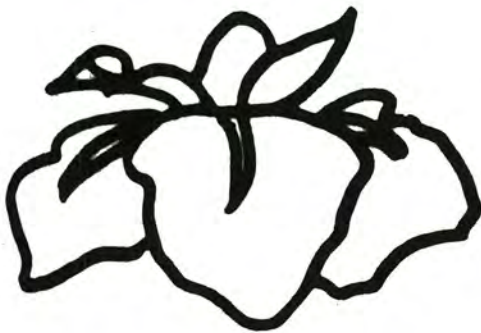
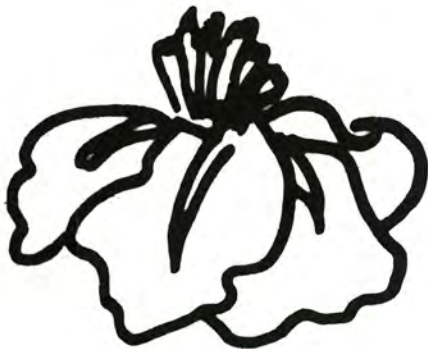


VOLUME 16, NUMBER 2
FALL 1979



THE REVIEW

OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

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OF
THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This was a good year for Japanese irises in Kentucky and letters from several other Regions indicated a good bloom also.

To date my garden has received 52 inches of rain. This is about nine inches above normal for the entire year. The JIs have responded with vigorous growth. Plenty of rain surely makes a big difference in the way they grow.

I am glad to report that the JI auctions are on the increase. In addition to Region One, there were auctions in Regions 6 and 8. These auctions are getting more people to grow JIs and each grower is a prospective member.

Our Editor can not print that JI news item unless you send it to him. So please help with news items from your area.

Now is the time to get your JIs ready for winter. After your first frost remove the foliage. It is much easier to remove before it falls over. Cut six inches above the ground as the stubble will help keep the winter mulch in place. Leaves or pine needles are good. A good mulch is essential to insure adequate moisture all winter.

Are you now growing Japanese irises?

ADOLPH VOGT

Performance of Japanese Irises in Soils of Different pH

Currier McEwen, M.D.

It is well known that Japanese irises belong in the group of plants which prefer or require acid soil. The late Max Steiger, however, was successful after years of selective breeding, in developing a strain of Japanese irises which he called Care strain (for calcium resistant) which grew well in soil of alkaline pH. I obtained several plants which were said to be of the Care strain from England a number of years ago and they flourished in our decidedly acid coastal Maine soil. Furthermore, Japanese irises apparently grow well in parts of the United States where one would not expect the soil to be acid. These experiences suggested that perhaps these plants may be more tolerant of differences in pH than I had assumed and I undertook the following very amateurish trials to test their adaptability.

In the spring of 1975, 2x10 inch planks were sunk in the ground to "wall off" an area measuring about 20 feet long and 4 feet wide. The southern 10 foot half of this bed was treated with ground

limestone to bring the pH, over a number of months, to about 7. Similarly the other half of the bed was brought to about 6.5. A 10 foot section just north of the boxed in bed was left untreated and had the natural pH of our soil which is 5 to 5.5. These pH measurements were made using the Sudbury test solution and estimating the reading when the color fell between those of the standard chart. Hence the figures for pH noted above are approximate values and not exact. That fall the pH of the treated bed had decreased somewhat and ground limestone was added again in lesser amounts. Two Japanese irises, Garden Caprice and my Purple Parasol, were planted in each of the three sections of the trial bed as were also two Siberian irises, Dreaming Yellow and Polly Dodge, and a daylily.

The following spring (1976) the pH of the three sections was again checked and found to be about as desired, i.e., 7, 6.5 and 5 respectively. All plants had survived the winter about equally well but only the daylily bloomed that season. Once more ground limestone was added that fall but none was used thereafter.

In 1977 all the plants bloomed. Unfortunately I did not measure and record heights or the number of stalks, branches and buds that season but, although bloom was good in all three sections during the regular bloom period, the height was greatest in the northern, acid section and least in the southern section with pH 7. Still more striking was the performance at rebloom. Quite by chance I had selected for the experiment two Japanese irises which have proved to be reliable rebloomers. That year only the two in the northern (acid) section rebloomed.

In 1978 I kept more careful records with the results in the case of Purple Parasol summarized in Table 1. Tests had shown the pH of the three sections to be close to the figures of the previous years. The number of stalks in the acid section that year was slightly less during first bloom than that at pH 7 but rebloom was distinctly better at pH 5. Height of stalks and number of branches and of buds were consistently better at the lower pH.

The lower half of Table 1 summarizes the data for the 1979 season. Meanwhile, however, the clump in the middle section had had to be dug to fill orders. By this time, with no limestone added for two years, the pH of the southern and middle sections had dropped to essentially the same level as that of the northern, untreated bed. Nevertheless, performance was still better in the northern bed, perhaps indicating a lag in the capacity of the plants in the previously neutral sections to recover quickly.

Table 2 summarizes the results for 1978 and 1979 in the case of Garden Caprice. In general its behavior was similar to that of Purple Parasol.

Results in the case of the Siberian irises and the daylily showed no differences in any of the three sections. Dreaming Yellow, which is a rebloomer, did so equally in each of the three sections.

Table 1 Results for Purple Parasol

Year		Number of Stalks			Height in inches			Number of Branches [#]			Number of Buds		
		pH5	pH6.5	pH7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7
1978	Soil pH	pH5	pH6.5	pH7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7
	1st bloom	7	6	9	40	38	35	1-2	1	1/2***	5	4	3
	Rebloom	7*	2	2	40	38	35	1-2	1	0	5	3	3
1979	Soil pH	pH5	***	pH5.3	5	***	5.3	5	***	5.3	5	***	5.3
	1st bloom	11		3	40		36	2		0	6		3
	Rebloom	6*		5	40		36	1		0	5		3

* Plus 1 or 2 more stalks in Sept.

** 1/2 = only half the stalks had a branch

*** Clump removed in spring 1979

In addition to terminal

Table 2 Results for Garden Caprice

Year		Number of Stalks			Height in inches			Number of Branches			Number of Buds		
		pH5	pH6.5	pH7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7
1978	Soil pH	pH5	pH6.5	pH7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7	5	6.5	7
	1st bloom	9	14	12	38	40	31	1-2	1	1	4	2-4	3
	Rebloom	1	0	4	38	39	31	1-2	1	0	4	2-4	2
1979	Soil pH	pH5	pH5.3	pH5.3	5	5.3	5.3	5	5.3	5.3	5	5.3	5.3
	1st bloom	15	6	6	40	38	31	2	1	1/2***	4	3	3
	Rebloom	3*	5	6	40	38	31	2	1	1/2***	4	3	3

I must emphasize that this was a rather crude experiment. The beds treated with limestone were only partly isolated from the surrounding, naturally acid soil. The pH measurements were made with soil at the surface and also several inches deep and were the same at both levels, but it may have been more acid at deep root level. Furthermore even in the least acid section the pH had been reduced only to neutral and performance probably would have been poorer in soil of alkaline reaction. Nevertheless it was interesting to me to find how well these two Japanese irises performed in beds treated with limestone. The number of stalks and size and appearance of the individual flowers was the same in all three sections. On the other hand, they did better in the acid section with regard to height, branching and bud count and rebloom. After the first year there was some immediate rebloom in both plants in all three sections but, at least for Purple Parasol, it was better at pH 5; and the second rebloom in September occurred only in the plants in that section.

Nematode Control

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven CT., 06504, has 9 page Bulletin No. 701 on the subject of Marigolds--- A Biological Control of Meadow Nematodes in Gardens---which may be of interest to some JI growers. Its Summary reads as follows:

"Meadow nematodes injure many plants around the home. Control of these nematodes results in better flowers and more fruit and vegetables from the garden. Chemical control of nematodes in a small garden or around a few established plants is generally impractical. Nematicides are not ordinarily available in the small amounts needed to treat a garden, equipment to apply them is designed for large areas, and most volatile nematicides injure plants that they touch. Growing of marigolds controls meadow nematodes as long as 3 years. Rotating marigolds with plants injured by meadow nematodes or other nematodes provides both flowers and nematode control."

Iris Society of Minnesota Auction

SJI President Adolph Vogt sends the following:

"The Society for Japanese Irises acknowledges with thanks the receipt of a check from the Iris Society of Minnesota. The check was for \$29.00 from the auction of Japanese irises at their fall meeting September 9th."

A Note Regarding Rebloom

Currier McEwen, M.D.

For the Apring 1979 issue of the Bulletin of the American Iris Society (Number 233, pages 73-77) I wrote an article on Rebloom in Siberian and Japanese Irises in which I reported several observations which are summarized below.

1. Rebloom in Siberian and Japanese irises differs from the usual experience with tall bearded irises in that the rest interval between first and second bloom periods is only a matter of a few days to several weeks instead of months. 2. In Siberians there are two types of rebloomers. Some, which I have called occasional rebloomers, do not rebloom every year and their first bloom is more abundant and better than rebloom. Others, which I have called preferential rebloomers, do so each year if growing well and second bloom is more abundant and better than first. 3. Because of the short rest interval between the first and second periods of bloom it is difficult to say whether a given plant is reblooming or showing continuing bloom. As a rule of thumb I have called a plant a continuing bloomer if the stalks for the second bloom are visible before the last flowers of the earlier bloom period fade. I call it a rebloomer if the first period of bloom ends before any new stalks can be seen.

Although that article was chiefly concerned with Siberians, I reported that casual observations suggest that rebloom in Japanese irises is similar to that in Siberians. The purpose of this article is to discuss this further.

First, Japanese irises are similar to Siberians in having a short rest interval between the two periods of bloom. Because of the great density of the foliage of healthily growing Japanese irises I found it difficult to tell when new bloom stalks started to appear until they were fairly tall. Hence, I abandoned the effort to distinguish between continuing bloom and rebloom as defined above because my observations were not sufficiently accurate. Of approximately 200 Japanese iris seedlings under number from my own crosses which were mature enough for rebloom to be possible, about one-quarter showed either continuing bloom or rebloom in 1979. Among 62 named cultivars of similar maturity, chiefly from other breeders, thirteen showed continuing bloom or rebloom, namely Seisno Nagon, Katuse Nami, Ocean Mist, Midwest Splendor, Midwest Symphony, Bluetone, Geisha Mischief, Raspberry Rimmed and Purple Parasol. Each of these plants gave a period of bloom from one to two weeks longer than others in the garden and had only short rest periods or none. In addition Bejewelled Mogul, Popular Acclaim, Garden Caprice, Purple Parasol and several of my diploid and tetraploid seedlings under number, bloomed again after four to six week pauses in what was clearly rebloom with timing rather similar to that of the tall bearded rebloomers except that each of these had already shown a period of continuing or rebloom. In 1978 the most dramatic example of this fall rebloom was Purple Parasol which opened its last bud

on October 1st. This year Purple Parasol ended in mid-September and the latest were Popular Acclaim and a white, double flowered diploid seedling, 76/73Z, which are still in bloom as this article is being written on September 21st. The seedling is one of 14 sisters from a cross of (Star at Midnight x Garden Caprice) x unknown; nine of these showed rebloom or continuing bloom this season in their third year since they were planted as seeds. Their colors include whites, medium and light blues and several darker blues of marbled pattern. None is a great flower but they are pleasant, have one to two branches with give to six buds at the first bloom period as well as at the second and, I hope, will prove to be good parents to increase the trait for rebloom.

A feature in which the Japanese irises have differed from the Siberians is the lack, thus far, of any which could be called preferential rebloomers. That is, I have observed none in which performance has been better at the second than at the first bloom period. Height of stalks, branching and bud count have been essentially the same at both periods.

I believe the ability of the continuing bloomers and rebloomers to prolong significantly the length of the total period of bloom is a highly desirable quality which can be improved by selective breeding. In view of the number of them which have appeared among my own seedlings and in the plants of other hybridizers it is clear that the trait is not rare. Hence there is already a large gene pool at the hybridizer's disposal.

SUGGESTION TO HYBRIDIZERS

Skip Ross writes as follows:

"I was just visiting Grady Kennedy's garden and examined a big clump of Eckard Berlin's tetraploid I. pseudacorus. It is a striking improvement over the cultivated native clones. Of vigorous growth, it has large, heavily substantiated flowers that are of rich golden yellow with a strong brown signal.

"It seems to me that some of our hybridizers should remake the cross that resulted in Golden Queen using the tetraploid."

JI Robins

Skipper Thaxter has recently taken over the directorship of the AIS JI robins. He has formed some new ones, and of course would like to see even more in flight (Wouldn't we all like to see more people sharing JI interests and knowledge?) If you would enjoy participating, contact him and join in: Mr. M. K. Thaxter, 39330 Hwy. 55, Nehalem, Ore. 97131.

Control of Couch Grass in the Home Garden

Wray M. Bowden (Simcoe, Ontario)

Couch Grass is known to botanists as *Agropyron repens*. It has many common names such as Quack Grass, Witch Grass and Quitch Grass. It is a common and troublesome perennial weed and overwinters in the soil as numerous long slender rhizomes (rootstocks) with many nodes which sprout stems and leaves in the spring. In Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening, reprinted in 1941-42, it was suggested that "some think it can be smothered by straw mulch." In Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia, fourth printing, 1975, Wyman stated that Couch Grass "can be smothered out with black polyethylene film and some kinds of mulches."

In 1976, I began to use the small size of processed pinebark mini-chips (mini-nuggets) and found that they were an ideal mulch for Rhododendrons and Azaleas as well as for Japanese irises. The one-to two-inch deep layer of chips helped to keep the soil moist and cool during the summer. I soon noticed that weeds were easy to pull out of the mulch. The occasional plant of Couch Grass was easily removed. I realized that it would be worthwhile to try a mulch of chips on two large beds of perennial flowering plants that were badly infested with Couch Grass. Before using the mulch on these two beds, large amounts of rhizomes, stems and leaves of Couch Grass were removed several times during each summer. However, it was impossible to remove all of the rhizomes in the soil and the pesty plants soon appeared again. Some time in 1977, I applied a mulch of mini-chips to both beds. They had to be weeded as before for the first summer in order to remove any new stems and leaves that appeared above the level of the mulch. By 1978, it was noticed that the weeds were thinning out and that the individual Couch Grass plants could be removed easily. In this spring of 1979, there are only a few small plants of Couch Grass that remain in these two beds where a sufficiently thick layer of mulch had been provided. In an adjacent bed which had only bare surface soil and no mulch, the area is still infested with many Couch Grass plants.

Until this year, I used Eastern (United States) pinebark mini-chips. This spring of 1979, local garden centers offer only chips from the western coast of the United States and these are from Redwood trees. These Redwood chips come in three sizes: small, medium and large. The Redwood chips probably will last longer than the pinebark chips. I still prefer the small-size chips for mulching, as they pack together better to smother any weeds. The medium-size chips would be worth trying and their larger size might make them last longer.

The cultivated plants in these two beds were mostly strong-growing perennials such as Peonies, Oriental Poppies and Lily hybrids. Pinebark mini-chips cannot be used around all kinds of plants as some plants such as Bearded Irises would not be able to withstand the increase in soil acidity and small plants might be suffocated by a mulch.

Farmers, of course, can control Couch Grass with an herbicide such as Roundup. However, this is not practical for the home gardener as one has to buy enough chemical to treat $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land. Also, the land must be free of a crop or other plants so that this method cannot be used to kill Couch Grass in a perennial border that has many kinds of cultivated plants.

As noted above, Couch Grass is often called Quack Grass and it is a perennial. Couch Grass should not be confused with Crab Grass which is an annual that belongs to the genus Digitaria. Several species of Digitaria are involved and these weedy Crab Grasses occur in large areas in some lawns during late summer and early fall. Crab Grass plants mature and drop their seeds in the fall and the seeds germinate in the lawn areas during the following spring about the time that the Forsythia blossoms begin to fall. Chemical control of Crab Grasses can be obtained by applying Dacthal or some other chemical to the lawn when the Crab Grass seeds begin to germinate.

Horticultural Terminology - The Inner Meanings (continued)

Normal Season:	Average; never experienced in living memory.
Overpriced:	I can't afford it.
Perfect Form:	I got a blue with it in the Show; antonym of "Dog."
Quite Nice:	Can't be rude after that good lunch; We must encourage the beginning hybridiser.
Rarity:	Everyone else threw it out years ago.
Real Gardener:	Almost as good as I am.
Reverted:	I forgot to cut off a seedpod and this came up in the middle.
Slave:	Better gardener than I am.
Apecies:	Not quite as good as a "dog."
Specimen:	I only have one of it.
Standard of Excellence:	that big thing I saw last week; the one the judges liked; figment of the imagination.
Terrific:	The originator is my best friend, even if his taste is all in his mouth.
True Species:	It doesn't look quite like the one in the book.
Unavailable:	They didn't have it at the dime store.
Valuable Antique:	Someone took it West by covered wagon and it was the only plant that survived.

Japanese Irises in the Low Country

Mrs. Wells E. Burton

The JI test garden here in Summerville, SC, had a very successful first year. Eleven seedlings were sent in last fall to the JI test garden operated by Mrs. J. Grimsley on Doty Avenue. All eleven survived and all bloomed. I had an article in the local paper, The Scene, regarding the JI test garden and when bloom could be seen. Elsie said many came and asked about it and in what section of her garden they could be viewed. I checked the JIs several times prior to bloom, at bloom time and since. I was real pleased with the bloom for the first year. The maximum height was 52½" and the maximum bloom width was 8½". We expect two more hybridizers to enter their seedlings in the test garden this fall. The JI seedlings in the test garden started to bloom May 23 and ended June 9. Mine started, here in Ladson, May 18 with Peacock Dancer and ended June 23 with one bloom on Purely Oriental and one bloom on a seedling.

Mr. J. Drayton Hastie, owner of Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, lost many of the seedlings he planted last fall due to our three months of no rain. He says he is replacing them. Adolph Vogt sent Mr. Hastie a hundred of his seedlings to try in their spacious gardens.

Meadowlake Gardens in Hendersonville, SC, about 32 miles from Summerville, was beautiful this year with its hundreds of "hems" and several newly planted JIs. Marion Vincent and I tried to get the names of many of these but the labels were not legible.

I did not get to Swan Lake gardens this year due to conflicting dates but assume it was as beautiful as ever.

I have asked the manager of parks and playgrounds here in Summerville if I could plant some JIs in Azalea Park. Mr. Hinson has given me permission and said he'd give me some help to do so. I have five plants that I can divide and take up and if there is anyone out there that is digging and has some spare named ones, I could use 15-20 more. I'll keep a record on them with a planting plan and see that there are duplicate copies for the JI Society.

Walter Marx

Your Editor has just been informed by Lorenzo Paolucci that Walter Marx has died. For many years Mr. Marx was one of America's pioneers in hybridizing and marketing Japanese irises. His garden was located in Boring, Oregon.

Siberian-Japanese Auction
Westboro, Mass. 1979

Bee Warburton

The Siberian-Japanese auction at Warburtons was again a highlight of the year, in spite of the so recent death of Ethel Shepherd, Secretary of the Society of Siberian Irises, dear friend and neighbor. Also missing because of gas problems, the Society's editor, Peg Edwards, and Kevin Vaughn, original instigator of this affair, busy finishing his Doctorate at Miami University in Ohio. Commercial interests were well represented by Lorenzo Paolucci, whose ad for Japanese Irises is in the Fall AIS Bulletin for 1979; Charlie Trommer of Tranquil Lakes Nursery in Rehoboth, Mass., was unable to leave his flourishing Japanese iris business for the day.

The Region supports and cosponsors this affair, and all the regional officers and members of the committee for the proposed convention in New England in 1983 attended. Furthese traveler was Bill McGarvey who regularly drives all the way from Oswego, New York, to be at this affair, and assists in many ways.

Auctioneer was Walter Kotyk of Connecticut, with Currier McEwen assisting by furnishing descriptions and histories of the plants; he had brought nearly all of the Japanese irises from his own plantings.

At these meetings, the morning program is first as soon as possible after the members have arrived bearing their potluck dishes and helped to get all the hot dishes reheated, the salads chilled, the buffet set up and ready, before settling down to watch the slides. In this instance Currier McEwen was the speaker and showed beautiful slides of both his new Siberians and his new Japanese. He sent me a brief report of his season to include:

"Among the Japs the big event was the appearance, at last, of about 30 new colchicine-induced tets and chimeras in colors I have not previously had, and also in doubles as well as singles. Among them are several in soft and in rosy pink (from my Simple Elegance by Shu's Mitsu-Zakura); a huge flat double white; and one of similar form in dark, close-to-true blue. The sad note is that I have gotten very few seeds from these flowers, but this is their first year and I hope for better success in later years."

This is the only extensive work being done in America on creating a true tetraploid Japanese strain. Orville Fay, who worked at this and created some tetraploids, concluded that there wasn't all that much improvement in them and gave up the project. Perhaps this time they will become popular enough to receive the sort of development required to show what could be created in advanced generations of a settled tetraploid strain.

The potluck luncheon that followed furnished good food and fellowship to bolster the bidding, which most successfully added \$203.00 to the Treasury of the Society for Japanese Irises. The irises offered, with Currier's descriptions:

Frostbound	Rich '71	Single, red-purple with light edges
Garden Caprice	Payne '66	Double, lilac lined lighter, reblooms
Geisha Parasol	Maddocks '68	Double, very gay mixture of lavender and light blue
Glitter 'n' Gaiety	Payne '62	Double, blue-violet with bold white lines
Glitter and Glamor	Payne '66	Double violet with bold white lines
Hue and Cry	Maddocks '70	Double plum red with white centers and bold white lines extending out
Leave Me Sighing	Maddocks '63	Double pinkish with blue lines
Nissano Mai	Mitsuda	Double late white, stippled and edged wine-purple
Okino Shirao		
Purple Parasol	McEwen '77	Double, dark blue-purple rebloomer
Raspberry Rimmed	McEwen	Tetraploid (plus a numbered tetraploid seedling to provide a plant to cross it with)
Rokko Arashi	Marx Import	White bordered blue
Seisno Nagon	Hirao	
Simple Elegance	McEwen '78	Single, rosy pink
Tropical Showers	McEwen '79	Marbled double, medium blue-violet
Umi Botaru		Double, very early white heavily brushed orchid
Western Symphony	Payne	Double, fine medium-dark blue violet
Worley Pink	Worley '66	(from Marx seed) Double rosy lavender pink

MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES
May 2, 1979, Sheraton Motor Inn
Huntsville, Alabama

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mr. Adolph Vogt, at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Leland Welch, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, submitted the following slate of nominees for 1979-1980:

President	Adolph Vogt, Kentucky
Vice President	Mrs. Orrin E. (Janet) Merrill, New Hampshire
Treasurer	Ford Grant, Iowa
Secretary	Harley Briscoe, Illinois

Harry Kuessel moved that nominations be closed and the slated elected by acclamation. The motion was seconded by Leland Welch and passed.

Leland Welch announced the Kalamazoo JI show to be held the first Saturday in July.

Dr. McEwen announced the annual Retion 1 Auction at Bee Warburton's to be held the last Sunday in August.

Mrs. Marion Benson of South Carolina read a letter from Ginny Burton announcing that JI seedlings are wanted for Magnolia Gardens, Charleston, SC. Seedlings should be sent to Mrs. Crimsley, Doty Ave., Summerville, SC.

Adolph Vogt showed some slides of JIs and Dr. McEwen showed slides of reblooming and tetraploid JIs.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

H.E. Briscoe, Secretary

The South Carolina Iris Society
Japanese Iris Tour and Show

Editor's Note: The following is taken from a letter to Mrs. Phillip Hembree from Ruby Buchanan, 113 South Oak Drive, Winston-Salem, NC., 27107.

"The South Carolina Iris Society is planning a Japanese Iris tour and a Show at the Magnolia Gardens Plantations House, May 30-31, 1980. This member's garden was to be the highlight of the visit. Adolph Vogt is to be the speaker - and the SCIS has planted Japanese iris in Magnolia Gardens for the event. Free entry into the Gardens for AIS members presenting membership cards (usual fee is \$4.50, I think). Free day- May 31st. It should be an interesting meeting - visitors will stay at Hamilton's Motel in Summerville, S.C. Judges training from a 'spacious patio' on Friday (refreshments). Breakfast in 'gazebo - Azalea Park - within view of new JI plantings! (just down a path from Motel). A covered dish luncheon served by member's Garden Club in her garden - (no itinerary of possible tours included in the Robin). The JI Show will be on the veranda of the Plantation house (around three sides) and in a series of downstairs rooms with candlelit early supper (possible) served in Plantation House kitchen. Tentative plans only - but doesn't it sound exciting and delicious?"