

Twin City Iris Society

NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 8 Book 5

May, 1960

Plans for the 1960 Iris show of the Twin City Iris Society are nearly completed, but for a really successful show we will need the co-operation of all the members. Because of the great loss sustained a year ago we know that there will not be the quantity of bloom of previous years, but if everyone will make an especial effort to bring those he has we can have a very lovely show. It will be held this year in St. Paul at the Commercial State Bank at 5th and St. Peter Streets - across from the St. Paul hotel. Access to the show rooms on Sunday morning the morning of the show will be very easy as the bank has a parking lot at the rear of the building and exhibitors enter by the door from the parking lot. According to the show committee there are no stairs or elevators to negotiate and facilities are very accessible. The dates of the show had been set for Sunday and Monday, June 5 and 6 but because of the lateness of the season it has been postponed to June 12 and 13.

The item that should be called to your attention is the fact that one class in the arrangements schedule will require advance registration. This is No. 4. In the Emerald City. If you are desirous of entering this class please call the show chairman:

Mrs. Betty Van Buskirk - - - HU. 9-7054

Good luck to each and everyone of you and may you all win blue ribbons! !

* * * * *

Our next meeting will be held Thursday, May 26 at 8:00 p.m. at the Minneapolis Y.W.C.A. The room number will be posted at the elevators. This will be a most important and interesting meeting especially for those of you who have had little or no show experience. The program chairman, Vern Landey, has arranged a panel discussion on Getting Ready for the Show. The panel will give information on selecting iris specimens for the show including those characteristics making for championship iris, methods of transporting iris to the show, and any, and all other things pertaining to the show. Come prepared to ask any questions that have been in your mind pertaining to the show and the panel will do their best to give you an answer. The show schedules will also be available that night.

* * * * *

MORE IRIS CULTURE: G. B. Gable

Good reports come from those who have used herbicides for

(Continued . .)

MORE IRIS CULTURE (Continued)

weed control in iris gardens. What could be nicer than to return from a vacation and find the garden free from weeds. The herbicide is not harmful to iris or daylilies and will not kill weeds, but when weed seeds sprout the tiny sprout is killed. We intend to use Crag Herbicide this year. That pig weed gets me down.

We would like to have more reports on the use of dried skim milk or dried buttermilk used for fertilizer. It can be dissolved in water and sprinkled or sprayed over the iris and gives wonderful results. Lush growth can be expected and soft rot may develop if too much is used. We used 100 pounds one year and it was such a job to mix it with water that we applied it dry as a side dressing and we really produced big rhizomes that year.

Red spider mites do such damage to iris and daylilies. The yellowing of leaves during the summer can be caused by red spider mites, and now is the time to start the control. An ovacide should be used at this time. Ovatron was recommended to me by the State Nursery inspector. He said it destroyed the eggs as well as the mites.

Those who expect to exhibit should obtain a supply of three ft. bamboo stakes and a bundle of 4 inch twistems. Bloom stalks that lean or are blown over should be staked up immediately. Crooked bloom stalks can't win the blue ribbons.

If interested in the best of new varieties, look for Galilee, Celestial Snow, Butterscotch Kiss, Irish Linen, Swan Ballet, Frilly Fringes, Caribou Trail, Deep Black, Chinese Lantern and Spring Valley. My guess is that Galilee will win the Dykes Medal this year. Which one do you pick?

Compare Mission Rose with Mary Randall this year. I thought it much better than Mary Randall last year. My first choice for a blue on white plicata is Castle Rock. It grows very good, is very hardy and has Blue Shimmer and Lela Dixon out-classed.

* * * * *

EARLY IRIS HISTORY: W. G. Sindt

Most people who grow iris today know of names such as Fay, Hall, Schreiner, Kleinoorge, and other modern breeders but have heard little of the forerunners of these men.

The first real attempt to get iris history was instigated by the American Iris Society which was founded in 1920. By the use of old catalogues of German, Dutch, Belgian, French, British and American origin a fairly complete account of work by breeders

(Continued . .)

EARLY IRIS HISTORY (Continued)

between 1870 and 1920 was obtained. Older catalogues gave lists of varieties, but nothing about the raisers. Garden publications had articles about the beauty of the flowers, but little about their history. Robert S. Sturtevant, the first secretary of the Society, found in 1850 reference to the fine iris collection of the Dutch bulb firm of Krelage.

Mr. E. H. Krelage, a grandson of the founder, had kept not only the old catalogs of his firm but also those of other growers. Mr. Krelage wrote that a half dozen so called "spicies" had been grown in gardens with the bees doing the pollination. This gave rise to countless color forms but no one named them, propagated them or distributed them before E. Von Berg of Neuenkirchen, Germany and De Bure of Paris who started their work in the early 1800's. Von Berg described and gave Latin names to many of the seedlings but did not distribute them. De Bure named, also in Latin, the first garden variety that was introduced to commerce. It was a plicata named Buriensis. The time was about 1822.

De Bure influenced Monsieur Jacques to grow iris seedlings and introduce them into commerce. The varieties did not amount to much but he was head gardener at the Royal Nevilly Domaine at Villers and one of the most eminent French horticulturists of the 1820's, 1830's and 1840's. As such he made the iris better known and inspired Monsieur Lemon, of Belleville, France, to specialize in iris. In 1840 Lemon listed for sale 100 varieties raised by himself (with the aid of bees) and given vernacular as well as Latin names. One of these I am sure many of us have seen and know as Mme. Chereau. This variety was named in 1944 for the wife of the president of the National Horticultural Society.

The very early interest in iris seems to have centered on the continent but after 1870 it started to gain some recognition in England. In 1870's and 1880's Peter Bors of London, Robert Parker of Tooting and Thomas Ware of Tottenham were raising and introducing new varieties. Whether these were hand crosses or not is not known for certain, but in the 1890's hand crosses were being made in Germany by Goos and Koenemann, and in England by Amas Perry and George Reuthe. The varieties of the late 1890's were considered so fine that many growers believe further improvement impossible.

The earliest settlers to North America brought iris with them and were commonly grown under the general name of "Flags". Japanese iris were brought to Long Island in the 70's and 80's but these did not survive so well. Bors in England had classified in his catalogue what he considered the six principal species - *Iris pollida*, *variegata*, *amoena*, *neglector*, *plicata* and *sgvalens*. One of these catalogues fell into the hands of Bertrand H. Farr, a music store owner who imported the entire collection. On seeing these he was so enthusiastic about them that he sold out his music store to start a nursery.

(Continued . . .)

EARLY IRIS HISTORY (Continued)

About this same time a minister in Nebraska, the Rev. C. S. Harrison was growing and writing about iris. He is credited with influencing Hans and Jacob Sass to take up iris breeding.

In 1909 Mr. Fair introduced a number of his seedlings with a great deal of fan fare and the unheard of high price of fifty cents and later even seventy-five cents each. Among his better known varieties were Quaker Lady, Mt. Penn, Wyomissing, and Penna. Fair. In 1915 he planted a large bed of seedlings at the San Francisco World's Fair and received a gold medal for it. He did not go to the fair himself and so missed meeting Californias two great iris enthusiasts, Sydney B. Mitchell and William Mohr.

The names mentioned in this article such as Krelage, Von Berg, De Bure, Jacques, Lemon, Barr, Parker, Ware, Goos, Koenemann, Perry, Reuthe, Farr and Harrison are all forerunners of the ones we know. There are many others of the early twentieth century who are not mentioned here not because they are less important but because the article would be too long for this issue of the "NEWS and VIEWS".

* * * * *

TALL AND SHORT OF IT

We were saddened to learn last week of the sudden passing of Mr. H. E. Kahlert, who has been a member of the Twin City Iris Society for a number of years. Mr. Kahlert was an avid gardener and was a member of a number of the Garden Clubs. The Minneapolis Star called him "one of Minneapolis' outstanding amateur gardeners". Our condolences were extended to his family.

The name of Mr. L. R. Smith of Owatonna should be added to the list of commercial iris growers in the year book. We understand that both he and the Rev. Folkers have gardens worth seeing if you are going through Owatonna or even for a special trip down there.

Our show chairman, Betty Van Buskirk is planning a trip to Mexico during the month of June, in fact, is postponing it three days to officiate at the show.

If you have any items for this column please call Betty Ipsen at LI. 5-9764.

* * * * *

I want to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of those contributors whose wonderful articles have made the NEWS & VIEWS possible. Without them an interesting and informative NEWS & VIEWS would be impossible. The Editor

Next meeting - May 26 - Y.W.C.A. - 8:00 P.M. Come and bring your guests.