

Last month's pot-luck dinner at St. Leo's Church was a great success and a good many members turned out to enjoy the many and varied dishes brought by the ladies. A big vote of thanks to Mrs. Milton Dale and all her committee whose hard work made it possible. We were all thrilled to see slides of some of the newer varieties of Iris from Cooley's Gardens. It was like a breath of spring and gave us the feeling that with such beauty just around the corner we would work harder than ever to produce bigger and better blooms.

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The next meeting of the Twin City Iris Society will be held April 28 at 8:00 P.M. at the Minneapolis Y.W.C.A. The room number will be posted at the elevators. We hope there will be a large turnout as it is most important for the show committee to know how your iris wintered and what the prospects will be!! Also it is most important to you to hear the report and plans of the show committee, the schedule has been prepared and is most interesting. The program committee has an interesting program arranged, and refreshment will be served as usual. It should prove to be a most informative and interesting evening for everyone. Thursday, April 28th - 8:00 P.M. at the Minneapolis Y.W.C.A. 12th and Nicollet.

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It is with a great deal of pleasure that your editor makes the following announcement:

Selmar Stenoien and Alice Foss announce their marriage on Sunday, the twenty-seventh day of March, nineteen hundred and sixty at three o'clock p.m. at the Little Brown Church in the Vale Nashua, Iowa.

Alice is one of the best known and most loved members of the Iris Society and the whole society joins in wishing them a long and happy life together blessed with contentment and fulfillment. We know, knowing Alice, that it will also be filled with beautiful flowers. We hope that "Sam" will let us welcome and congratulate him in person and will attend and enjoy our meetings with his bride.

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SPRING AND FLOWER ARRANGING - Mrs. K. W. Fisher

Spring seems so reluctant -- even the daffodils in the grocery store are small and apologetic in appearance. I haven't purchased any yet. It takes a warm Spring day to start my fingers itching.

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Supposing it were a warm, moist Spring day. Along with the bread, flour, potatoes and other staples would be the "orchids" on my budget -- a bunch of daffodils. As soon as I haul the groceries in, I cut the stems again and put my flowers in water for a fresh drink. While I put away the uninspiring flour and potatoes I try to decide between my flat yellow dish with the brown base or the yellow green bowl and natural manzanita.

Groceries away, I go downstairs to my workroom to make the first arrangement of the season. If the yellow dish is used, I put on boots and go out for a few pussywillows from the yard. The yellow green bowl means that I prune the overgrown grape ivy in the living room. Either way, it means fresh plant material again and Spring.

I shouldn't spoil the story by reporting the remarks of the family "So who's coming that we have flowers?" or "No butter this week - mother bought food for her soul instead". Oh, well, mothers get used to that.

Working again with this fresh material reminds me of the opportunities we have to learn more about this interest. Every spring brings a fresh crop of books on flower arranging - usually profusely illustrated. Schools, demonstrations and classes begin again.

For example, School III will be presented by the Federated Garden Clubs of Minnesota at the Colonial Church of Edina on May 19, 20. Here is an excellent chance to study with nationally recognized teachers in the field. Mrs. Barton, instructor in flower arranging, has had photographs of her work included in many of the finest references on the subject. Further information may be obtained from Mrs. J. Stowe, LI. 5-2715, or from Ag Wright.

A one day course for flower show exhibitors is offered by the Minnesota Horticultural Society. One of these will be presented in South St. Paul on July 14. Contact Mrs. Fisher, GL. 5-5245. Your Horticulture magazine will carry other dates.

There are many more opportunities to learn, but none of the lessons mean much without practice. Buy that bunch of daffodils and get started practicing!

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EXTENDING THE IRIS SEASON - Fern Bates

Did you know that even here in Minnesota the Iris season can be started in January? Well, it can be done! We have had interesting bloom from some of the so-called "lesser" iris and the less well known iris in January, February and March.

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One of our favorites and the first to come into bloom is Iris Reticulata or the Netted Iris, so called because of the characteristic netting with which the bulbs are covered. In our rigorous climate these little ones cannot as a rule be grown in the garden but they can be forced as the hardy bulbs are. We pot them at the same time as we do the tulips, daffodils, etc. in October or early November. They are then placed in a cold frame, covered with leaves, the frame is covered with the sash and then boards placed over the sash and more leaves heaped over the cold frame. They are left undisturbed for ten or eleven weeks to form new roots and go through the natural process of dormancy. During this time the temperature within the frame does not get to freezing no matter what the outside temperature has been. The pots can be brought into the house in January or February (we try to pick a day when there is a warm spell or at least a warm sun so the plants will not be frozen when they are exposed to the air.)

A short time after the pots are brought in the plants get their top growth and come into bloom. The Reticulata have a delightful grape-like fragrance which scents the whole house and the rich blue-purple and gold blooms give one an absolute lift during one of these dark, dreary, and cold winter months.

The Regelia species is another which we have carried in the cold frame until January or February and brought into bloom as the hardy bulbs are. Among the weird and enchanting Regelia species are the soft blue Hoogiana, Korolkawi Pink, Korolkawi Green, and the Regelia-Oncocyclus hybrids such as Hera which is ruby red and bronze with a blue suffusion in the falls. Artemis is another hybrid with a rich claret-purple effect due to the deep crimson veining and peppering over its silver-gray background.

The Regelia and Regelia-cyclus groups would be better known if they were not so difficult in their cultural demands. They need absolute dryness for the rhizomes after flowering. This, of course, can be best achieved by growing them in pots in a cold frame where all moisture can be excluded during the summer and the rhizomes can be well baked. In fall they can be mulched along with the other pots of bulbs to be forced and carried through until January or February.

By means of cultural methods such as the preceeding, iris lovers can have Iris bloom for six or seven months of the year here in notoriously cold Minnesota.

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HINTS ON SPRING IRIS CARE - G. B. Gable

Too much wind to burn the hay and a long delay in uncovering our iris. Considerable mildew indicates the necessity of selecting better hay for covering. Canary grass and other broad leaved grasses in the hay packs down so the air cannot circulate and results

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in mildew which could cause an unhealthy condition. To be safe we always treat our iris with a good drenching of Carco-X as soon as possible after the hay is removed.

First indications are that our iris came thru in wonderful condition and there are an abundance of green leaves and very few brown or dead leaves.

As soon as possible after the hay has been removed and a fungicide treatment applied we should apply a good side dressing of fertilizer. Iris grown in rows can be fertilized with a good commercial fertilizer. We use mineralized Loma balanced 5-10-5. To each 5 pounds mix in 2 pounds super-phosphate or bone meal and add a cup full of muriate of potash. We believe this mixture grows strong stems, large rhizomes and roots and intensifies the color. This fertilizer must be kept six inches away from the rhizomes and should never be applied over clumps of iris. Clumps of iris can be fertilized with super-phosphate or bone meal. Hyponex or other liquid fertilizers can also be used but we prefer to use the liquid fertilizer about the time the bloom stalks are about six inches tall.

Fermate is the best fungicide that I know of for the control of leaf spot and other leaf diseases, but is hard to mix and keep mixed without a power sprayer having an agitator. Parzate is second choice, easier to mix and use. It washes off the leaves and the residue can be seen on the rhizomes, doing a good job keeping the rhizomes healthy, so you see fungicide washed off the leaves is not entirely lost. Either fermate or Parzate can be combined with DDT to spray for iris borer control. Two or three sprayings should be made at eight day intervals, the last one when bloom stalks are about a foot high. Ovatran or Malathion can also be combined in the above spray. Saves labor applying all control measures in one spraying.

The iris show is less than 60 days away and our iris remain covered. A late bloom season is possible this year.

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THE TALL AND DWARF OF IT

David Sindt has just received word that he has been accepted for Junior Year Abroad. He will spend his junior college year at Silliman University in the Phillipine Islands. He will leave early in June since the school year is from the middle of June till the end of March.

Mary Shields is president of The Garden Club of Ramsey County which is the second oldest in the state having been organized in 1912. She is the first woman to be elected to serve a second term.

Mr. and Mrs. Selmer Stenoien, nee Alice Foss, are at home at 6045 St. Croix Avenue after April 5.

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Last call for 1960 dues - If you have overlooked paying your dues for this year, send them at once to Mr. Kenneth Shook, Route 4, Box 402D, Excelsior or bring them to the next meeting, so that you will continue to receive the NEWS & VIEWS.