

Twin City Iris Society

NEWS & VIEWS

Vol. X, No. 8

October, 1962

The date for the next meeting of the Twin City Iris Society has been set up one week — so instead of the fourth Thursday it will be held on October 18, 1962. This is our Annual dinner meeting and is one of the most important as well as one of the most enjoyable meetings of the year. It will be held at the Hasty Tasty restaurant, 1433 W. Lake St. in Minneapolis, at 6:30 P.M., October 18, 1962. The roast beef dinner will be \$2.95 and reservations may be made by calling any of the following:

Mrs. O. A. Bakke - JU 8-6919
Miss Adah Anderson - WE 8-7216
Mrs. Ethel Smith - MI 9-3828
Mrs. G. B. Gable - PA 9-8855

Reservations must be made by Sunday, October 14. If it is necessary to cancel a reservation made previously, call Mrs. G. B. Gable by Tuesday — any reservations standing after this date must be paid for. This policy is necessitated by the restaurant — they must know exactly how many to expect.

We wish to urge everyone to attend this meeting. The program will be entertaining and informative, as the report from the program chairman will show, and the annual reports and election of officers are very important. Besides, where else can you get good food with the good fellowship one finds in the Twin City Iris Society? This should be a must meeting for everyone who can possibly make it.

From the program chairman:

Many people took the time, after last month's meeting, to tell me how much they enjoyed the program. I am sure we are all very grateful to the Minnesota Allied Florist's Association for loaning us the fine colored sound movies. After viewing the film on arranging, I am afraid we have no excuse for not entering arrangements in that class at the Iris Show next year!

When we gather for dinner October 18th, it will be the prelude to the first annual meeting of our second decade as a society. Our speaker, Mr. E.M. Hunt, of the Minnesota Horticultural Society, is a familiar figure to many, many gardeners, both locally and throughout the state and has been a frequent speaker before gardening groups. All past presidents of the Twin City Iris Society know him, since, in that capacity, they have automatically been directors of the Hort. Society and have attended meetings at which Mr. Hunt either presided or was prominently in attendance. Inasmuch as he was the speaker at our first annual meeting ten years ago, it seems fitting that he should help us launch our second ten years also.

Be sure to come for fine food, an interesting program and good fellowship. Let's all try to make each visitor and new member want to come again!

MayBelle Wright

Attention all hybridizers!!! Do you have your seeds planted yet? If you haven't, they must be planted now. It is already late but if they are planted immediately they should do all right ... Don't put it off another day!!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Serving in the capacity of your president this year has provided me with a great source of material for pleasant recollections in the future. One of these happy memories is certainly going to be our September meeting. It was good to be back together after our summer dormancy, and with the fine attendance and interesting program it would have been a good meeting in any event. But when it turned into a virtual birthday party, complete with a fancy cake and a greeting card covered with the signatures of well-wishing friends — well, how about that?? My thanks to all you wonderful folks!

Here is some food for thought. From May 24, the date of our last previous meeting, until September 27 was four months, one-third of a year. In the meantime quite a lot happened out in the garden. Our irises came into bloom, reached their peak, and went out of bloom. We made our crosses, grew and finally harvested our seed pods, and most of us got our seeds planted. We divided and replanted our old clumps, bought our new varieties, stole a little more space from the lawn to get room, and planted them. We hoed and cultivated, sprayed and fertilized, dug new beds and renovated old ones. In short, we went through all activities of the growing year with the exception of putting our gardens to bed for the winter and getting them up again in the spring.

With all this activity, however, there was one thing that we didn't do. We didn't have a meeting. We had a lot of questions to ask and observations to swap with other members. But when the September meeting came along the evening was pretty full & we didn't get around to them. It doesn't look as if either the October dinner meeting or the Christmas party will provide an opportunity to discuss them. By January we will have forgotten about them. The point of all this is that some of our members think we should hold regular meetings in some or all of our three dormant summer months. What do you think? I'll be asking for an expression of opinion for the guidance of next year's officers.

To change the subject, our historian tells me that she is still in need of such items as old bulletins, pictures, articles written by or about our past or present members, or other similar material pertaining to the history of our society. Anyone who has such material and is willing to contribute or lend it to the society is asked to forward it to Mrs. J. F. Lavacot, 226 Prescott St., St. Paul 7.

G. F. Hanson, President

Our thanks to Gus Sindt for the following article on winter covering for our iris — be sure before that covering is applied to have all old or diseased leaves removed. Many insects lay their eggs on garden debris to emerge in the spring to prey on our gardens. Chief culprit of interest to the iris gardener is the iris borer. If we clean up the beds and burn all debris, we reduce greatly the chances of a borer infestation.

COVERING IRIS

As the days shorten and the nights grow cooler, one begins to see piles of baled marsh hay at the garden centers. This is in anticipation that gardeners will soon be needing cover for their perennial plants.

There are at least two reasons for covering. One is to keep the plants at a uniform temperature through the winter. Bright sun on a day in mid-winter can become quite warm and thaw both the plants and the top of the soil. A cold night then freezes everything again. This alternate thawing and freezing can kill many plants. This also causes heaving, or the lifting of rhizomes out of the soil. I have seen them sitting two

inches above ground level, held up by the roots. Heaving also breaks off the roots a couple of inches down, since the roots are not so elastic that they stretch an inch or more. Keeping the temperature uniform is the generally accepted reason for covering.

A second reason for covering I feel is the same as when we ourselves pull up another quilt on a really cold night, and that is to keep warm. By looking in the garden today I see there is a great deal of difference in cold resistance among various plants. The coleus, sweet potatoes, and vine crops show frost-blackened leaves but not the roses or chrysanthemums. Since there is a difference in cold resistance near the freezing temperature, I feel the same condition exists for plants living through colder temperatures. Our tomatoes are killed at around 30° F, but the grass in our lawns survives the coldest winter. All plants have a minimum temperature at which they remain alive, whether it be 30°, 25°, 20°, 15°, or lower. Usually our soil temperatures do not drop much below 20° F, and one of the purposes of covering is to shut out the cold air (-20° F) from above and conserve the warmth of the soil.

The best covering material is that with which Mother Nature provided us last winter. However, since we cannot depend on getting a foot of snow early in December and having more added throughout the winter, we must depend on substitutes. What the best substitute is depends on what is available. Marsh hay is generally rated quite high because it is stiff and does not easily mat down and is also quite free of weeds. Cornstalks, leaves, straw, and excelsior are other materials that can be used to advantage if available at a reasonable cost. Whatever is used it should be clean, that is, not moldy. I know of one iris garden that was destroyed by mold and rot because moldy alfalfa hay was used as cover.

Cover should be applied after a slight frost crust has formed on the soil. The reason is that theoretically all mice have found their home for the winter so will not move in to dine on your covered iris. I think it is wise, however, to include some food for the mice in case they should come. Some poisoned grain (which can be purchased ready mixed) should be placed in tin cans which have had both ends removed and been partially flattened. The cover should be fluffed up when put on to a depth of about six inches. Also, be sure to extend the cover beyond the edges of the bed because you know how the cold creeps in when your bed partner has just turned over and taken the cover along.

Then next Spring (April first?) the cover is removed and there are the plants all ready to go!

...Wilbert G. Sindt

Remember the important date: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1962 — 6:30 P.M.

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING AT HASTY TASTY CAFE — make your reservation now!!
