

THE REVIEW  
OF  
THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

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WAGES OF NEGLECT  
Thornton M. Abell

There is one thing I have definitely learned---Japanese irises resent neglect (Many other plants agree). Due to the press of my architectural affairs I have had to neglect them these last two years. The results are sad indeed.

The Japanese had not been replanted for five years. This year they had given me up---a few weaker ones died, many others died out in the center of the clumps. I had tried to at least keep them damp during growing season, but not enough. I had scattered a little food and compost on them, but that was a poor substitute for digging, dividing and replanting in a well prepared bed every three years.

I got what I deserved. Poor bloom last year and miserable bloom this year. The only good bloom I had was in a pot of my 'Fuji.'

Next year I will have more time for the iris. I will dig up the entire garden, fix the beds and replant the iris properly. This may be an idle wish, but I will most certainly try.

In the meantime I want to thank all of you for the privilege to have been your president these last few years. I am only sorry I have not been able to attend our AIS conventions to meet some of our members.

I am sure most of you did better than I with your plants. I will look forward to future issues of The Review for glowing reports!

PROGRESS NOTE ON TETRAPLOIDY---1978  
Dr. Currier McEwen

Bill Ouweneel has again requested a report bringing my experience with tetraploid Japanese irises<sup>1</sup> up to date. I must emphasize that these comments will be concerned only with my own flowers. Work with tetraploids has been ongoing in Japan for years but I am not sufficiently familiar with it to comment.

Although a few of my tetraploids which bloomed this season were first generation ones induced through the use of colchicine,<sup>1</sup> the majority were of second and third generation status, resulting from simple crosses of tetraploid parents. Altogether about 150 bloomed. All from the crosses are single flowers, even when one of the parents was an induced six-petaled double. Whether this has come about merely from chance or perhaps means that singleness is a dominant trait I have no idea. If any reader has genetic knowledge regarding this, I will appreciate being informed.

As I have said in earlier notes,<sup>2</sup> my first second generation tetraploids bloomed in 1975 and were nine quite bad sisters from two even poorer single parents. In 1976 a better one appeared and subsequent

crossing of those ten has led to distinct improvement. About 70 seedlings from crosses made in 1976 bloomed this year. About half are a little better than the first ugly sisters but among the others are some which reinforce my belief that tetraploidy will result in some improvements in Japanese irises as it has in Siberians. These better seedlings are large with greater substance and richer colors.

I plan to introduce my first tetraploid Japanese iris in 1979. Its parents are two colchicine induced tetraploids: one from Garden Caprice x a seedling derived from a marbled blue and a white with blue edge and the other from Ageha x Shikino Hajime. It is a single with wide wine red edging surrounding white centers which are also splashed with the red. It has one to two branches and 4 to 5 buds per stalk. This season, in its second year of bloom, it sent up successive stalks for a total bloom period of 39 days with a rest period of less than a week in early August. Whether this should be considered rebloom or continuing bloom is discussed elsewhere in this issue of *The Review*. It is nicely fertile but, of course, only with tetraploids. I have not tried selfing it so do not know whether that can be done successfully. Therefore, with each order next year, I will include another second or third generation tetraploid seedling in order to provide something to cross it with. I am eager to see others enter this area of hybridizing.

#### References

1. McEwen, C. Efforts to Induce Tetraploidy in Japanese Irises. *The Review*. Vol. 8, No. 1, page 9 (April 1972).
2. ---- Progress Note on Tetraploidy---1977. *The Review*. Vol. 14, No. 2, page 14 (Oct. 1977).

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#### PSEUDACORUS X KAEMPFERI HYBRIDS

Among the SJI members there must be some experience in growing *Pseudacorus x Kaempferi* hybrids in 1977 and 1978. If you are one of them, please send your report to the Editor by April 1, 1979, for publication in the April 1979 issue of *The Review*. Please be as detailed as possible in reporting source of plants, soil and climate conditions, potted or bedded, amount of bloom, increase, etc.

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#### WANTED

A copy of *The Japanese Iris* by Kuribayashi and Hirao. Send details to Lorenzo M. Paolucci, 25 Downs Road, Stevenson, CT., 06491.

## REBLOOM? CONTINUING BLOOM?

Dr. Currier McEwen

In an earlier issue of The Review<sup>1</sup> I have commented on rebloom in Japanese irises. Now, following conversations with more experienced growers, I wonder what the definition of rebloom in these and Siberian irises should be. Rebloom in bearded irises, as is well known, does not appear until eight weeks or more after the first bloom. In Siberian and Japanese irises, however, the additional bloom which I have observed comes only a week or two after the end of first bloom. Hence perhaps it is more appropriate to call it "continuing bloom." Actually there are some which do indeed pause only a few days before bloom again appears on stalks which had already been started. One of my second generation tetraploids (T<sub>2</sub>75/3) this year bloomed first on July 14th (fairly early for Maine) and continued for three weeks. Then, after only 4 days of no bloom, it started again on a stalk already showing early buds when first bloom ended, and continued to send up several more stalks with the final bud opening on August 26th. Several other plants, however, rested for 10 to 15 days between end of first bloom period and start of the second.

Perhaps 10% of my seedlings during the past few years have had this "reblooming" characteristic. Now, of course, I am consciously crossing these flowers, hoping to increase the trait for reblooming, but in my early experience with Japanese irises in the 1960s I had no such thought. I suspect that the relatively large number of my seedlings which showed the tendency in those years owed it to the fact that one of the few good named cultivars I then owned was Garden Caprice so I used it over and over; and it happens to be one with a strong "reblooming" or "continuing blooming" trait. In the case of Siberian irises, which I have studied more closely, I am certain that this feature is largely genetically determined. Hence it should be easily enhanced by selective breeding.

I will appreciate it if other growers will give me their thoughts about this feature. Certainly what I observe is not new. In my garden Bejeweled Mogul and several others as well as Garden Caprice show this type of rebloom strikingly. Hence more experienced growers than I must have observed this very desirable characteristic over the years and no doubt have written about it and have already decided its proper designation. I will appreciate learning about this either through letters or through comments sent to Bill Ouweneel for The Review.

Subsequent Note: After the above was typed, I was surprised and delighted to see a new bloom on my Purple Parasol on September 21st. The new scape has a branch and three buds. I estimate that the last bud will open about October 1st. Purple Parasol had bloomed in July and again, after a short pause, in August. That might have been considered continuing bloom but this September flowering obviously<sup>2</sup> is rebloom. This is the second time I have seen so late a bloom.

### REFERENCES

1. McEwen, C. 1972 Rebloomer Report. The Review. Vol. 10, No. 1, Page 6 (April 1973).
2. ----- in a letter to the Editor, The Review. Vol. 14, No. 2, Page 20 (October 1977).

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE USE OF FERTILIZERS AND  
GROWTH STIMULANTS IN THE CULTURE OF  
JAPANESE IRIS SEEDLINGS

Lorenzo Paolucci

A considerable quantity of literature exists relative to the culture of the Japanese Iris and the germination of its seed. However, I have not, as yet, come across a great deal of writing about the culture of Japanese Iris seedlings. I refer to that grey area between germination and lining out. Now this subject may be of little interest to those of us blessed with a sweet climate and a winter consisting of nothing more nasty than cold rains, but here in Connecticut, with its short growing season, it is imperative to get as much growth on new plants before the snows as is humanly possible. For several years preceding this one, all our efforts at seedling culture resulted in line after line of slow growing, dismal grasses that took approximately 36 months to flower. That factor alone added one enormous constraint to our hybridizing efforts. This year we decided to get serious about our problem and devise a better way. The results of our efforts in this area are presented below.

A caution is perhaps in order: The results described here may not be replicated by other growers. As we are all aware, the variables in any kind of plant culture are infinite, and what works for one grower in one area may result in grim failure in another. If you are considering the use of any of the methods described below, it is wise to proceed with caution and not put all of your eggs in one N-Triacontanol basket.

The subject of this undertaking was 21 flats of Japanese Iris seedlings. Some of these seedlings were grown from mixed seed from Japanese hybridizers, some were crosses between my Sakata Hybrids and Marhigos, and some were simply Marhigo by Marhigo. This information is presented because each of these different groups differs slightly in growth habit, making it a bit difficult to accurately evaluate growth rate. As much as I would have liked to present actual measurements of the different groups of seedlings, I have not done so because of those differences in plant size and growth habit.

The seeds were planted indoors in early March, stratified and germinated, hardened off and transferred to gardens in early May, and were finally lined out in mid August. The controlled watering and fertilizing of these seedlings from early May until their lining out in August was carefully recorded and provided the notes upon which this report is based.

The seeds were planted in 4" French peat pots in well soaked PRO-MIX A and stratified "in situ" in an old unused refrigerator. For this experiment, the 21 flats of seedlings were divided into five groups with one left over. The one left over was consigned to God's good graces and was neither watered nor fertilized. Needless to say, it fared considerably worse than all the others. However, it was found to have a considerably more extensive root system than any of the others, probably as a function of its search for moisture. Incidentally, all flats were placed on the

ground where the seedling roots rapidly penetrated the pots and proceeded into the garden topsoil. This, of course, did not occur with those four flats placed in trays.

Group A, consisting of four flats, was the control group, and was only watered daily. It was neither fertilized nor MAG-AMP treated.

Group B, consisting of four flats, was watered daily and fertilized weekly with a dilute solution of Peter's Special Orchid Fertilizer at 20-20-20. Growth was steady and regular and satisfactory in every way.

Group C, consisting of four flats, was watered daily; however, the flats were placed in trays which maintained about 1" of water at the base of the pots at all times. One large, heaping tablespoon of MAG-AMP was placed on the surface of the pots at the base of the seedlings and watered in. Most of the seedlings so treated with MAG-AMP, including those in the other groups, did not evidence any immediate change in growth rate. In fact, I would describe the effect of this fertilizer as sporadic. It seemed that the seedlings would go for a time without change, and then---BINGO---they would appear to have grown several inches in a very short time.

Group D, consisting of four flats, was watered daily and dosed with MAG-AMP as above. It was periodically sprayed with Gibberelic Acid per the manufacturer's recommendations. This material was obtained in a spray bomb from a local garden supply center. Perhaps the Gibberelic Acid was not as pure as it could have been, perhaps the can had exceeded its shelf life, or perhaps its effect on Japanese Iris is negligible, but the end result was not any different from Group C. I will try again next year with our own mix, if I can find a recommended dilution rate for the powder.

Group E, consisting of four flats, was treated as Group D above, except that instead of Gibberelic Acid, the plants were sprayed every three weeks with a 0.05 mg per liter solution of N-Triacontanol and wetter sticker. The results were certainly worthy of notice. When the seedlings were lined out in August, they had grown completely out of their pots, had grown 18 to 24" tall, and were producing multiple growths. The only fault I could find at that time was a nasty habit of accordioning leaves. This usually indicates unequal growth rate between inside and outside of leaves. It did not affect all of the plants in this group, so it may be of minor importance. Whether these are healthy plants with hard growth and capable of surviving our winters remains to be seen. However, to keep the evaluation fair, I won't cover these seedlings completely with mulch hay this winter. They have about 4" of wood shaving at their bases now and that will have to do.

In summary, it is my opinion that the use of MAG-AMP in conjunction with the substance N-Triacontanol deserves further investigation and more widespread use. If it turns out that the new growth it produces is soft and not at all hardy, perhaps those areas of the country with milder climates might profit most from its use. I hope that those of our plants so treated will make it through the winter without kill and thereby commend its use to all seedling growers.

We discovered the beneficent uses of N-Triacontanol as a result of its use on Phaelaenopsis orchids. We put 9" of leaf span on ex-flask plants in less than 9 months. That was a pretty impressive accomplishment! The logical next step was its use on all of our seedlings. N-Triacontanol and other chemicals for growth stimulation and regulation, as well as for tissue culture, are available from THE ORCHID PLACE, 1800 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, CT 06475.

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#### MEMBERSHIP

The MEMBERSHIP LIST in the April, 1978, issue of THE REVIEW should have included the following:

Julian M. Ross, 402 Mountain Gap Road, S.E.  
Huntsville, AL 35803

Mrs. Nathan Bauman, 3622 Lakeview Road  
Memphis, TN 38116

Mrs. J. W. Kuykendall, P. O. Box 16663  
Memphis, TN 38116

Mr. Howard R. Lutz, 2975 Meadow Brook Road  
Memphis, TN 38116

Mrs. Ortho Boone, 340 Reemer Road  
Wadsworth, OH 44281

Mr. Bernard Jones, 11359 North Drive, North  
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Mrs. Sylvia Eddy, 5260 Angling Road  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Mrs. Annilee Katz, 601 Clinton St.  
Marshall, MI 49068

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#### JI SEEDS

Your Editor has about 75 bee-pod JI seeds he will send to the first person requesting them.

## KALAMAZOO JAPANESE IRIS SHOW IN REVIEW

Leland M. Welsh, Show Chairman

The Fifth Japanese Iris Show sponsored by the Southwestern Michigan Iris Society was held at the Westmain Mall on Saturday, July 1, 1978. There was a total of 9 exhibitors. Fifty seven named specimens representing 55 different cultivars were entered in competition by 5 exhibitors, 27 seedlings by 4 exhibitors, and 24 arrangements by 6 exhibitors. Interest was added by the inclusion of a few spuria and one Louisiana iris in the specimen entries. All exhibits proved to be of exceptionally good quality, producing a beautiful show.

The iris "Popular Acclaim" lived up to its name by being selected as Queen of the show. It was exhibited by Mr. Arthur Hazzard of Kalamazoo. The award for best seedling went to Jill Copeland of Mattawan for seedling #78-7. Leland Welsh of Kalamazoo was the qualified exhibitor receiving the Silver Medal for most blue ribbons and Mrs. Ronald F. Miller of Kalamazoo received the Bronze Medal. The horticultural specimens were judged by Mr. Adolph Vogt of Louisville, Kentucky, Mrs. Roger (Linda) Miller of Markle, Indiana, and Mr. Hal Stahly of Grand Blanc, Michigan.

Mrs. Avis Howard of Kalamazoo exhibited the best artistic arrangement of the show and was also awarded a special sweepstakes rosette for having the most blue ribbons in the arrangement section.

In addition to the arrangements in competition, much interest was added to the show by a spectacular display of Japanese style arrangements (between 25 and 30) staged around the Dandelion Fountain by the Battle Creek chapter of Ikebana International, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Roy (Jean) Marsh, in conjunction with several Kalamazoo members of the Sogetsu Michigan Study Group. Several special arrangements were made by Jean Chung and Sylvia Wong, of Kalamazoo, and Catherine Miller of Battle Creek. Mrs. Chung designed a traditional Japanese "Rikka" arrangement about four feet high which greeted visitors approaching the show along the main mall axis. Mrs. Miller also demonstrated Sogetsu arranging techniques during the afternoon and evening.

The afternoon session on judging Japanese Irises scheduled for Mr. Hazzard's garden was held in Mr. and Mrs. Hazzard's home instead due to rain. The very interesting two hour discussion conducted by Mr. Vogt covered much general and cultural information on Japanese irises. Our only disappointment was the small number of out-of-town people attending this regionally approved session. We were pleased, though, to have a number of our Ohio friends visit the show.

Of special interest at the show was the public's reaction to the horticultural exhibit. Frequently overheard from shoppers strolling through the show were remarks such as, "Are these irises?" "I never saw irises like these before." "Aren't they beautiful!" and even



occasionally, "I'd like to grow some of these." It was my belief that this show created at least as much excitement, if not more, from those who saw it as our tall bearded show last spring, which had been a very good show. We also find the Japanese theme gets more participation and interest from area arrangers, especially Garden Council People. In addition, the special Japanese arrangement exhibition was enthusiastically received by both garden club members and the general public. It is also my belief that the show, held now on two successive years, has increased interest among our local society members in growing more Japanese irises.

The Japanese Iris show, as we have held it, seems to be unique to the Kalamazoo area. Would it not be possible for a few societies in other regions to be able to achieve the same results? I believe you would find such an experience a rewarding one.

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The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr. Lee Boehmer, 1179 Bond St., Redding, CA., 96001  
Mrs. Jean Flory, 973 Dartmouth Road, Troy, OH., 45373  
Gladys Klobberdanz, 712 Brookville Drive, Modesto, CA., 95355  
Mr. Donald P. Himmel, 2517 South St., Baler, LA., 70714  
Mr. Gerald D. Shutes, 2609 Belvedere Ave., Louisville, KY., 40220  
Mr. William A. Scott, 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, CA., 90068

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Total membership this issue- 145.