

Twin City Iris Society

NEWS & VIEWS

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The February meeting of the Twin City Iris Society will be held Thursday, February 17, 1966 at the usual place, the Community Room of the Guaranty State Bank of Robbinsdale, 3700 West Broadway. The program will be a very interesting and entertaining one with discussions of two of the lesser grown types of iris, the dwarfs and the intermediates. If you want to stretch the season of bloom in your iris garden, come learn all about these fascinating members of the iris family and next summer plant some of the newer ones for extra dividends.

The new officers for the year 1966 have taken over the reins and a most interesting year for the Twin City Iris Society is ahead. The officers for the year are:

President Mrs. Charlotte Schoene

1st Vice President Mr. David W. Goddard

2nd Vice President Dr. Rueben David

Treasurer Mr. Walter Carlock

Recording Secretary . . . Mrs. Walter Johnson

Corresponding Secretary . Mrs. Robert Netko

Board of Directors: (two year terms)

Holdovers: Mrs. George Lankow

Mrs. D. C. Messer

Mr. Stanton Rudser

New: Mr. Henry Halvorsen

Mrs. O. A. Bakke

Mr. Carmine Socco

These officers know they can only do a good job if they have the support of all the members. Remember this is your Society and will only be as good as the whole membership makes it. If each and every member does his part then we will have an outstanding year--let's make it so! !

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome to the 1966 year of Iris. It is my privilege to serve as your president. With your help, and we do need the help of each and every one of you, let's make this year bigger and better than ever before. Membership, Fellowship, and Showmanship are three words we should all concentrate on.

It is probably hard to get enthusiastic about gardening when it is below zero, but as the new catalogs come in "we can dream can't we?" Now is the time to plan all the things we should do in the spring and remember what we did wrong last year, I usually keep a log from year to year, as I'm sure most of you do, which helps keep track of the do's and don'ts.

This could be a hard year for our Irises so plan to spend extra time with them.

Our February program will be of great interest to all so we expect to see a good turn out. See you all then.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Schoene

(over)

THOUGHTS ABOUT SOCIETIES WHILE RIDING THE BUS

By G. F. Hanson, Regional Vice President
American Iris Society, Region 8

Some 15 years ago a small group of people got together and formed the Twin City Iris Society. They held meetings, swapped experiences, held shows, and through their cooperative efforts helped each other learn more about the iris and do a better job of growing it. Today the same activities are still going on, but the Twin City Iris Society has grown to well over a hundred members, and every year its shows rank among the very largest and best in the nation. And many of those original members are still highly active today.

Now these folks who founded our society had as their inspiration a pet flower so fascinating and so highly developed that they wanted to band together and learn more about it. The reason why they had this wonderful flower, and therefore why our society was founded, goes back quite a bit further and gets into another story. Something over forty years ago, in much the same manner, another group of people with similar interests got together and formed the American Iris Society. And like the TCIS and AIS grew and expanded its scope and activities until today it has 7,000 members scattered over the entire United States and several foreign countries.

To realize just how well the AIS has done its work, we need only look at a modern iris and compare it with the best that was available a generation ago. Today we have a variety of sizes and forms, we have ruffling and lacing, and we have a rainbow spectrum of colors that our parents and grandparents never dreamed of. We have information about culture and pest control. We have an extensive array of published literature so that we can study and learn. We have a controlled roster of judges functioning under uniform standards. Perhaps best of all, we have a complete and orderly control over the thousands of registered varieties, so that the same name means the same iris, whether it happens to be in Maine or California.

The time came when the very scope and size of the AIS demanded subdivision. Interests, cultural problems, and growing conditions in Minnesota were not the same as in Virginia or Missouri or Oregon. So regions were set up, based on concentrations of membership and similarity of growing conditions. There were 23 regions in the United States, and Canada forms the 24th. Region 8 consists of Wisconsin and Minnesota, with a membership of about 125, roughly half in each state.

By now most of the other regions, wishing to establish firmer ties between their own people whose interests and problems are similar, have set up regional organizations within themselves. Here in Region 8 we have not become accustomed to thinking in regional terms. Recently I asked our membership for an expression of opinion on the subject of a regional organization, and it appears that we aren't ready for it yet. First, we need an increase in memberships and a broadening of our interests beyond our own groups, with recognition of the true value and function of the AIS.

Since we aren't ready for a regional organization yet, I toss out another suggestion as food for thought. Here in Region 8 we have other societies like our own. There is the Wisconsin Iris Society, and the Duluth Peony and Iris Society, and a number of smaller garden clubs interested enough to maintain membership in the AIS. Might it not be to our mutual benefit to establish better contact between these state and local groups? First, perhaps, through an exchange of publications, and

later by an exchange of writings, speakers, and what-have-you? I have a feeling that we can all profit from each other, and maybe this is a logical first step. Let's think about it.

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Our January meetings with Tell Muhlestein were an outstanding success, as I am sure those who were fortunate enough to attend will testify, Mr. Muhlestein or "Tell" as he wished to be called, is a warm, generous friendly flower grower and hybridizer, who, according to his own evaluation is a "plain dirt-gardener." His beautiful slides, his description of his "home place," his invaluable discussion of hybridizing and blood lines and his warm friendly nature will long remain with those of us fortunate enough to attend these meetings. To us the name Tell Muhlestein will not be just a name on a catalog but will invoke warm memories of a personal friend. Thank you, Tell, from the whole Society! !

At this meeting, our Past President Greta Kessenich was presented with a gift for her two years of dedicated work for the Society, as its president. We want to share with those of you who could not be there the beautiful tribute paid to Greta by Hazle Sweeney in the name of the Society.

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PRESENTATION SPEECH January 5, 1966

Under your leadership as President of the Twin City Iris Society these past two years, we have accomplished many firsts. Here are but a few:

1. Membership reached an all time high of 185.
2. The Iris Show of 1965 missed being the No. 1 show of the nation by only 6 bloom stalks (we had 837 entries as against California's 842). However, we led the nation in number of visitors to the show!
3. Good public relationship built up through:
 - a. Publicity in local newspapers, radio and national magazines.
 - b. Personal contact with Southdale Shopping Center to sponsor our Iris Shows.
 - c. Personal contact with officers of Guaranty State Bank to hold all iris meetings in their new modern Community Room.
 - d. Beautification program, in line with President Johnson's National Beautification Program, by donating rhizomes to civic projects:
 - (1) Minneapolis Municipal Garden Center.
 - (2) Bloomington City Hall.
 - (3) Hopkins Beautification Project, plus Girl Scout Troop Project.
 - (4) Richfield Affiliated Garden Club.
4. The Crowning Glory to top this list of accomplishments, is the presence here tonight of Tell Muhlestein of Provo, Utah, internationally famous irisarian and hybridizer. In spite of his busy schedule, you have charmed him into giving us not only one session, but two--the first meeting to show color slides and talk on varieties of iris; the second session to be informal open discussion with gardeners interested in hybridizing, following a pot-luck supper.

To carry out such a strenuous program required a great sacrifice of time, thought and energy. We know that you, Greta, were always the first one to appear at the meetings, and the last one to leave. We cannot help but feel your life was patterned after the following quotation:

TIME FOR EVERYTHING

Take time to work--it is the price of success.
 Take time to think--it is the source of power.
 Take time to play--it is the secret of youth.
 Take time to read--it is the fountain of wisdom.
 Take time to be friendly--it is the road to happiness.
 Take time to dream--it is hitching your wagon to a star.
 Take time to love and be loved--it is the privilege of the gods.
 Take time to look around--it is too short a day to be selfish.
 Take time to laugh--it is the music of the soul.

Old Irish Prayer

And NOW, the Twin City Iris Society takes genuine pride in presenting to you this token of appreciation, in the presence of our distinguished guest this evening. This memento has the unanimous approval of the officers and Board of Directors of the Twin City Iris Society. It is inscribed:

GRETA KESSENICH, PRESIDENT
 TWIN CITY IRIS SOCIETY
 1964 & 1965

In selecting this particular memento, we felt the imported marble base was a symbol of strength and endurance; the perpetual calendar an everlasting reminder of the happy days, months and years with the Twin City Iris Society; the pen would encourage you to continue to write your thoughts in long hand; and the gavel, of course, the symbol of your reign as President of the Twin City Iris Society.

The following article caught my eye and I thought our members might like to have this information. It was printed in the August 1965 issue of Popular Mechanics. (Submitted by Dorothy Rudser)

"Please Don't Eat the Oleander"

The woman was in intense pain when admitted to the emergency room of a Cleveland hospital. The left side of her face was swollen and her speech was thick, almost unintelligible. Her tongue and mouth membranes were so badly swollen that she couldn't swallow. She admitted that she had bitten into the stalk of a dumbcane plant but had not swallowed the juices or the pulp.

(Dumbcane is not an exotic growth. It sprouts in many a livingroom and is favored as a decoration for somber hotel lobbies. It grows from three to six feet high and has elongated green leaves that may be spotted or streaked with white or shades of green. Its scientific name is Diefenbachia seguine.)

Dumbcane is not the only nasty plant you may be nurturing in your home or in your garden. Take a walk around your house and you're likely to find at least half a dozen plants that could fell you and your children if their leaves or fruit were ingested.

In your walk around your garden you may well encounter a daffodil, narcissus, or other lily-like plant. They're all bulbous plants and the bulb is the potent portion. It contains chemicals that produce nervous symptoms and extreme digestive distress.

Lily-of-the-valley is a well-established favorite for both house and garden. It has white, bell-shaped flowers and a sweet fragrance. Look at it and sniff it, but don't eat it. It contains a drug similar to digitalis, the heart stimulant, and is also irritating to the digestive tract. Digitalis, of course, comes from the Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) which is an ornamental plant that grows from two to five feet high and has purple flowers. The drug is prepared mostly from the leaves.

Another plant that contains a compound that affects the heart is oleander (*Nerium oleander*). A leading authority on toxic plants warns that a single leaf can be a lethal dose for a child.

Here is a list of other plants to be wary of:

Gloriosa or climbing lily (*Gloriosa superba* L.) is a slender plant that grows from five to seven feet tall and has yellow and yellow and red flowers. It is native to Asia and Africa but is widely used as a garden flower in the southern states. All parts of the plant are poisonous and can cause nausea, a feeling of numbness in the lips, tongue and throat; giddiness and loss of power in the limbs, and convulsions and loss of consciousness.

Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) is a bushlike shrub that grows to five or six feet and has sweet-scented white to rose flowers. It can be found in many parts of the country. The Delaware Indians used laurel to commit suicide. It contains a compound that produces nausea and vomiting, depression, difficult breathing, prostration and coma.

Jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*) has a related species known as angel's trumpet or Gabriel's trumpet (*Datura suaveolens* H. & B.). Jimsonweed grows wild, but the angel's trumpet often is found in gardens. It has large, white pendulous flowers. Both species contain atropine, a drug that paralyzes motor nerves and can produce respiratory and heart failure.

Wisteria (*Wisteria* species) is a tough vine that grows in many sections of the country and produces clusters of showy flowers. Seeds from wisteria pods are reported, in recent years, to have produced mild to severe digestive upsets in children. Wisteria is a relatively new addition to the list of poisonous plants.

Yellow Oleander (*Thevetia peruviana* Schum.) is a shrub or small tree with a dense crown. A native of tropical America, it is also grown in the warmer sections of this country. It has yellow to dull orange flowers. Despite its name, it isn't a true oleander. All parts of the plant are said to be poisonous. Two of the compounds found in it act as heart stimulants.

Larkspur (*Delphinium* species) is a tall spiked plant with feathery green leaves that is frequently planted in flower gardens. All varieties reportedly contain compounds that cause digestive upset and nervous excitement. In Western states, larkspur is said to cause more losses of cattle than any other poisonous plant except locoweed.

Rhubarb (*Rheum Rhaponticum*) is okay if you eat only the stalks, as countless rhubarb fanciers are well aware. But the leaves of the plant contain oxalic acid, which crystalizes in the kidneys, plugging and rupturing the tubules of the organ. Human deaths have occurred from eating rhubarb leaves.

Castorbean seeds (*Ricinus communis*) are highly toxic and may be fatal if chewed or eaten.

Jerusalem Cherry (*Solanum Pseudo-Capsicum*). The bright orange-red berries are considered toxic if eaten.