

NEWS & VIEWS

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February, 1960

Spring is on its way!!! My little eight year old daughter came in one of those warm sunny days wreathed in smiles and blithely announced, "Spring is almost here - know how I know?" I said, "No - how do you know?" "Because the birds are singing so much more and so differently."

Yes, spring is coming and now is the time to make our plans and resolve to have bigger and better iris gardens than ever before.

The next meeting of the Twin City Iris Society will be Thursday, February 25 at 8:00 P.M. and will again be held at the downtown Y.W.C.A. at 12th and Nicollet in Minneapolis.

A most interesting program has been planned. Mrs. Alice Foss who recently returned from a trip to the Carribean Island will tell us of her trip and show the many beautiful slides she took of this tropical paradise. She said the poinsettias were particularly beautiful - practically growing wild.

Too - we will have a short talk on the new and interesting iris varieties. Coffee and refreshments will be served to cap what promises to be a most informative and enjoyable evening. Hope we will see you there!!

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ANOTHER WINTER WITH LITTLE SNOW: Mr. G. B. Gable

Our neighboring states to the south and east are receiving more than an adequate supply of snow this winter while we who grow iris in Minnesota wish for a foot of snow to cover our iris gardens. One sure thing, we should have no snow-mold problem with our bent grass lawns this coming spring. The weather here seems to follow the pattern of the past two winters and heavy winter losses may be expected unless there is adequate moisture at the time the frost goes out of the ground in March.

Those who have small iris gardens can supply the moisture with the garden hose. I have been planning to do that very thing where our new and expensive varieties are planted. It may look silly to get out there with the garden hose and sprinkle over the top of the hay but if we don't get snow soon and we continue to have thawing weather and the soil is dry when examined, my iris will get the soaking. To avoid mildew after soaking I expect to attach a siphon to the hose and apply a generous amount of liquid fungicide at the same time.

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We always uncover our iris April 1st, weather permitting and have found spots where the hay was full of mildew, the soil was covered with a mold also the iris leaves. I believe that mildew formed during March when the temperature got up into the 60's or above 70 degrees. An application of fungicide may be the answer to that problem.

The evergreens can stand a good sprinkling too.

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MORE ANSWERS FROM MR. SCHREINER:

NEMATODES I am surprised to hear you mention this, as to my experience Iris nematodes are a problem mainly in California, Arizona and I believe Texas. I do not have any direct information on New Mexico. Unless some stock is brought into Minnesota land and infect it I wonder if you ever have it. I may be incorrect but it is my understanding that a cold climate such as yours where the frost penetrates the ground deeply will not harbor nematodes. And from what I hear of your winter this year those critters will have to go deeper than 52 inches to be below frost line! The Shell Oil Company has a very effective anti-nematode material. I do not know much about it so I do not know if it is a liquid or chemical but I know it is used and I see it advertised extensively in California trade papers. I would suspect that you would rarely if ever have nematode trouble in your iris in Minnesota. At least I never saw it while I was there.

SOIL How to sterilize it. The inevitable question here is sterilize it for what? I do not think ordinary good soil needs sterilization unless you have a disease or insect infestation. And the thing is that there would be different sterilizings agents for each. Aldrin is very good for wire worms and such like insects that lurk in the soil if you have an infestation. If you have disease problems then the use of one of the soil fumigants like DOW-FUME or that family would be good. We do not sterilize our soil as we keep rotation and I dislike to disturb the soil with other treatments unless I have to.

Choice of fertilizers. This to a degree depends on the particular soil and is very variable in the Twin City area. Sandy soils like we had out south Robert Street needed much more fertilizer than the heavier soils out towards Mendota. I would say an ideal source of humas if one could get it would be to pile some sod up to say a heighth of three to four feet and let it rot for a year or so. Then mix that in, this is for texture and friability. I always found that when manures were used that bacterial rots seemed to be invited, particularly in late June if rainy thunderstorm weather was prevelent. A balanced fertilizer like a 4-8-6 is a dependable formula. I like to use

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minor elements a small amount it is true but the use of ES-MIN-EL (Essential, Mineral Elements) made by the Tenn-corporation of 617 Grant Bldg., Atlanta, Georgia is one of the finest things I have ever come across. Very little is needed for the ordinary garden. I think a 5# sack which comes to about \$5.00 would last several years, it is applied at the rate of 1 teaspoonful per clump, and you need not worry if you accidentally got too much on as the plants seem to be able to take up only what they need and leave the rest. There are two old reliable fertilizers that Iris like which are steamed bonemeal and superphosphate. We use them as a matter of fact they are in the 4-8-6 formula that we use if it is necessary to fertilize. Here commercially we grow our iris in one field one year, then move on to the next field, in the meantime we sow the fields where the iris were growing into fescue grasses and we lime the soil at that time and correct any nutriment deficiency should any show up.

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At the last meeting the contest for the name of our gossip column was conducted. The clever winner was Mrs. Charlotte Sindt so from now on it will be called:

THE TALL AND DWARF OF IT:

Pat Taylor is taking a midwinter trip to the North Shore. Hope she brings back slides.

The Loren Franklins bought a nursery out on the Rockford Rd. and are going to build a new home this spring. They'll have their own private gardens and arboretum.

David Sindt won a J.R. Watkins Company scholarship for 4H achievement.

Mrs. Koempel will have iris in bloom for Easter. She picked up some dried-up rhizomes at a bargain price and potted them.

Many members of the society have reported bad bouts with the fluss. We hope they'll all be with us soon.

If you would like to take a Carribean cruise by proxy - come and see the beautiful color slides Mrs. Foss brought back. She'll tell us all about them at the meeting the 25th.

Gus Sindt was recently elected president of the Minnesota Peony Society.

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Dues are due and payable now. Send to Mr. Kenneth Shook
Route 4, Box 402D
Excelsior, Minnesota,
or bring them to the next meeting. In case you have forgotten
the dues are: Single: \$2.50 with Minnesota Horticulture
\$1.00 without
Family: \$3.00 with Minnesota Horticulture
\$1.50 without