

# *Twin City Iris Society*

-News and Views-

Volume <sup>XII</sup>I, Book <sup>I</sup>XII

January 1964

It's been a long time since the last issue of the News and Views came your way, and it seems even longer. So many things have happened.

We hope each and every one of you had the best holidays ever. We want to wish for each of you the **happiest** of New Years and may your gardening and horticulture endeavors be particularly productive, with spectacular results -- but more important, with personal satisfaction. With each New Year our interests, our knowledge and our efforts should increase so that each year shows improvement. Have a Happy, Happy gardening New Year!!

The next meeting of the Twin Cities Iris Society will be held at the regular meeting place, the Minneapolis Y. W. C. A., 12th and Nicolet, Thursday, January 16, at 8:00 p.m. This will be a most interesting meeting and we hope to have an extra large turn-out. The speaker will be Mr. Russell Lehman from Lehman Gardens at Faribault. For more details see THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS.

The yearbook will go to press on February 1, 1964.

We urge all members to send in their dues at this time so your name can be listed. Be sure to include your correct address, telephone number and zip code number. It would facilitate matters greatly if those attending the meeting January 16th, could have this information and the correct change for their dues in an envelope to hand to the treasurer at that time. The schedule of dues is as follows:

Single Membership with membership in the Minnesota Horticulture Society . . .	\$3.50
Family Membership with membership in the Minnesota Horticulture Society . . .	4.00
Single Membership without membership in the Minnesota Horticulture Society . .	1.50
Family Membership without membership in the Minnesota Horticulture Society . .	2.00

The Twin City Iris Society is a member of the Minnesota State Horticulture Society and as such, each member should be getting the Horticulture magazine. The dues are given "with" and "without Hort", because some members have "Hort." memberships with other organizations and there is no need to duplicate. But all members should belong to the Minnesota Horticulture Society which includes a subscription to the magazine published by the Society. This is a mine of information and every gardener should have it. So, if you are not at this time getting this magazine please include \$2.00 for your subscription.

If you can not attend the January 16, meeting please mail your dues, making checks payable to Twin City Iris Society, to:

Mrs. Robert Nitkow, Corres, Sec.  
725 - 80th Avenue N. E.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55421

The new President of our Society is Mrs. Greta Kessenick. We are most fortunate to have such an enthusiastic, efficient and charming chief executive!!!

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

Greetings:

What a bone chilling December! The coldest in thirty-four years.

It is good to start the New Year with fields and gardens covered with a good insulation of snow. As I write this, the temperature is rising and continually my glance is toward the iris beds. Even though they were covered to some depth with Oak leaves and hay, beside hilling, it is not a relaxing feeling to see the thermometer go to the 40° mark for any length of time.

Keep watch and should the snow melt, there may be some rhizomes exposed. Use more hay!

We want to see those beautiful blossoms which will come forth from those choice rhizomes and seedlings.

We have plans for another interesting program this year, in addition to a general discussion of garden topics.

We hope to have the News and Views supplement you with articles pertaining to soil conditions, fertilizers, hybridizing, questions and answers and all the problems that are encountered in growing iris.

Now is the time to start your garden file or scrap book, clippings from papers and magazines on articles that are of interest to you. Also, keep your News and Views beginning with this issue. By the end of the year, you will have compiled valuable information.

Our regular scheduled meeting date, the third Thursday of the month, comes early in January. It is the 16th.

The program will be most interesting as Mr. Lehman of Lehman Gardens in Faribault will be the speaker. We will talk on Chrysanthemums, Clematis and Hemrocallis.

Mr. Lehman is noted far and wide for his "Mums from Minnesota." The Clematis growing in his fields, number several hundred. The display of the latest and better hemrocallis can be seen throughout the summer. He excels as a hybridizer in the field of these three popular perennials.

For the meeting, we are asking that you invite your gardening friends as your guests. We welcome them. Start calling on your telephone and circle the date January 16, on your calendar.

See you then....

Greta Kessenick

The new slate of officers for 1964 is as follows:

President:	Greta Kessenick (Mrs. R.M.)
1st Vice President:	Rev. Paul E. Folkers
2nd Vice President:	Walter Carlock
Recording Secretary:	Joyce Meyers (Mrs. Joe)
Corresponding Secretary:	Sunny Netkow (Mrs. Robert)
Treasurer:	Milton Dale
Directors:	Urban Ipsen
	Mildred Stover (Mrs. Clifford)
	Alice Stenoien

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At the last meeting these officers were installed by Mr. W. G. (Gus) Sindt. These installation remarks were so clever and appropriate that we asked Gus if we could publish them for those of you who were unable to attend this meeting:

"Perhaps it would be well if we could associate our officers with some of the varieties of our favorite flower, the iris."

"(To the President) From those who have gone before you, you have inherited a great Heritage. Our president has reached the Pinnacle and I present this gavel to her as our Leading Lady."

"If our First Vice President has aspirations, he must have Patience."

"The Second Vice President must live in a Dream Castle if he has thoughts of attaining the Summit."

"To help take minutes, our Recording Secretary might find Dot & Dash helpful."

"From our Corresponding Secretary we expect to hear only Good News."

"It would be a great help to all of us if the treasurer were a Millionaire."

"Our Directors we hope will step in with a Bang and not be just Dreamy but ready to help Anytime."

"All our members owe to you, the officers, their greatest Allegiance."

Gus Sindt, President  
Minnesota State Horticultural Society

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With such an outstanding slate of officers, society affairs will continue to hum as they have for the last two years under our outgoing president, Glenn Hanson, and his fellow officers who all deserve a standing ovation and the gratitude and thanks of all members for a job well done. No slate of officers, no matter how efficient, can work alone. They must have the cooperation and assistance of each member if they are to do their best. Please include in your New Years' resolutions one to the effect that you will do your part to make our Society one of the very best.



## THE LOVLIEST FLOWER I KNOW

Some 25 years ago I saw the old iris, Ambassadeur, in a parishoner's garden in Woodcliff, New Jersey. Few remember it now, and more have never heard of it, but it caught my eye and stirred my heart. My friend took me to a grower's garden where I was overcome by Wabash, King Tut, Indian Chief, Joycette, Seminole, The City of Lincoln, Gudrun, and several others. Since then I have grown iris with many new ones added from year to year.

In acient mythology Iris, the goddess of the rainbow, was the personal attendant of Juno, the wife of Jupiter. The Roman poet Virgil (70-19 B.C.) wrote the line: "Iris, of saffron wings, displaying against the sun a robe of a thousand varying colors". The word "iridescent" comes from iris because of its "shimmering changeability" under various lights and positions, having unusual coloring, shading, and sparkling beauty.

I will not discount roses, lilies, phlox, dahlias, glads, mums, clematis or columbines but for me the iris is the goddess of the garden - the multi-colored masterpiece of the Creator. Other flowers catch my eye but the iris caught my heart. Its delicacy and refinement, together with its astounding shades and patterns, never fail to bring "Ohs" and "Ahs" as visitors enter the garden.

Splashes of color are fine but ultimately each iris must stand on its own merits. Some look good in a crowd and others with the proper background, but somehow I like both irises and individuals with personality and character of their own. If they wilt in the heat, fade in the sun, become dull in the shade, or fold up when it rains they aren't worth much to anyone.

Browning's "Pipa Pasa" sang: "God's in His heaven, All's right with the world". This sounds good to esthetic ears but it isn't quite true. God's in His heaven alright, but the world is full of disease, bacteria, root rot and leaf spot, bugs and borers. People have bursitis and plants have boutritis; spores and spots afflict both folks and fans. The struggle for existence is an up-hill grind for both the tough and the tender.

Iris enthusiasts are not the only "bugs" that love this flower. The beard of the iris, scarcely noticed by many observers, is, according to botanists, "a signal guide to insects seeking nectar. It leads them to the store hidden deep in the heart of the flower". While seeking nectar they spread pollen. You should continue crossing iris, but don't be surprised if the bees beat you to it. The Almighty has a way of keeping His flower beds going and His bugs are often His most effective servants.

Some years ago I saw an iris growing in Orville Fay's lawn, and this impressed me. It had fallen up side down and lay there all winter. In the spring its roots shot out and then turned down into the ground while the fans came out from beneath and reached up looking for light and air. Mr. Faye left it that way and it bloomed beautifully. I said: "Send me this one, it deserves some respect and appreciation". I admire both people and plants that do their best even under adverse circumstances. When irises come back and bloom on the compost pile or at the dump I feel like bringing them back and reinstating them in a favored location.

You can get along well with iris if you observe a few good rules. 1) Give them a decent place to live and treat them with respect. Their soil, like your food should have some vitamins in it, and they will appreciate appreciation. 2) Give your iris plenty of good sunlight. Old Sol has heat, light, and curative powers for both growing iris and aching joints. 3) Give them good drainage. Who wants to live in a mudhole? Even the carabao in the Philippine marshes doesn't want to live in muck and water. 4) Trim out the dead leaves. How would you like to go with long filthy fingernails, no hair cut or hair do, shabby clothes, or dirty face? 5) Clean out the weeds. Your house must be in order. You can't have chairs and piano, birds and bees, beds and bunks, lavatory and limousine all in the same room. 6) Dust and spray once in awhile. No one wants fleas,, bedbugs, dermititis, or worms. Neither do iris like aphids, leaf spot, boutritis, or borers.



7) Stir up the ground occasionally. Your philosophy of life can get stale and your thinking encrusted. How long since you turned over a new idea, or even rehashed an old one? Give both your iris and your thinking some fresh air. 8) Reset them after a couple of years. Being over-crowded or root-bound isn't good for any of us. Get out of your old ruts and look around a little. You, too, might take on some new growth.

Now, in case you are stuck with a problem there are Doctors David, Gable, Hanson, and Sindt and professors Bakke, Messer, Stenoien, and Wright - a real Brain Trust for our Society and a boost to any President and cabinet. You might know a lot, but it won't hurt to keep your ear cocked to their wisdom. (Please forgive me if your name should have been listed above. I thought that maybe you and I could wait).

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Rev. Paul E. Folkers  
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We mentioned in the last News & Views that Mrs. O. A. Bakke had an article published in the October issue of the Bulletin of the American Iris Society. For those of you who do not get the Bulletin we decided to reprint it.

#### POTTING IRISES FOR WINTER BLOOM

Choose irises that are sure to bloom. Last year I chose purple and white seedlings.

Pot in 7- or 8-inch rose pots when plants are dormant-late October. Leave outdoors in protected area and water if needed. Leave outdoors until after Thanksgiving, depending on the weather.

The soil used was sandy garden loam, so in watering the moisture will go down. I used no fertilizer because rich soil for indoor plants is not good. My garden soil is good because we use lots of compost every year.

I have a heated south porch, with double sliding windows on the south and west sides. The windows are opened a little almost every day all winter because it gets so warm, often the venetian blinds are dropped part way.

On February 12 we had bloom. Each plant had a perfect stalk, 30 inches in height. The stalks grew from 2 1/2 to 4 inches a day. It was exciting to note the growth and bud formation. One stalk had seven blooms, another had eight, all perfect flowers.

All blooms opened at night, between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., and each lasted two days. There were flowers for two weeks. Alice Foss, of the Foss Iris Gardens, said they were nicer than an Easter lily.

I tried two dwarf irises with no results. I recommend tall bearded and border irises for potting.

I had no leaf spot or aphids-no difficulty of any kind.

Mrs. O. A. Bakke

Many of you will remember seeing Mrs. Bakke's iris last winter at one of the meetings. Three of our members, that we know, have tried potting iris this winter and we thought it would be of interest to follow through on these and let you know their progress.

Mrs. Bakke potted nine iris seedlings, planting them in a mixture of bone meal, gypsum and potting soil. They were brought in the house and placed in a sunny window Dec. 1, 1963. They were fertilized twice with Ortho-Gro. To this writing one has grown two feet and the others are just starting growth.

Dr. Ruebin David on New Years Day chopped through 2 inches of frozen soil to get some rhizomes to plant in pots. He brought in two seedlings - a Blue Sapphire x Silver

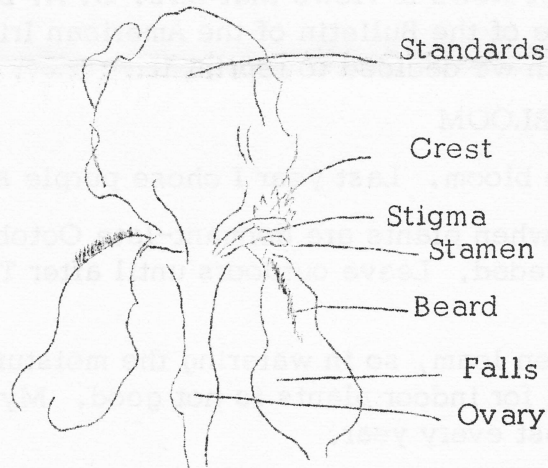
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Chalice Cross. Today, Monday January 6, one had grown about 1/4 inch, while several that he brought in earlier in the fall have shown no growth at all. His rhizomes are planted in garden soil. In checking on Dr. David's potted iris I found out he is embroiled in several other most interesting iris projects. He has promised a report on these projects for our next News & Views, and I am anxiously awaiting the progress notes and results. I'll keep you in suspense until next issue.

Alice Stenoien potted several but has nothing of note to report on them yet. We will check again next month to see what is happening.

We will keep you informed as to the progress of these "indoor" iris. If any of the other members have tried potting iris we would be most interested in hearing of your success or failure!!!

## HYBRIDIZING



Hybridizing Iris is not too difficult for the amateur. Pollen from the stamens of one variety is transferred to the stigma of another variety. When the seed pods are yellowing they should be picked and dried. The seeds are planted in the Autumn and will germinate the following spring.

Interesting hobbies cannot be acquired overnight - so all gardeners young and old who have never hybridized a flower - start this year in this fascinating pursuit of beauty. It will be a glorious moment when you find one of your crosses more beautiful than any ever seen before.