

THE REVIEW
OF
THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

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Mrs. R. N. Carrington, San Diego, Ca., 1974
Mr. Adolph Vogt, Louisville, Ky., 1974, 1975
Mrs. Lloyd Zurbrigg, Radford, Ky., 1974, 1975, 1976

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. W. E. Ouweneel, Editor and Publications, Terre Haute, In.
Mrs. Edith Cleaves, Robin Chairman, San Jose, Ca.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Amid the usual shipping/transplanting rush this fall my thoughts have haunted the mailbox frequently these past few weeks. Great was my relief a day or so ago when the word came from the Nominating Committee that a new President was on the slate of officers! The SJI truly needs more leadership than the "Hang in there, Baby" bit I have been able to manage (like the celebrated picture of the kitty hanging to a wire by two precarious claws).

The immediate financial emergency is over; we are not bankrupt. The plant sale on the east coast came through in good order; and the aid of members also decreased publication expenses. With inflation what it is, however, I would not say all financial troubles are over!

Dr. Clarke Cosgrove contacted me this fall about ballots from AIS judges, on Japanese Irises. It appears there were only sixteen ballots received that voted for the Payne Award! One iris received eight (half), less votes than the iris had to receive to get an HM. Though there is a stated minimum number of votes (or % of the total) for most awards, this was apparently omitted from the Payne Award given in 1972, but that there was in 1973; number of votes was not given. Much needs done!

I bid you all adieu, with special thanks to those who were so helpful in keeping the organization going! Here's to the greatest future possible for the Society for Japanese Irises!

APOGON AUCTION

The Apogon Auction sponsored jointly by the Society for Siberian Irises and Region 1 netted the SJI \$107.00 according to a report from Bee Warburton.

SJI MEETING AT AIS ROANOKE CONVENTION

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Margaret Zurbrigg. Dr. Currier McEwen gave an illustrated talk on his efforts in trying to induce tetraploidy in Japanese irises. Mr. A. J. Vogt showed slides of Japanese irises picturing parents and their seedlings.

JAPANESE IRIS IN JAPAN

Lee E. Eberhardt

Japan is a nation of islands with climatic conditions that vary from subtropical in Kyushu to subarctic in Hokkaido at the northern extremity. Japanese irises are grown throughout Japan. In the north on Hokkaido I have seen cultivars blooming during the first two weeks of August in spots where I have also seen a meter of snow cover and temperatures as low as minus 30° centigrade. From this I believe that we can surmise that these irises can be hardy. On the other hand, in the south on the main island of Kyushu there is practically no winter or freezing weather. This island is where the Kumamoto iris strains originated, which were the earliest introductions to the U. S. West Coast, where they did well. This probably accounts for the hardiness difficulties early in the game in the U. S. Midwest, North and East before the Kumamoto irises froze out, acclimatized here, were succeeded or supplemented with imports of the harder strains.

Kyushu, incidentally, is the island closest to the Asia mainland countries of Korea and China. There is some speculation that perhaps some of the background species in modern Japanese irises may have origins in Siberia, Korea, and China. They possibly were imported along with Buddhism, ceramic technology, etc., in the 650 to 1200 A.D. period. Modern diploid cultivars were some 600 years in developing to today's beauties.

Returning to Hokkaido, which island seems possibly to be the original habitat of "wild" iris species: I have seen many acres growing in the wild. Invariably they grow along the seashores in the brackish watered tidal swamps behind the shore dunes. The plant crowns are out of the water but the variable water table averages about six inches below the crown with the deeper roots well watered. In every place where these were seen growing they were exposed to sea salt spray and were not growing in similar areas out of the spray range. These irises are obviously sodium tolerant in acid pH conditions. At the same time, I suspect they may be calcium intolerant. In respect to these factors they are similar to rhododendrons and azaleas. I believe that Japanese irises will thrive anywhere rhododendrons are grown and under similar growing conditions.

Japanese irises in Japan are almost always grown in association with much water. This has probably led to misconceptions of their growing in or near water like paddy rice. BUT the fields are flooded mainly to keep down weed, insect, and disease infestation, not because the irises require so much water. Most of the rest of the year the water table is lowered to a point where only the lower roots may be saturated with the crowns dry. Japanese irises are sometimes pot grown in colorful glazed ceramic pots from 18 to 40" in diameter. Many bloom exhibitions may be mainly clumps in these pots, the balance of the show being individual blooms. Judging and ribbons are usually not evident, only the variety name, in Japanese.

Japanese irises are heavy feeders and are manured and/or fertilized heavily before and after bloom with high nitrogen and acid materials. Japanese bearded iris enthusiasts were set back perhaps ten years in development due to "soft rot" problems of handling TBs similarly. This loss of plants was wrongly attributed to the hot, humid (monsoon) June weather which as a side contribution only made the losses worse. With correction of their bearded iris fertilizing practices TBs are now doing well in many areas of Japan. There is no chance, however, that bearded irises will ever replace their traditional national flower, probably rightly so.

Drs. Hirao and Tomino, among others, were working hard for tetraploids and when the writer last visited in bloom season several years ago they thought they had some tetraploids, as evidenced mainly by foliage substance. At that time, however, they had never seen any tetraploid bloom on these heavy foliage suspects. From discussions at the recent Roanoke AIS meeting, I understand that Dr. Hirao has practically abandoned this activity due to the lack of bloom. Other Japanese and at least one U. S. JI breeder have had tetraploid blooms and are in advanced generations. Perhaps from this work one day soon we may have some true blues and the elusive yellow. Dr. Hirao, incidentally, has developed many colchicine induced tetraploid hostas ranging all the way from miniature dwarfs to "talls". These he has growing on his fantastic little botanical wonderland mountain south of Tokyo.

The JI bloom in Japan has to be seen to be believed. The main gardens are usually associated with shrines and temples. In Kyoto the Heian Shrine, the sacred shrine in Ise, and the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo are outstanding examples. In recent years large plantings have been tourist attractions. One such at Shuzenji south of Tokyo advertised, "A million blooms, over a thousand varieties." They could add that they are to be seen by thousands of people who arrive by railroad, bus, truck, bicycle, and on foot. This is a worthy and commendable civic venture. Having visited here at peak bloom I can vouch that their advertisement, if anything, is understated. Some of these plantings have to be the worlds outstanding showings of irises. During the bloom season one sees JIs everywhere---railroad stations, department stores, hotels, commercial offices, factories, etc. Tracking them down to where they are grown, however, can be a difficult and frustrating experience without the learned guidance of obliging and enthusiastic friends like Drs. Tomino and Hirao, among others.

The bloom season starts in Kuyushu in late May and progresses in time and geography northward to early August bloom in Hokkaido. A visit in bloom time is a soul satisfying iris experience. Try it you will like it.

These comments are only to illustrate Japanese situations which are very different from those in the U.S.A. Perhaps you can, however, winnow out some helpful clues to your own growing of Japanese irises in the U. S.

IRIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Lee E. Eberhardt

The iris season will be with us soon, and many iris lovers will be interested in photographing selected specimens of our favorite flower. These remarks are general comments based upon the writer's photo requirements.

Every flower photographer has different ideas and needs. Some people like to take a picture of a single flower to fill a 35 mm slide; others like the writer use the camera instead of a notebook for permanent records; others like to photograph single bloomstalks and/or clumps of iris. Other people take pictures of people taking pictures of iris. Some people take pictures of iris and feet.

Strangely enough, very few take pictures of iris gardens. Several years ago I was collaborating with several Japanese on photos for a Japanese book on iris. There was no problem on individual iris photos, but we had a difficult time getting good pictures of clumps of iris and iris gardens not cluttered up with more people than iris. The latter situation and the photos of iris and feet obtain mostly at annual AIS conventions.

The best camera for flower photography is the single lens reflex with through-the-lens viewing and lightmeter. Such a camera with any of the available color films and screw-in plus supplemental lens (say, plus 1, plus 2, and plus 3) should provide the camera equipment. Of equal importance is a good notebook in which to record every shot.

The actual photo depends upon good composition and judgement. Pick the specimen you want, make sure of same's being isolated and with proper background, preferably with the light on the flower (avoid backlighting). Focus carefully and shoot at the indicated lens opening and speed. Immediately write down at least the exposure number and the name of the iris.

Occasionally in a roll of film it is a good idea to take a picture with the name label in the picture with the iris, thus providing a datum mark in the slide sequence for identifying the slides.

In general it is more difficult to take photos in bright sunlight with dark shadows than on a day when there is a haze or an overcast sky.

The various color films available have differing color sensitivity. An example is the Kodachrome sensitivity to red and poor blues. It is best to learn the characteristics of one film and then stick with it. The sensitivity problem provides some weird results in iris colors. The so-called "green" iris that show up as mustard tan are one example. Other problems are taking good photos of blue iris and the blacks.

Part of the problem is that the colors are what we want to see and necessarily what the film sees. For example, we say, "what a beautiful blue or black iris," overlooking the lavender or the red infused in same. The film sensitivity for color picks up what we overlook and emphasizes it; the result is usually disappointing. Perhaps one of the biggest problems in iris photography is taking too many photographs and not spending enough time on the individual picture. This is particularly true at conventions. It is better to take fewer pictures in such cases; I will guarantee that you will have better pictures and fewer feet.

Cameras, big ladies' purses, and high heels are reputed to be the curses of iris gardens. Be a good visitor---keep your camera confined, don't tramp in the beds, keep out of other photographers' shots, and you'll be more than welcome another time.

(Copied with permission from the Regional 6 Newsletter)

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5101 Fegenbush Lane
Louisville, Ky. 40218

October 15, 1974

Mrs. Lorena M. Reid, President
The Society For Japanese Iris
Rt. 2, 17225 Mc Kenzie Highway
Springfield, Oregon 97477

Dear Mrs. Reid,

In accordance with Article IV, Section 1 of the Bylaws of the Society, the Nominating Committee of the Society nominates the following for Officers to serve during 1975 and 1976. They are:

President - Mr. Thurnton M. Abell, Santa Monica, Ca.

Vice President - Mr. Frank B. Foley, Davenport, Ia.

Secretary - Mr. Harley E. Briscoe, White Hall, Il.

Treasurer - Mr. Ford L. Grant, Davenport, Ia.

In accordance with Article VI, Section 3, of the Bylaws of the Society, the Nominating Committee nominates:

Mrs. Orrin E. Merrill, Epsom, N. H. to serve as a member of the Nominating Committee during 1975, 1976 and 1977, succeeding Mrs. R. N. Carrington, San Diego, Ca.

Permission has been obtained from each of the nominees to use his or her name.

Yours truly,



Adolph Vogt, Chairman,
Nominating Committee.

AV:fts

c.c. Mr. W. E. Ouweneel