

Twin City Iris Society

NEWS & VIEWS

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March again! And as usual in Minnesota, it has been a stormy, blizzardy, wholly disagreeable month so far. But too "as usual" March brings to the Twin City Iris Society members the really "fun" meeting of the year. The annual "Come As An Iris" pot luck dinner! Well do I remember last year, it was a snowy, blowy, thoroughly disagreeable night, but those who were able to make their way there spent a most rewarding evening. We are full of optimism that this year the weather will be beautiful, so that everyone no matter from how far will be able to come. The date is Thursday, March 18, 1965, time--6:30 p.m., place--our lovely new meeting place Guaranty State Bank, 3700 West Broadway, Robbinsdale.

If you have not been contacted by Mrs. Mutterer, our hospitality chairman, as to what you should bring in the way of food, bring a hot dish or salad, large proportions please--as these iris people get hungry! As you know, the women bring the food (and what good cooks we have!) and the men bring \$1.00 for all they can eat. We promise you an evening of gastronomical delight.

Now for the "Come As An Iris" part--we would like for each one to come dressed as some iris, or with some part of their apparel representing the name of some iris. There are a fantastic number of choices available and a glance at any catalogue will give your imagination full sway. Indeed, with all the names mentioned in the President's contributions later on in this News & Views--all you need is to read on.

New members who have never been to one of our pot luck suppers, I'm sure will be delighted with the fun, fellowship and good food, and those members who have attended before know what an enjoyable evening it always is.

Prizes will be given for the best costumes in the following categories: most typical, most elaborate, most humorous, and most unusual, with prizes for best man and woman in each category. There will also be a prize for the one guessing the most names represented correctly.

You should know a little about the iris you represent. Color, year of introduction, hybridizer, etc., especially for those iris not commonly known in this area. We are all interested in learning as much as we can about our favorite flower, so you will be asked to tell about yourself.

So, come one--come all--put on your thinking caps--call on your imaginations, throw off the winter doldrums, dress as an iris, bring your husbands, wives, or best friends and your food contributions to the Spring Pot Luck Supper--March 18! !

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A meeting has been arranged for Saturday, March 27, 1965 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Guaranty State Bank, 3700 West Broadway, Robbinsdale, to study the Color Classification System of the R.I.S. as used to determine classes for the Iris Show. This will be of particular interest to those who will be new exhibitors in the
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Iris Show this year as well as for everyone who wishes to understand the system better. A.I.S. slides of "New Introductions and Better Irises" will also be shown. Gust Sindt will conduct the meeting and will give instructions that will enable you to make out your tags for the flower show more efficiently and help eliminate the disappointment of having a beautiful bloom stalk disqualified because it is in the wrong class. If you have a copy of the Color Classification Booklet bring it with you. There will be a limited number available at the meeting for 35 cents each.

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The article appearing in last month's News & Views, From Farming to Horticulture by Alice Foss Stenoiien was originally written by Alice for the Minnesota's Rose Society publication and was modified by her for our News & Views.

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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

After a very busy day and a quiet hour is found to write this monthly letter to you, I meditate and think all the words have been used, topics have been discussed and what of interest can possibly be written, so I lose myself in looking through last season's catalogues.

Beautiful descriptive adjectives are predominant in nearly every line--"ebony--blue black, sea foam chartreuse, wisteria blue, cantaloupe pink, golden brown, deep honey amber, gleaming henna copper, delicate pink, warm white." As enchanting as word descriptions are, they fall far short of the actual beauty and color of iris. Suddenly the flowers become real and they seem to speak their language as the "Rainbow of the Garden." No other flower deserves this name quite so well. Among the tall bearded you will find masses of all colors of the spectrum.

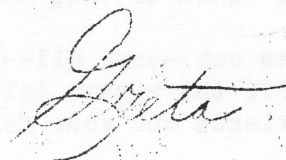
So in this Dreamy state, as the Evening Star shines through the kitchen window, the flowers take over and the rest of the letter will be left to them:

We live in the North Country but Chances are the Wonderful sky will bring Fair and Warm weather on Thursday, March 18. You may sit in the Front Row, in Cool Comfort with your Country Cuzzin in Wonderment about the Touch of Elegance and Tribute paid to the Top Favorite of all flowers--The Iris. This will be a New Adventure to some, as the Mademoisells will be On Parade in their Gala Gowns of Black Taffetta, Dotted Swiss, Royal Velvet and Lace Flounces of Exotic Blue and Orange Frills. A Lace Bonnet of Chantilly may Adorn the head of a Lavish Lady showing Blue Freckles and Pink Cheeks some will Blush Pink. The Tall and Handsome men may be in Full Dress or portray an Astronaut or Ranger in a Mexican Hat.

Use your Imagination for this is a lot of Monkeyshine and Melodrama. Also a Spring Tonic and Above All not a Formal Affair for it is the Annual Pot Luck Dinner.

Greta M. Kessenich, President

See You There,



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IRIS IN THE MIXED BORDER

by Ivy Lavacot

The first two weeks of the month the iris is indeed "Lord of June." On the small property, where space is premium, and color is wanted for several months instead

of weeks, it becomes necessary to interplant these beauties with other perennials and annuals. For continuous bloom from spring to fall the mixed border or garden should contain some bulbs as well as perennials and annuals. In using iris in this type of planting care must be exercised in placing the companion plants so the iris rhizome will receive its share of sun. Foremost among the perennials that can be successfully grown with iris in the mixed border are the peony, delphinium, hemerocallis, columbine, shasta daisy, heuchera, dianthus, phlox, fall asters, baptisia, meadowrue, and pyrethrum. Speciman plants of peony, hemerocallis, or phlox are excellent to separate the iris clumps and give bloom later in the season. In late summer if these plants give too much shade to the iris, a bit of judicious trimming can be done--in my garden I use binder twine to keep the peonies from taking up too much room and an occasional "hem" will also receive a twine belt to keep it in bounds.

The lovely blue baptisia blooms with the iris and makes an excellent background for the blue-whites, many of the pinks or pink blends and the creams or pale yellows. The baptisia foliage is attractive until killing frost and the plants can be trimmed if necessary. Thermopsis with its lupine-like yellow flowers and foliage is also a good companion plant that blooms a bit later than the baptisia. The leaves of the delphinium make a nice contrast to the iris foliage and the tall kinds make good background material as do the tall fall asters. Thalictrum or meadowrue, with its airy puffs and columbine-like foliage is nice with iris and its airy habit of growth makes no shade problem. The columbine--the long spurred varieties especially are lovely with irises and do not bid for competition of attention but blend well into compositions. Blooming at the same time as the iris, the oriental poppy is often used, but care must be taken in selecting the right varieties for color, the brilliant orange-scarlets and crimsons can sound a discordant note and demand attention. It is best, therefore, to stick to the soft pinks or the lavender shades. The round blossoms of pyrethrum contrast nicely with iris and add interest in the early summer garden. The low growth of the clump of pyrethrum makes an excellent foreground plant so there will be no shade problem. The heuchera, or coral bell is another perfect foreground plant with its low mound of foliage that is attractive all season and it never outgrows its allotted space. Another good perennial for the foreground or edging is the carpathian harebell with its blue or white bells all summer and fall. If it sprawls too much or creeps over to the iris rhizome it takes kindly to trimming and rewards with more bells. Any of the low edging annuals can be used--the alyssums in white, rose, or purple, the petite marigolds, dwarf ageratum, lobelia and many others that are easily raised from seed. Taller annuals such as cleome, salvia "Blue Bedder" and the newer "White Bedder" or snapdragons can be used to fill empty spots. Marigolds and other plants of more vigorous and bushy growth can be used if placed to the North of the iris clumps. The location and facing of the garden plays an important factor in the plants chosen as companions for the iris and practically any favorite can be used if care is taken in regard to its placement so the iris will receive its full share of sun and warmth so necessary for good health and good bloom year after year.

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'SPRING CARE OF IRIS'

By Greta M. Kessenich

How is your old sprayer working? Are you prepared for one of the problems that give all irisarians in the Midwest a troubled season? "The Iris Borer" D.D.T. + fungicide + miticide = healthy iris. It means control of the borer, leaf spot and red spider. Read directions on the labels for added information.

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In early April with the coming of warm days it is then that the iris borer hatches from eggs deposited the previous fall on dead leaves, debris and shrubs near iris. The tiny larvae crawl up the leaves and enter the fans. They hatch throughout the spring and I wonder if they do not hatch during the summer. I have seen tiny worms on iris plants where free circulation of air and sun could not penetrate and the ground could not reach the degree of dryness desired by an iris. They must be killed before entering the leaf fans.

Beginning in April, spray every ten days and continue until blooming season. Not only should iris be covered with spray but also the ground surrounding plants and shrubs. One heaping tablespoon of D.D.T. to a gallon of water will take care of them. To control leaf spot the fungicide should be applied before any signs. Captan, Fermate or Phaltan is good or use one of your own choosing. Mix in with the D.D.T. solution and at the same time add a miticide (Malathion). This makes a good three way spray.

Observe your plants as you go through your garden. Do not become discouraged when you see the sign, a saw toothed leaf in the summer, and the suspected borer already inside the leaf fold. Search for him, by either opening the leaf or squeezing it, beginning at the top of the leaf with finger and thumb and work down to the base of the plant. A program of spraying also gives complete coverage of all perennials which may be growing with iris in a mixed border garden. Be sure and spray your columbine with this mixture.

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When growth begins in the spring, uncover your iris beds by degrees. NOT ALL AT ONCE. This is a most critical period.

A few years ago, on May 4, a cold freezing front came swooping down from Canada. The iris fans, then over ten inches tall, were laid flat, also all perennials. The following day the sun shone and all plants again took on the air of spring. The bloom stalk had been damaged to such an extent that when they bloomed the blossoms were in the fans and some close to the base of the plant.

When air is warm plants are bound to grow and are very vulnerable to this cold and freezing temperature, especially in open, unprotected areas. If beds are large, there is little one can do. I am careful at planting time and always put the new plantings in one area and if warning of a storm comes in time I can protect that planting. Those with smaller gardens can do the same.

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Last month at our meeting Greta presented a most unusual tribute to Winston Churchill. Several members have asked that this be included in the News & Views so that all those who were not at the meeting could share it.

Every year as I make the markers for new iris or replace the old weathered ones, I never cease to wonder how the originator happened to select that particular name. What does it mean? How and why was it associated with that particular flower? The names are beautiful, intriguing, fascinating, and sometimes breathe an air of mystery. They have a touch of fairyland beauty.

Gorden Plough says, "Iris names are very important in the marketing appeal of an iris. A poor sounding name has a real handicap and the iris must be superior to rise above the name."

Brother Charles states that he is convinced it is easier to grow a good iris than to name one.

So by observation it is noted that originators name iris as to color, such as--Solid Gold, Blush Pink, Blue Carnival, Bronze Brocade, Blue Valley, Pink Chimes, Snow Goddess, Exotic Blue, Limelight and Amethyst Flame.

There are names representative of cities and states, as--Aquatennial Queen, Arizona Sunset, Illini Gold, Miss St. Louis, Minnesota Skies, Miss California, Idaho Gold and Missouri. Indian names--Inca Chief, War Eagle, Indian Chief, Indian Hills, and Tall Chief.

Names of families of the originators, admiration of friends, iris fanciers or of outstanding people in art and history: Ramesis, the Dykes Medal winner in 1932, was the most famous of the Egyptian Pharaohs, the greatest of the twelve rulers in 1300 B.C. Lothario, portrayed the character of a great lover in Nicholas Rose play, "The Fair Penitent." Amigo, means friend in Spanish. Appian Way, an ancient Roman road, constructed in 312 B.C. called the Queen of Roads. Thotmus III, Great King of Ancient Egypt, died 1475 B.C. It was on his tomb that the first representation of iris art was known 1500 B.C. A mode of sculpturing called bas-relief was used portraying the flower he loved. We call it Oncocyclus. The new introduction, "Helen Keller," American writer, power of speech dormant at birth--is deaf and blind. Helen Traubel, Great opera singer. General Patten, General of the Army World War II. May Hall, named by originator, Mr. Hall. Esther Fay, named by originator, Mr. Fay. Emma Cook, named by originator, Cook. Lady Rogers, named by originator, Rogers. Patricia Craig, named by originator, Craig 1962.

It seems fitting that Brother Charles, noted hybridizer, a Catholic Missionary should have names for his flowers like: Celestial Snow, Celestial Glory, meaning heavenly, also Mission Sunset, named for Mission Gardens, where he works with plant breeding.

I could go on and tell you more names and their meanings but there is one name that is of a very particular significance and has much meaning. Many Irisarians will recall it vividly because of its continual use in the days past. New Zealand was colonized by the British and is a part of the British Commonwealth. There, lives a noted hybridizer, Mrs. Jean Stevens. No doubt we all have some of her iris in our gardens as she is the originator of, Pinnacle, 1949; Polar Cap, 1956; Foaming Seas, 1960; Mystic Melody, 1951 which won a Princess Award at our show last year 1964. Other beautiful irises of hers have found their way to Minnesota.

It was during the eulogys of Britains greatest man in English history, Sir Winston Churchill that I heard and read over and over of his "Finest Hour." Of course, you know that was when this great "Man of the Century" rallied his nation in World War II and continued to install courage and calmness all through the terrible war years.

In 1958, Mrs. Stevens named one of her introductions Finest Hour. It is safe to assume that this name was taken from Sir Winston's "Finest Hour."

I do not have this iris nor have I seen it but did read that it has white standards and plum red falls. H.M. in 1961. A very fitting color for the history. All irisarians must be pleased that such a name is recorded and belongs to our beautiful flower.

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Several members of our society have been asked for a short contribution about My Three Favorite Irises. Many thanks to all who responded--more will be published in the April News & Views.

Picking three favorite iris is as hard as picking three books to be marooned with on a desert island, but after quite a few starts here are mine:

The first is a sentimental favorite, an older, smaller flowered variety of a beautiful copper bornw. It was my grandmother's favorite iris out of the many she grew in her garden.

Lady Mohr would be my next choice because of its large blooms and exotic coloring of oyster and chartreuse.

The last and hardest to choose because of the many beautiful varieties left is Happy Birthday picked for its happy name and equally happy pink color.

Now if I had been asked to name my least favorite iris the task would have been easy. It is Firecracker, yellow and red plicata. My children love it because of its name and very bright coloring, but I have yet to find a place in my iris bed where it does not clash with the surrounding flowers.

Lois B. Johnson

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The three favorites in my garden? Ladies Day still is my choice for a white iris. The blossom is ruffled, of heavy substance, with a small area of yellow across the hafts. The stalks carry at least four branches.

The loveliest blue I've ever seen is Blue Sapphire--new in my garden next spring.

Although rather short, Party Dress has the most lacy edges, the color a very pale blush pink. It is exquisite when viewed at close range.

Mary Duvall

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At this time of the year I always think of the quotation, "O winds that blow, if winter comes, can spring be far behind," and we hope that is soon.

I have a wide variety of iris from dwarf to Japanese but the one that stands out is Little Freak, a flat plicata. We miss a great amount of iris beauty by the closed standards. The Little Freak displays this beauty very well. I have crossed this both ways with Melody Lane seedlings of which also show a tendency to flatness and a wide range of color from buff to pink. This spring when bloom comes to my seedlings, I shall be watching with uncommon interest the results of the union of these two favorites.

Louie M. Solberg

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Description of three iris in my garden that I especially like and why.

Accent, bi-color, clear yellow standards with velvet red falls. One of my favorites because it is sturdy--needs no staking; grows to height of 41" in my garden; large flowers, pleasingly spaced; good branching habit; develops huge clump in one season. It truly 'accents' the garden!

Lamplight, soft blend of flesh and buff. Favorite because its petals glow like gold nuggets in the sunshine! Useful as divider between dark colors. Classified as "orange blend" but don't let that fool you.

Wabash, bi-color, pure white standards--rich violet falls. My husband's favorite and one of mine too. Its vivid colors give it a wholesome freshness.

Hazle Sweeney

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