

Twin City Iris Society

-News and Views-

Volume XI, Book 3

March, 1963

Everyone is thinking of spring — it isn't here yet — but there are many subtle signs that it isn't far away. Maybe not just around the corner, but close nevertheless. Officially, the first day of spring is March 21; how fitting that that should be the day of the Iris Society's harbinger of spring, the Pot Luck Supper. Last year we had to forego this traditional meeting, but we can indulge ourselves again this year. To all those "old timers" among the membership, nothing more need be said, but to our new friends may I add that for good food, good company, and just plain fun the Pot Luck Supper of the Iris Society is hard to beat. This year, to add to the fun, as we did once before, we have decided to make it a Come As An Iris party. In other words, each is to suggest by his or her costume the name of an iris. These can be as simple or as elaborate as you choose — all one really needs is a little imagination and things everyone has in the house. It's fun baffling the other members who just can't think what iris is indicated, maybe!! Be sure to plan to attend. For further particulars, here are messages from the Hostess and Program Chairman:

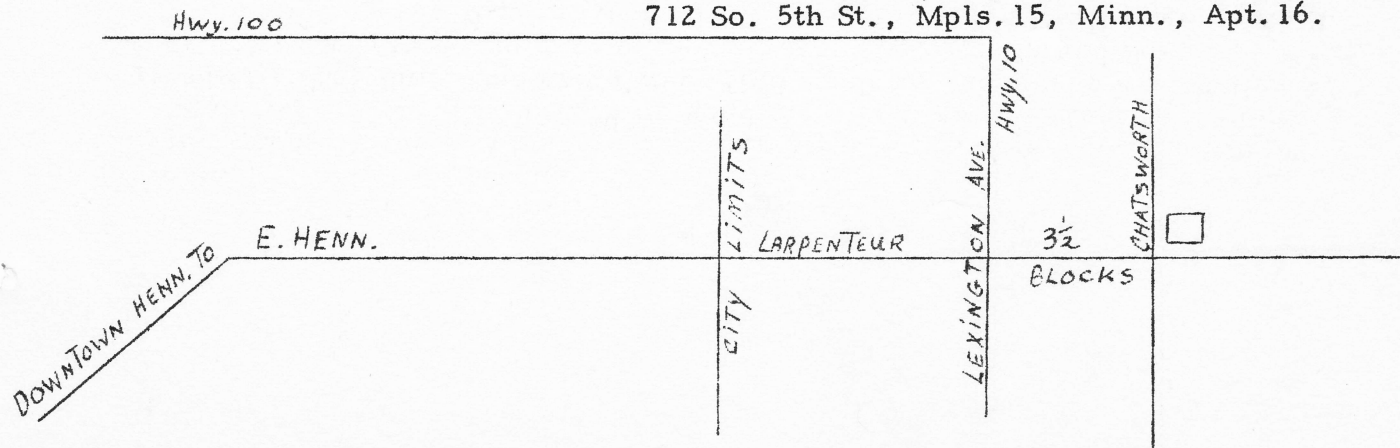
The other evening a friend of mine asked me if I had heard the thunder and rain or had seen the lightning. I couldn't help but think that spring is not too far away. With Mrs. Stenoien's "Come As An Iris Fun Program" and its being the first day of spring, Pot Luck should be enjoyed by one and all. At the last Twin City Iris meeting I sent a book around to be signed in order to let me know what you would care to bring for Pot Luck. I wish to thank each and every one in helping to set up the menu. If you have not as yet been contacted in regard to Pot Luck and you intend to come, please call either Mrs. M.E. Dale - SU.4-8160 or Adah Anderson - WE.8-7216 or send me a post card so that we can count you in on the fun. One can always find a job for those who are willing to help with the following groups: Setting Up; Cleaning Up and Serving. Food may be brought in anytime after 5:30 P.M. and dinner will begin at 6:30. Gentlemen bring \$1.00.

Don't forget — March 21 — First Day of Spring — Come as an Iris Fun Night — being held at the

North Como Presbyterian Church
Larpenteur Ave. W. at Chatsworth
St. Paul, Minnesota

See the map for directions from where you live. All husbands, wives and outside guests are invited to attend this meeting. Hoping to see you one and all.

Mrs. Steve (Jean) Boguta, Social Chairman
712 So. 5th St., Mpls. 15, Minn., Apt. 16.



All set for our potluck supper and Come As An Iris party? If not, get on the ball, select an Iris that you want to suggest in your costume.

Some examples: Huntsman - easy for you hunters; Wedding Bouquet - still have a wedding dress around? Velvet Robe - easy, Pinafore Lass - a cute apron would do. Savage - have we an Indian in our group? Masked Ball - so simple to do. Party Dress, and many, many others. Let us make it a real costume party!

Remember, men, you have never received such a value in a meal for one "buck" before, or food prepared by some of the best cooks in Minnesota!

So bring your appetites, you men, one dollar, dress up; and be prepared for an evening of fun and good fellowship.

There will be prizes for the most elaborate costumes and for the most humorous for both men and women. A fine of twenty-five cents will be imposed on anyone not wearing some sort of 'get up'!

See you all the twenty first of March, the first day of spring!

. . . Alice Foss Stenoien

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

How would you like a report from the deep south, just to remind you that spring is on the way up? Late last summer a very good old friend of mine decided to get married and take off for Florida. When he left he carried away a representative assortment of iris rhizomes from my garden, stashed away somewhere among the miscellaneous collection of appurtenances that people take along when they migrate from Minn. to Florida. About a month ago I received a letter describing the horticultural havoc wrought this winter when the weather man forgot his geography and inflicted repeated sub-freezing temperatures on our normally sub-tropical states. We heard up here about the losses to fruit and vegetable crops, but from his description the damage to warm blooded ornamentals must have been devastating.

Well, it seems that the only portion of his newly planted grounds that came through entirely intact was his iris bed, where the new green growth was popping up as though nothing had happened. A nursery man who was invited out to the house to provide an estimate of the cost of replacing the damaged plantings was amazed to find irises. He inspected them with great interest, but assured my friend that they were out of their proper area and would never survive. (This came as a surprise to me; I assumed that they grew irises everywhere.) As this is written, I have just received another letter containing the next chapter of the story. My friend always did have a little trouble with his horticultural nomenclature, so I wasn't really too surprised when I read: "Our glads burst open this morning — they are positively beautiful!"

From Florida to Minnesota is quite a hop, but it does begin to look as if spring might get here, too. Last week I received my annual importation of seeds from England and got a few of them started. This is always one of the more interesting of my gardening adventures, because I try to choose things that aren't available locally. Some of my experiments are pretty dismal, but others are very rewarding. For example, I get a strain of annual double poppies that are strictly out of this world. And then there is a strain of the tall form of celosia that contains browns, maroons, and pinks along with the more conventional colors. It grows as tall as your head, stands up straight in winds and rains, and seems to love Minnesota. There is one disadvantage in my experiments, however. It seems that either my suppliers in particular or the English in general don't go in for the common old-fashioned flower names that slide comfortably off the tongue. Everything is named botanically. So when garden visitors see something strange and ask me what it is, and when they receive in reply a latinism as long as

your arm — well, after all, a thing like that can ruin your whole day if it happens too early in the morning!

G. F. Hanson, President

We hope to have this years copy of the Year Book ready for distribution at the March meeting.

MEDIAN IRIS . . . Carol Lankow

If any of you are interested in extending your iris season, if you have a special spot in your yard for which your iris are just too big, if you are a hybridizer looking for brand new worlds to conquer, may I make a small plea for you to consider the various median iris?

The subject is confused a good deal by the difficulties in classifying these iris, and no system seems to be entirely satisfactory. They insist on overlapping their stated boundaries, and their growth habits vary with climate and geography. To add to the problem, there have been different classifications tried over the years so that catalog descriptions most often reflect the highly individual opinions of the growers rather than the A.I.S. standards.

The Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) are species and hybrids from ten to fifteen inches in height, usually blooming in the late dwarf season. These little fellows put on a bigger show than the miniature dwarfs and many come in colors and patterns not available in other irises. A happy field for hybridizers to play in — how about those contrasty spots on a TB? Some well known SDBs are Green Spot, Fairy Flax, Baria, Tinkerbelle, Dale Dennis and Brassie.

Intermediate Bearded (IB) are irises from fifteen to twenty-eight inches in height that bloom midway between the SDB and TB seasons. It resembles a border iris in size, but must bloom before. Some of the most persistent & reliable of all irises are in this group, which accounts for the fact that so many people continue to grow the older varieties even though iris enthusiasts insist that they are poor looking things & very "old hat." With the renewed interest in smaller & earlier iris, the newer intermediates are definitely chic with real improvements in form, color & substance. Some good new ones are Paul Cook's Kiss-Me-Kate, the oncomed Moonchild, First Lilac, Lime Ripples, and the sisters, Cloud Fluff and Blue Asterisk. For those of you who refuse to be intimidated by Minnesota's speedy summers, the most reliable rebloomers are in this group. Lots of luck!

Now I'll confuse you some more. There are two more median groups in the same height range of fifteen to twenty-eight inches, and both of these bloom with the TBs... at show time, that is.

The table iris is now called a Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB) and would make an interesting entry for that "other than TB" class. These are miniature replicas of TBs and have a mighty strict standard to meet. The plant must be perfectly proportioned with slender, small leaves well below the flowers. The flower size (width plus height) should not total more than six inches (2-1/2 x 3-1/2 is considered ideal). Stems should be slender, wiry and graceful, and no thicker than a lead pencil. This is the arranger's iris...dainty, flexible and manageable size. The difficulties in improving this class are formidable. There are very few tables available, and most of these are diploids of venerable age, & the color range is limited. Germination is difficult and seeds are few. New MTBs are few, but some that are rated as nice are Parakeet, Pewee, Desert Quail, Quien Sabe, Baby Doll and Kaleidoscope.

In the Border Bearded (BB) the flowers are generally four inches or more across and the stalks are stiffly erect. Basically, they are species or varieties of TB which are simply

MEDIAN IRIS, cont'd

too short to be classed as "talls." Ideally, these fellows need good proportion, too. There is a tendency for the flowers to be too large for the height, and for them to be bunched at the top of the stalk. Most of us already grow a border or two. Black Forest, Pink Ruffles, and Priscilla are borders. There was a shortage of good borders for a long time because hybridizers culled the "runts" out of their seedling rows, but there are many good ones now in all the fashionable colors, with ruffles, lace, tangerine beards, and all the rest. Some highly rated newcomers are Chocoleto, Yum-Yum, Yellow Dresden, Frenchi, Pinata, and Jungle Shadows. Mrs. Bakke's border, Sandy Jean, will be introduced this year.

A.I.S. members may join the Median Iris Society, and their quarterly "The Medianite" though of modest appearance, is a gold mine of hard information on the development of medians, and experiments with newly available species of interest to all hybridizers.

So there they are. Irises for all sorts of garden uses, becoming easier to find, and with the endearing virtue of more modest price tags than their big brothers.

We wish to thank Carol for this most comprehensive study of the "medians" and hope it inspires some of you to branch out into this wide-open field of hybridizing; and others to enjoy the varied and interesting forms of these iris in the garden.

CROWN ROT (Mustard Seed Fungus) . . . G. B. Gable

I believe we can eliminate at least 95% of disease & fungus (crown rot) by disinfecting our gardens early in spring after the first cultivation by drenching the plants & soil with a solution of 1 tablespoon of Terraclor in each gallon of water. Drench the peonies, too, when they start sending up their shoots.

Terraclor has worked wonders for me. Last year I disinfected all rhizomes dug & sold and those purchased & planted. My hands were wet with the solution many times each day with no ill effects although I took precaution & washed them in clear water each time.

During the wet spell after the bloom season last year the mustard seed fungus (crown rot) was about to ruin two beds of my newest varieties and it was spreading to all sections of the garden. One application of Terraclor solution was all we used to bring it under control. This year we are going to treat the entire garden immediately after the first cultivation so the solution can easily soak into the soil around the rhizomes.

Maybelle Wright's report of the Hybridizing Meeting, held February 1, will be published in the April News & Views due to lack of space in this issue.

We wish to congratulate MR. & MRS. MANFRED WARMUTH on the birth of a baby boy — named Michael — on Valentine's Day — a future Iris Fancier — we hope!!

DON'T FORGET — POT LUCK SUPPER — COME AS AN IRIS — THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 1963, 6:30 P.M., NORTH COMO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ST. PAUL.

Ladies - bring food; gentlemen - \$1.00; all of you - your appetites and imagination to Come As An Iris.

We wish to emphasize that this meeting is one to which everyone is invited — especially spouses and friends of members. Come one and all — enjoy the best food and fellowship in the Twin Cities!