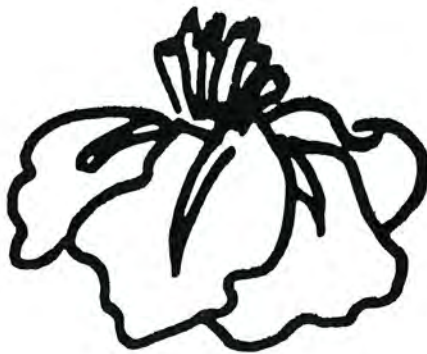


VOLUME 18, NUMBER 2  
FALL, 1981



# THE REVIEW

OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

THE REVIEW  
OF  
THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

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Through 1982	Mrs. Frank Vincent, Box 460, Boneau, SC., 29431
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Membership Chairman	Mrs. C. Robert Minnick, 324 N.E. Park Circle, Kansas City, MO., 64116

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I thank the Iris Society of Minnesota for a check for \$57.00 for the Japanese irises sold at their auction on September 20. Also, The Society for Siberian Irises had its Fall Iris Auction on August 29 at Plainville, Massachusetts, where \$170.00 was earned for the SJI. Thanks to all who organized or attended these auctions. Such auctions not only raise money for the SJI but help distribute JIs to future members.

With the first freezes already here it is suggested that the foliage be removed from JIs after the first light frost rather than wait for the foliage to fall down after a hard freeze. By removing foliage early in the fall you may prevent damage from field mice that often hide under it. Field mice and shrews like JI rhizomes and can destroy a large planting in a short time.

Adolph Vogt

## JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGING IN A FLOWER SHOW

Shirley Paquet

Japanese flower arranging (Ikebana) originated many centuries ago and has been continued and perfected by various schools formed by their masters. The oldest is the Okenobo School. Flower arranging is an art and part of the culture of Japan.

Because of the amount of study required to become proficient in the art, the National Council of State Garden Clubs, which sets rules for the standard flower show, requires that any Japanese flower arrangements in a show be done "in the Japanese manner." Traditional Japanese arrangements are never judged; those "in the Japanese manner" may be judged.

Three elements - branches, leaves and flowers - have always been the basic materials for every Japanese arrangement. In modern abstract designs the branch is often omitted.

The positioning of the material is of utmost importance in all designs with exact rules as to length and degrees of slant. To achieve these the most used mechanical aid is the needlepoint holder (Kenzan) which is placed in the container. These are made with lead bases and sharp nails on which the material is impaled. They may be obtained in most floral supply stores. For the amateur these are best. The more advanced student learns to use forked sticks as wedges.

The Kenzan is secured by (1) a piece of newspaper the size of the Kenzan wetted with water and placed under the Kenzan; (2) use of "Stickum" or other floral adhesive; (3) placing another Kenzan upside down on one end of the Kenzan holding the arrangement to counter-balance heavy material leaning away from the upside down one; (4) cutting ends of heavy branches diagonally or flattening them with a hammer to make them hold on the needle points or wrapping 2 inch strips of hardware cloth around the ends and secured with wire to hold them steady; (5) branches may be bent

to a more pleasing angle by carefully bending with both hands held closely together; (6) judicious notching with a knife and inserting a wooden wedge to alter the line; (7) using a wired pick to strengthen weak stems; and (8) tying weak or small stemmed flowers together (no two flowers the same height) with tape before placing the Kenzan.

The most useful containers are low round or oblong bowls about two inches high; vases with necks that are not too open; modern containers of wood, ceramic material or glass; and, if very fortunate, traditional iron or bronze Japanese containers.

In using the shallow open containers the Kenzan is placed off-center. The Kenzan may be elevated in the tall vases by adding sand or pebbles (carefully!) to within an inch of the opening. Avoid clear glass because the mechanics will be seen.

Bases or stands may be used under the finished arrangements to give height or to give bottom interest if the design is tall and straight. Mats can also be used.

Backgrounds, either a three-sided niche or cloth-covered frame set off the arrangement and should be used in staging a show.

Editor's note: Mrs. Paquet is an active supporter of JI activities in the South Carolina Iris Society and a participant in the Summerville JI Shows. She is equally active in Ikebana International and has promised THE ReVIEW two more articles on flower arrangement.

## GROWING JAPANESE IRISES IN COLORADO

Harlan Clark

The first time I visited the Japanese iris gardens at Meiji Shrine in Tokyo, they were in full bloom and I immediately resolved to raise some of these beautiful flowers in my own garden when I retired. That was in 1957 and the many years and travels that intervened before my coming to Colorado in 1970 to retire-at last-did not change my mind in that respect. Something else did for a while, and that was the discovery that here in the southwestern outskirts of Denver, as in most other parts of Colorado, we have a highly alkaline clay soil wholly unsuited to growing acid-loving Iris kaempferi-quite apart from the relative scarcity of water so dear to the kaempferi palate.

Then through my membership in the Species Iris Society I was led to hope that a micro-habitat suitable to the growth of Japanese irises and other acid-soil plants could be created in one's garden and that water requirements should be no more than for the rest of the garden. The trick lay in creating a so-called acid bed. Through this hint from an article in the Species Iris



Bulletin, I was led to both the Japanese Iris Society and to a catalog put out by Melrose Gardens containing instructions as to how to construct such an acid bed. Additional helpful hints came from the Japanese Iris Society's Round Robin letter.

By this time I was busy building my own rather small acid bed and reading everything I could find locally about Japanese iris culture. I gathered from one article in the Species Iris Society's Bulletin that *kaempferi* seems to tolerate sodium salts but not calcium salts, which suggests that Japanese irises had their origin near the salty marshes by the sea. The western slopes of Colorado still have traces of the ancient sea beds that once covered this land but our salts on this side of the divide are definitely calcium.

While it is easy to purchase locally or scrounge materials for an acid bed, I'll admit that my own preparations were facilitated by the presence of mountain land we own of abundant materials such as black soil lying in old pond beds, rich in humus and decomposed granite, with a pH of 6.2. There were likewise great quantities of lichen-covered rocks which Coloradoans call moss-rocks and I used these to construct the raised beds we call rock gardens in which I plant all my shrubs and flowers, adjusting the pH to plant needs by adding such things as old sawdust (also plentiful on our land) to produce further acidity, or ground limestone for alkaline lovers like clematis and bearded irises. The mountain soil to which I refer seemed to be just right for Siberian irises but it needed to be even more acid for *kaempferi*. That was easy to arrange through the addition of flake sulphur, sphagnum moss and other acidifiers. I never use aluminum sulphate for this purpose, however, because of toxic side effects that have been observed.

It is almost equally important to maintain the acidity level in the acid bed once the Japanese irises have been planted. That would be difficult enough if one had only to contend with the flow of alkaline salts into the bed every time it was irrigated with local city water. The main threat, however, seems to be the rise of alkaline salts by diffusion from the clay underlying the acid bed. It is simple enough to deal with the latter problem by laying a sheet of plastic over the clay before filling the bed with the specially mixed soil. After digging all the clay out of the bed to a depth of 18-20 inches I used heavy plastic sheeting to line the hole, so that it looked something like an empty lily pool. The bed was located on a slightly sloping piece of ground, enabling me to provide necessary drainage by cutting a small hole in the plastic at the lower end of the cavity and running one-inch flexible black hose pipe from the upper end of the bed through the hole and along a ditch (later covered) to a point about 20 feet below the bed where I could install a threaded fitting and screw cap to permit periodic draining of any water in the bed (once a month or so.) I drilled a line of holes in that portion, 12 feet, of pipe lying on the bottom of the bed itself to facilitate even drainage from along the entire slope of the bed. Having sealed the pipe to the plastic with silicone glue at the point where I had cut the hole, I filled the bed with my acid soil mixture.

It is worth noting that Japanese irises do not tolerate well being immersed in water during periods of dormancy and really seem to prefer nestling at or slightly above the edge of boggy pools, though they will grow happily immersed in water during the spring and summer months. I never keep my acid bed flooded for long, and doubt that it has much more moisture in the soil during the summer months than any other well-constructed flower bed. In the late fall I remove the drainage plug entirely counting on the rain and melting snows to leach accumulated salts from the bed. When the iris shoots begin to sprout in the spring plenty of water is needed. If the rains falling then are heavy there is more promise of heavy bloom come mid-summer.

I won't go into much detail about how my particular acid soil is constructed except to say that it is surmounted by a rock garden along one side of roughly half its entire length so as to make it look like all of my other raised beds. A bonsai lodgepole pine from our mountain land was planted at the top and two pools at different levels with a watercourse in between add to the Japanese garden atmosphere. The pine, by the way, is no longer a bonsai having found a way to extend its roots to the rocks to the rich pay dirt below!

The irises themselves sent up spikes the first year after they were planted and have bloomed profusely almost every year since 1973. I say almost every year since there have been a couple of lean ones. I had been warned to replant Japanese irises every three or four years since for apparently obscure reasons they seem to peter out thereafter. There were also the learning pains of what animal and fungus pests to cope with. Cut worms will climb high on the bloom stalks to sever one's best new spikes; slugs will worry at the leaves and in some years grasshoppers can be a menace. Peculiar other things happen that suggest unseen borers are at work below and diseases resembling crown rot are attacking some plants. I never lost a clump once established, and have avoided overkill in the treatments used. Perhaps diazanion granules on the bed and orthene once or twice a growing season have been the most effective insecticides used. Terrachlor has helped against disease, and I have also sparingly used fungicides like Benlate and will try the new one, Funginex, this year.

Two years ago I decided to dig up the whole bed except the rock garden and replace the ruptured plastic sheeting. Except for that necessity, to keep out the roots of nearby cottonwoods, I feel sure the bed would have received only little "upgrading" during replanting. This year every clump but one looks great, and if the hailstorms will cavort elsewhere and the locusts do not descend, I should have something special to celebrate again on the Fourth of July--Japanese iris blooms as big around as a small dinner plate and much, much more beautiful.

Yes, it does take a little effort to keep the acid bed in good condition but not nearly as much as any lawn especially the local variety which is usually planted on beds of virgin clay that at the shortest notice (such as when one misses a watering day or experiences a spell of 100° weather under a

clear sky with a strong down-draft wind from the foothills) will take refuge in returning to the status of a sun-dried brick. Meanwhile, the Japanese iris bed, or any other flower bed filled with adequate humus, may begin to look a little sorry for itself, but the irises themselves will brave it out and keep on blooming and blooming like--I almost said--a rose.

#### SUMMERVILLE IRIS SOCIETY SHOW

The following article was written by Mrs. Wells E. Burton for the Summerville Journal-Scene:

##### "Winners Announced at Japanese Iris Show"

"The Summerville Iris Society held its 3rd all Japanese Iris show May 30 with 20 artistic entries, done in the Japanese manner, and 40 JI horticulture specimens judged by American Iris Society judges.

In Class 1 -- "Driven Snow" --Betty Black from North Charleston won first place, Cassie James of Camden, 2nd and B. J. Brown of Charlotte, 3rd.

In Class 2 -- "The Great Mogul" --John Wood of Gaffney was first, Edith Plyler of Hopkins, 2nd and Jane Langston of Flowertown Garden Club, 3rd.

In Class 3 -- "Hue and Cry" --Barbara Austin of Hanahan won first; Shirley Weickhardt of Flowerton 2nd and Angie Grimsley of Summerville, 3rd.

In Class 4 -- "Three Way" --Ira Parnell of Belton first, and the silver tray for the best artistic arrangement in show, Betty Black, 2nd and Esther Shepperd of Columbia, 3rd.

In Class 5 -- "Prairie Love Song" --Shirley Paquet of Cayce won first, Ruth Allgood of Walterboro, 2nd and Jackie Taylor of Moncks Corner, 3rd. Betty Black's "Driven Snow" won the most popular arrangement award and a silver tray donated by J. B. and Agnes Hale of LaGrange, Ga.

"Mrs. Wells E. Burton won the best horticulture specimen award and a silver goblet for her entry "Muffled Drums." She has been growing this iris along with Simple Elegance and Purple Parasol--all Dr. Currier McEwen's-- for the new Azalea Park pond as soon as sealing problem can be solved.

"Virginia Rowland of Goose Creek and Peggy Jeffcoat of Blythewood won first in the JI seedling division. Marion Vincent of Bonneau won first in the container grown division with "Betteryet."

"Thirty-four took JI judges training on Friday in the JI test garden at the home of Joe and Elsie Grimsley. Adolph Vogt of Louisville, Ky., president of the JI Society, told how to hybridize, what to look for in new seedlings, good substance, branching, clean color, color breaks and point scoring. He is an American Iris Society judge and past director of AIS.

Refreshments were served by Maxine Phillips and Marion Vincent.

"Following a breakfast at the Community Hut Saturday morning, there was a tour of the private garden of Col. and Mrs. Hugh



Knight in Sumter (they grow several thousand Japanese irises.) The group then went to the Sumter Garden Center to view an Ikebana Flower Show staged by Chapter 182 of Ikebana International. The noon lunch served by The Garden Makers Garden Club of Sumter was served to 70. Then, the group toured Swan Lake Iris Gardens with Walter McGee, Sim Wright of the Sumter Parks Commission and John Wood, region 5 judges chairman. The private gardens of Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Sostic and Mrs. M. F. Korn were visited by the tour group.

"The bus tour returned Saturday evening to the Continental Corner in Summerville for a special Greek supper. Afterwards, at the Community Hut, W. L. Ackerman of the Scientific Research Department of Washington, D.C., discussed and showed slides on the research being done on Japanese iris. Sunday morning there was a breakfast at the home of Frank and Marion Vincent in Bonneau.

"At the Sumter meeting, Charlotte Withers of Florida learned she is to receive the Distinguished service Award of the Siberian Section of AIS. She was one of the first to start a siberian section of AIS, is in charge of a test garden in Florida and is secretary/treasurer of the Florida Iris Society."

#### KALAMAZOO JAPANESE IRIS SHOW

The following letter has been received from Lee Welsh regarding the 1981 Kalamazoo Japanese Iris Show:

"The date had been set late to avoid holding the show on the 4th of July. Combined with our early season, which continued to be early until Japanese iris bloom time, and hot weather with drying winds, there was very little left by July 11.

"The Society has voted to hold the Japanese Iris Show next year on July 3 and to retain the same theme and arrangement schedule as set up for this year."

#### KAEMPFERI-PSEUDACORUS HYBRIDS

The following was taken from the Region 4 NEWSCAST where it was a contribution by John Wood, Chairman of Judges Training, Region 5, of Gaffney, SC.:

"Dr. W. L. Ackerman, Research Horticulturist, National Arboretum, U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C., was one of the instructors (at the Summerville Judges Training Class). He is working mainly in the areas of JIs and Camellias. Most of you, I am sure, are familiar with the "Golden Queen." This is a hybrid of the JI species *I. kaempferi* x *I. pseudacorus*. This hybrid is not very adaptable due to lack of chlorophyll in the foliage. It is pale yellow rather than green. Dr. Ackerman is treating *I. kaempferi* and *I. pseudacorus* seedlings with colchicine converting



them to tetraploids. When this is accomplished he will cross the tet seedlings and hopefully come up with a yellow JI with lush green, very hardy foliage. His research also is to prolong the bloom holding quality from 2 or 3 days to perhaps 4 or 5 days."

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES  
May 13, 1981  
SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

The annual meeting was called to order by our President, Mr. Adolph Vogt of Louisville, Ky., on Wednesday, May 13, 1981, at 1:00 P.M. at the national convention of the American Iris Society in St. Louis, Missouri.

Mr. Vogt introduced the officers of our Society to the members and guests present at this large well represented meeting.

Mr. Vogt urged the members to pay their dues on a timely basis, suggesting that it might most easily be done at the time of renewing A.I.S. memberships. He pointed out that the A.I.S. will accept the dues of the various sections and forward these dues to the appropriate section. By doing this all at the same time it makes it so much easier to renew all memberships on a timely basis. Also, there is the convenience of writing only one check.

Mr. Vogt then called for the treasurer's report which was read by the secretary protem. On Jan. 1, 1980 we had \$487.31 in a savings account and \$729.67 in a checking account. During the year we received \$219.50 in membership dues. Donations of the following were received:

\$87.50 from the iris sale sponsored by the Upper Midwest Beardless Iris Society.

\$100.00 from the Region One iris sale.

\$485.25 from the Iris Connoisseurs of Michigan

This gives us a total donation of \$672.75. Our total expenses for the year were \$355.83. Subtracting our expenses from our assets left us with \$1,789.38 on 12-31-80. A detailed treasurer's report is enclosed on a separate sheet.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as read.

Mr. Vogt expressed the gratitude of the entire Society to the UPPER MIDWEST BEARDLESS IRIS SOC., THE IRIS CONNOISSEURS OF MICHIGAN, and REGION ONE for their kind consideration and generous donations. Without these donations the Society could not exist because \$219.50 in dues does not defray the expenses of \$355.83 to put out the two issues of THE REVIEW.

It was announced that Region One would hold its auction on August 29, 1981, in Mass. under the leadership of Barbara Whitehouse.

Dr. V. L. Winkler suggested that the "Buddy System," as employed by the St. Paul, Minnesota Group, be used. This system will be explained elsewhere.

Mr. Harry Kuesel extended an invitation to all to attend the next A.I.S. convention which will be held in Denver, Colorado in 1982. He told us of their efforts to force pots of Japanese iris into bloom for us in time for the convention. Mr. Vogt assured us that if anyone can accomplish this feat, Harry and his staff will.

Mr. Leland Welch of Kalamazoo, Michigan extended an invitation to all members and guests to join them for their 8th Japanese Iris Show which will be held on July 11, 1981.

Dr. Currier McEwen gave us an update on the work with Japanese irises being done at the National Arboretum by Dr. Ackerman and Mrs. Williams for the last 20 years. The research was started in 1956 with seed from Japan. In the last three years they have added approximately 65 plants from Dr. Hirao and Mr. Tomino. Their goal is to breed plants with flowers which last longer and breed plants which bloom earlier and later than usual to lengthen the bloom season.

It was reported that the Copelands, Jimmy and Jill, of Michigan are having some success breeding plants which are more tolerant to various soil pHs.

The final report given was on the wide crosses being done between *Iris pseudocorus* and Japanese Iris. It seems that the cross can only be made with Japanese iris pollen on *Iris pseudocorus*. Golden Queen is the only variety of this cross easily available in this country.

The business part of the meeting was adjourned for the program of slides which were presented by Dr. Currier McEwen, Mr. Art Hazzard and Mr. Adolph Vogt.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Winkler,  
Sect'y protem

FOR THE RECORD-I

W. E. Ouweneel

The following was written originally as a letter in a JI Robin:

"On the matter of judging importance of one or more flowers being open at one time:

"It is worth comparing Arlie' Payne's article on judging and the accompanying schedule in the second issue of THE REVIEW with the present judging manual. Note that they are almost the same word for word except in one respect. That is in the statement at the bottom of page 74 and on page 78 under Branching.

The first says "In order to display each flower perfectly, and to extend the bloom season, it is preferable to have only one blossom open at a time." The second says "Preferably, only one flower should be open at a time." In Arlie's article in THE REVIEW no such statement or anything near it is made.

"At the bottom of page 74 appears this footnote: "This chapter written by W. A. Payne and C. A. Swearengen." Both men were personal friends of mine at the time and I remember their preparing the standards. They were hand-written by Arlie Payne and given to Bob Swearengen for publication. When published, Arlie found one statement which he strongly disapproved. I do not remember what it was. However, because the statement quoted above is in the standards and not in Arlie's article in THE REVIEW, I am strongly inclined to believe that it was that statement which he disapproved. I therefore would not use Arlie as an authority for it.

"There must be nothing more beautiful than a single JI stalk on a potted plant with a lone terminal flower, preferably white, before a gold screen such as our Japanese friends use for ritual purposes. But we grow JIs for garden purposes and in a plant with several blooms one is not going to separate flowers stalk by stalk.

"My view on whether one or more blooms on a stalk at one time is desirable is guided by two statements in Arlie's article. The first one reads: "All types of bloom...are meritorious only to the extent of their beauty..." The second appears in the schedule with his article and also in the current judging schedule under Branching: "The branches should be well-spaced so that the buds are not clustered and long enough so that the flowers are not crowded." In my view the number of blossoms open at one time is immaterial so long as the individual flower and the plant are beautiful."

As an afterthought as we go to press: "Beauty lies within the eyes of the beholder." Color, form, pattern and spatial arrangement should be expressed in aesthetic terms and let go at that.

#### FOR THE RECORD-II

In the Spring, 1981, issue of THE REVIEW I commented on the statement that Japanese irises "need good drainage for low temperatures." I requested that "If any reader has any explicit facts supporting or explaining the above quotation" he or she send them for publication in this issue of THE REVIEW.

No correspondence on the subject has been received.



P.S.

If the address label on your copy of THE REVIEW carries a red X, it means that as of October 15, 1981, the Membership Chairman, Mrs. C. Robert Minnick, has not received your SJI membership renewal and dues. Please see the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the SJI in this issue for the preferred method sending dues.

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the SJI in this issue refer to a Treasurer's Report. It is not printed in this issue of THE REVIEW because it was published in the Spring, 1981, issue.

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October 15, 1981

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