descriptions are not always authoritative). Many Checklist descriptions are short and imprecise. This is the reason SJI has requested that all hybridizers supply a photo of slide to the SJI Library of all new registrations (only two hybridizers have done so in the past five years). The problem is universal, and thus the same request (motion) was brought up at the most recent AIS board meeting, November 1994, for all irises!

John Coble SJI Slides Librarian. *Review*. Vol.32. No.1.

MALFORMED IRIS BLOOMS.

This has been a very peculiar year with spikes of all sizes on pogon and apogon plants. With luck you kept a note of those in your garden. You didn't? You don't surprise me because I'm a cynical old woman. All the same, if those plants do it again next year, the Plant Pathology Department at Wisley would be interested to have samples from those plants for inspection in 1996. Telephone Wisley on 01483 224234, explain that you are B.I.S. and ask what the department wants you to do. Mind you, the probable explanation lies in the weird weather we have had this year and it won't happen next year. If the worst comes to the worst, I expect to be at the A.G.M. in Pershore, so come and tell me about it then if you can't raise the energy to put pen to paper.

Anne Blanco-White.

REMONTANCY (REBLOOM) IN BEARDLESS IRISES.

I have been interested in this phenomenon for several years and if any member observes re-bloom in beardless iris cultivars in their gardens details sent to Mrs. Jane Cole, a member of this Group, would be appreciated. Mrs. Cole is acting as Hon. Recorder for the Remontant Group of which I am Secretary. The reason for this request is that I am attempting to establish whether there is sufficient interest in remontancy to justify a 'robin'.

Philip Allery.

WANTS.

Doug Zimmerman of 68359 Bell Springs Road, Garberville, CA95542, USA, is searching for *laevigata* seeds, especially those from Mr. Hiroshi Shimizu. As far as I'm aware he's had no luck to date, so if anyone can supply him from their own seed, he'd be most grateful. He has offered us P.C. purdyi seed from irises on his property so it would be appropriate to offer him something for his trouble. Please help if you can spare any seed.

I am looking for *sibirica* 'Sprinkles', I don't even know whether it's generally available yet, but it looked so amazing on the slide I saw that I've been asking around ever since! I am also looking for the real 'Margot Holmes' since I've doubts about mine. If anyone has a piece they can let me have I'll be happy to pay them in kind or in lucre. I'd like to get a few so that I can compare them, so if you have her and can bear to part with a bit, please contact me. Does anyone have a piece of 'The Great Mogul' that they could spare me too? I'll pay your postage of course.

Anne Blanco White is in need of divisions of named *laevigata*s if anyone can help her.

Ed.

NEW ZEALAND FLATWORM.

Do remember this sinister pest when introducing plants to your garden this autumn. Submersion of pots in water for at least ten minutes should indicate whether these pests are present.

Flatworms hide in damp places under bricks, stones, pieces of wood and other garden debris. Their eggs resemble small shiny blackcurrants and can often be found in similar places to the adult. Be on your guard and wear gloves when handling them; they can cause irritation to sensitive skin! Incineration appears to be the only way to eliminate them at the present time.

Philip Allery.

On the subject of annihilation, if memory serves, such beasties can regenerate themselves after being diced so Philip's not over-reacting when he stipulates death by fire. If any platyhelminthologists can step out of our ranks with further comments, I'm sure we'd all like to hear from them.

Ed.

SOUTH OF WATFORD.

This has been another of our weirder years. Again, heavy rains over the winter meant that the soil had a very high water content once the growing season got underway. Just as well- on the last day of Wimbledon everyone turned on their sprinklers and went indoors to the cool while they looked at television, so naturally the water pressures plummeted and the Water Boards slapped on the hose orders. Well, you can't have the Fire Brigade short of the stuff when they need it, can you?

Spring was notable for alternating weeks of very warm weather and very cold. Some fruits have set well, some fruit trees, and not only fruit, have lost nearly all their leaves to icy winds and will be in trouble next year. The effect on beardless irises in general has been interesting. Clumps have been irregular in development; at Wisley where there are three clumps, one will be undersized, one normal and another tall, but in general there has been a tendency for spikes to be overtopped by leaves in the *sibiricas*. There seems to have been a tendency for the leaves to grow fairly steadily through the season while the flower spikes have operated a start and stop system. There are signs of this in the *Japanese irises* too.

The *Pacificas* weren't judged this year and nor were the *spurias*, but the *Japanese* have put on a surprisingly good display considering that they bloomed at the height of the heat wave. The new plantings of small *Japanese* cultivars are spread so far around the Rock Garden areas that we are to have maps next year so that none of them get missed out when we are selecting for future trials. Sadly, a tall blue plant which I mentioned last year because of its splendid height and branching is not doing well this year and it isn't possible to be sure why, but it may have had very local frost trouble in the spring. It seems to be Currier McEwen's "Southern Son".

As to my own patch, some of the *pacificas* did very well indeed; the *sibiricas* did nicely, but were very late. It looked as if the sudden drought which set in around the second half of May, and which baked my clay to concrete, delayed flowering until after a cooler spell with a little rain. The *spurias* put on a fine display and there is a nice, small yellow without a name which I cannot recall seeing anywhere at any other time; not enough flowers though. The *Japanese* which were salvaged from under the cider apple are growing on steadily and I have hopes that they will get around to flowering again soon so that I can decide which are what. Currier's "White Parachute" stood up to the heat very well indeed in spite of being in a container and unwatered for

several days. All the same, the prize for survivor of the year goes to *I. ensata variegata*. I'm sorry to say that through sheer neglect I nearly lost this plant and only salvaged a miserable bit of rhizome. It was potted up and left where it was reasonably sheltered all winter, but it didn't seem to be doing awfully well during the spring, so I moved it to a lighter place. Variegated forms do seem to need more light than the plain ones. Well, the drought set in and I couldn't get to it for three weeks. I thought that would be too much. Not a bit of it. There it was proudly waiting for me with lots of nice new leaf and demanding a larger pot.

On the other hand, I'm in trouble with Jack Ellis's "Chance Beauty", the fertile *pseudacorus x ensata* hybrid, because some of its seeds got loose and too many seedlings settled in. So I've been evicting those seedlings which were identifiable. As luck would have it, one seedling turned out to have an aubergine stem like "Gerald Derby's". I'm going to register it in due time though it isn't as spectacular as G.D.. I'm afraid though, that it may be fairly fertile and shouldn't be allowed to seed. And, by the way, if anyone has a piece of "Tiggah", that's going to be registered too. It has aubergine bracelets on the nodes.

There is a heavy replanting session ahead because I must make space for a lot of new plants, including some of Tomas Tamberg's fancy hybrids, so I can only hope that the recent rains will continue though they seem to be threatening more meteorological excesses for the rest of this month.

Anne Blanco-White.

GERMINATION GAMES.

ENSATAE, LAEVIGATAE & P. C. I

Since I grow other irises besides bearded, being mainly interested in the wonderful new PCI's, I thought it sensible to join the SS&J. From the last BIS seed distribution I obtained several packets of *I. laevigata* and *ensata* hybrids.

The *ensatas*, from various sources, specialist growers etc., were sown in soil-less general purpose compost with extra grit added in February 1994. The pots were kept moist in an unheated greenhouse and germination, which started in March, has been good. The entire stock - 42 good seedlings - were potted into Levington's ericaceous in June this year.

The *laevigata* seed, which has had identical treatment, has not germinated so well - half a dozen seedlings - so the ungerminated seed and seedpots are being stood out for the summer and brought back under cover for next winter and hopefully, more seedlings will appear next spring.

Question: I notice some of the *laevigata* seedlings have the pronounced 'ensata rib'. I've no experience of modern *laevigatas* - having only grown *I. colchesteri* in a pond - so, is this rib a product of crossing *laevigata* and *ensata* hybrids and how would subsequent seedlings respond to being grown in standing water?

I've had the best PCI germination ever this year! To date I've potted some 200 seedlings and that's about 2/3 of the current batch! I sow these in the same compost and find this perfectly suitable even though the iris concerned are reckoned to be lime haters.

My main reason for not using ericaceous compost for this purpose is that the acidity must increase during the period up to germination to a level where it could harm newly emerged seedlings. Some PCI seedlings look excessively pale and sickly at this stage and I think this is the cause. On the other hand, the soil-less compost should have a pH of the required level when germination occurs. What I've just said may be complete nonsense but the results are definitely better using ordinary soil-less.

When sowing PCI seed, I get best results from February sowing and if I don't soak before sowing, i.e. just allowing it to imbibe water naturally from its surroundings. I sow about 24 to a 5" or 6" pot and cover with a layer of Croxden's grit. These are then placed in a well ventilated cold greenhouse along with my arilbred seedlings and seem perfectly happy with this. Once germinating (March-April) I make it policy not to allow the small seedlings to get frosted although perhaps I'm being overprotective.

A word of caution: Two years ago I lost about 90% of an excellent batch of PCI seedlings at the potting stage. I used a certain brand of ericaceous compost which, thankfully, is no longer marketed and the seedlings which were potted in it yellowed and then dried up completely as if treated with paraquat! Subsequent analysis of the compost could detect no contamination but the pH was around 4.0! Okay I suppose if you want to grow cotton grass but otherwise not much use. The remaining 10% were potted in Levington's Ericaceous and grew perfectly normally.

Apparently PCI's dislike both low and high pH levels, their ideal being around 6.5. I mix one part of ericaceous compost to one part of either soil-less potting or J.I. No. 1 plus grit and Perlite, the proportions of the last two aren't critical. Mixing the ericaceous and ordinary composts in this way raises the pH slightly, reducing the risks of the aforementioned disaster.

I import my PCI seed directly from Joe Ghio in California. He always sends a wonderful mixture and many of the seedlings I've raised from this compare favourably with some of his named varieties. Perhaps I should admit to having succumbed to the siren lure of his catalogue and imported a dozen or so of his latest PCI's last autumn. They arrived rather late in the season, wrapped in damp newspaper with healthy new roots pushing through. Some of the top growth had started to rot and I soaked them in a solution of tepid systemic fungicide. Each division was potted separately in a similar mixture to that described above but with rather more grit and Perlite. The pots were then stood in a well ventilated cool greenhouse but in spite of all I could do, all but three pots were lost. These three are doing well and have flowered beautifully. The trouble is, I don't exactly know what they are because the names had been written on the leaves and had shrunk to indecipherability by the time the plants arrived. This method of 'labelling' seems common practice in the USA and I wish it weren't.

So, my three Ghio PCI's were rather expensive, I wish I knew what it was I did wrong-or right. I have Joe's 1995 list and 'WOW!' as they say over there, who could resist bright orange with black signals?

My latest project is a large bed using old railway sleepers to house my ever growing collection of PCI's. Inelegant but functional. Doubtless I'll require several lorry loads of imported soil to fill it - and a bank overdraft! In the meantime there is the usual headache of where to house several hundred developing seedlings and mature containerised stock until they can be planted out. It's even worse with the arilbreds - they're all grown under cover.

People around here think I'm mad and I'm beginning to believe it myself!

Geoff Wilson, Lincs.

I beetled off and fondled all my *laevigatas* and my one putative *ensata* but they both seemed to have the same sort of rib to my fingers. If anyone else can be of more use, I'm sure Geoff would be delighted to hear from you. I have been advised that since *laevigatas* proper have a weak rib, Geoff's are probably hybrids and therefore he can grow them in standing water as long as the container's top is clear of it to allow the roots to 'breathe' as well as have ample liquid. Apparently, standing water is robbed of

its oxygen in hot weather and plants can suffocate just like fish if they're that way inclined. *Pseudacorus* and *laevigata* can both apparently stand stagnant conditions however, although that's teetering off the subject. I've had to pot up one of my unknown *pseudacorus*' out of a big barrel this summer since it was doing poorly, whereas what may be *p. Ivory*' has been ramping away. I probably just looked at it askance one morning when I'd got out of bed on the wrong side.

Ed.

BEGINNERS LUCK.

ENSATAE.

Well I'm not really a beginner as for many years we've ordered seed of Higo's hybrid *ensatae* from a well known firm and grown lots of tall leaves but very few flowers. However, catching the enthusiasm of the SS&J Group and encouraged by very helpful letters from Joan Trevithick, and Anne Blanco White, we ordered six packets of seed from David and had another go.

I have for many years grown *Lilium auratum* and *speciosum* hybrids from seed with great success and resolved to try the same method with *ensatae* since their seeds are constructed almost identically. I laid them flat on top of a tray of ericaceous mix compost which was not watered and pressed them down lightly with my fingertips to ensure good soil contact. Then they were misted with a sprayer twice daily for 14 days whilst standing in full sun. I then picked them up with two fingers, avoiding the embryo, and twisted slightly to tear away the outer, leaving the seed intact. If they don't tear easily, water again for a few days. My wife Marion proved better at this, having better nails! The seeds were then covered with a thin layer of ericaceous compost and the trays watered and left in full sun. The method is similar to one recommended for *laevigatae* in a previous Newsletter. From a mid March sowing the seedlings were two inches high by the end of May. Germination was as follows;

Japanese Mixed Diploids-38.

Ensatae Diploids (Japanese imports)-50.

Ensatae 91\55 Chiltone Heine -23

Ensatae 81\19 & 81\41 Pinks- 23.

Seaways Introductions-35.

Japanese Imports -40.

(The nomenclature is precisely that used by David on his packets.)

These were now transferred to square 2" pots and grown on until November, taking over my greenhouse well nigh completely. In November they were potted into tall square 3" pots using a compost comprising one part 'Lady Muck' cow manure compost to two parts sterilised loam, both tested at 6.5pH. I also included about 6 sulphur tablets per pot. I overwintered them in the greenhouse and by February they were 4"-6" high with almost no losses. At this stage my enthusiasm rather ran away with me; as the temperature began to rise in the greenhouse, I purchased a number of 3' pot trays for windowsills, about 1\2" deep and fitted all my staging with them. Most of the pots fitted in them with a few remaining on the floor and I kept the trays filled with water. After a few weeks I noticed some of the shoots looking a little yellow and found, to my horror, that the centres pulled right away. Undoubtedly it was a botrytis type of rot so I watered every 14 days with a fungicide, all to no avail. I lost about 40% of the pots on trays, but only 5% of those on the floor which were grown drier. Whether the higher temperatures on the stage induced a softer shoot more susceptible to fungus attack or whether it was the over abundance of water, I don't know. All was not completely lost since some of the sideshoots regrew around the dead centres. I also carefully pulled off the fibrous remains of the outer shoots as this does seem to help if you catch it early enough.

Now, in April, my problem is lack of space; I have repotted into 4" or 6" pots depending on vigour and have over 120 healthy specimens. We can't sit out in the 'rose arbour' any more as the irises have covered it, sunning themselves, all paths are restricted to about 1' in width, the patio is covered and its fish pond surrounded!

Talk about 'Great Expectations', we really are looking forward to seeing what colours and forms we get from these plants BUT I am ready to bet even money that they will all be at their best when we are away on holiday in Cyprus at the end of May!

John Wilkins, Southport.

Well, I must admit to envy! Between my doing ignorant things with J.I. and the mollusc hordes, I have only managed to raise a few spindly, yellow, nibbled specimens as yet. but I now have hope that since it's obviously all my fault, I can do something about it, such as take them out of water and check their pH perhaps! John hasn't mentioned supplementary feeds, so if there's anyone out there with recommendations or even notes on any to avoid, please do write.

Ed.

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS.

Soil and moisture are vital to good JI growth. Because my suburban soil is clay, and rainfall can be feast or famine, I decided that I should improve on these conditions. Being unable to amend 15 cubic yards of clay, I decided to build raised beds on top of the clay. 2"x12" lumber was erected to encompass what had been a swimming pool. Since JI's like moisture, and having a pool liner, the liner was installed before yards of virgin soil and sanitation compost were added. After JI's were planted, a daily timer watering system was installed. All went well until the second bloom season. At that time it was noted that some clumps were stressed. Inquiries were made, knowledgeable people observed the growth, and samples were sent to the Extension Agency. Nothing was decisive; therefore, nothing was done. After bloom season, stressed clumps seemed to regain their vitality.

The following Spring there were more stressed plants. Believing that excess moisture was the problem, we moved all of the soil in order to remove the plastic pool liner. Horse manure was tilled in, JI's were planted, and the timer soaker hoses were installed. The following year no stressed irises were observed and bloom was great- 54" stalks, many increases, and huge rhizomes. I have never seen any type of iris grown well in a pot, usually because of soil drainage. My back yard 'pot' was no exception, but for the opposite reason. So much for plastic liners!

Unfortunately school is not out. In the past few years there have been rave reviews about rabbit food\ alfalfa pellets. Not wanting to miss out on the benefits, a having a bed that was not producing well, I decided to add alfalfa horse feed. JI's were removed, horse manure tilled in, and then a large quantity of soggy alfalfa was spread where JI's would be planted. As usual, a muddy trench was created with a garden hose- the hose mixed the soil and alfalfa. JI's were wallowed into the mud and the timer

hose was installed. Within weeks it was noted that the JI's were not doing well. The jury is still out, but I believe that I have lost 500 plants. I do not know if it was because alfalfa is not compatible with JI's, because of the application of alfalfa around the roots, or because of the quantity used. I mention this as a precautionary warning. Next Spring's report card will be recorded in the Fall Review.

One more class in the School of Hard Knocks! Unlike most other irises, JI new roots grow on top of the old ones. For this reason JI's should be planted deep initially. Following this thought, 4 years earlier I planted JI's deep. Growth was good until last year. Studying the situation, I realised that there were many undersized crowded rhizomes and that their roots were becoming exposed. Therefore, division was in order. Replanted in the usual muddy trench and with timer soaker hoses installed, this year the irises have rebounded with large rhizomes and luscious growth. To prevent overcrowding and root exposure, and to stimulate growth, I now transplant half the beds every year.

Rich Randall, *The Review*, The Society for Japanese Irises, Vol 32, No.1. Spring 1995.

Well, what can I say- I'm aghast! The rest of the year HAS to have been an improvement....hasn't it? I can only wish you continued resolve!

Ed.

THE WATER GARDEN.

It is apparent that interest in water gardening is increasing and for those planning a pool in next year's programme I would recommend the following books for winter reading:-

'Irises for the Water Garden'- Written for The British Iris Society by Angela Marchant and published in 1969. Although slightly out of date in some respects the principles are still sound. It may be that this publication is now out of print. If so, send me three first-class postage stamps or a postal order to the value of 75 pence and I will send you a photo-copy.

'The Rock and Water Garden Expert' by Dr.H.G.Hessayon, published by pbi publications is the other book I would recommend as essential reading before any work is undertaken. You will find that many nurseries stock this book and at a price of around £6.00 it really is good value.

New members are urged to make use of the Group's library facilities. Those who have joined the Group following the article on Japanese Irises in the July edition of 'The Water Gardener' will be pleased to learn that a copy of Dr.Currier McEwen's outstanding book on these irises is available from the library. With the long winter nights ahead of you why not start from scratch and include in your reading 'Growing Irises' by G.E.Cassidy and S. Linnegar and published by Croom Helm Ltd., or the R.H.S. publication 'Irises' written by S. Linnegar and Jennifer Hewitt. The latter book is available in the Group's library.

I am sure that many members like me who have an interest in water gardening would welcome comment and advice from those members of the Group who have specialist knowledge. Articles on this subject would be welcome.

Philip Allery.

ON THE GERMINATION OF P.C.I. SEEDS.

This article is a status report on a project still in progress:- to accurately define the temperature requirements for germinating PCI seeds. The work has involved primarily the germination of seed in petri dishes at carefully measured and/or controlled temperatures. A home refrigerator is used to obtain cold temperatures, and small iceboxes have been built to maintain warmer temperatures. These iceboxes have a computer controlled fan which can blow cold air from ice or warm air from a heater, into a seed chamber so that temperatures in the range of 40-90 degrees Fahrenheit can be maintained. In most of the experiments, seeds are placed in the petri dish between two layers of moist filter paper, without any other growing medium. In this way the top layer can be removed to observe progress. The rate of germination and total percent germinated for each experiment are recorded.

This report uses the physiologist's definition of germination, i.e., that it is complete at the time that growth starts. For these experiments, each seed is recorded as having germinated as soon as any sprout can be seen coming from the seed coat. Here we define emergence as the appearance of the seedling above the soil.

A particular part of the investigation to date has been to examine the idea of pre-cooling the seeds in the refrigerator or freezer for some period of time before planting them. The following related conclusions can be made based on the results so far:

1. PCI seeds need cool temperatures to germinate. Room temperature here is borderline maximum for some batches, too high for others. The day-time temperature of 80° F. in my orchid greenhouse is definitely too high.

2. Pre-cooling the seeds in the refrigerator or freezer will not make them germinate any better at warmer temperatures. There is no dormancy which can be broken by this method.

3. They will germinate well at 40°F., albeit slowly. Probably they will also germinate at temperatures closer to freezing, but tests below 40.F. are not yet completed.

4. After germination is complete they grow very slowly at cool temperatures, readily at warmer ones. At 40°F., a 1½" sprout will grow to only 1¼" in several weeks. At 72°F., it will put out roots and a 5½" long leaf in 10 days.

These conclusions explain why seed germination methods described by Lee Lanz, Roy Davidson and others, work so well. Lee Lanz's method (Fall 1986 SPCNI Almanac), says to plant the seeds in a container between layers of sphagnum moss, refrigerate for 3-4 months and on removal to a greenhouse they will pop up like a flat of grass. Another method in the same article, is to seal the seeds, along with a handful of planting mix in a plastic zip-lock bag. Place in a cool location, i.e. lower than 40°F., although precisely what wasn't specified. With variations, this method was used by Caroline Spiller at Strybing, Roy Davidson and Dorothy Hujsak. The latter method seems preferable because the time when the seedlings are ready for transplanting can be controlled by leaving the seeds in the bag until the start of growth is desired.(If you review these Almanac articles, remember that they may have a different definition of germination.) These methods work because the seeds germinate well when cold but don't grow much until moved to a warm location.

Germination time for PCI seeds at 60°F. varies with every seed. The first seeds germinate in 15-20 days and the last ones from 25-40 days. At 41°F., however, the first seed germinated at 54 days and the last at 110 days. This is why the germination methods described by Lee Lanz et al. require a refrigeration time of at least three months.

This project has not yet developed much data on freezer use. The kitchen freezer runs at about 0°F. Seeds left there for two months did not germinate and only did so very poorly when removed to 60°F. On the other hand, seeds frozen in a block of ice for two weeks and planted outside emerged normally. More data is needed to resolve the effects of freezing.

Only one other variable has been tested briefly; the effect of varying versus steady temperatures. One of the temperature controlled iceboxes was set up to provide temperatures varying from 70°F at noon to 50°F at midnight repeatedly. This results in a saw tooth pattern averaging 60°F. They germinated in the same time as those held steady at 60°F. They also germinated the same when a petri dish was buried in a box outside where the temperature averaged 61°F, with a minimum-maximum of 44/65. On the basis of just these tests it would seem that such variations are irrelevant.

The tests will continue. The current objective is to get more data on the temperature range for germination of other species. All of the data to date has been from one batch of douglasiana. It was the only species of which a large quantity of seed harvested from one area was available. In the fall of 1994 we gathered more seed; tenax, innominata and chrysophylla came from Oregon, macrosiphon and a small amount of munzii from California. Work on some hybrid seed donated by Vernon Wood and Lewis Lawyer is also planned. Tests already show that these hybrids germinate well at 60°F.

Eugene Loop, Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris Almanac, Fall 1994.

SMOKING IS NOT ALWAYS A HAZARD.

It has been perennially difficult to germinate Australian native seeds utilising the traditional methods of germination. Recent research in South Africa caused Australian researchers to discover that the use of smoke can increase the rate of germination by 10-50 times for some species. Others have up to a hundred percent increase.

Probably stemming from the Aboriginal people's cultivation of the flora by fire as a means of stimulating new foliage growth to attract animals, prior to European invasion, many species have adapted over the centuries so that fire or disturbance enhances their germination. This is most particularly seen in such species as Eriostemon, Stackhousia, Epacridaceae and Telopea.

An enclosed environment can be created quite easily and simply by us all at home using an old drum with a lid/cover or by making a fire-proof tent. Trays of seed, either already sown in punnets or naked, are placed on shelves or racks. Smoke can then be pumped in at the base for about one hour. This smoke should be from a combination of both dry and fresh native materials that are not alight with flame, but are just at the point of combustion. By using a hose that is a metre or two in length and kept cool and moist, the smoke will cool sufficiently to prevent any possible scorching or overheating. Seed is then treated in the usual way for germination. Watering, though, should be kept to a minimum to avoid a 'wash-through' of the smoke effects. Commonly germination will occur 4-6 weeks after the treatment.

Further research is being conducted to determine which chemicals in the smoke may be responsible and also to discover which of the rarer species are boosted by smoke germination.

Why not give this method a try yourselves? Our shy native iris might just break out of their shells and stop being 'shrinking violets'. Some to start on would be *Pattersonia occidentalis* and *Orthrosanthus laxus* (Morning Iris).

Bernard Pryor, Iris Society of Australia, NSW Region.

Many thanks for your news on this intriguing discovery, we wish you every success with your endeavours and a lack of kipping! Please do keep us informed of your progress.

If anyone over here is intrepid enough to try this method I'd be delighted to hear from you, whatever the results!

Ed.

SPURIA NOTES.

From time to time I've been asked about growing conditions for spurias. My own experience goes back about twenty years now and like every one else, I'm constantly learning. I thought it might be useful, particularly for those starting out with them for the first time, to look at some of the factors involved.

As with most plants, a good idea is to try and find out in what conditions the native species in any area grow and then try and replicate them. This usually works well enough with the species but plant hybrids can present more of a problem, especially if they have been bred from a mix of widely differing species. The range of spuria species is not particularly large but habitats vary considerably. The common name for the group, 'salt marsh iris', gives some clues but can also be misleading. Habitats range from sunny low-lying meadows and the cachement basins of rivers through somewhat drier near steppe areas to the shoulders of mountains. In many cases the ability of the roots to reach down to a steady supply of groundwater is a pre-requisite. Salty conditions present no problems for the majority. The common factor is plenty of sun in the spring and summer. Some species naturally dry off completely in high summer as the water levels sink, whilst others remain green. Plant heights vary from around 20 cm to almost 2 metres. If they are growing in long grass the amount of sun reaching the rhizomes will be reduced. Cold tolerance seems to be very high for almost all species. Hybrids can therefore show a variation in their requirements for optimum growth depending on their genetic make-up.

It is quite clear that in most gardens a reasonable compromise must be the order of the day. Over the years the following factors have emerged as being important and are probably a good starting point:

1. Plant in full sun - vitally important in the U.K. A planting against a south facing wall or fence would be a good situation.
2. Neutral or slightly alkaline soil. Spurias are generally quite tolerant but very acid conditions should be avoided. Values around pH 7.5 have been quoted as being optimal.
3. Regular dressings of fertilizer rich in nitrogen and potash. Humus dug in before planting to open and enrich the soil is beneficial. At first, I was not convinced that heavy feeding was necessary but a simple trial convinced me that it improves growth patterns and flowering.
4. I think in the U.K. they should be kept damp for most of the year but not waterlogged. This is by no means a 'cut and dried' answer. Those spurias which dry up in midsummer - and their hybrids - may prefer a period of say two months dry in midsummer. All I can suggest is to experiment.

The other two points are that all resent being moved at any time and are particularly susceptible to drying out during a move, especially at the seedling or small plant stage. In view of this, wherever possible the plants should be placed in their final positions at the out-set.

So there it is - a few ideas. Nothing in any way revolutionary but factors which it is worth bearing in mind. Above all, don't be afraid to experiment, particularly with water and the amount of fertilizer and the frequency of application. The group as a whole is one of the toughest in the genus and that little bit of extra attention can pay dividends in terms of flower numbers and regularity.

Adrian Whittaker.

SPURIANTICS.

The last summer left my ground so hard that even 50 gallons of water on 2 square yards of ground and a plastic covering made an inadequate impression on a flower bed I wanted to replant late in August. The replanting was urgently needed for the benefit of the spurias which were in pots. In spite of everything, I did manage it with rather interesting results. As usual, the spuria leaves collapsed unanimously in spite of having been staked- this was early September and we did have a little rain. In October it really rained and all the rest of the spurias around the garden were shooting up happily, but not the replants. Through November it rained again and we had some frost, then there was a warmish spell and they grew so fast that they're now as far ahead as the ones that were left alone. It is going to be very interesting to see what they do about flowering this season. Incidentally, the Americans are now looking for around eight flowers to a spuria spike and since they set the pace, British judges will be raising their standards too.

Anne Blanco-White

SOME THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT SPURIAS.

My experiences with spurias began in 1966 with 'Dawn Candle' and 'Yellow Wings'. In the mid '70's I split these clumps. It was obvious that distinct personalities were emerging because the row for 'Dawn Candle' was twice as long as that for 'Yellow Wings'. In the late '70's I aquired several more cultivars and thus began my avid interest in their hybridisation.

FIRST: I soon discovered that even if the anthers are removed from the pod parent, if the flower is not protected, bees can bring unwanted pollen. The solution to this is to cut off the falls, thereby removing their landing pad. I have left hundreds of flowers not pollinated with the falls clipped before bee activity begins, and not once has any seed set, even without removing the anthers.

SECOND: On one of my visits to Melrose Gardens outside of Stockton California, Ben Hager told me that he plants spuria seeds directly from the pod as soon as they are mature and before they become dry. This prompted me to set up a direct comparison for eleven different crosses made in 1985. Seeds from these were more or less equally divided and 597 fresh from the pod planted September 5, while 568 left to dry were planted November 21. From the fresh seeds, 241 plants were obtained, giving an average germination of 40.4% with a range of 20.0% to 57.3%. Seeds from the November planting gave only 99 plants, an average of 17.4%. The range was much wider, fluctuating between 4.2% and 63.4%. Only one cross- 'Clarke Cosgrove' x 'Crow Wing', from two year old seed was planted with the fresh seed and from 32 seeds I obtained 23 plants, representing 72% germination. With this one example it would seem that it's better to store the seed for as much as two years. However, from 80 crosses made in 1983 and of 2,490 seeds planted on November 25, with the above mentioned 1985 crosses, 921 plants were obtained, an average germination of 37.1% ranging from 0-100%. Of the 80 crosses, 8 failed to germinate (160 seeds), but from one cross with 'Struttin' as the pod parent, 32 seeds gave 32 plants.

Continued direct comparisons have proved Ben's method sound, but I make so many crosses that I cannot plant all seeds direct from the pod to take advantage of the higher average germination.

THIRD: An interesting observation on their germination resulted from my handling method. I plant 25 seeds in a square 4" pot. These are sunk in the ground in groups of 12 until it's time to line them out in the field, by which time there are several seedlings in a pot. They are separated and planted, the soil being retained for future potting. When only one has germinated, I simply plant the entire potfull. The next year I had seedlings coming up where I had used the pot soil and also around the single plants I had lined out. Not only that, but there was still more germination in the third year! There can be germination in the fourth year too. From over 4,000 seeds planted in the fall of 1993, only 71 seedlings were lined out. Pots rewatered in the fall of 1994 are now (January '95) showing a great many seedlings emerging and some 2000 seedlings were lined out this year.

FOURTH: Having cut the flowers from more than 30 cultivars covering over 1/2 an acre, I found that they multiplied more rapidly than comparable ones used in crosses or which had their flowers left to mature.

FIFTH: When preparing to register my first seedlings I grew them next to some of Joe Ghio's in two year old clumps and discovered that those in my garden were a foot or more taller than their listed height. On a visit to Joe I discovered that he replants all his irises, including spurias, every year. Voila! Mystery solved! Some can be dramatically shorter in their first year, and some may not flower at all. Comparing 100 cultivars in their first year after planting in the Salinas Display Garden the heights ranged from 19" for 'Maritima Gem,' to 52" for 'Highline Bluebird' with an average of 37.9". The same cultivars ranged from 23" to 56", an average of 43.6" in the second year and an overall increase of 5.7". The greatest change was from 31" to 48" for 'Kaibab Trail'. Inconsistencies are usually due to unequal treatment before planting. They will often, however, grow even taller as the crowding of the clump intensifies.

SIXTH: Given good growing conditions, many spuria seedlings will bloom the first year after lining out, in their second year after planting. I have some under poor conditions that have not even bloomed after four years. One year I discovered that seedlings lined out at a new location made as much growth in two months as some elsewhere had done in two years where there was insufficient water.

SEVENTH: It is recommended that spurias need good drainage and that they prefer to be dried off during July and August. Here we have no rainfall during those months and conditions are ideal. However, I can certainly concur with Ben Hager on summer rot. Part of my garden was inadvertently sprinkled in August and when I dug them in early September I not only had this rot, but there was a differential response to it between affected cultivars. The most clear cut evidence was with my new introduction, 'Finally Free'. The water had reached only half of the planting, resulting in 80% of the terminal buds being rotted, while the other half that remained dry showed no rot.

EIGHTH: Knowing that spurias should not be allowed to dry out after digging and before replanting, the move of over 1,000 selected seedlings and 40 cultivars to another location presented a formidable challenge. Digging was accomplished in two days and fortunately the rhizomes were dry and without new root growth. Dividing the clumps took several days, but each selection was placed in a plastic bag in a cool place. Special ones, and a sample of each cultivar, were stored in a refrigerator. This produced no ill effects apart from the loss of growing time. The mature hardened rhizomes should be dipped in fungicide and stored without moist towelling or other media since it is better that they remain dormant for handling and moisture would promote root growth. They seem to grow more rapidly once planted. My cultivar 'Amber Gleam', amongst the latest to flower as a seedling, was amongst the first after it was stored in the refrigerator for a month. This leads me to believe that the trigger mechanism for bloom is highly temperature sensitive. I thus discovered that rhizomes refrigerated for a few months bloom earlier than their established peer group and it is apparently common for growers in the USA to keep their stock refrigerated until sale. (Has anyone over here tried it with newly lifted stock? Ed.)

In conclusion I must emphasize what is already known about spurias- that they all have their own personalities. Some do not bloom the first year after planting, some skip every other year while others are very consistent. Some, like 'Dawn Candle' and 'Ping', together with several of my seedlings, produce rhizomes high on the stem on rare occasions. These are also called proliferations. There are differences in response to diseases and even in the severity of leaf burn from frost during the active growing period. They also differ in whether they clump or spread, making a definite difference in the difficulty of digging. No doubt there is much more to be learned about spurias and I look forward to this in the future!

Charles Jenkins. Arizona. USA. Spuria Society Newsletter.

If there isn't a body of information collected about the disease response of different cultivars of the various species, could we initiate one? I have had one sibirica cultivar absolutely slaughtered by something this year and I have lost it, although my other sibiricas seem fine so far. I am interested in discovering which cultivars are resistant to the effects of such attacks since if it was viral I imagine that these peculiarly warm years will promote their spread.

Ed.

RETICULATA COMMENT.

I think Ray overestimates my contribution of reticulata seed and the damage done by marauding squirrels has been so great that I virtually haven't grown any for the last few years. I do think that if you want to keep your bulbs from one year to another that the pots should be as deep as you can manage, if you haven't a raised- bed frame, because that will give the bulbs a better root run. Dry them off completely when the leaves start to die down, keep them dry and cool through the summer and repot with luscious compost as early in September as you can. They should then be allowed to remain damp so that the root systems can re-establish. If you want to try for seed- and no method is guaranteed- bring the flowering plants into a warmish place when the flowers show signs of opening. You can then watch them in comfort. At night move them somewhere cooler and cover with a plastic bag which has been sprayed inside with water. repeat the process until the anthers have split. Then go ahead and pollinate. Repeat this daily for as long as the flowers and anthers last. The aim and object is to try to approximate to the natural climate of the plants where there tend to be cool damp nights and warm sunny days. Sometimes putting an Anglepoise type of light over the pots to simulate light and warmth helps too. In outdoor frames and greenhouses you will have to rely on sunshine for warmth, but extra humidity is probably not necessary. Go ahead and experiment.

Oddly enough, putting a sprayed bag over crocuses will prolong their house life considerably. Paul Furze used this system extensively.

Anne Blanco-White.

ILL WINDS BRING BENEFITS.

P.C.I.

We were thrilled when the first rains of the 1994-5 season came to California in earnest. The rains started on November 11 '94 and have continued without letup ever since. We had gone through seven years of drought and hoped that our seasonal rainfall could climb to 18 inches, our long-term average in the San Francisco Bay area where we garden. We reached normal on January 12th of this year and it continued to rain and snow in the mountains.

By the time the Pacifica iris were in peak bloom during the last week of March and the first week of April, we had accumulated a total of 33 inches for the season! We were pretty tired of the dark days and the rapid invasion of lush weeds, unchallenged by house-bound hands, but there were some compensations.

Firstly, the extra water was of benefit to all growing things in our garden, not only the weeds. Of equal importance, we were able to evaluate our PCI varieties and seedlings for rain induced characters; standability of the bloom stalks and substance of the flowers under low light and high rainfall conditions. Among the named cultivars, Joe Ghio's 'Eagle Eyes' was the clear winner in resistance to damage by rain. It's foliage resembled a short, upright Siberian iris except that there was a slight outward flare. The flowers were fresh, clean and unspotted, with no sign of tired standards or style arms. 'Age of Chivalry' was also an outstanding performer under these conditions. The soggy conditions gave us an extraordinary opportunity to eliminate those of our own seedlings which failed to meet our standards this year.

I will not list the introduced varieties that fell over from the weight of water, or those whose blooms were speckled with holes or transparent areas where the raindrops had been. These could be numbered among the majority of the 226 PCI species, hybrids and selections that bloomed in our garden this year.

The take home message is that extreme conditions help you choose the quality varieties for your environment. These can be rain, heat, heat plus humidity, or frost. If notes are taken on performance at times of exceptional stress, and this information is directed to growers and breeders, we can choose and tailor PCI varieties for adaptability to every environmental situation.

Adele Lawyer, Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris. USA.

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Adele Lawyer, Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris. USA.

IRIS TYPHIFOLIA.

I'm excited about what *I. typhifolia* is going to add to the diversity of garden siberians. From my observations in the Kansas City area the bloom season is about two weeks earlier than 'Indy' or 'Blue Hyacinth', adding about 50% to the length of the siberian season. The blades are narrower than other sibs., giving a more graceful look to the plants, even after the flowers have gone. The flowers tend to vary a great deal in form, many with pendant falls, but some with flaring falls that emphasize the delicate bloom. The shape of the falls varies from oval to round or heart shaped, while the standards can be vertical or flaring. The colors that I have surveyed are all shades of red and blue-violet, with many contrasting midribs. All that I have seen have at least one branch, if not two or three.

The best specimen that I have seen so far is 'Caitlin's Smile', registered in 1993 and due to be introduced in 1996. This gem was

The potential for *I. typhifolia* has just begun to be explored. It's an adventure considering the possibilities of combining these genes grown from seed obtained from Jim Waddick. I was impressed with the balance and grace of the form, along with good branching and pleasing shades of blue-violet with a yellow and bronze signal surrounded by a white flush.

I. typhifolia readily cross-pollinates with other siberians; so far I have obtained seed from 'Caitlin's Smile' x 'Aqua Whispers',

'Contrast in Styles', 'Devil's Dream', 'Dutch', 'Esther C.D.M.', 'Gull's Wing', 'Indy', 'King of Kings', 'Mabel Coday', 'Magenta Moment', 'Shirley Pope' and 'Sky Mirror'. I should see the first bloom next season with a cross between a two branched stalk of 'Indy' x 'Caitlin's Smile'. I can hardly wait, with the *I. sibirica* x *I. sanguinea* hybrids...a treasure chest just waiting to be opened. A cornucopia of siberians starting to bloom in early April will be a valuable asset to our gardens.

Kevin J. Morley. *The Siberian Iris* Spring 1995.

TYPICAL I. TENAX.

The great diversity of plant variation within a certain species never ceases to amaze me. The different colors and shapes of both the flowers and leaves, makes it practically impossible, for me at least, to place a plant into one species category. I know that there are certain genetic factors that control their 'look like' qualities; but, like people types, it is sometimes difficult to tell just where they belong.

Some years ago while visiting the North Umpqua River in central Oregon, we came upon some beautiful, dark shades of *I. tenax* on the tables at a local restaurant. A lady who worked there took us to see the irises in the wild, a whole hillside above and around her house just outside of Glide. Later that fall a generous amount of seed arrived in the mail. Some was sent to the seed exchanges and a half cup or so was planted in the far back corner of the yard where it came up like grass. There were a few lighter shades, but with a little rogueing out, I eventually had a patch ranging from deep burgundy and plum-purple with sharp contrasting white signal patches. These flowers were 'typical' of *I. tenax*. There was one prized plant with deep plum-purple flowers, a sharp, white signal and also a thin white edge to both the standards and the falls. I fear, however, that it was lost in the move.

Glide and the Umpqua River are in central Oregon on the eastern side of Interstate 5 and I understand some of the darkest colors of *I. tenax* come from that area. On the western side they seem to be lighter in color with blue-violet and the bluish colors typical. What a visual treat to encounter a large clump almost smothered in bloom.

I've planted seed of 'white' *I. tenax* two or three times but they have always turned out to be very pale shades of lavender with some darker veining. One plant, a rather dirty creamy-white with slightly darker veins and more rounded falls, I touted as a white *tenax* until I realised it must be some sort of hybrid and added it to the compost pile. I've never seen the yellow form that I know of. This form was once referred to as *I. gormanii* and was located in only two places, one of which was along Scroggins Creek in Washington County, Oregon. Occasionally, you will find a plant with cream or dirty white flowers, but I don't know that I would call them yellow.

The colors in central Washington seem to be different again, all the way from pale lavenders, pinks and whites, with the darker colors in the red-violet shades. One large area we visited in spring '94 had flowers in pale delicate colors, some with 'red' veining, lovely clear pinks and two groupings of pure white with bright yellow signal patches. I thought they were the find of the century, but apparently pure white is not that uncommon. There is at least one named clone in existence. The white flowers we saw had no veining at all and except for the 'typical' form of *I. tenax* one would think they belonged to another iris species. They were seen on private property and we had the opportunity to gather seed.

Mother Nature does other things besides giving us a complete and complex color range of flowers by mixing up the species, thus adding further complications to an already complex field. *I. tenax* with *I. chrysophylla* gives us the 'Valley Banner' pattern of white flowers with purple lines on the falls and purple styles. This pattern occurs quite frequently in nature, and hybridizers have now stabilized this pattern and given us modern hybrids with much wider petal parts. Another interesting flower I saw in that spring was one simply named 'Douglasiana Seedling' at a show. The flower was 'typical' purple douglasiana with elongated style ends, 'typical' of *I. chrysophylla*. I've never seen douglasiana with these exaggerated style ends, nor have I seen *chrysophylla* in any color other than creamy white. Could this flower have been a cross between the two? I would guess that it was. At any rate, it was a flower with great merit and certainly something out of the ordinary.

Colin Rigsby, Rochester, Washington, USA. S.P.C.N.I. Almanac. Fall 1994

WATERLOVERS IN A DRY TIME.

Last year I began establishing a bed for irises that prefer a bit of moisture in a low lying bed that, when it rains heavily, is like a moated island. I have several forms of *I. pseudacorus*, two different types of the yellow one, one with more markings on the falls than the other; *bastardii*, *variegata*, 'Turnipseed' (which flowered for the first time this year), *flora plena* (from Anne Blanco White), and one with cream and yellow striped flowers which my cousin gave me. Out of four new varieties of *I.*

versicolor, bought last year from Anne, two flowered; 'Party Line', a pretty pale pink, and 'Silvinton'. I. v. *kermesina* I have had for several years growing happily under a 'Victoria' plum in a rather dry spot.

Sibiricas are also growing in the 'damp' bed. 'Blue Forty' has established a large clump and has flowered profusely. I divided 'White Swirl' and moved it out of the herbaceous border, it has sulked but the piece I gave to a friend was quite spectacular. I obviously gave away the wrong half! Several new varieties from Wisley's trial beds the other year put up one or two spikes each and look well, so I look forward to an even better display next year.

Chrysographes rubellum has done me proud again, winning the twin trophy for the second year. It was given to me many years ago, before I became interested in species iris, by a good friend who worked at Kew. It languished for several years in a pot but eventually flowered and I fell in love with it. It is now a clump about 3' across which thrives on very little attention. I also grow the type, the black form and the supposed cross 'Mandarin Purple' which grows rapidly and is very floriferous.

Another present from Kew was *I. confusa* which lives permanently growing in the floor of the greenhouse. I only light up the heater if the temperature drops below -3 degrees and during the winter I have layers of bubble-wrap or newspaper against the glass and 'Agrifleece' over the top when things get really cold. It gets an occasional mulch of home-made compost and water now and then in the summer. It produces flower stems between 3 and 5 feet tall which last for weeks and fascinate all my non-iris visitors.

I. setosa 'Park Form' bought at the June Show has just germinated but the P.C.I.'s are still struggling and those that have flowered are all rather similar. One self-sown seedling of *douglasiana* however, has made a huge clump over 10 years or so and produces a huge amount of bloom. The parent plant was one I bought from Gwendolyn Anley's garden about 30 years ago and which has long faded away.

I. orientalis and *I. monspur* 'Cambridge Blue' both used to do well for me but in the last 3 or 4 years have gone back. Any suggestions? *Orientalis*, I think, has become too over-shadowed by shrubs, I shall probably have to move something. I know, the shrubs!

Jane Cole. Hungerford.

Jane also wrote that for those enquiring after sibiricas 'Perry's Blue' and 'White Swirl', Insaich Alpine Plant Nursery stock the former and Mrs. P. Brown of V.H.Humphrey's the latter.

THE MIXED ALLOTMENT.

I live in a house with three small gardens which are undergoing a change at the moment. A patio and raised beds with some rockery work are to be put in which will have some *I. innominata* and *I. tenax* planted into the scheme. I also have *I. chrysographes* and a few Dutch iris in the old flower beds. My allotment however, grows irises along with my vegetables. It is about two miles from the Quantock hills at the lower end of Durleigh brooke and is on a south facing bank which makes the best use of both winter and summer sun. In flower this summer were P.C.I. 'Apricot Peach', always a joy to see, the siberians and also *chrysographes*, the latter making excellent growth. I moved and divided 'Holden Clough' last November and that is making very good progress with a good number of new shoots which I am very pleased about as it is on my 'top ten' list of irises.

I. ensata 'Banners on Parade' is fighting to survive with only one seedling out of five left, which is about 5\8" high. I am considering resowing more seed next season. *I. orientalis* looks to have average growth; 2'6"-3', but appearance is poor with discolouration of the leaves- yellow-brown at the edge and green at the centre of the leaves. Two leaves show concertina-like growth which first made an appearance in February and now are dead. I hope I don't lose that plant, if anyone knows the reason for this type of growth, I would be pleased to have an answer.

Peter Brooksbank, Bridgewater.

Thank you for writing Peter, sorry to hear you have problems. I have had these concertinas on some of my sibiricas, but have always assumed this simply to be due to young growth getting a lot of water and becoming soft enough to fold rather than push its way past the adjacent leaves. They've not subsequently exhibited discolouration that I remember. So if anyone can help Peter out, or tell me that I'm wrong and I ought to be worrying too, we'd both be very grateful

Ed

THE ART OF THE SHOE-HORNED GARDEN.

On moving to my present garden in 1987, all that was here was rubbish and weeds 12' high. I set to and double dug the whole garden, it's only 15' by 140' long, however I also have the use of the bottom of next door's garden for some of my T.B.'s. I then proceeded to plant all the T.B.'s I had brought with me. I also put in five trees, which I restrict the growth of, including a medlar and a quince and several unusual shrubs. There is a dyke beyond the two gardens which is nice, with swans, herons, mallards, moorhens and a water vole who has adopted me.

Since then I have branched out into herbaceous perennials, especially hardy geraniums and many different hellebores. Also of course I am trying out different irises, so far *japonica*, *laevigata*, *Pacific Coast*, *sibiricas*, *spurias* and the Dwarf and Intermediate bearded. Friends tell me they have never seen so much packed into such a small space. I also have quite a few early flowering bulbs ending with the 'Parrot' tulips. Last year I got a friend to build me a pergola, so now I am training the honeysuckles-three types, passifloras, roses-'Albertine' and 'Mermaid'- and a hydrangea up onto it. I also have the seedlings of a glory vine growing, to add to the rest.

All I need now is to win the lottery, so I can have a larger garden.

Margaret Criddle.

AGAINST THE ODDS.

JAPANESE.

Sue Pierce has prevailed upon me to write about my novice's experience with Japanese Irises. I am a sucker for a lady in distress and so, despite my only success being in getting 100% survival rate, bear with me while I bore you a little.

Lorna and I found ourselves - after 20 years living in flats in the tropics and growing little apart from chilli, 'queen of the night' and poinsettias, in pots on balconies- to be proud owners of God's own half-acre which had had limited interference from mankind apart from lawn (lined on two sides by a few shrubs and the inevitable overgrown *leylandii* hedge) and a pond in the

damp area. Note that 'dampest' was a carefully chosen word. In our area, Argyleshire\ Dunbartonshire, with a clay soil and say 60 inches of rain a year, drought is *not* a problem- although summer '95 managed a powerful imitation.

Our problem was to remember what we should have learned at father's knee about gardening and then to work out what to plant under 140 year old deciduous trees (beech, oak, lime, sycamore), how to drain the planned fruit garden and how to accommodate soggy areas in the garden to best effect. Only the last of these might interest readers here.

The new R.H.S. Gardener's Encyclopedia lead us towards Japanese Irises and thence via the R.H.S. to the S.S.& J. Group of the BIS. Eventually I wrote to Norman Payne to order 'Geisha Gown'; he advised against only one variety as we could increase our stock by dividing rhizomes. He also wrote expressing doubts about success with them in Scotland but gave a lot of advice to give us the best chance. His advice was *very* welcome.

Rhododendrons thrive here (in fact the species 'ponticum' has naturalised far too successfully) with the moisture and the mild winters. The soil is slightly alkaline and the garden provides good wind protection but perhaps too much shade in the summer for Japanese Irises. The best way to find out was to order some and try, armed with Norman's advice and a dozen plants of 10 varieties. I only ordered seven but Norman obviously felt we needed all the help he could give!

This was in July '93 and after a fitful winter when our new babies never completely went off to sleep beneath their compost blankets they stuttered into growth, some enthusiastically in the spring, some reluctantly as late as June '94. As with all new 'parents' we worried over slugs, or were those missing bits and collapsed centre growth the work of weevils? The growth certainly didn't look strong enough to support flowers; in this we were right, but the growth points increased in one year and all twelve plants had survived! We had treated with slug bait and 'Sybol' (for weevils) just in case and fed with 'Phostrogen Ericaceous' and left them to settle back for another winter.

Spring \ summer '95 has seen much healthier growth and, apart from watering more and trying 'Dug' processed chicken manure, we have not changed our strategy. Again they have spread more, thickened up somewhat but still not flowered. We are optimistic for '96 but with spreading growth rather than bigger crowns we are not sure whether our optimism is misplaced. Comment and advice would be very welcome.

Incidentally, leylandii clippings straight from the hedge make an excellent mulch- I have used it both in the fruit garden and under the young rhododendrons- so there *is* a silver lining to that particular cloud!

Pat Whitaker, Rhu.

Many thanks for a most enjoyable article, I hope others follow your good example! Let's hope that the coming year brings you bloom.

Ed.

FROM DAVID TREVITHICK.

Since the death of my mother in July 1994, I have been grateful to receive many kind letters and tributes to her memory and work for the SS&J Group from members both at home and overseas. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their kindness and appreciation of her efforts to promote these most beautiful irises and wish the Group every success in the future.

A.I.S. SPURIA AWARDS 1995.

Eric Nies Medal.

60 votes - Cinnamon Stick. (Niswonger.)

Runners up; 32 votes- Dress Circle. (Hager.); 29 votes- Chocolate Fudge. (Niswonger.); 29 votes- Highline Coral. (McCown.)

Award of Merit.

36 votes- Candle Lace. (Jenkins.); 33 votes- Sultan's Sash. (Niswonger.); 31 votes- Sonoran Caballero. (Wickencamp.)

Runners up; 28 votes- Snow Hawk. (Corlew.); 27 votes- Bellisnado. (Corlew.); 24 votes- Laced Coffee. (Rowlan.)

Honorable Mention.

40 votes- Alphaspu (Jenkins.); 31 votes- Ila Remembered (Hager.); 29 votes- Bronze Art. (Jenkins.)

PLANT SALES.

I have divisions of flowered seedlings available, mostly two years old; 2n=40 chromosome chrysographes, these are plicatas, also a few divisions of yellow seedlings from sibirica 'Orville Fay', all at £3.00. I have unflowered seedlings of pseudacorus variegata and the following spurias too at 25p; 'Zulu Chief', 'Elixir', 'A.W.'s yellow\brown\red', 'Barbara's Kiss', 'Kaibab Trail', 'White Shimmer', 'Mixed Jenkins', 'Eurasia', 'Mystic Mesa', 'Janice Chesnik', 'Redwood Supreme'. These prices include postage, proceeds to the Group so think of your subs.!

Ed.

SEED BANK.

ENSATAS.

Cultivars

Chitose Heine x Hekuin
Hatsuyia mixed diploid pinks
mixed Americo-Japanese
mixed named cultivars
mixed - N. Payne

Payne Award winners

dark blue
light blue
90\73 x bee

FOETIDISSIMAS. foetidissima mixed

HEXAGONAS.

brevicaulis
hybrids from Texas

hybrids

LAEVIGATAS.	Aon Ton	Nure sagi
Cultivars	Gosho beni	pale violet
	mixed	Violet Parasol
	Nou beni	
Species	? albopurpurea	semperflorens
	colchesterensis	'laevigata'
	laevigata	
PSEUDACORUS.	Berlin Tiger	Sulphur Queen
Selected forms	Golden Queen	
Species	c. Turkey	bastardii
	nearly pure white - Horinaka	cream form
PACIFICAS.	Califancy	Pacific Orphan
Cultivars	Canyon Orchid	Sierra Dell
	Carmel Gem	Silver Circle
	Las Olas	Triple Heart
	Monterey Snow	mixed hybrids - Bob Wi
Species	innominata - peach	mixed crosses
	macrosiphon c. Marin co.	pacific coast natives
	mixed yellow crosses	
SETOSAS.	setosa	c. R Amur Rodionenko
	" from Park Farm	c. S. Kuneshir JH 1991
	'Alaska Blue'	c. S. Magaden
	var hondoensis	
SIBIRICAS.	Avon	Mulled Wine
	Caesar	My Love
	Castle Grace	older varieties
	Caesar's brother	orchid and purple
	Cambridge	Orville Fay
	Clee Hills	Outset
	Dance Ballerina Dance	pink seedlings
	Dreaming Yellow	Red Flame
	Fanny Heidt	Rejoice Always
	Fourfold White	Silver Edge
	High Standards	Sparkle
	Laurenbuhl	Teal Velvet
	mixed tets	Tropic Night
	mixed reds, pinks, blues and lavenders	Vee One
	mixed red diploids	Wiltrud Gissel
	Weisse Etagen - tet	
Species	2n=40 mixed	chrysographes rubellum
	delayvayi	" dark purple
	forrestii	delayvayi 'Didcot'
	sanguinea (nertschinskia)	dykesii x clarkeii
	sanguinea	typhifolia
	sibirica acuta sibirica	wild form
	" alba	" c. Jura, Switzerland
SPURIA	Adobe Sunset	Gentry
	April's Birthday	Harvest Shadows
	? Arbitrator	Irene Benton
	Baby Chick	Isla Crawford
	BF53 x Diminuendo	Janice Chesnik
	Border Town	Kaibab Trail
	Brass Beauty	La Senda
	brown, red and yellow mixture	Lenkran
	Candle Lace	Monspur Cambridge Blue
	Cherokee Chief	Mystic Mesa
	Countess Zeppelin	Perry Bunker
	Easter Colors	Pieces of Eight
	Elan Vital	Purple Reign
	Eleanor Hill	Shelford Giant

	Elixir	small yellow c/v
	Ethic	Universal Peace
	Eurasia	Violet Bloomfield
	Evening Dress	Zulu Chief
	Finally Free	yellow \ white bicolor
Species	carthaliniac	LG 5054
	“ ‘alba’ monnieri	
	crocea (aurea)	musulmanica
	graminea	notha
	“ pseudocyperus	orientalis (ochrolueca)
	halophylla	sintenesii
	“ hybrids	sogdiana
	“ pale yellow	“ c. S.W. Siberia R. Tobol
	“ c. Stavropol	“ c. Asia Minor
	kerneriana	

VERSICOLORS.

Cultivars	Cat Moussam	Party Line
	Claret Cup	pale blue
	kermesina	pinks
	Mint Fresh	pink\red crosses
	minis	'Rosca'
	mixed	'Rougette'
	mixed Morgan Award	white - lavender veins

Species	kermesina
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VIRGINICAS.

	virginica var. shrevei
--	------------------------

XIPHIIUMS.

	latifolia	very pale blue
	“ Mont Blanc	

INTER-SPECIFIC HYBRIDS.

Gerald Derby - versicolor x virginica

IRIDS.

Dierama pulcherrimum

APPENDIX - GROUP MEMBERSHIP AT 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1995.

Mr. P.E. Allery, (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), 199, Walsall Road, ALDRIDGE, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 0

Mr. J.C. Ashford, Edenvale, Sandown Farm Lane, NAIRN, Scotland.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Baughen, Copper Beeches, North End Lane, DOWNE, Orpington, Kent BR6 7HG.

Dr. J.A. Beal, Ashleigh, Bamsley Road, SCAWSBY, Doncaster DN5 8QE. (West and Midlands Area representative.)

Beaver Water Plant & Fish Farm Ltd. - See under Mr. J.M. Wheeler.

Mrs. A. Blanco- White, (Secretary), 72, South Hill Park, LONDON, NW3 2SN. (London Area and Japanese iris Representative.)

Mr. G.R.A. Bomford, The Hills, Tanhouse Lane, Beoley, REDDITCH, Worcs. B98 9AB.

Mrs.M. Bond, Olmeda, Ferry Lane, MEDMENHAM, Marlow, Bucks. SL7 2EZ.

Mr. P. Brooksbank, 4 Queens Road, BRIDGWATER, Somerset. TA6 6EG.

Mrs. P. Brown, trading as V.H. Humphrey, Iris Specialist, Westlees Farm, Logmore Lane, WESCOTT, Dorking, Surrey. RH3 3JN.

Mr. J. Carter, Proprietor, Rowden Gardens, BRENTOR, Nr. Tavistock, Devon. PL19 0NG.

Mr. R.R. Coggins, Lovacott, Shebbear, BEAWORTHY, Devon. EX21 5HN.

Mrs. P.J. Cole, Iona, Inholmes Common, Woodlands St. Mary, HUNGERFORD, Berks. RG16 4SU.

Mr. & Mrs. G. Coley, Chetton, 3, Coppice Lane, BROWNHILLS, Walsall, West Midlands. WS8 7JN.

Mrs. M.V. Criddle, 5 Storeys Lane, BURGH le MARSH, Skegness, Lincs. PE24 5LR.

Croftway Nursery, Barnham, Bognor Regis - see Mr. G. Spencer.

Mrs. J.M. Dean, 8, Thurlstone Road, BLOXWICH, Walsall, West Midlands. WS3 3NX.

Profr. & Mrs. D.A. Dixon, Walnut Cottage, 3 Newark Drive, WHITBURN, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear. SR6 7DA.

Mrs. M. Fraser, Barsham House, Roundwood, Rucklers Lane, KINGS LANGLEY, Herts. WD4 8BE.

Mr. J. Frisby, 131 Lutterworth Road, BURBAGE; Leicestershire. LE10 2DL.

Mr. Mark Frith, 80 Deans Way, EXHALL, Coventry. CV7 9HF.

Mr. G.W. Goddard, 25 Mornington Road, CHINGFORD, London E4 7DT.

Mrs. H.M. Goodwin, (Vice-Chairman), Corner Cottage, School Road, GREAT BARTON, Bury-St-Edmunds, Suffolk. IP31

Mrs. J.K. Gray, Graygarry, 8 Churnhill Road, ALDRIDGE, Walsall, W. Midlands WS9 0HG.

Mr. S.P. Harrison, 56 Chatsworth Road, DORE, Sheffield. S17 3QH.

Mrs. J. Hewitt, (Librarian), Haygarth, Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER, Kidderminster DY14 0QU. (Siberica Specialist).

Hollybush Aquatics c/o Hollybush Nurseries Ltd., Hollybush Farm, Warstone Road, SHARESHILL, Wolverhampton, WV10 7LX.

V.H. Humphrey, Iris Specialist - see Mrs. P. Brown.

Mrs. R.G. Jones, 87 Ack Lane East, Bramhall, STOCKPORT, Cheshire. SK7 2BH.

Mr. G. Lewis, (Seeds Officer), Rancho Lodge, Stone Street, WESTENHANGER, Kent CT21 4HS.

Sqdn. Ldr. & Mrs. McCarthy, 31, Northern Avenue, HENLOW, Beds. SG16 6ES.

Mr. P. Maynard, 43 Sea Lane, GORING-BY-SEA, Worthing, Sussex BN12 4QD.

Mrs. J. Moore, The Knoll, Northwood Green, WESTBURY-ON-SEVERN, Glos. GL14 1NB.

Mrs. Marilyn Neale, 33, Woodlands Avenue, SPILSBY, Lincs. PE23 5EL.

Miss P. Oliver, The Garden House, Angley Park, CRANBROOK, Kent. TN17 2PN.

Mr. N.S. Payne, 84, Whatley Avenue, MERTON PARK, London SW20 9NU.

Mr. S.J.A. Pierce, (Newsletter Editor), 89 High Street, Measham, SWADLINCOTE, Derbys. DE12 7HZ.

Mr. G. Price, 101 Baker Street, CHASETOWN, Staffs. WS7 8RQ.

Mr. A. Robbins, Grosvenor Tropicals, 160-62 Beersbridge Road, BELFAST. B76 8AE.

Mr. C.A. Rose, 26 Devonshire Road, BRISTOL. BS6 7NJ.

Rowden Gardens Nursery, BRENTOR, Nr. Tavistock - see Mr. J. Carter.

Dr. S.P. Ruffles, 26, Middleton Road, Streetly, SUTTON COLDFIELD, West Midlands. B74 3EU.

Mr. J. C. Russell, 47 Station Road, NEW BARNET, Herts. EN5 1PR.

Mrs. S. Ryder, Toadshole Cottage, Old Road, Feering, COLCHESTER, Essex. CO5 9RN. (Eastern Area Representative).

Miss N.S. Scopes, 68 Somerset Road, NEW BARNET, Herts. EN5 1JD.

Mr. P. Setchell, 6, Elmcroft Road, North Kilworth, LUTTERWORTH, Leics. LE17 6HX.

Mr. B. Sleeman, c/o Waterside Garden Design Ltd., Shield Hall, HEXHAM, Northumberland. NE46 1TU.

Mr. Ian Smith, Siri-Dam, 8 Wicket Road, Kinson, BOURNEMOUTH, Dorset BH10 5LT.

Mr. John M. Smith, The Water Garden Nursery, Highcroft, Moorend, Wembworthy, CHULMLEIGH, Devon. EX18 7SG.

Mr. G. Spencer, Croftway Nursery, Yapton Road, BARNHAM, Bognor Regis, W. Sussex PO22 0BH.

Mr. D.A. Trevithick, 86a Grantham Road, RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT, Nottingham NG12 2HY.

Water Garden Nursery, Wembworthy, Chulmleigh - see Mr. John M. Smith.

Mr. H.A. Webster, 5 Gladstone Street, HEANOR, Derbys. DE75 7PW.

Mr. J.M. Wheeler, Beaver Water Plant and Fish Farm Ltd., Eastbourne Road (A22), NEWCHAPEL, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6HL.

Mr. J.P.C. Whitaker, 10 Laggary Park, RHU, Dumbartonshire. G84 8LY.

Mr. A.E. Whittaker, Chestnuts, Hilden Way, LITTLETON, Winchester. Hants. SO22 6QH. (Spuria Specialist and Southern Area Representative).

Mr. John Wilkins, 25 Dunster Road, SOUTHPORT, Lancs. PR8 3AG.

Mrs. L. Wilkins, (Hon. Auditor), 17 Lancaster Avenue, ALDRIDGE, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 8RE.

Mr. G.F. Wilson, Little Garth, Main Road, Utterby, LOUTH, Lincs. LN11 0TQ.

Mr. & Mrs. R.E. Wilson, Dalehead, 100 Blackburn Road, CHORLEY, Lancs. PR6 8TJ. (Pacifias Specialist and North West Area Representative).

Dr. R. Woods, 5 Coppice Avenue, GREAT SHELFORD, Cambridge CB2 5AQ.

Mrs. J. Young, Kiln Cottage, 33 Park Hill, WHEATLEY, Oxfordshire OX5 1NE.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIP.

CANADA - Mary Lyn Brown & David Maltby, 54 Stonechurch Road, E. Hamilton, ONTARIO L9B 1A9, Canada.

EGYPT - Professor Dr. Nasr A. El-Emary, Professor of Phytochemistry and Medicinal Plants, Faculty of Pharmacy, Assiut University, ASSIUT 71526, Egypt.

FRANCE - M. Jean Peyrard, 101 Ave. de la Republique, 38170 SEYSSINET PARISSET, France.

GERMANY - Frau. M. Ahlberg, Hohes Feld 22, 3171 ROTGESBUTTEL, Germany.

Herr Eberhard Schuster, Post Gadebahn, D19065 AUGUSTENHOF, Germany.

Dr. T. Tamberg, Zimmerstrasse 3, 100 BERLIN 45, Germany.

Herr A. Winkelmann, Zieglerweg 13, D - 86447 AINDLING, Germany.

JAPAN - Mr. Akira Horinaka, c/o Kawara-machi 2-6, Shinomiya Yamashina-ku, KYOTO CITY 607, Japan.

Mr. Hiroshi Shimizu, 3 - 6 - 21 Aihara, Sagamihara-shi, KANAGAWA-KEN 229, Japan.

NETHERLANDS - Dr. & Mrs. de la Hayze, Selsdam 22, 4331 NT MIDDLEBURG, Netherlands.

NEW ZEALAND - Mr. H.E. Collins, 6 Pyes Pa Road, TAURANGA, New Zealand.

Miss Gwenda Harris, Editor, New Zealand Iris Society Review, Private Bag, Herbert, NORTH OTAGO, New Zealand.

Mrs. F. Love, 11 Frederick Street, Carterton, WAIRARA, New Zealand.

Mr. P. Richardson, 78 Thackeray Street, UPPER HUTT, New Zealand.

SWEDEN - Mrs. I. Brolin, Rausets Bostelle, S24295 HOERBY, Sweden.

Mr. C. Lidner, Herserudsvagen 62, 181 35 LIDINGO, Sweden.

U.S.A. - Mr. & Mrs. T. Abrego, Chehalem Gardens, P.O. Box 693, NEWBERG, Oregon 97132 - 0693, U.S.A.

Mr. H. Brookins, N 75 W, 14257 North Point Drive, MENOMEE FALLS, Wisconsin 53051 - 4325, U.S.A.

Mr. M. Cook, 639 Portland Drive, LEXINGTON, Kentucky 40503 - 2161, U.S.A.

Helen Fowler Library, Denver Botanical Gardens, 909 York Street, DENVER, CO. 80206 - 3799, U.S.A.

Mr. L.T. Fry, 4, Renata Court, NOVATA, CA 92686, U.S.A.

Mrs. Ada T. Godfrey, 9 Bradford Avenue, FOXBOROUGH, MA 02035, U.S.A.

Miss H. Grier, 4621 Palm Avenue, YORBA LINDA, CA 92686, U.S.A.
Mr. D. Hamblin, 152, Idlewild, MUNDELEIN, Illinois 60060, U.S.A.
Judy Hollingworth, Editor, The Siberian, 120 Sherwood Road, EAST WILLIAMSTOWN, MI 48895, U.S.A.
Mr. B. C. Jenkins, 9426 East Tapeka Drive, SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85255, U.S.A.
Mr. Lewis O. Lawyer, Editor, The Society for P.C.I., 4333 Oakhill Road, OAKLAND, CA 94605, U.S.A.
Mr. C. Mahan, The Iris Pond, 7311 Churchill Road, McLEAN, Virginia 22101, U.S.A.
Dr. Currier McEwen, RD1, Box 818, SOUTH HARPSWELL, Maine 04079, U.S.A. (Honorary Life Member.)
Mrs. R.F. Miller, 6065 N 16th St., KALAMAZOO, MI 49004, U.S.A.
Mr. D. Niswonger, Cape Iris Gardens, 822 Rodney Vista Blvd., CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO 63071, U.S.A.
Mrs. Shirley Pope, Pope's Perennials, 39, Highland Avenue, GORHAM, Maine 04038, U.S.A..
Mr. Robert Pries, 6023 Antire Road, HIGH RIDGE, MO 63049, U.S.A.
Mr. Marty Schafer, Joe Pyeweed Nursery, 377 Acton Street, CARLISLE, MA 01741, U.S.A.
Carole Spiess, Editor, The Spuria Newsletter, 6204 N. 15th Ave., PHOENIX, AZ 85015, U.S.A.
Dr. James W. Waddick, 8871 N.W. Brostrom Road, KANSAS CITY, MO 64152, U.S.A.
Mrs. C. Andrew Warner, 16815 Falls Road, UPPERCO, Maryland 21153, U.S.A.
Mrs. Sharon Hayes Whitney, RR1 Box 847, SOUTH HARPSWELL, Maine 04079, U.S.A.
Mrs. Evelyn White, Editor, The Japanese Review, 193 Jackson Hill Road, MILNOT, Maine 04258, U.S.A.
Mr. F. Wickencamp, 10521 Bellrose Drive, SUN CITY, AZ 85351, U.S.A.

(Please check to see if your address is correct. Notification of address changes and corrections would be appreciated.)

REMINDER - 1996 Membership subscriptions are due on 1st January, 1996, viz:-
£2.50 - Members in U.K. and all countries in E.E.C. postal rate area; and
£3.00 - All other members resident overseas.

The change from a mid-year membership term ending on 30th June annually to a calendar year membership term will come in effect on 1st January next. Members whose subscription was paid to 30th June, 1995 only, and who have yet to adjust their payment to the membership year change, should increase their subscription payment by £1.50 or its equivalent, on this occasion only.

Philip E. Al
Membership Secre

8th September, 1