

**THE
REVIEW** **OF THE SOCIETY**
FOR
JAPANESE IRISES



VOLUME 39
NUMBER # 2
FALL 2002

LANDSCAPING WITH JAPANESE IRISES



SANDY RAWLINGS, WEST CHESTER, OHIO



ACADEMY HOUSE GARDEN, MILLINGTON, MARYLAND

**THE REVIEW
OF THE
SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES**



VOLUME 39

NUMBER 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Officers and Appointments.....	2
Business Items	4
Letter from the President – Jill Copeland.....	6
Japanese Iris in Mississippi – Miriam Emerson	8
Show Reports – 2002.....	10
American Iris Society 2002 Awards.....	12
Meet the Hybridizers-Don Delmez – Cindy Rust.....	13
Garden Profiles – Earheart Gardens – Sharon Whitney...	16
Invitation to Hybridizers-2005 Convention.....	18
JI Culture – Terry Aitken.....	19
Matters of Discussion.....	21
On Voles – Jim Holmes.....	25
Robin Found – Hearing from Hybridizers.....	27
Display Garden Spotlight-A California Garden.....	33
Free Rhizomes for Youth Members – Jean Morris.....	35
Robins Flying Again.....	36
Nominating Committee Report.....	38
Editor's Essay – Rita Gormley.....	39
THIS 'N THAT.....	40
SJI Board Meeting Minutes.....	42
Visit Your Local Gardens – Jim Morris.....	44
Culture of JI in the Same Space – Joy Flint.....	46
 Cover Photos Credits.....	 26

THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

Officers

President	Jill Copeland, 78118 M-40 Lawton, MI 49065 Tel. (269) 624-1968; <Jandjcope@aol.com>
Vice President	Carol Warner, 16815 Falls Rd., Upperco, MD 21155-9445 Tel. (410) 374-4788; <draycott@qis.net>
Secretary	Peter Weixlmann, 280 Seneca Creek Road, West Seneca, NY 14224 Tel. (716) 674-6289; <Pweixl@aol.com>
Treasurer	Robert Bauer, 9823 E. Michigan Ave., Galesburg, MI 49053 Tel. (269) 665-7500; <ensata@aol.com>
Immediate Past President	Terry Aitken, 608 NW 119 th Street, Vancouver, WA 98685 Tel. (360) 573-4472; <aitken@flowerfantasy.net>

Directors at Large

Donald Delmez, 3240 Connecticut Dr., St. Charles, MO
63301 Tel. (636)723-2274

Virginia (Ginni) Hill, 1030 Autumn Oak Circle, Collier-
ville, TN 38017 Tel. (901) 853-2641
<garden64@southbell.net>

Andy Wheeler, 90 Call St., Colrain, MA 01340
Tel. (413) 624-8800 ; <andrewswheeler@hotmail.com>

Nominating Committee

Through 2002	Virginia (Ginni) Hill, 1030 Autumn Oak Circle, Collier- ville, TN 38017 Tel. (901) 853-2641 <garden64@southbell.net>
Through 2003	Dennis Hager, PO Box 390, Millington, MD 21651 Tel. (410) 928-3147; <academyhouse@toad.net>
Through 2004	Riley Probst, 418 N. Van Buren, Kirkwood, MO 63122 Tel. (314) 822-2485, <rprobst02@earthlink.net>

SJI is a Section of AIS and all meetings are open to the public.

Appointments

Membership Chairman	Robert Bauer, 9823 E. Michigan Ave., Galesburg, MI 49053 Tel. (269) 665-7500; <ensata@aol.com>
Slides Chairman Librarian	John Coble, 9823 E. Michigan Ave., Galesburg, MI 49053; Tel. (269) 665-7500; <ensata@aol.com>
Robins Chairman	Cindy Rust, 2016 Meadow Lane., Union, MO 63084, Tel: (636) 583-6355; <srust@fidnet.com>
Hybridizer Robin	Jill Copeland, 78118 M-40 Lawton, MI 49065 Tel. (269) 624-1968; <Jandjcope@aol.com>
E-Mail Robin	Dennis Hager , PO Box 390, Millington, MD 21651 Tel. (410) 928-3147; <academyhouse@toad.net>
Popularity Poll	Bruce Filardi, 4244 NE Royal CT., Portland, OR 97213-1668; Tel. (503) 238-1604; <bfilardi@attbi.com>
Display Garden Chair	Phil Cook, PO Box 338, Underhill, VT 05489 Tel: (802) 899-9928; <phgarden@together.net>
Awards	Anna Mae Miller, Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson Way #155, Kalamazoo, MI 49009 (269)349-5934 <irisquilt@aol.com>
Editor:	Rita Gormley, 6717 Martha Dr., Cedar Hill, MO 63016; Tel (636)274-7435; <GormleyGreenery@aol.com>

Business Items

The SJI Review is published semi-annually by the Society for Japanese Irises. The editorial office is temporarily located at 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065. Deadlines for receiving copy are February 15th and August 15th, with earlier receipt desirable. Black and white photographs, slides, colored prints (glossy) and black and white drawings are welcome. Reprinting permission is granted to any other iris society publication to reprint any material in this publication with due acknowledgement.

DUES:

Single annual - \$5.00 triennial - \$12.50 Life - \$75.00

Family annual - \$6.00 triennial - \$15.50 Life - \$100.00

Youth annual – \$2.00 triennial – \$ 5.50

Dues may be sent either to the AIS Membership Chairman (see AIS Bulletin for address) or directly to the Membership Chairman, The Society for Japanese Irises.

Address changes: please notify membership chairman

SALES AND RENTAL ITEMS

The Japanese Iris by Currier McEwen \$24.95

Color Postcards – 2 for 1 Sale

Set #1 – 16 different W.A. Payne introductions

Set #2 – 18 different Payne Award winners

2 sets (#1, #2, or both) \$5.00

Overseas orders, add \$1.00 per set for airmail

Back issues of The Review - \$1.50 per copy

Volume 1 (1964) consists of 3 issues

All others contain 2 issues each

SJI Slide Set Rental \$5.00

Iris Laevigata – book rental \$5.00

All prices include postage. Send requests to John Coble.

Check payable to SJI. Please allow ample time for scheduling.

ADVERTISING

Advertising will be accepted for plants and horticultural-related items.

Charges:

Full page layout	\$18.00
Half page layout	\$10.00
Short ads, text only	\$2.00 for up to 5 lines and for each additional 5 lines or fraction thereof
Full page, color layout	FREE , Photo color separation at cost

Please send original photos (prints or slides) for scanning. Advertising copy and payment to SJI should be mailed to the Editor prior to Editorial deadline

NEW!!! Commercial Directory \$3.00 – includes 2 issues and link to website. Send name, address, phone, e-mail info

1999 J.I. CHECKLIST

The SJI Checklist contains all registrations and introductions through 1999 of Japanese iris and any interspecies crosses involving Japanese iris. All updates, including awards, can be found in the 1999 edition. The 1999 Checklist is 65 pages of 8.5" X 11" format. The previous edition was published in 1997.

To order, Send \$4.00 postpaid* to:

John Coble, SJI Sales Chairman

9823 E. Michigan Avenue, Galesburg, MI 49053

*\$5.00 Canada, \$8.00 Overseas air mail – payable in US funds only
please make checks payable to SJI

SJI MEMBERSHIP LIST AVAILABLE

A current SJI membership list can be ordered. This will be a computer printout, listing members alphabetically.

Send check for \$3, payable to SJI, Bob Bauer, 9823 E. Michigan Avenue Galesburg, MI 49053

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jill Copeland

Greetings,

I had a wonderful bloom season this year. My one year seedlings were in soil that never ever had iris in it. Some had 5 or 6 bloom stalks and 99% bloomed. We had a Portland spring, cool with plenty of rain. The named JIs were in their second year in the same soil as the seedlings and they were magnificent. I have heard 5 different theories on how to keep Japanese iris healthy.

1. JIs use up a key nutrient in the soil and if you give it to them, they are happy in the same spot.
2. JIs grow up out of the soil and if you lower them again, they are happy in the same spot.
3. The hybridizers have selected for cultivars that need to be moved to fresh soil every few years by using that kind of culture.
4. JIs produce a toxic substance and kill themselves. This seems to me to be counter intuitive. It is not survival of the fittest, for sure.
5. JIs attract a pathogen in the soil and when this organism reaches a critical number, the JIs are no longer healthy.

You will find articles in this issue on this subject in the new "MATTERS OF DISCUSSION" section. We would love to hear your experiences and theories in either articles or paragraphs for "THIS & THAT." "THIS & THAT" is a feature of *The Review* meant for you to make a comment on any JI subject without having to write a whole article.

Those of you who missed the JI meeting at the AIS Convention in Memphis missed a great program. Don Delmez gave us a wealth of information on culture and showed slides of seedlings of Willy Hublau, Belgium, his own and others. Peter Weixlmann was chairman and auctioneer of our first national auction. He had slides of each variety, which helped those who were not familiar enough with the iris to know that they wanted it. We made over \$600 for SJI. My heartfelt thanks to Don, Peter, and all who donated JIs for the auction.

I know you will join me in thanking Bob Bauer for his dedicated work as Treasurer and Membership Chairman. After 7 years, he feels that it is time for someone else to have a chance. Bob was SJI Secretary, maintained the membership list and supplied mail labels for SJI before he was Treasurer. He has also made a huge contribution to SJI by getting the SJI checklist from Florence Stout on "Tandy" computer floppy disks, converting it to a useable data base, and updating it every year. Bob will continue as Treasurer until the first of the year and will continue maintaining the checklist.

I did a bad job of dedicating the Fall 2001 issue to Evelyn White. Help me do a better job for the Spring 2003 issue. Please, send articles or paragraphs of your experiences with Evelyn to be put in the Spring issue (deadline Feb. 15, 2003). I know her job was very hard because I am doing a very small part of it now.

I realize that I don't know all the commercial growers of SJI. If I don't know, how is the newcomer to know? If each of you commercial growers would send your name, address, the price of your catalog, and \$3; we will set up a commercial page in the *Review*, put your information in both issues for that year, and link you to the SJI web page if you wish. Sounds like a good deal to me.

Region 4 is planning to have a JI Regional meeting in the Spring of 2004. It sounds like it will be fun. I bet they will let us Out-of-Region people go too. They are having an Iris Show with it, which will feature a design section, a Sumi-e group displaying their paintings of JIs, and an Ikebana display utilizing JIs. They are planning to visit the Norfolk Botanical and the Pagoda gardens.

I hope all of you hybridizers have sent guests to Theresa Jewell, the guest iris chairperson for SJI convention in 2005. If you haven't, you still can next year. I think this is going to be the place to be in 2005. The Diamond State Iris Society has worked very hard on this convention. They will have a master planting at the Delaware State University School of Agriculture, which is in walking distance of the hotel. They will also have 6 other gardens with guest irises. They are all close so we will spend our time seeing iris not riding on the bus. For more information see their web site <www.2005conv.SocJI.org>.

I hope you had as good a bloom season as I did. I hope you took lots of pictures that you are willing to share with the *Review*. I hope you took notes so you can report interesting things in your garden or any garden you visited.

Best Wishes,

Jill

Japanese Iris in Mississippi – Not Possible- Yes It Is

By Miriam Emerson, Vicksburg, MS

There is nothing I like better than talking, except talking about iris, especially Japanese iris. What a surprise I had upon receipt of my first order of JI's ordered from an off-the-wall catalog; why not spend three dollars and try them; the picture was neat in the book!

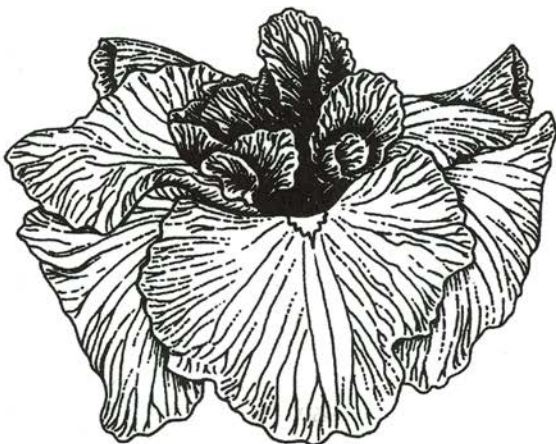
Have you ever received rhizomes that looked like fat white worms with green horns? This could not be real,- something like this would make a beautiful flower? Well, I'll just poke them in here and there and see what happens. You know the results. WOW, what beauties!! luckily for me, two of the cultivars were CAPARICIAN BUTTERFLY, and RUBY KING. They grew so fast that they truly got my attention and you can guess "the rest of the story".

Somehow by sheer accident I got on the computer and located a man in Pennsylvania who was selling out, and getting rid of all his Japanese Iris. We emailed each other back and forth and it happened he was moving back to Mississippi to work with the USDA. He could not believe I had been able to raise the JI's this far south in the HEAT among other conditions. Thank goodness he told me the JI's need a lot of water which was the only advise I had obtained. Since my little "worm plants" were so small I did water them well. He was willing to make me a good deal if I wanted to buy them all, or by the pick-up truckload. Never tell a woman this! There was no way that he knew I had a friend, Nita Lewis, who goes to Pennsylvania each year for conventions. I immediately called her and told her about these beautiful iris, gave her the man's name and address (which I can not remember now, but I think several JI people know who I am talking about) and off she went driving through the back country, down the secluded roads, through the path in the woods and surprise!! - hundreds of JI's among numerous other flowers. Needless to say the trunk was filled to capacity with JI's. This was the beginning for her also.

Nita went wild with the JI's, purchasing numerous cultivars that are beautiful. She just planted hers among her daylilies and kept them all watered and fertilized the same. With rows of JI's just planted in clay soil with very little amendments, they have grown like weeds. She has captivated all the day-lily lovers with her JI's and needs to be given credit for promoting the JI's in this region. Last year she was host for the Regional AHS tour and stole the show with the JI's, and sold more JI's than daylilies. Now the word has been spread through several states in the south. I would be curious to know how much the sales of JI's to individuals in this area have increased.

On a more serious note I want to encourage everyone to try to raise the JI's in their area. I believe water is the secret. I did soak mine good no less than once a week and mulched them with pine straw through the winter. If the plants started turning a little yellow , I would fertilize with Miracle Grow, Miracle Acid for Azaleas or the good old fashioned 13-13-13. I have not had a problem with voles yet, but Nita recommended Cygon 2E to slow them down, as apparently it does not taste good. I have not tried them placed directly in water ponds, but plan to do so this fall. Nita potted up excess plants this past fall and kept them in kiddie pools all winter with great success. We did have a short mild winter the past year.

Attending the recent AIS Convention in Memphis, which was a first for me, was a great experience and a wonderful opportunity to meet the hybridizers and growers of the wonderful iris. I never realized how many years of work it took to actually produce an iris from conception to market stage. I personally thank all the hybridizers for the great effort, which I am sure is a result of a great love of the iris. The individual society meetings were super, and sharing the progress in hybridizing through the years was astonishing. The one fact that was emphasized through out all the sections to hybridize seeking good substance, good growth habits, keep this wonderful perennial at the top of the list for quality, stamina a reputation that has been earned through years of effort. I encourage everyone to attend the AIS Conventions, If there is anyway possible. It really is a great education, learning from the pros is the only way. The only thing that exceeded looking at beautiful iris was meeting great people; SJI has some of the best.



2002 SHOW REPORTS - JAPANESE IRIS

We appreciate receiving the many show reports from all over the country. These reports reflect the interest in showing Japanese Irises and especially the names of varieties that do well.

Region 1

Maine Iris Society holds the latest show – July 13th, Auburn, ME!

Best Specimen of Show: **Dirigo Red Rocket**, JI by John White

Seedling judged most worthy 96S-MW-1-1 Siberian by John White

Silver Medal for most BLUE ribbons John White, Bronze Medal second most

Blue Ribbons Paul Dostie.

This was very close and had to be determined by counting the RED ribbons.

Best Design -Linda Ridlon , Artistic Design Sweepstakes Sharon Harvie

In Youth – Best design was exhibited by Donna Roberts.

Bob Sawyer, RVP Region 1, Paul Dostie – Show Chairman

Region 3

Diamond State Iris Society - This was an unusual year for the DSIS and Japanese irises. There were Japanese irises at both bearded shows! .May 19th show had 3 Japanese: **Springtime Melody** (Reid '94), **Springtime Prayer** (Reid '94), and **Haru-No-Umi** (Hirao '93). On May 26th another bearded show was held and 4 Japanese were shown

At the Japanese show on June 16, we had 109 specimens and 96 were Japanese Irises. There were Japanese seedlings at two shows: from Dennis Hager and Connie Marino. A total of 9 seedlings were exhibited on June 16.

Best Specimen: **DRAMATIC MOMENT** (McEwen '82) by R.Dennis Hager
On the "Queen's Table" were: **Midsummer Reverie** (Marx '54) by Joyce Corrin, **Japanese Sandman** (Bush '80) by Joyce Corrin, **Schehedrazade** (Payne '51) by Theresa Jewell, and **Crystal Halo** (Marx '59) by Connie Marino. Best Seedling: 1099 Connie Marino

Most blue ribbons (Silver Medal) were won by Dennis Hager, Bronze Medal went to Theresa Jewell.

Dorothy L. Mallozzi, President and show secretary of Diamond State Iris Society (DSIS).

Region 6

The Southwest Michigan Iris Society held a Japanese Iris display show on June 29, 2002 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The unjudged show was again judged by the public. Each visitor to the show at the mall was handed a blue ribbon and asked to place it in front of their favorite flower. The public really take the "fun" task seriously and walk around the tables looking at all of the iris blooms with much more interest than they do at "pre-judged" shows.

We had 78 stalks displayed: 46 Japanese cultivars, 18 JI seedlings, 5 Louisiana cultivars, 2 LA seedlings, 4 Siberians, and 3 species-x. **Raspberry Candy** garnered 16 votes, **Bellender Blue** 9 votes, **Fourfold Mystery** 8 votes, **Tropical Storm** 7 votes, and **Maiko** 7 votes. **Icy Peaks**, **Kalamazoo**, **Caprician Butterfly**, and **Nemurijishi** each received 6 votes; **Prairie Glory** and **Diomedes** each received 5 votes. Jill Copeland JI seedling M11 received 7 votes. 149 visitors judged the show.

John Coble, Galesburg, MI

Region 13

Greater Portland Iris Society – June 22, 2002 – Portland, Oregon

Late Show included JI, LA, SPU, SIB SPEC and SPEC-X. 128 entries, 50 of which were seedlings.

Caprician Butterfly (Marx '85), by William Plotner was best specimen.

Lee Walker's Tetraploid seedling TET-99-137-3 was selected Best Seedling of Show after much debate. (Our seedling panel of judges were not able to eliminate beyond the top four seedlings, and had to request the assistance of the Horticulture team).

William Plotner was awarded the Silver Medal with 11 Blue Ribbons, while Chad Harris came in at a close second with 10 for the Bronze Medal.

Thomas Collier, a new youth member, won his first Blue Ribbon with a fine specimen of Blue Bunting, a spuria.

Best Design and Sweepstakes of Designs was awarded to Kay Ludi.

Chad Harris, Show Chair, Washougal, WA

Region 18

The Greater St. Louis Iris Society (MO) Late Show was held June 8, 2002 at the Missouri Botanical Gardens with 92 entries. Best Specimen of the Show was the Don Delmez entry, **ALL IN WHITE** (Delmez 95), Youth Best Specimen was **CRY OF REJOICE** by Christopher Rust and Best Seedling was Don Delmez's DBVOPUST. Lu and Orville Dickhaut were awarded the Silver Medal, Don Delmez the Bronze Medal with Best Design and Design Sweepstakes going to Jean Morris and the Youth Best Design to Stephanie Rust. We were pleased with the turnout of exhibitors and spectators.

Doris Loveland, Show Chair, Fenton, MO

Region 19

June 15, 2002 Basically Beardless Iris Show, Medford Leas, Medford, NJ

Best Specimen of Show Joe Griner **Oriental Eyes** (Vogt '84)

Silver Medal - Most Blue Ribbons R. Dennis Hager

Bronze Medal - 2nd Most Blue Ribbons Joe Griner

Best Artistic Design Award Margo Griner

Best Seedling Joe Griner

From Region 19 Website – Cathy Button, Westampton, NJ

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY AWARDS

2002

*Number of votes listed first

Payne Medal (JI)

46 ELECTRIC GLOW (J.T. Aitken)

Runners Up:

26 PINK DACE (Jill Copeland)

23 RASPBERRY GLOW (J.T. Aitken)

AWARD OF MERIT (JI)

22 GEISHA DOLL (Ed Matheny III)

21 FOREIGN INTRIGUE (Bob Bauer & John Coble)

Runners Up:

20 BLUE SPRITZ (Don Delmez)

19 SING THE BLUES (Lorena Reid)

HONORABLE MENTION (JI)

30 RASPBERRY CANDY (Bob Bauer & John Coble)

26 PLEASANT SANDMAN (Chad Harris)

24 PINKERTON (Bob Bauer & John Coble)

19 RIVULETS OF WINE (J.T. Aitken)

17 CONFETTI WINE (Lorena Reid)

17 INDIGO DELIGHT (J.T. Aitken)

Runners Up:

16 LITTLE BOW PINK (Don Delmez)

14 LITTLE SPRITZER (Don Delmez)

MEET THE HYBRIDIZERS

DON DELMEZ

By Cindy Rust, Union, Missouri

Don Delmez is a prominent Region 18 grower and hybridizer. He gardens in St. Charles, Missouri, which is very near St. Louis. Don has been growing irises for 40 years and hybridizing for 20 years. He credits his parents, Leon and Mary Delmez, for fostering his early interest in irises. Don clearly recalls that his parents kept a very up-to-date iris garden featuring TBs. Each year would see the addition of many fine new TB varieties to the Delmez family garden. It was not until many years later that Don's interest in Japanese irises would be encouraged by his mentor, Louise Bellagamba. Although Louise worked mostly with Siberian iris hybridizing, she could see that Don had a special fondness for and interest in the Japanese irises. Thanks to her help and encouragement, the Midwest's most prominent JI hybridizer began developing his program and his insight.

Fairly early on, Don learned from Currier McEwen how to use colchicine to double the chromosomes in Japanese irises. Don explains that it is an imperfect science and the plants are sometimes not converted at all; they can be partially converted and some are converted briefly but may regress to the diploid level again. However, since Don believes that tetraploidy is the future of his hybridizing program and for Japanese irises in general, he has put a great deal of effort into this aspect of his hybridizing program. He also routinely sends out special seeds for embryo culturing and has incorporated the resulting seedlings into his program. Don keeps about 150 named varieties on hand for possible hybridizing stock, as well as selected seedlings of his own. He does not hesitate to use a first year seedling that pleases him, if it is a break he is looking for. He explains that although certain aspects of the seedlings may change from year to year, the potential is there on first bloom. He does not have time to watch seedlings for years before deciding to use them and has never suffered from this approach in his work.

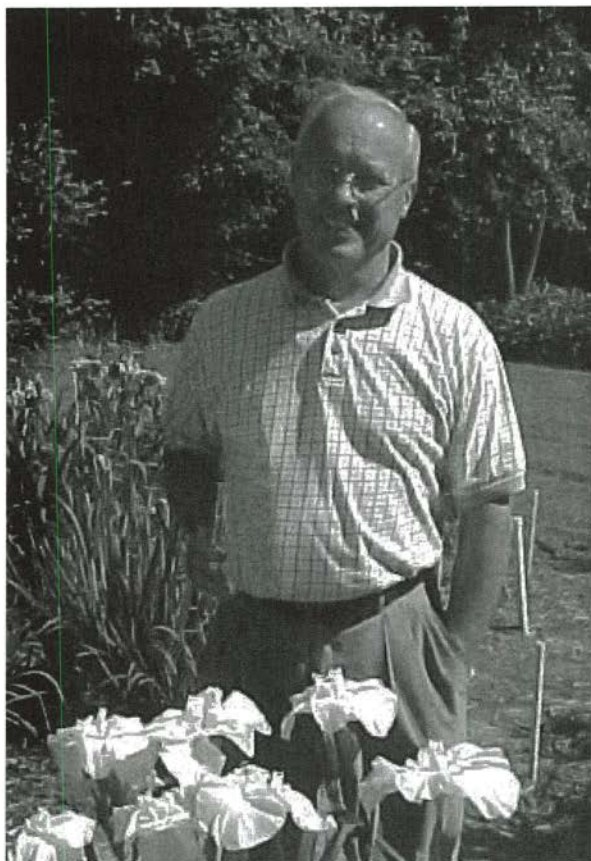
Much of Don's original breeding stock was imported directly from Japan over a number of years. This involved a great deal of expense and also time, because the plants were not acclimated to his Missouri climate at all. Indeed, he says that many of the plants were grown only in pots and were never garden subjects in Japan. This has led Don to a somewhat unique view on Japanese iris culture in general. Instead of the usual three to six year division of clumps that many Midwestern growers prefer, Don divides his plants every year to two years and three years at the outside. He has found much success with this method in the garden and on the show bench, although he admits it is too work intensive to meet with great approval from most iris enthusiasts.

Don's original hybridizing goals of earlier bloom and hardier plant habits remain unchanged. He originally worked with only two lines of breeding; one for pink JIs and one for blue JIs. Lately he has added two more lines. He is very interested in breeding a fertile tetraploid yellow and also has a line going for red or near-red JIs. When queried about whether he is working for a line of miniature JIs like his very popular LITTLE SPRITZER, he replied that he is not. Apparently, Little Spritzer was a chance seedling that people loved for arranging and so he introduced it for them.

When asked about "key breeders" in his program, he singled out a white seedling of his own origination, No. WTGSN-2. He said it is a white seedling that does not have the merit he looks for to introduce, but it is a very good and consistent producer of quality offspring. Although Don does not have a line to produce white irises, he uses some white irises to clarify the color of muddier flowers he would otherwise like to use, and for the plant qualities they can reproduce. In the yellow line, he cited the variety HATSUHO as an example of a fertile tetraploid of yellow and red-violet coloring. In the blue line, he liked using the varieties SPIRIT LAKE, KONTAKION, SAKURAKA, and WARAI HOTEL. He hybridized DYNAMIC IMPACT using YAMATA- IKOKU and ROYAL GAME. In hybridizing pinks, he includes the varieties HIME KOMACHI, KAIGAIKU, SAKURA-NO-SONO and SAIGYOZAKURA.

Don's usual practice is to plant his seeds in the fall into large rectangular wooden framed beds. The frames give protection to the plantings and make sure of just where the seedlings are. He generally plants out about 1,000 seedlings each spring. Don makes careful use of both linebreeding and outcrossing in his hybridizing program. He sometimes skips several generations before going back to linebreeding because he does not want to lose vigor and wishes to introduce new traits into his lines. Since he does not breed for violets or purples, he is careful to concentrate on screening out the violet colors in blue, pink and yellow breeding lines.

Don has been a member of the Greater St. Louis Iris Society since 1979 – 1980 and joined AIS shortly thereafter. He began exhibiting in 1981 and has enjoyed tremendous success on the show bench since that time. He was one of the members instrumental in inducing the GSLIS to institute the popular "beardless" or "late" show and often provides all of the flowers for the many artistic classes at that show as well as winning the Best Seedling award and the top show awards. Don conducts a popular garden judging session in his commercial garden most years for area judges and iris enthusiasts who gather there. In addition to his own varieties, Don introduces Japanese irises for his friend, Willie Hublau from Belgium.



DON DELMEZ

Don has so far introduced 18 named varieties and they are
 1994 intros: TOTAL IMAGE, BEAUTIFUL ACCENT, DYNAMIC IMPACT;
 1995 intros GRACEFUL DANCER, PATTERNS IN SPACE, ALL IN WHITE ;
 1996 intros BLUE SPRITZ, AZURE HEAVEN;
 1998 intros LITTLE SPRITZER, LITTLE BOW PINK;
 1999 intros HEAVENLY REFLECTION, PALATIAL PINK;
 2000 intros BEYOND CHANCE, EYE OF HEAVEN, ABOVE AND BEYOND;
 2001 intros BEYOND WORDS ;
 2002 intro SAPPHIRE SKIES and DREAMS UNFOLD.



ALL IN WHITE (Delmez '95)

Asked which of his introductions was his own personal favorite, he named LITTLE BOW PINK.

(See inside back cover for pictures)

GARDEN PROFILES - EARTHEART GARDENS

Eartheart is a repetition of the word earth. It is a reflection of my strong sense of the deep connection between human hearts and our beloved earth. I also run a small gardening business, Eartheart Gardeners. We have a staff of from 2-6 depending upon the time of year and tasks at hand. We design, install and maintain a few gardens. We are also available for garden consultation.

Twenty years ago Currier asked me to help him put his gardens to bed for the winter. At the time I had no idea it was a turning point for me! In the years since 1982 our work relationship has evolved through many changes. For the first few years, my responsibilities were in my favorite place: the garden. In 1993 when Shirley Pope, Currier's long time iris friend, became unable to continue introducing and marketing Currier's new originations, Currier invited me to become his business partner. This partnership involves growing, registering, introducing for sale and marketing his iris cultivars. Our good garden friend and colleague, Steve Jones from Fieldstone Gardens in Vassalboro, ME, took over the sale of the older varieties of Siberians. Steve's help with the older Siberians has helped Currier and me to focus on developing and marketing new varieties of Japanese and Siberians. Eartheart Gardens continues to handle all of Currier's Japanese Irises.

In 1993 Currier and I began the long process of moving garden selects and introductions from Seaways Gardens to Eartheart Gardens. Fortunately we live about ½ mile apart. Currier personally saw to the planting of his 1997-2000 seedlings at Eartheart Gardens.

Our gardens are located in zone 5. The soil is acid, sandy loam. Because of the difference in site conditions in the two gardens peak bloom is about a week apart. This gives us many more varieties in bloom at any one time, an asset for hybridizers and visitors.

The display beds developed at both gardens contain all of Currier's named and introduced varieties of Siberians, Japanese and daylilies

Over the years I have had the joy of working with Currier evaluating plants. We have discussed various strategies and ideas about how to get from here to there. Some years I have made a few crosses of plants that were of interest to me and were not Currier's focus. This is the first season that I have put a lot of time into making crosses. We continue to work for new, truer colors, branching, repeat and continuing bloom, hardiness and plant vigor.

In 1993 Currier formalized his collaboration with Japanese iris growers who live in the cold growing zones of Alaska; Canada; Northern Maine, New

Hampshire, New York, and Vermont; Lithuania; Russia; and Scandinavia. He called this project the Deep Freeze Project. Our collective goal is to develop modern looking ensatas that have the cold tolerance and hardiness of the frost-resistant species that are native in northern latitudes. Dr. George Rodionenko has done the first stage of this work. He created his 'Altai', V. Alferov' and Dersy Uzala'. Crossing our modern hybrids with Rodionenko's cultivars and other species ensatas is the second stage of this work. We exchange seeds and then grow the results of our crosses in the northern latitudes. In 2001, one of the children of a cross made by Dr. George Rodionenko produced a species looking seedling that had 3-4 branches and rebloomed. We crossed it with some modern repeating hybrids (Katy Mendez, Kamiji-no-Homare and Variation in Pink). It had good seed set. We plan to work with these seeds next season. We will try to convert some of them to tetraploid form and others we will grow on as diploids.

Currier has been on the evening news and was featured in the March-April issue of People, Places and Plants, The New England Gardening Magazine: "Always have a new goal." The Portland Flower show celebrated him on Thursday, March 14 with a birthday cake and a slide show built around a 19" x 24" poster that includes 100 of his irises and a charming photo of our dear friend. The Maine Iris Society was on hand. It was great fun.

Governor Angus King proclaimed June 22, 2002 Currier McEwen Day. On that day the Harpswell Garden Club in conjunction with the Maine Iris Society hosted a celebratory party at Centennial Hall, the garden club's home. The community of friends and colleagues gathered on that misty June afternoon to hear the reading of the proclamation, share cake and punch and participate in the dedication of the garden club's work of art: The Currier McEwen Centennial Garden.

Our plants continue to suffer from the whims of the climate. Our 2002 winter was unseasonably warm. We went into the winter with 5" less rain than usual. It is hard to believe that the lower section of my Japanese garden was under water spring 2001. We are in the midst of drought/heat wave again. As I write it is raining. I spoke with a local lobster fisherman at the Post Office this morning. We agreed that we'd be happy if it rained for a week.

Let us pray for peace in the world and ample rain in the next gardening season.

SHARON HAYES WHITNEY
HARPSWELL, MAINE

2005 – INVITATION TO HYBRIDIZERS

The Diamond State Iris Society will host the Society for Japanese Iris Convention in Dover, Delaware, June 2005. Hybridizers are invited to send guest Japanese irises of recent introductions or seedlings under serious consideration.

Shipments will be accepted:
September 1 to October 15, 2002
April 1 to May 15, 2003
September 1 to October 15, 2003

Send guest plants to:
Theresa Jewell
310 Lloyd Guessford Road
Townsend, DE 19734-9544
Email: tljcjewell@aol.com
(302) 378-3523

Photographs: We are requesting that hybridizers send a 35mm color slide of each of their submissions. Please mark them clearly with the name or seedling number of the iris. These slides will be shown at the convention.

Guidelines: Three to five divisions of each variety may be submitted. The name of the variety or seedling number must be clearly marked on each division. In addition, a packing list with the following information must be enclosed:

Hybridizer name and address

Email, if available

Name or seedling number of variety

Description, distinguishing characteristics and bloom season (E, M, L)

Year of introduction, if applicable

If a guest seedling is named subsequent to shipping to the convention, it is the responsibility of the hybridizer to notify the Guest Iris Chairman no later than January 1, 2005.

A receipt will be sent to all contributors. Two months before the convention, contributors will be asked for instructions regarding disposition of guest plants. Options are destruction, donation to the SJI for auction at the convention, or return. Returns will be shipped post paid, except to foreign addresses.

The convention committee and the owners of tour gardens will follow the code of ethics as printed in the AIS Convention Handbook. Only officially submitted guest iris will appear in the convention booklet.

JI CULTURE

By Terry Aitken, Vancouver, WA

Rumors are getting back to us about how Japanese irises are dying all over the west coast! Such rumors are quite hilarious - until somebody decides to take them seriously. So I would like to take a few minutes to squelch this one.

First of all, let me assure you that Japanese irises are flourishing up and down the west coast- everywhere that I know of. One exception is the Japanese Garden in Portland, Oregon. A visit to the garden by Chad Harris resulted in the observation that, over 30 odd years, the trees had grown up and the JI plantings were now in the shade, no longer able to produce bloom.

Another cultural issue is one that I take great exception to. It is the idea that Japanese irises poison the soil and that no irises will ever grow there again. By sheer dumb luck, over the past 20 years, we have planted our JI irises in the same fields for 6 or 7 years, then moved them all to a different location. This has everything to do with planting alphabetically and the system breaks down about every 3 or 4 years because of new plants coming into the garden - so we transplant to get them back into order. Since they also need to be planted deeper, it works for both reasons.

In a given field, we plant in rows 3' -6' apart which gives us walking space between mature plantings. When we transplant, we till up the aisle and shift the plants to their new home in the old aisles. About the time we need to transplant again, they need a larger field. Our "old" field is then planted to something else - usually bearded irises - and they grow very well, thank you.

My experience over 30 years seems to indicate that some form of crop rotation between bearded and beardless is beneficial to both types of plants. It is almost like planting in virgin soil. Of course, the nutrients are probably depleted by the "old crop", but the new crop seems to use different nutrients. Regardless, we add substantial quantities of Alfalfa when transplanting and treat the soil with Nematicur to clean out soil parasites. (This is getting very expensive at \$225.00 per 50# bag which is enough to take care of at least an acre.) Some attention may need to be given to soil acidity as the Japanese are perfectly happy down at a pH of 5.8 to 6.8 range while bearded iris prefer something in the pH 6.0 to 7.5 range.

Another area of benefit seems to be that the two types of plants do not seem to host or harbor the same kind of diseases and insect pests. For example, our bearded iris seedlings are looking very large and luxurious in the "old JI field" and show little or no leaf spot, rhizome rot or root rot and almost no aphids.

The Japanese irises are now growing where our old bearded iris seedlings used to grow and they do not appear to be affected by the diseases that the bearded iris struggled with. The thrips that love JI's are not present in the bearded irises.

My observation of JI's over the years is consistent with other growers in the sense that, left in the same ground, JIs languish and virtually stop growing over a period of 7 or 8 years. They need something. However, I adamantly refuse to accept the theory that JI's poison the soil. My theory would be that the JI's use up some micronutrient in the soil that is essential to their well being . We need to identify what "it" is and find some way to replenish "it".

Whichever theory is right, the JI iris world would benefit greatly from the information. Meanwhile, I will continue to plant my bearded irises where my beardless irises used to be.

Terry Aitken



MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

GROWING JAPANESE IRISES IN THE SAME SOIL

When asked for their opinions on this subject, SJI members had a lot to say!

JOHN WHITE, Minot, ME

GROWING ENSATAS IN THE SAME PLACE FOR TOO MANY YEARS.

Slide "A" shows three beds of JIs growing continuously in the same soil since 1987. These beds were set out that year with JIs for the 1990 Convention in Maine. The plants in the picture are not the original planting as they have long since died out. The plants you see are my introductions planted there two years ago. As you can see, they are doing very poorly. The near plant is DIRIGO DEBUTANTE, about two feet tall. I have it in another garden in new soil and it is about 40" tall and very vigorous. It has bloomed for over a month. I have recently moved all the plants in the three beds shown in slide "A" to new ground. Perhaps I can get you a slide of these same plants in their new location for a comparison next year.

The plants shown in slide "B" are two year old seedlings planted in new ground two years ago. Their average height is about 40". Two or three plants are about five feet tall. Slides A and B tell a graphic picture of what happens to JIs when grown more than four or five years in the same soil.

I think it would be a good idea if the Society sponsored some botanist or chemist to find what it is that the roots produce that is detrimental to the well being of the plant and to see if there is some way to neutralize that substance.

All my seedlings from last year's crosses have been recently lined out in new ground, just cleared of brush and trees a year or so ago.



Margaret Boehm, Wilton, CT

I just stumbled across the Spring 2001 Review again, and reread the article on myths and fallacies by Clarence Mahan. At the end of the article he asks for responses from those growing JI's in the same spot or replanting in the same spot.

I've grown some of my JI's in the same spot for 15+ years and am only in the past year noticing some diminution of blossom which I attributed to drought and overcrowding. I have also replanted JI's in the same spot, because I didn't know any better, with no problems at all. In none of these places could there be anything remotely called leaching going on.

I also visited the wonderful Meiji iris gardens in Japan several times a year for the 5 years I lived there. The JI's are grown in a ravine which is flooded in the spring but essentially dry in summer and fall. If they don't replant in the same spot, or if they dig and totally replace the soil, I never saw it in process, which doesn't mean it doesn't happen because anything connected with the imperial domain gets exquisite attention.

This spring I was/am planning to dig and replant one older JI which has become infested with some obnoxious running grass. I was/am planning to replant in the same spot and now don't know what to do.....

I've been gardening in this yard for 25 years and the ensatas have been in for at least 20. The most successful, consistently, are Arthur Hazzard's -- Prairie Chief, Prairie Bluemoon, Virginia B among others--, though there are others that have been in place 10 years. The bed those are in is next to Cedars which dry it out to the point that the peonies wilt, so leaching is not happening there. The yard is in full sun and the pH for the flower beds is usually between 6.5 and 6.8, not exactly Japanese iris heaven. The soil tests out as sandy loam though I swore for years it was clay. In the summer it takes a pick axe to dig a hole because it is hardpan except for the spots where I've been digging and re-digging and amending over the years.

We are wet in the winter and spring from sheeting surface water but there is no flooding. We are very dry in the summer. There is one spot, where swales come together and a curtain drain has failed where the irises sit with ice over their heads all winter and still survive. Perhaps the water flow there matches the leaching effect discussed in the article. Except for one or two (Izu no Umi being one), those have not been in for many years and I wasn't counting them in the "long time success" stories.

I don't know what Southwest Connecticut's annual rainfall is, though it has been sparse in recent years.

I tend to plant the Japanese either near rocks or on the down side of a gentle slope to take advantage of what water there is. Even so, in some places I've been dividing and replanting -- ignorance is bliss -- the same irises in the same spot for a good 15 years. That would make the nematode theory make sense if I don't have them.

We are not in farming country so no alfalfa unless the occasional vegetable patch has it as green manure. There are no passionate iris growers near me that I know of.

There are Japanese irises I have no luck with, McEwen's are one, and I no longer try. They die and I try another in the same spot until it "takes," so perhaps there's a genetic+soil component. Others, like Frilled Enchantment, will grow anywhere.

I've had a theory for years that most plants have 4 or 5 requirements and if you meet 3 or 4 really well they will tolerate missing one. I've accounted for my Japanese iris success that way since I know I'm not meeting their optimum requirements. Maybe I've just been lucky in not having the nematodes?

I do hope "they" find out what's going on.

Gardening is always an adventure!

Terry Aitken, Vancouver, WA

See Terry's comments on this topic in his article on JI CULTURE on page 19 of this issue.

Carol Warner, Upperco, MD

Growing Japanese Irises in One Spot

It seems that much has been circulating concerning Japanese Irises and their effect on the soil where they are grown. I have been growing Japanese in somewhat the same areas for about twenty years now and have several observations. My soil is clay and rock so it holds moisture. Our rainfall is usually adequate and I do not irrigate or manually water the plants.

Japanese irises grow phenomenally in virgin soil. They will continue to increase and grow very well for at least three years. In soil that is not drenched or flooded they will then begin to decrease in vigor and may eventually die out entirely if not moved to a new location. From all the discussions I have heard, it is the feeling of the experts that these irises put some type of toxin into the soil rather than depleting it of some nutrient.

Plants can be moved as little as a foot from their original location and still continue to prosper. In landscaped display beds I have simply exchanged them with a daylily or some other perennial. Other plants that are planted where the Japanese iris had grown do fine with the exception of Siberian irises which tend to be stunted slightly. In production or commercial beds where the plants are grown in rows I try to rework the entire bed and plant where the paths used to be and use the rows where the irises had been planted for paths. I also spread and incorporate dried alfalfa pellets over the beds before replanting. After one reuse of a bed I find that the Japanese irises do not perform well so I practice crop rotation and use the area for something else. I have successfully grown bearded irises, daylilies and peonies in the areas with no ill effects. I've also used the area for vegetables such as tomatoes, corn, beans, cucumbers, etc. and they have done very well.

Recently I replanted Japanese into an area that had been free of them for about six years and the plants have grown and bloomed well.

It would be wonderful to have some way to study what chemicals the Japanese irises produce that limit their own growth in the same area and consequently to find some way of reversing the phenomena. Frequent flooding of the ground seems to leach away some of the harmful chemical so planting along a stream or flooding as in a rice paddy may eliminate the problem. Soil structure may also play a role in how the toxins are held so other growers may have different experiences.

ON VOLES

Jim Holmes, Flat Rock, North Carolina

When you see tunnels in your garden, that is an instant sign of potential trouble. But before you act, it is a good idea to determine whether or not you have voles or just moles. Remember that mole starts with m and are meat eaters. For example, they eat grubs and every gardener should want that. On the other hand, vole starts with v and they are vegetarians. They eat your plants starting with your most expensive ones first.

I have found there are three basic lines of attack: 1) animals, 2) mechanical, and 3) chemical. Outside cats with sharp claws are very effective. Snakes can go into the tunnels to pursue the varmints. This year a 4 foot black snake appears to have the problem under control in my garden. For obvious reasons, I prefer my new tenant to the local copperheads and timber rattlesnakes.

Before my new friend found my garden, I used both mechanical and chemical weapons. I was contemplating nuclear, but opted for some restraint. Voles are reported to have tender feet and sharp rocks mixed into the hole at planting can help drainage and deter these critters. Wire mesh can also be used. Since the tunnels tend to be shallow, a 5" deep underground fence of small gauge mesh should work. But what should you do about squirrels that dig from the top? Then a wire cage or overlay sheet might be needed. But the overlay must have large enough holes for the plants to grow through and spread. This solution can be labor intensive, but does last.

The chemical choice involves breaking into the tunnel. Then put pellets, such as Rozol, into the tunnel and directly on top. Cover the hole with a pot that will keep the light out and simulate a tunnel extension. Make sure the pot does not blow away.

While the black snake appears to be the elegant, simple, and least labor intensive solution, new friends can be fickle. So have alternatives ready.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2005 JI Convention – The Diamond State Iris Society will host the Society for Japanese Iris Convention in Dover, Delaware, June 2005. Hybridizers are invited to send guest Japanese irises of recent introductions or seedlings under serious consideration. See article on Page 18 for rules.

See the website at www.2005conv.SocJI.org

Spring of 2004. – Region 4 is planning to have a JI – Regional meeting . *Ensata Extravaganza* will be held on the 3rd, 4th, & 5th of June 2004 in the Norfolk, Virginia area.

Ensata Extravaganza will have something to offer the beginning as well as the advanced JI enthusiast. Our main focus will be to introduce everyone to the beauty of Japanese Irises. We're still in our planning stages, but here are some of the activities that we've finalized; Six Hours of Judges Training , Irises for Beginners 101 , An AIS Beardless Iris Show , A Day of Garden Tours , Demonstrations & Displays , A Super Plant Auction!

As mentioned, *Ensata Extravaganza* is still in the planning stages and we welcome your input. We have more surprises and additions! Further information will be forthcoming as our plans finalize. Watch for updates in "The Review" and at www.socji.org .

COVER PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover – **ELECTRIC GLOW**, (Aitken '92) , 2002 PAYNE MEDAL WINNER , Photo by T. Aitken

Inside Front Cover – **SANDY RAWLINGS GARDEN**, Photo by Mike Greenfield, **ACADEMY HOUSE GARDEN**, Photo by Tom Gormley

Inside Back Cover – **LITTLE BOW PINK**, Photo by Don Delmez, **GRACEFUL DANCER**, Photo by Rita Gormley in Delmez Garden

Back Cover – **GAY GALLANT**, Photo by Lorena Reid, **SCHEHERAZADE**, Photo by Tom Gormley in D. Hager Garden

Robin Found!!!

We found the Hybridizers Robin after a strange chain of coincidences. The letters were dated 1998! I asked the writers of these letters if they had updates and Chad Harris and Mike Iler got their updates in time for this issue. Here they are:

From Chad Harris, Mt. Pleasant, Washington:

Lee Walker spent a few days with me this spring at bloom time (1998). The topic of crossing tetraploids and getting pods with viable seeds came up. And after several years of trying and getting zero seed, this year was different. Three tries with JAPANESE HARMONY X TRIPLE THREAT set one pod with nineteen seeds. Five tries with TRIPLE THREAT X JAPANESE HARMONY gave two pods with a total of forty seeds. The pods were interesting and fun to watch grow. They ended up to be the size of golf balls. Anyway, Lee has found that we've been putting the pollen on the wrong part on the stigmatic lip of the iris. When we cross diploids and hold the crest, we are placing the pollen toward the back of the stigma lip, not so with the tetraploids. The lip on the tetraploids is much larger than on the diploids, with over half of it tightly covered by the style crest. Lee showed me how he peels back the style crest up and off of the lip 'til they cracked, thus exposing the back of the lip that is wet and sticky. Of course, I'm sure as with diploids, we will find some tetraploids to be sterile, pod and/or pollen. Have to wait 'til spring to get germination count.

Tetraploid seed, as started in the 1998 robin, have been handled the same as the diploid seed. Collecting the pods when they are fully ripe and starting to split. The seed is separated and left to dry for 2-3 months in the garden shed, which is dark and not heated. Using standard six inch plastic pots and a commercial potting mix. The seeds 20-25 per pot are covered with ½ inch of soil and firmly tamped. The pots are labeled and placed out in full weather in November for the winter. At Mt. Pleasant, Washington, our winters are mild (zone 6) and very wet. Handling the seed in this manner has given me a germination rate of 65% to 70% for tetraploids compared to 90% for diploids.

For four years running I've used the same two plants, JAPANESE HARMONY and TRIPLE THREAT to try to unlock the mystery of setting pods on tetraploids. Something else besides the placement of the pollen to the stigmatic lip is coming into play. The years that we had warm days and nights, I had 30 % takes with pods forming to the size of golf balls. Other years no takes at all. I know both parents are fertile and my handling of the pollen and of the flowers are the same. Can temperature and humidity be playing a bigger part in getting takes?

The culture question with JI and water has been fun these past three years. We have several bog-like creeks and a pond on the property. The JI that were grown under water died in two years. The ones in the creeks were not planted but just thrown, so the crowns were above the water. I think that is the key- the crown of the plant needs to breath. I have a three year old clump of ELECTRIC RAYS in a ditch that floods with every rain and covers the crown. The water drains in one to two days and the plant still looks great. Also, I've a large planting of PLEASANT EARLYBIRD by the pond that is 3 years old. The crowns are four to six inches above the water line. No fertilizer and no transplanting, I want to see how long they will live. The plants went down hill this fall to only ½ the size from springtime. The root mass is now above the soil level, but always damp.

The crowns of PLEASANT EARLYBIRD at the pond edge are still growing and blooming each spring. They were planted fall 1996 and have not been divided or fertilized. The only care that I give is to hand weed, bait for slugs, and strip any seedpods that form. The plants were at their peak in year two and three, forming a typical clump. The fourth year the crowns started to thin out. The increases diminished from six to ten per fan to one to two. The bloom stems also diminished from having two branches and seven buds to an occasional branch and two or three buds. In their fifth year, the crowns took an interesting shape. The rhizomes are now crawling on top of the root mat and are exposed but for a light leaf litter. The fans are now evenly spaced six inches apart in a three by five foot area. At bloom time the effect is most beautiful with each flower spaced slightly apart. The plants still look to be healthy and should bloom again this their sixth spring. All the other plants that were grown where their crowns could flood, have all perished by the end of year five.

From Mike Iler, Coos Bay, Oregon:

JI notes from the Oregon coast? Hmmmm....Guess I'll start with a decision made that's probably not going to be popular. We seem to have a knack for that. Anyway, to me the most important thing I can do regarding JIs is to convert diploids. It seems that to be worthwhile one needs to make hundreds of attempts. The bottle-neck here is having to keep track of the pedigree of the seeds used. Combing through stacks of containers looking for sprouts, giving each cross it's own solution bath, and tagging each batch is a giant pain. I know what I'm suggesting borders on the sacrilegious but really, how much good is it to know the parentage of a tet conversion? It's not like you can back-cross to the recessive parent. On paper it might seem helpful to know that a particular seedling may carry a recessive trait but in the reality of the garden we're talking about so few conversions that you're going to test cross everything anyway and all should become apparent in time. For instance, a selfing

should show the recessive @ 1:36 because a conversion can only be AAAA, aaaa, or Aaaa (Right Terry?). As you've guessed I'm treating this first batch together (60 pods representing 36 X's). I need to mention that mixing them is not the same as using random seed. We've bloomed most of these X's in the diploid state and should be able to make some pretty good guesses as to parentage and after working with a lot of Hirao's intros I know that sometimes guessing is as good as knowing. My question to y'all: is there something I'm missing? Anyway, at this point all I'm really after are tet JIs with nice blooms that are fertile and increase enough to introduce.

In hindsight, not tracking the crosses was a mistake. It wasn't so much laziness as a lack of confidence on my part. In trying something new (Surflan in place of colchicine) the thought was let's just see if it works en masse before we get bogged down with the details. This past year, when half the suspected conversions bloomed and were successfully crossed with known tets, I wouldn't have minded knowing which were which. Subsequent conversions have been thoroughly tracked. We've worked out a low tech method that easily handles 24 crosses per run.

Speaking of goals, admittedly we're all over the map. One hopes that we'll settle down as we gain a hybridizers maturity but I'm not holding my breath. Wanting it all yesterday is inherently problematic but I've learned to bear it. However, one goal/trait has risen to the top: DURABILITY. Until this year we never made much distinction between durability and substance and while you need substance to have it, it really is much more. The only way to describe it is a flower that takes a long time to develop and die with the substance and coloring to stand up to anything that comes along for the duration. It must be akin to what, in the old days, the Japanese called "the act". What would you say to a rolling double with mid-plum styles edged silver wire, falls with dark violet veins running from dark yellow signals through a large chalky silver zone to a 1/2" raspberry margin edged silver wire? A changeling lasting six full days that included one day of wind and two days of rain? Yeah, I know, we don't believe it either and we have it! With the daily changes as it develops a big clump should be pretty dramatic. If the end came today and Saint Peter said "You can only bring in one plant" this would be the one.

Wow. Have I no shame? Still very involved with durability but that particular seedling doesn't throw enough stalks. Two saved siblings are better bloomers but the coloring isn't as rich and they tend toward blown centers on the second day. That's breeding for 'ya.

Regarding fertility of available McEwen tets; I don't use them much anymore but do use seedlings derived from them. As you would expect fertility improves as you go on. A quick ranking of the named tets would look something like this:

Good both ways starting with the best: JAPANESE PINWHEEL, FOURFOLD PINK, ROYAL BURGUNDY, PINK MYSTERY, POPULAR DEMAND has very good pollen

DOUBLE FIRST is stingy both ways but does produce a few seedlings.

ALPINE MAJESTY has set a few seeds both ways but none have ever germinated. I suspect it's triploid.

HEARING FROM HYBRIDIZERS

Meet the New Hybridizers Robin Members

by Hybridizer Robin Chair, Jill Copeland

Since not all of the members of this robin know each other, each has written an introduction. We will continue the "introductions" in the next issue.

Phil Cook, Underhill, VT: I retired from the University of Vermont about 10 years ago to look after my aging parents and to spend more time on things, which really mattered-i.e. gardening. Even before retirement, I had a small mail order business, selling alpine and rock garden plants. I now do some retail and sell plants wholesale to local garden centers. I helped to organize a local hardy plant club, which has operated for nearly twenty years. Periodically, I give talks to garden clubs and this year will be giving a presentation on Siberian and Japanese irises at the Vermont Flower Show. Other interests include writing haiku, playing chess, playing bridge, and cross-country skiing (when weather and my joints permit). Cutting and splitting wood for the stove is also a retirement activity.

I garden in northwest Vermont (zone 4B) on a 70 acre parcel of land which was originally part of my father's farm. There are a variety of habitats including woodland, rock ledges, abandoned meadows, etc. Fortunately for JI, the soil is on the acid side-calcium is not a problem. Part of the land is a low lying marsh through which a small stream passes. The stream is periodically dammed by beavers and they in turn are damned. The variety of sites has led to experimentation with a wide variety of plants. However, too much land is often more of a problem than not enough and I let myself get overextended in terms of projects. I now have in excess of 400 JI cultivars and 200 SI cultivars. More recently, I've become infected by MDB's and SDB's. There's no end in sight!

I acquired my first Japanese irises about 25 years ago while I was still in my "dwarf conifer phase" of gardening. The irises thrived despite neglect during my "rock garden phase". Perhaps this was because they were planted in an area where there was nearly continual seepage and occasional periods of running

water. In any event, a friend gave me a catalogue from Ensata Gardens, which in turn led me to the SJI; I attended the 1989 JI convention in Maine, and became totally hooked on JI. The "JI garden phase" has lasted for over 12 years now and hybridization has become an annual ritual. I find that the pollination is a lot of fun but finding time and space to care for the resulting seedlings is a problem, a problem also noted by Maudie (Pack). I had a strong genetics background during my graduate school years and am interested in the inheritance of color patterns but my main focus in hybridizing has been the development of miniatures (perhaps the result of my earlier interest in rock garden plants).

Sharon Hayes Whitney, Harpswell, ME: Since this is the first time that I have written in the robin, I thought that it would be a good idea to let you know a bit about my family and me. I live and work at Eartheart Gardens, in South Harpswell, ME. My husband, Donald Clifford (Cliff) is a carpenter/builder. We have two grown daughters, Sarah and Nellie. Sarah is married to a wonderful young man, Jeffrey Stoebe. Sarah and Jeff developed their own business, Rhythmic Cable, building and installing cable systems for towns. Nellie manages their business office.

For those of you who have never visited us at Eartheart Gardens, we are located about ¼ mile up the road toward Brunswick from Currier and Elisabeth's [McEwen] home on Harpswell Neck. We are 12.4 miles from the light at Bowdoin College in Brunswick.

Currier invited me to become his business partner. This partnership involves registering, introducing and marketing his iris cultivars. Some years I have made a few crosses of plants that were of interest to me and were not Currier's focus. This is the first season that I have put a lot of time into making crosses. We continue to work for new, truer colors, repeat and continuing bloom and hardiness. Another of my interests is to continue to increase the gene pool of tetraploids by converting new genetic material to tetraploid form.

We are excited about the convention in Delaware in 2005. I have heard that Dennis Hager is building a web site for the convention. I have my sites set on getting together in 2005.

Chad Harris, Washougal, WA: I made my first Japanese Iris cross 14 years ago. I played around for six to eight years. I now feel that I'm just starting to really make some crosses that honestly have a direction and goals behind them. It also helps a great deal that we live on a few acres that are prime for the culture of the iris, so that the seedlings can be spaced out.

I enjoy all forms of the Japanese Iris and am currently working with 3Fs to 12Fs. The number 1 trait that I'm working to is multiple blooms per stem and / or plant that open one at a time. I also like things that are a little "off the wall". I'm looking for dwarf plants with blooms and novelty blooms like hose in hose. This also entails the all elusive 'Ever-blooming Japanese Iris'

Terry Aitken, Vancouver, WA: Terry has been hybridizing Japanese iris for 20 years. He has a commercial garden, Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden and is the president of AIS. The robin came just as he was leaving for the AIS convention in Memphis.

Lorena Reid, Springfield, OR: ... I have raised Japanese Irises at my present location for 35 years (and my previous location an additional 2 years)...so know them fairly well. My husband and I live on a bit more then 2 acres on the McKenzie Highway almost within sight of the McKenzie River (can see the bridge in winter when leaves are off the trees). It is a great location for Irises. For most of this time I operated an Iris nursery selling beardless irises by mail order all over the country (and over the world until recently).

I am now retired from "nursery-ing" but am still actively hybridizing. Although much of my hybridizing efforts are concentrated now on sino-siberians and interspecies crosses, I still find the Japanese Irises as fascinating as when I had more than 1000 JI seedlings blooming each year! (As one ages...I am 77...one is forced into moderation.....Sigh!)

My hybridizing goals have been mostly to "satisfy curiosity". To see IF I can get earlier blooming, later blooming, better branching, bluer, etc. Experiments with crossing 3 fall with 6 fall and back crossing have proved interesting to me, and have produced some superb varieties. While this is perhaps not the most scientific method of hybridizing, it has proved rewarding to me, and has suited the time I had available for it.

The only hybridizing I have done with the Japanese this spring (as bloom is not yet at peak here) is some out-crossing, e.g. JI pollen on I. pseudacorus and JI pollen on *Enfant Prodige*, (one of the *versatas*) and the reverse (*Enfant Prodige* on JIs). The *versatas* have been crossed with *versicolor*, so I figured why not on their other ancestor, the JIs.

DISPLAY GARDEN SPOTLIGHT

A CALIFORNIA GARDEN

(Note: This is the first of a projected series on the gardens of participants in the Japanese Iris Display Garden program. Unfortunately, I will not be able to visit the majority of gardens and will have to rely on material provided by the owners and other visitors. Phil Cook, Display Garden Chairman)

Should one visit a Japanese Iris Display Garden when the Japanese irises are not in flower? The answer is enthusiastically affirmative when you encounter a garden such as that of Vicki Dudley near Watsonville, California. I was planning to visit some friends in southern and central California and wanted to spend some time exploring different gardens. Vicki's garden was about an hour drive from where I was staying so I called to find out if she would mind a couple of off-season visitors. She responded that we'd be welcome so we traveled down from Palo Alto through the brilliant green of early April in the coastal hills.

It was apparent that we were visiting a real plant lover as soon as we drove up. All kinds of plants in pots bordered the parking area. The house and garden are constructed on 1.3 acres of relatively steep hillside, the only level spots being the parking area and a small terrace in back of the house. Most of the plants are located on the slope above the house and are reached by a series of switchback paths. A friendly goat, tethered at one corner of the lot, seemed eager to get acquainted as we neared the top. Located in a rural area, the garden is frequently visited by deer and wild turkeys and is also a home to gophers. I hoped that Vicki might have some easy solutions for dealing with the varmints but such was not the case.

Nearly all types of irises are represented in Vicki's garden. At the time of the visit, the tall bearded irises were just beginning to bloom. It was a special treat for this New Englander to see a wonderful collection of Pacific Coast irises in flower and it was a surprise to see Louisiana irises blooming on the well-drained slope. Irrigation is obviously necessary and water is provided by a system of perforated hose.

With a slightly alkaline pH and sharp drainage, the site is not an ideal one for growing Japanese irises. A special bed has been constructed at the edge of the terrace and the sandy soil has been enriched with copious amounts of compost, manure and peat moss. The bed is watered every 2-3 days. The Japanese irises were just beginning growth at the

time of our visit and looked healthy. There are about 40 cultivars in Vicki's collection. Among her favorites--Butterflies in Flight, Cascade Crest, Chidori, and Electric Rays. It was informative to see how JI can be grown when climate, soil and drainage are not in their favor. The key is interest and effort on the part of the gardener.

Vicki is a retired Physician's Assistant and began to garden seriously about 6 years ago. She is now preparing (with the help of her husband) the garden for a regional iris meeting in 2005. Rototilling for new beds in some areas on the slope requires the use of ropes! Roses and orchids are also special interests. And, as if gardening was not enough to keep her busy, she also raises poodles. It was a pleasure to meet this very energetic lady and to view a very interesting garden. It is worth a visit in nearly any season.



FREE RHIZOMES FOR YOUTH MEMBERS

It was first suggested to us by Lauren Charlton, a Region 18 youth, that youth members usually don't have many newer irises and they would welcome receiving free rhizomes from time to time. Many of us must dig out our iris beds to make room for new rhizomes we have purchased at auctions or have ordered from commercial growers. Think about sending some of the best bloomers to youth members.

Did you know that Schreiners Garden sends twelve AIS youths a new introduction or seedling each year? Cooley's Gardens has also gifted several youths in the past, as has Maryott's Gardens. Bill and Ada Godfrey of Hermit Medlars Walk donate gift certificates to youths for irises in their catalog and have even paid memberships to the Median and Dwarf Iris Societies for youth members. A host of other individuals and clubs have supplied irises to the Classroom Iris Projects. We were especially grateful in 1998 and 2000 when the Denver Convention Committee and the Dallas Convention Committee shipped newer rhizomes to EVERY AIS YOUTH MEMBER. What a nice thing to do!

If you would like to donate a few good irises, just ask the AIS Youth Committee which youths have been active in the youth program in the past year and decide how many rhizomes you'd like to send. As many addresses as you'd like will be provided.

A few youth members grow large iris gardens, but there are many out there who grow less than a dozen varieties and can't afford anything new. Several youths are hybridizing and need some updated cultivars to use as parents. Often, youth members are given the tiny rhizomes left over from sales or poor growers someone wished to get rid of. They are willing to make use of these, but having "good doers" is much more encouraging. So far this year, rhizomes have been sent to 88 AIS youth members with more still to come. Total youth membership is over 350. Won't you consider joining this effort to help out our youths?

Jean E. Morris, Chairman AIS Youth Committee
682 Huntley Heights Drive, Ballwin, MO 63021-5878 (636) 256-3927
<morrisjel@aol.com>

(Editor's Note: SJI has a Youth Membership rate and at least two of the AIS Late Shows had Youth category winners. How do Youth members get involved with JIs? Someone gives them a clump! Donate irises or SJI Youth Memberships – it will pay off in the future!)

ROBINS FLYING AGAIN!

We are pleased to report that the Robins are up and going again. Jill Copeland has included an article in this issue showing all the interesting hybridizers included and an old "lost" robin has been found.

If you are interested in the JI Hybridizing Robin or the JI General Interest Robin, please contact:

Cindy Rust , director for the JI General Robin

2016 Meadow Lane, Union, MO 63084

Phone number is (636)583-2745, E-mail address is srust@fidnet.com

Jill Copeland, director for the JI Hybridizer's Robin

78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065

Phone number is (269) 624-1968, E-mail address is Jandjcope@aol.com

E-Mail Robin -Dennis Hager , <academyhouse@toad.net>

There has not been much activity on the e-mail Robin but we hope more people will join us! There are 58 members currently. Cathy Button explains the sign-up procedure like this:

It costs nothing to sign up – The simplest way to get on the JIRobin list is this:

- Send a blank email to: JIRobin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

(If you have more than one email account, make sure you send this email from the same email account that you will be using to read/post to JIRobin.)

- To post to the list, send email to: JIRobin@yahoogroups.com

- To get off the list, just send a blank email to

JIRobin-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

EASY, huh! So why would you want to join the list any other way?

Well, there are lots of features and choices that are only available to you by joining the list the long way. For example, if you would like to only get a once a day digest emailed to you instead of individual emails for every post. Or you might want to not receive any email at all and just look at all the posts thru your browser, whenever you like from wherever you are. These options and lots more are only available if you have a yahoo account.

The basic steps to joining the list this way are:

1. Sign up for a yahoo account id.
2. Go to the JIRobin group and join.
3. Select or edit your preferences for your account and group membership.

To get a yahoo account, go to <http://www.yahoogroups.com/> and follow the link for "Registration". You will need to complete a bunch of information and submit it, but the very basic account is free. You don't need to sign up for a yahoo email or web page, just your basic yahoo registration id. Once you receive confirmation, go the yahoogroups page again and sign in with your new id and password.

After you have signed in, it should take you to your yahoogroups home page. If you don't see this, clicking on the link for "groups home" should take you there. If you click on the link for "My Groups", you can use the "Membership Wizard" to join but I can't tell you how this works since it changes every time.

To join from your home yahoo page, look for the Join groups area and the "Search" box. In the search box, type JIRobin and click on search. This should bring up a list with only one entry - JIRobin. Click on that link and it will take you to the JIRobin page. Either in the middle or over on the right hand side, you will see a link to join this group. Click on it and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: Be patient. Sometimes it can take 2 WHOLE DAYS for your membership to become active. Sometimes its done in an hour and there's no way to predict which. Its a busy site.

Editing your preferences. In general, there are 2 kinds of preferences you can edit. You should definitely edit your account preferences if you didn't do it when you signed up - specifically - "Edit Your Marketing Preferences"! You can find this link by clicking on the "Account Info" link. Editing your marketing preferences will make it so that you don't get 7 million more junk emails a day.

Editing your preferences for a specific group membership lets you change to the choices for no email or email digest. From your home groups page, click on the JIRobin group, and then over on the right hand side you will see a link for "Edit my membership". There is also a link there to leave the group.

If you view the JIRobin group online, you will notice that there are other things there beside the Messages. Check out the "Files" and "Photos" links. One overall recommendation when doing this online yahoo stuff, go slowly and carefully and remember your id and password - it will keep asking you for them. There are help pages on yahoo that actually have some helpful info in them if you get stuck. And please be aware that yahoo sometimes changes the look of their pages so even though all this info was good today, it may change!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT FALL 2002

The Nominating Committee is pleased to offer the names of the following members to serve as Officers of the Society for Japanese Irises, starting January 1, 2003.

President: Jill Copeland, 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065; Tel (269) 624-1968 jandjcope@aol.com

Vice President: Carol Warner, 16815 Falls Road, Upperco, MD 21155-9445; Tel (410) 374-4788; draycott@qis.net

Secretary: Peter Weixlmann, 280 Seneca Creek Road, West Seneca, NY 14224 Tel. (716) 674-6289; Pweixl@aol.com

Treasurer: Catherine Button, 70 Sharpless Blvd, Westampton, NJ 08060 Tel (609) 835-4218; cathy@gixxergirl.org

Nominating Committee: Ellen Gallagher, 1689 Riverside Drive, Berlin, NH 03570 Tel (603) 752-5731; ellengalla@yahoo.com (serving through 2005)

If no other nominations are received before December 1, 2002, these nominees shall be duly elected.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Hill
Dennis Hager
Riley Probst

EDITOR'S ESSAY

Rita Gormley

I have been absolutely delighted at the warm response to my efforts on the last two issues of the SJI REVIEW and the prompt answers to my requests for articles of interest for the REVIEW. "Old Hands" have come through, as always, but I am especially pleased that we are hearing from Japanese Iris growers across the country, especially in areas that we seldom consider as being "ideal" JI growing areas. Many thanks to our "new authors"!

We have established a section of the REVIEW specifically for member feedback called "**THIS 'N THAT**" but we received such a great response to the issue of GROWING JAPANESE IRISES IN THE SAME SOIL that we have devoted a separate section to that called "**MATTERS OF DISCUSSION**". Controversy and differences of opinion are a healthy pursuit and I encourage all of you to share your opinions, solutions or disagreements on any particular topic with all of us.

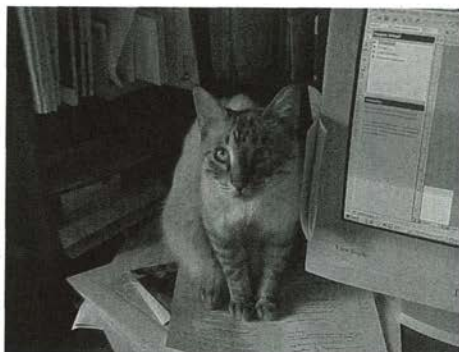
Also appreciated is the submission of slides to go with articles and I thank all of you for that! We have resources for many fine slides of specific cultivars but specialty, overall garden and landscape shots seem to be in short supply. Please send copies of your "great" slides to me for use in the REVIEW or, if you wish, I can have them copied and return the originals to you.

We hope to hear from more JI growers all over the country (and the world, for that matter) on their experiences – good and bad – in growing ensatas along with their questions and suggestions for success. (My e-mail address is GormleyGreenery@aol.com and my cat Hamilton and I are on the computer all the time and will respond promptly!)

Thanks again for all your help!

Rita

(and Hamilton)



THIS 'N THAT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Many letters and e-mails are received with questions that can be answered by the Readers. Please send your questions and answers to the Editor at GormleyGreenery@aol.com or reply to the person asking. Thanks.

Donna Lockman, Lincolnton, NC

My JI's are somewhat shorter this year also, except for two that I left in pots on the top shelf in my pond. They did excellent! The others just outside the pond on the lower side where my pond drain is (not enough rain for it to drain this season) are the shorter, as you say weaker growing ones. They bloom but on short stems. The bed was lined with left over pond liner and filled with a mixture of red clay, humus rich acidy compost, alfalfa pellets, and a very small amount of gypsum. We use sludge compost in the bed. I still do not think it stays moist enough for them. Was told that the pond would be too wet but tried the two in it anyway and they are going to town and need repotting already! What to do, what to do? Put more in the pond, or try to get a more peaty soil in the bed for more moisture? Perhaps I will do both. But will have to be fall before I can get to that job! I like reading about the JIs.

These questions were answered by Hiroshi Shimizu in Japan:

Q: Can Japanese irises be grown in one spot in the ground for many years in Japan?

A: They never are grown in the same spot.

Q: In the wild, do individual plants live a long time (more than 5 years)?

A: It seems that wild ensata plants die in several years

Q: How and why use mixed pollen?

A: It is for getting the excellent pod parent that make easily seeds between many Japanese iris cultivars.

Jo Anne L. Schooley, Decatur, AL

In the last copy of Japanese Iris newsletter, I think I saw a request for information as to how to control voles in iris.

A few years ago I read that planting hostas with granite grit (chicken grit) in the soil and around the crown would deter voles (and mice and moles) since they can't dig happily through soil filled with small sharp objects.

On all existing hostas, I sprinkled granite grit and scratched it in. With all newly planted hostas, I laced the hole and also sprinkled. I never suffered any more damage.

The problem is, granite grit is expensive in Alabama. But limestone shards, called "fines," though cheap here, would alter the pH, so I need a cheaper alternative.

Surely this solution would keep them out of anything.

I recently visited Iris City Gardens near Franklin, Tennessee, as a result of your organization sending me their address. I hope in the future other gardens specializing in Japanese iris and other beardless iris will be mentioned in your publication so I may visit (I saw one mentioned in Collierville, Tennessee, last issue, also, and hope to visit next spring).

(Editor's note: see page 5 for Commercial Garden Directory request.)

Sue Delmez, St. Charles, MO

(Prior to receiving the article from Cindy Rust about Don Delmez, we received this note-worthy news from Sue. See some of Don's slides on the inside back cover! **Editor**)

On Saturday, June 15, 2002, two hours of garden judging on Japanese Iris was given by Don Delmez at his country garden in St. Charles, MO. About 15 people attended this very interesting and informative talk on culture and growing of Japanese Iris and what to look for when judging them. This training was hosted by Jeff Co Iris Society. Don tries to have this training each year, weather permitting and hopefully good bloom. This year we had perfect weather and excellent bloom.

We also learned that Don had won two awards at the 2002 **TGOA/MGCA** (The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Club of America) National Photography competition. Don had sent in twenty slides and received fourteen blue ribbons, four red and two yellow. His slide of "Mai-Ogi", a Japanese won Best of Show and a Japanese iris seedling won Second Runner-up. Many entries of all types of flowers, vegetables, trees and garden scenes are sent to this competition, so we are especially proud of Don's good work in photographing these beautiful iris.

Minutes SJI Board Meeting

April 25, 2002 Memphis, Tennessee

Attendance:

Sue Delmez
Anna Mae Miller
Bill Smoot
Tom Gormley
Jim Copeland

Barbara Aitken
Ellen Gallagher
Frances Thrash
Nyla Hughes
Shirley Pope

Gary White
R. Dennis Hager
Lorena Reid
Bruce Filardi

Jill Copeland
Carol Warner
Peter Weixlmann
Don Delmez
Andrew Wheeler
Ginni Hill
Rita Gormley
Terry Aitken

President
Vice President
Secretary
Director at Large
Director at Large
Director at Large
Editor
Immediate Past President

Meeting called to order by President Copeland 4:00 PM

Treasurer's Report: Bob Bauer's report presented by President Copeland, will be published in Review. Line item for Review does not demonstrate 2nd SJI Review to be published this year.

Minutes: Minutes from 2001 SJI Board of Directors Meeting as published stand. Motion L. Reid, Second C. Warner.

Membership: Bob Bauer sent a report, current SJI membership 380.

Robins: Cindy Rust sent a report, currently SJI has 2 regular mail robins; a Hybridizer robin and a General robin.

E Mail Robin: Dennis Hager reports the SJI E mail robin currently has 63 members. Dennis reported that the E mail members would like to have more frequent conventions and increased JI activities.

Display Garden Chair: Phil Cook reported the display garden list is updated and will be published in the next Review. Display gardens articles will be featured in each review.

Awards & Registrations: Anna Mae Miller had no news to report.

Popularity Poll: Bruce Filardi reported the 2002 Pop Poll will be in the next Review.

Editor: Rita Gormley needs good slides for the Review especially garden shots.

Slide Chairman: John Coble reported the availability of 2 slide programs.

OLD BUSINESS

Letters have been sent to the organizers and garden host requesting the return of the guest iris after the cancellation of the 2002 Japanese Convention in San Francisco.

Invitation to Join: Rita and Tom Gormley presented a mock up of the new ITJ and will take control of the remainder of the project. The beautiful new ITJ will be available very soon.

New Business

Fundraisers – we discussed possibility of an on line auction. A successful live auction was held at the general membership meeting in Memphis.

A comprehensive index of the past Review is currently being worked upon by Rita Gormley to cover 1988-1994.

The Electronic Checklist was discussed by Dennis Hager with a \$10 member, \$15 non member cost decided upon.

Website: SJI Official Website WWW.SOCJI.org. The site has links for the 2005 Japanese Mini-Convention.

A motion to allot \$500 for new Checklist was made by C. Warner, 2nd by L. Reid, motion carried.

A policy for pictures in the Review was discussed and will be drafted.

Excess SJI Reviews are available free for AIS clubs or affiliates hosting a Japanese Iris Show for the cost of postage.

Meeting Adjourned 5:45 PM

Peter Weixlmann SJI Secretary

VISIT YOUR LOCAL GARDENS

By Jim Morris, Ballwin, Missouri

As a member of SJI (especially if you are an AIS Judge) you owe it to your local growers and to yourself to visit as many gardens as possible. If you are anything like me (an iris nut) you are pretty worn out by the time the Japanese irises bloom. Here in the temperate Midwest the JIs bloom in June and it can be brutally hot. While I would prefer staying in the air conditioned comfort of my home or be floating on one of Missouri's famous Ozark rivers, I do enjoy seeing the Japanese irises at peak bloom.

We are fortunate in the St. Louis area to have the world famous Missouri Botanical Garden with its mass planting of Adolph Vogt JIs surrounding the zigzag bridge in the Japanese Garden. We also have several local growers who use different horticultural techniques in their respective gardens. This June I visited two of the gardens: Riley Probst in Kirkwood and Don Delmez in St. Charles, MO.

Probst Garden, June 13, 2002

Many of the JIs grown here are planted in pots placed in kiddie wading pools filled part way with water. The rest are in sunken beds surrounded by landscape timbers and heavily mulched. Both seem to do well. On this day the bloom was simply great. NIGHT ANGEL (Aitken 96), 6F, purple with light violet rays and a slight yellow signal, deep purple style arms edged white, had nine stalks in bloom and one repeat stalk just coming up. WORLEY PINK (Worley 66) had 10 stalks in lavender pink with a yellow blaze. BLUE SPRITZ (Delmez 96), 6F, is a wonderful blue-white veined blue-purple and edged white. At our Greater St. Louis Iris Society Late Show it is a perennial contender for Best Specimen.

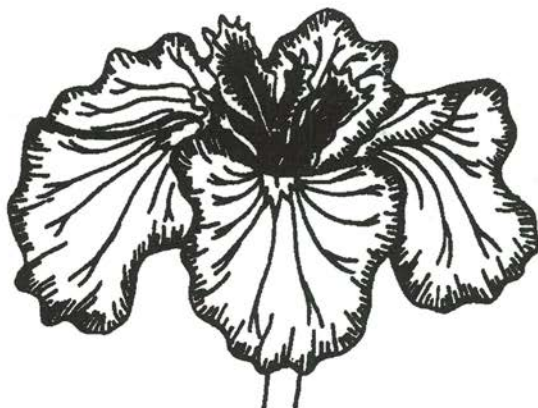
HEKITO (Hirao 58), registered by SJI in 1992, 6F, is a shorter deep blue. GLITTER AND GLAMOUR (Payne 69) had seven stalks in light pink variegated white with a yellow-green signal. LION KING (Bauer/Coble 96), 9F, ruffled red-violet splashed white, yellow-green signal, multiple white style arms. ROSE PRELUDE (Marx 60), 6F, had eight stalks in lavender-pink, white styles edged lavender and a yellow signal edged white. AICHI-NO-KAGAKI (S. Osugi/R. Osugi 62), registered by SJI in 1993, is a Species X of *I. pseudacorus* X *I. ensata*, white. It is a short plant with good sized flowers light yellow, darker falls and styles, yellow signal patch with brown markings around it.

Delmez Garden, June 20, 2002

Don's hybridizing garden is different from his home garden. This year all the JIs were planted away from home. The field has 17 rows of named varieties 82' deep and nine rows of seedlings in the same depth. While walking the rows a red fox came out of the woods to see what we were doing.

Among those we liked were: FLASHING KOI (Marx 78), 3F, an old favorite white marked red with a yellow signal; ELECTRIC GLOW (Aitken 92), 6F, blue with lighter blue rays; JAPANESE SANDMAN (Bush 80), similar to CAPRICIAN BUTTERFLY in purple and white; CASCADE CREST (Aitken 88), 6F, white with a light blue band growing short here; YUZEN (Ichei/Kamo 94), registered 1997, 6F, growing dwarf size here in white on purple with a lime-yellow signal; IPSUS (Innerst 81), 6F, blue-purple with a yellow signal; FOREIGN INTRIGUE (Bauer/Coble 95), 6F, dark blue-purple center, lightening on the edges, yellow signal, serrated purple crests; TESSA DARK EYES (Aitken 95), 6F, growing tall in lavender-blue veined purple, style arms deep purple; and my favorite in the whole garden SING THE BLUES (Reid 97), 6F, light blue with a white undertone, white styles edged light blue, yellow signal. It sang out to me.

Next year treat yourself to some JI garden visiting. Your local growers will appreciate your efforts and so will you.



Culture of Japanese Iris in the Same Space

By Joy Flint – Victoria, BC Canada

After 30 years of gardening in the same place, our plants are happy and healthy.

The face of our garden has changed many times and for the last few years we quite despaired because the upkeep was daunting to say the least.

We first eliminated many invasive plants – alliums were inundating and hostas and ferns large enough to overshoot anything below. Numerous rock plants – like celandine and violets and ivy also ran riot. This calmed things down a bit. We then drafted a plan that allowed changes but filled in empty spaces with a few annuals and under planted with glorious bulbs – spring and summer varieties and hybrid poppies.

These are our basic findings:

1. You cannot change the weather. Torrential rain and snow and gale force winds – you must wait for calmer skies.
2. Sun and adequate water and feeding as needed will determine the quality and size of blooms.
3. We used to keep everything to be done in the garden – what, for whom and when on the refrigerator door in the kitchen. Nothing is scheduled now other than a walk around in the a.m. to really look at the plants and let them tell us what they need.
 - Is your soil dry?
 - Is your foliage yellow or browning or eaten?
 - Are your flowers small or pale or drooping?
 - Was your soil good to start with? Then it can be again but you must replenish the soil to keep growth of anything optimal.

To revitalize the soil we have found the following works best –

1. Alfalfa Pellets - we broadcast our whole garden in February and let the rains take it down to the roots. (50 lbs. per 2000 square feet or 22 kg per 785 square meters).
2. Garden/Kitchen Compost – we used to use composters and carefully stirred and made a big job of it. Today we still compost but keep a 2 quart covered juice container by our kitchen sink for all the vegetable peelings, except potatoes (even a small piece of peeling with an eye will grow), fruit peelings (minus seeds and pits) and uncooked egg shells, tea bags and coffee grounds (no cooked material is composted). When full the contents are removed to the garden area where concentrically dug holes (app. 12 inches deep) are filled with the current compost material and sprinkled with 6.8.6 fertilizer (you may substi-

tute any low number fertilizer) then the whole covered with dirt. In two to three weeks the material has composted to a crumbly mix and you can actually see the stronger stems and better disease resistance.

Every Saturday in our City Center there is a depot where all plant material may be taken. There is a nominal fee to support this project. Our bags contents are dumped into a shredder truck and mountains of steaming compost results for use in our City Parks, which renews their soil and reduces the tax levy on householders and also helps with the diminishing land fill garbage sites. Another example of renewal in same growing area.

We stop the composting process twice a year as we still apply commercial fertilizers on the following schedule –

1. Miracid alternating with 20:20:20 to Japanese Iris at 3 weekly intervals if indicated until buds appear and stop at the end of July to April 1 as you do not want new growth in winter.
2. If heavy rains have leached the soil, we also add Steer Manure (well rotted).

Sick Plants –

Isolate in pots until you find the problem, then treat. We have found the following works if your plants are yellowing but do not respond to Miracid – Iron Chelate 10 ml (2 teaspoons) and 30 ml (2 tablespoons) Magnesium Sulfate mixed in a gallon of water to be a foliate is an old standby. Check your pH. If replanting on recovery, change the soil and wash the roots. If the plant does not improve, eliminate it rather than infecting other Japanese Iris.

Soil Preparation and Location of planting beds -

There has been endless advice on how to prepare your beds for new plants so I will skip this part – your dealer will send full instructions.

SUN as much as possible and DRAINAGE is paramount - do not sift your rocks out unless they are huge from any soil you import or if rebuilding an existing garden. Small rocks retain warmth and larger ones enhance drainage. In Fall when clean up is done and foliage reduced, we use a mulch of pine needles and oak leaves as much for acidity as for cover.

DO NOT give Japanese Iris bone meal, lime, mushroom compost (limed) and avoid runoff from new concrete.

Pests –

We had rats move in to nest in our compost boxes one winter when we were away, which is why we switched composting methods – one of the negative features of living near the waterfront. We had raccoons bathing in our fountain and a Peregrine falcon decimating our small birds. All have thankfully moved on. Slugs and snails we have found much less as we found in our fall cleanup eggs under massive leaves, rocks etc. Just hope your neighbor will be equally vigilant or you will have more visitors.

For aphids and white fly problems, we have natural insects placed by the parks department on our boulevard ornamental cherry trees to stop the stripping by tent caterpillar. They may be purchased for specific use at a local store and are much safer and effective than pesticides.

We hope these comments based on trial and error will help you to avoid some pitfalls.

If you enjoy your plants, they will prosper and you will be justly proud.

P.S. The “we” in this article is another iris lover, my husband (of 40 years) Ross who did the photography and a lot of digging etc. Yes the seedlings are mine but not numbered as they will not be registered. This seedling #2 is a very pretty flower but has poor increase and low bud count. As a self taught pollen dauber I'm undecided what to do next for her. I registered one Tall Bearded Iris "Spicy Twist".

I have 54 JI's and seedlings but they are all different ages and go into the same area always. We don't dig the whole clump unless there is a problem. We just split them off. I'm guessing 10 years at least in the same space. I say at least because there is not other land readily available to us. Our lot is 50' x 110' minus house lawn and other improvements or app. 1500 square feet of garden.

Gardening is after all supposed to be fun.

Joy



LITTLE BOW PINK (Delmez '98)

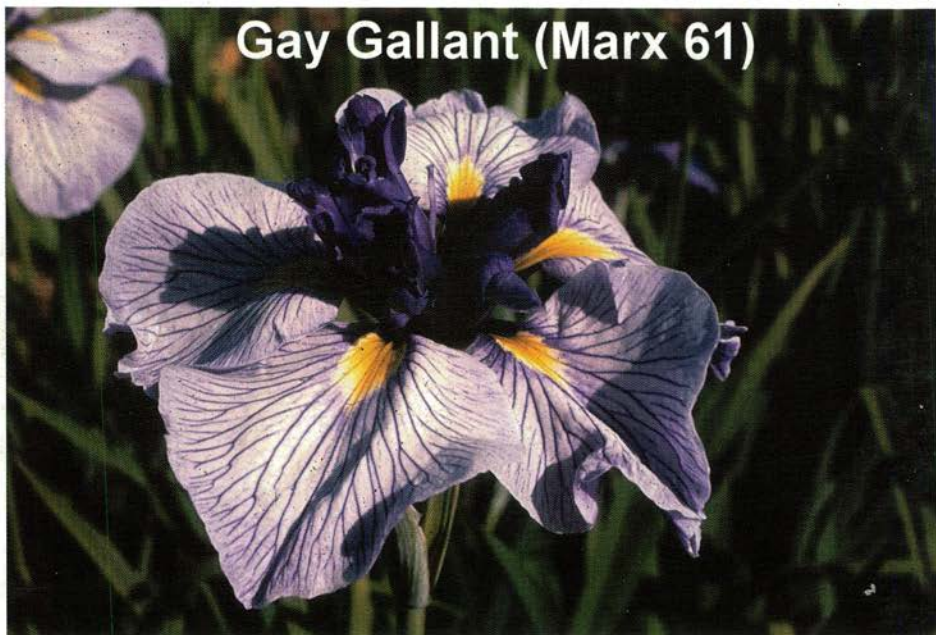


GRACEFUL DANCER (Delmez '95)

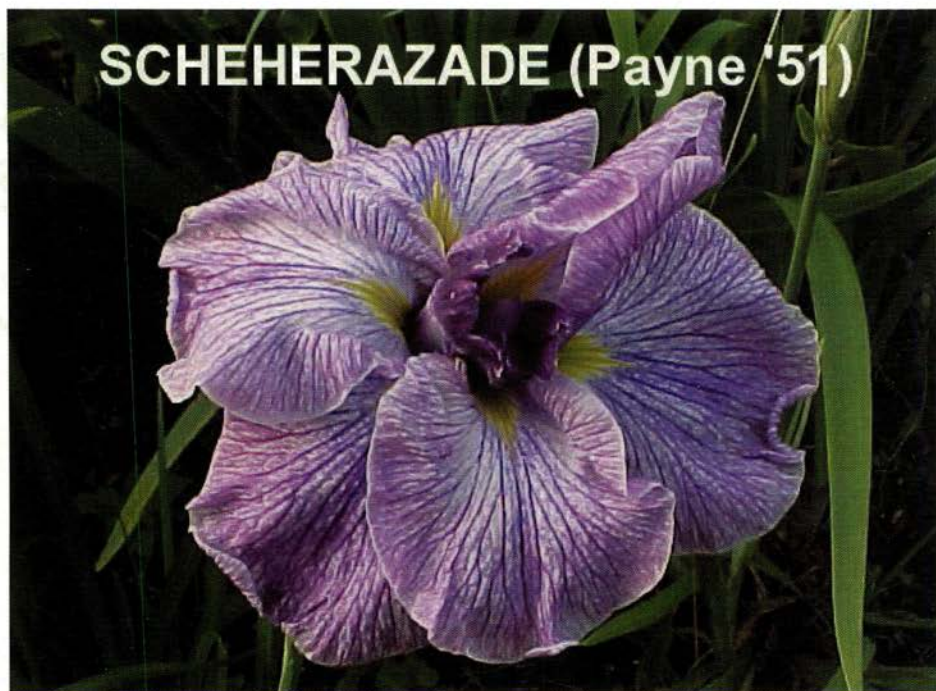


WHAT'S OLD!!

Gay Gallant (Marx 61)



SCHEHERAZADE (Payne '51)



STILL LOOKIN' GOOD!!