

Twin City Iris Society

-News and Views-

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Spring is definitely here and it won't be long before we will be up to our ears in garden work. If you are like me and most of those I've talked to, you are just itching to get out to work in the soil and to see everything sprouting and growing.

The next Twin City Iris Society meeting will be held Thursday, April 18, at the usual meeting place, the Y.W.C.A., Minneapolis, at 12th & Nicollet at 8:00 P.M. Our speaker will be Mr. Hugo Carlson. Mrs. Stenoien will tell you more about him:

"At this meeting we will have the privilege of hearing Mr. Hugo Carlson speak to us on "Dahlia Culture and Birds." Mr. Carlson is past president of the Minnetonka Men's Garden Club, an active member of the Minn. Rose Society and the National and State Dahlia Society. His specialty is dahlias, although he grows many other flowers and his vegetable garden is the envy of all who see it. He will also show slides on his subject and is anticipating receiving some special ones from Holland in time for this meeting.

Don't fail to be on hand to meet Mr. and Mrs. Carlson and to enjoy his most informative and interesting talk.

We are reprinting the kind invitation received from Mr. George Dubes of the Soo-Preme Iris Gardens in Sioux City, Iowa. Anyone who can take this trip will see some of the finest iris in the land, with over 2,000 new seedlings from our best hybridizers in bloom. Try to make plans to go — leaving May 25 and returning Sunday, May 26."

Dear Mrs. Stenoien:

Thank you for your letter dated March 6, advising that members of your society are planning a trip to Sioux City to see our iris garden and requesting me to advise you the best time to come.

It is rather difficult for me to predict just when the iris bloom will be at its peak, as you well know, because so much depends on the weather. If this year is anything like last year the week end of May 24th would be the perfect time to come. Usually we expect the peak bloom to be the last week in May.

I don't want to misinform you about the date and I realize that it is a long trip to Sioux City and that you folks will want to see a lot of bloom when you get here, therefore, why don't you still plan to come on the week end of May 24th. If for any reason there is not enough bloom to warrant your coming I will send an air mail letter or call you long distance and so inform you. I don't want to be guilty of having you folks make that long trip just to see iris buds.

You folks will cross the combination bridge over the Missouri River in Sioux City into Nebraska and follow that street (Dakota Ave. or Hwy. 77 which are the same) straight on to 39th St., where you will see our sign on the right hand side pointing to Soo-Preme Iris Gardens. On the left side of the highway will be the Tower Motel. This motel is only a very short distance from our garden. There is also another large motel near by. I don't believe that you folks will have any difficulty finding a place to stay over night.

Here is hoping we have an early season, with lots of bloom & that you folks can come as planned. We will be looking forward to meeting and greeting you.

Sincerely yours,
George Dubes

You will hear more about the Sioux City trip at the meeting and in the next News & Views, but make plans now to take this trip — it should be most interesting.

President's Letter

I have a letter from Mr. C. Gustav Hard, Extension Horticulturist at the University of Minnesota, asking me to notify our members of a series of televised gardening programs being presented over Station KTCA-TV, Channel 2. Under the general title, "Landscape Ideas", the series began on April 3 and will continue through June 12 every Wednesday night at 9:00 p.m. A wide range of interesting subjects will be covered.

Those of our members who couldn't make the pot luck supper last month certainly missed a real wing-ding. The "come dressed as an iris" theme turned up some unsuspected talent among our serious minded iris growers, together with some unsuspected and improbable wearing apparel that must have been languishing in our trunks for lo, these many years. I hope none of our folks had car trouble or an accident on the way home and had to get out in public in those get-ups!

While talking the winter covering off our isis beds this spring, I got to thinking about how important our own gardens are to the purposes of our society. In our role of iris specialists, we are showing our friends and neighbors what they will consider representative varieties of our pet flower. This points up the importance of being very discriminating in what we grow, and of throwing out the old dogs that fail to measure up to our standards. I would like to ramble for a while on this subject, but our editor tells me that we have quite a lot of material for this issue. Maybe next month there will be room for me to indulge myself.

G. F. Hanson, President

In regard to the pot luck supper at the last meeting, Evelyn Ceislak, the reporter who took the pictures, wishes me to extend her apologies to those who expected to see their pictures in the Suburban papers. It seems they had given her a camera that was not synchronized correctly and 3 rolls of film she took that week-end did not come out. There was a very nice write-up, however.

In February the hybridizing group had a meeting and Maybelle Wright, the hybridizing chairman, makes the following report:

"We couldn't have chosen a worse night than Feb. 1 for our second hybridizer's meeting, but in spite of freezing rain and snow, twelve brave souls ventured out for what we fondly hope was a worthwhile evening. We have been asked to share some of the ideas, that were discussed, with the rest of the group by way of this report.

Alice Bakke, who has been hybridizing longer than anyone in the group, talked to us first and has summarized her remarks as follows:

Hybridizing Records - 1st Summary

1962 - members of Iris Society

37 hybridizers planted 6,649 seeds from 290 crosses.

20 hybridizers have 3,942 seedlings that should bloom - 1963.

For 1963 records, all members who hybridize must give Maybelle Wright their report so we know who is interested when planning our program.

1. Keep record of seed germination 1963. Experiment with different methods of planting seeds for better germination.
2. Keep records of all crosses.
3. Record new methods for spray, soil treatment & fertilizers.
4. Record best crosses, and discard poor crosses.
5. Record date of planting seeds, resetting seedlings, also weather conditions. Reset seedlings early or they will not bloom next year. Any root damage causes a stunted plant. Reset when plants are 1" high, before feeder roots form.

(cont'd)

6. Record characteristics of best seedlings to help in evaluation.
Remember the Test Garden Chairman welcomes your best seedling as soon as you have one — your choice.

In "Garden Irises" David Hall states, "Color alone is of little value if not associated with such other important characteristics as good strong well-branched stem, flowers of good size, form and substance; also plant vigor. In "Iris Culture & Hybridizing for Everyone" Wilma Vallette says, "There is no use wasting time, work, and space on seedlings that cannot possibly be good enough to keep!"

With these thoughts in mind we talked about ways in which we might plan sound crosses. It is not sufficient for a variety to be a good flower itself. To be a good parent it must be capable of passing its good traits on to its offspring. We have previously published a list of known good parents in News & Views, but if there is anyone who doesn't have it please call me, TU.1-8125.

In general, we can expect the following results:

- Two blues: almost all blue
- Two Whites: all whites if recessives, some blues also if dominant
- Two blends: mostly blends
- Two blacks: mostly blacks, maybe some purples & blues
- Two pinks: T. B. pinks, apricots, raspberry pinks & occasionally a T. B. white or a lemon yellow.

For the present, we have limited discussion of genetics to dominants and recessives. Very simply, these terms refer to various inherited characteristics such as color, form, branching, etc., some of which are recessive and some are dominant. If a factor is dominant it will usually show in most of the first generation seedlings and about three-fourths of the second generation, while a recessive is usually not apparent in the first generation and will show in about one-fourth of the second generation. These figures are the expected results of diploid crosses involving true breeding varieties. Since we will be working almost exclusively with tetraploids, the ratio of dominants to recessives will be much greater, about sixteen to one in the second generation. A dominant is apt to show up often in the offspring, even if only one parent carries it, while a recessive factor must be present in both parents to appear in the offspring. However, this factor need not be visible but may be carried as a hidden recessive in both parents. Some of the common recessives are: the tangerine beard, the plicata pattern, the amoena pattern (except Paul Cook's blue amoenas) and the factor for variegatas. Any breeding program carried past the first generation will bring out hidden recessives and provide surprises. Intermediate appearance is usually due to incomplete dominance.

When we cross two quite different colors, or species, it is called a wide cross. If you are just beginning, we suggest you avoid these because both colors are apt to be ruined. Recessives will be hidden in the first generation or F1, but will reappear unchanged in F2 or F3 if you have the patience to wait 4 to 6 years. One exception to this is the yellow by pink cross (not really very wide genetically). You can't expect pink in F1, unless the yellow you use has a pink parent, and then only a small percentage, but you should get some good clear yellow.

We cannot hope to give our seedlings qualities which the parents varieties do not have in their makeup. In 1962, I worked out a new system for evaluating my seedlings and I have used the same method in planning my 1963 crosses. Before using any name varieties as parents, I intend to evaluate them by the same method. I have a pocket-sized notebook (suggested by Mr. Fay) in which I use a page for each numbered seedling. Before blooming season starts, I write the following categories on each page with room for the number, parentage and location of plant.

Color	Form	Beard	Buds
Size	Stand	Fragrance	Proportion
Texture	Falls	Height	Stalk
Substance	Haft	Branching	Plant

(cont'd)

As I number a seedling I judge it on each point in words, then when the busy season is over, I go back over each one putting a rating in front of each category as follows:

+ Good to excellent o average — poor

If I then compare ratings of two prospective parents, I can see at a glance, whether or not I will emphasize faults by breeding two flowers together with the same ones. Also, if I want superior seedlings, one parent should have a + if the other has a — or only an o in the same category. It takes just as much space and just as many backaches to grow a batch of "dogs" as a batch of high average seedlings. Of course, when going after a recessive factor such as lace or the t. b. on another color, we sometimes have to cross two flowers that are not ideal, with the thought of breeding out the faults later, but on the whole, I think this system will keep me from making foolish crosses. For those of you who are just beginning, we feel you could limit your evaluation of prospective parents to color, substance, form, haft, branching, stalk and proportion. We discussed these points as follows:

Color should be clear, with no muddiness and should look as if scrubbed clean.

Substance is the thickness of petals and is important because it lengthens the life of the flower and gives it resistance to wind and rain.

Form refers to the general shape of the flower, which may be tailored, ruffled, or laced, drooping, semi-flared or horizontally flared. It is largely a matter of personal taste, however.

Standards are usually considered acceptable if they are domed, conic (as in Mary Randall) or cupped and open if they have a strong mid-rib so they do not become floppy.

Falls are bad if they are narrow & strappy, tucked under at the ends (except in onco-blooded things) or droopy. The probable ideal falls would be wide & round with at least some flare.

Hafts with heavy veining coarsen the appearance of the whole flower, but color that appears to have been brushed on the haft often improves the appearance of the bloom.

Branching is a vital quality for a seedling because it provides room for more buds, thus lengthening the blooming season and also improves the overall appearance of the stalk. High Branching is bad because it causes the flowers to bunch at the top of the stalk. Close branching and turned in buds are bad because the flowers open up too close to the main stalk and are not displayed properly. Wide, well spaced and balanced branching is ideal because each bloom is shown to its best advantage. I would not want to use a variety (or seedling) as a parent with less than three branches and the terminal, unless it were very special in some other way, such as a color break.

A good strong stalk is important to hold up the many blooms when it is windy or rainy and also adds much to the general appearance of the plant.

In discussing proportion, I think of three of my seedlings, all of which had good flowers. The first was a very large flower on a heavy 44" stalk and was pleasing to look at, the second was just the opposite, a small dainty pink on a short 26" stalk, but this was also pleasing to the eye. The third one had a medium-sized flower on a heavy 42" stalk and looked like a large man with a small head. The loveliest flower loses much of its charm if it is in poor proportion to the rest of the plant.

If we choose one or two colors or forms to work with, we will probably get good results more quickly, as well as having the personal satisfaction of reaching a goal after working toward it. We should not hesitate to build on the success of others. All good name varieties are the result of many years of hybridizing and selection. We can take advantage of this by using at least one good new parent in each cross. Alice and I both invite you to share the pollen from our newer varieties. If we all work together, we can do much for the Twin City Iris Society and have a lot of fun doing it!

MayBelle

David Sindt, who is attending school in Chicago, has sent a nice article on dwarf iris which will be printed in the next issue — due to lack of space this month. Thanks a lot, David.

The next little tidbit is hush-hush so please don't give it away. We are having to conspire with his wife to keep it from him in this instance — she will have to hide his page — or something —

The Garden Club of Ramsey County and the Twin City Iris Society are collaborating in staging a testimonial dinner for W. G. "Gus" Sindt, who is one of our most valued members and is currently the President of the Minnesota Horticulture Society. The date is April 25, 7:00 p.m., at the Port Tea Room located at Grand Ave. & Lexington in St. Paul. The dinner will be \$3.00 and reservations can be made by sending your check to Mary Shields, 1144 Hague Ave., St. Paul 4, Minn. Phone CA.5-4190. Most of you will be called by callers and you can indicate whether you plan to attend, but your money must be sent to Mary. Tentative reservations should be made by the 19th, final with check must be in by the 23rd.

(The Port Tea Room is easy to find, they tell me. For Minneapolis people, take Lake St., across the bridge it becomes Marshall; take Marshall east past Snelling to Lexington; turn right 8 blocks to Grand Ave; turn left & the tea room is 3/4 of the way down this block on the right hand side of the street opposite the Uptown Theater.)

We are hoping a good many Iris Society people will attend to show "Gus" how much we appreciate him — and remember. Not a word of this to him. They hope they can make it a real surprise!!!

Mrs. Bakke during the winter wrote to Mr. Lehman at Faribault and asked him for his choice of four of the very best chrysanthemums he grew. These were given in his answer:

Ruth Lehman — one of the finest large early whites
Truly Ours — a large heavy textured deep lilac pink
O-four — very large golden yellow with quilled petals, excellent for cutting
Petite — very small button pompom, pink with ruby center.

He went on to say, "Of course, we would not want to forget varieties such as Bronze Giant, Poise, Happy Birthday and Yellow Giant.

We thought this might be of interest to you as you contemplated buying mums this spring.

NEXT MEETING — THURSDAY, APRIL 18, Y.W.C.A. — 8:00 P.M. — LET'S HAVE A REAL BIG TURN OUT — SEE YOU THERE!!!

MY PRAYER

By Hazel Lacey

God, teach me to take time to sit in the sun
To chat with a friend, or to make a new one,
To open my garden gate so wide
That a friend or stranger will come inside
That the flowers I grow, with your help and care
Will always remind me to share and share!
And if I'm privileged to work in your garden above,
Will you pass by with a smile of love?
That I may know you approve of my deed,
That I'm not wasting my time with Iris seed!