



# THE REVIEW

OF THE SOCIETY  
FOR  
JAPANESE IRISES

VOLUME 44  
NUMBER #2  
FALL 2007



**LITTLE BOW PINK (DONALD DELMEZ 1998)**

## **PAYNE MEDAL RUNNERS UP**



**RASPBERRY CANDY  
(ROBERT BAUER & JOHN COBLE 1999)**



# THE REVIEW OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

**VOLUME 44**

**NUMBER 2**

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**SJI is an affiliate of AIS and all meetings are open to the public.**

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**SJI WEBSITE:**                      **<http://www.socji.org/>**

Includes information on Awards, Bylaws, Commercial  
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ers, and Member Services

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Single	annual - \$5.00	triennial - \$12.50
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Overseas including postage : Effective January 15, 2006		
Single	annual - \$10.00	triennial - \$25.00
Family	annual - \$12.00	triennial - \$31.00

Dues may be sent either to the AIS Membership Chairman (see page 12) or directly to the Membership Chairman, The Society for Japanese Irises.

Address changes: please notify Membership Chairman

*Please note that all memberships run from Jan 15th to Jan 15th.*

**JOIN OR RENEW ON-LINE - <http://www.socji.org/>**

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**The Japanese Iris - Edited by Currier McEwen for the Society of Japanese Irises. A Brandeis University book. 224 pages. 32 color photos. 7" x 10". Published 1990 at \$29.95. (No longer in print)**

**\$20.00 including US Postage**

**Special limited time offer - 2 or more \$15.00 each**

The first definitive book in English on history and cultivation, The Japanese Iris incorporates the 300 year history of breeding in Japan and the experience of US hybridizers from East to West coasts. Contents include history, current hybridizing, color photos, and drawings of flower parts in detail; also soil preparation, watering, mulching, and pest control; display gardens, nurseries, and hybridizers.

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Back issues of The Review - \$1.50 per copy

Volume 1 (1964) consists of 3 issues, All others contain 2 issues each

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Iris Laevigata – book rental \$5.00

All prices include US 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.

FULL PAGE COLOR (4.5 X 7.5)	\$60.00	
FULL PAGE B&W (4.5 X 7.5)	\$50.00	
HALF PAGE B&W (4 X 3 1/2)	\$30.00	
1/4 PAGE B&W 4 X 1 1/2)	\$20.00	
Commercial Directory (plus web):		
Included free annually with any ad or	\$10.00	Annual charge

Please send original photos (prints or slides) for scanning or high resolution digitals (at least 300 dpi). Advertising copy and payment to SJI should be mailed to the Editor prior to Editorial deadlines.

## 2006 J.I. CHECKLIST

The SJI Checklist contains all registrations and introductions through 2005 of Japanese iris and any interspecies crosses involving Japanese iris. The 2006 Checklist is in 8.5" X 11" format. The previous edition was published in 1999

**To order, Send \$7.50 postpaid\* to:**

John Coble, SJI Sales Chairman  
9823 E. Michigan Avenue  
Galesburg, MI 49053

\*\$9.00 Canada, \$13.00 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**, to Catherine Button, 70 Sharpless Blvd,  
Westampton, NJ 08060, Tel (609) 835-4218; <ridingthewind@gmail.com>

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Dennis Hager*

“Please sir, may I have some more?”

We are familiar with that simple request from *Oliver Twist* in the musical ‘*Oliver*’, but I was a bit surprised when I started hearing that request after staging several One Entry Japanese Iris Exhibitions (see Review, Spring 2007) this year. Throughout the bloom season, I did my best to keep the flowers coming.

As bloom season was winding down, I found myself wanting more, so it was off to Maine to catch peak Japanese iris bloom there. It was fun to take a step back and re-live the bloom season. I saw an unusual Japanese iris that challenges conventional knowledge of the species. I look forward to further evaluation of this plant and eventually a published report on it.

Speaking of having more, next year with the triennial Society Convention being held in Kalamazoo and we can all have some more. Now is the time to start making plans to attend. It’s worth it just to see the newest and best of Japanese irises along with tried and true favorites, but there is so much more.

Last year, I visited Kalamazoo for the Region 6 meeting. It was just a taste of the great experience that can be had there. It was a well-organized meeting with well-paced tours of exceptional gardens. I saw one exceptional seedling that, by itself, made the whole trip worth it. But there was more. The hospitality was exceptional.

So, to answer the question: Yes, you may have some more. The place to get it is at the 2008 SJI National Convention in Kalamazoo. See you there!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dennis", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish.

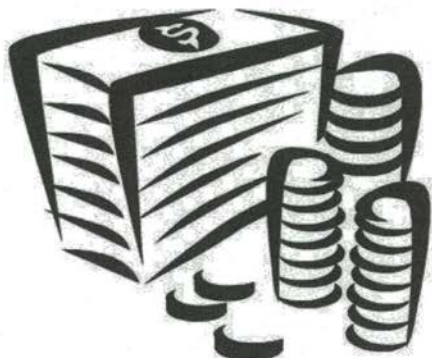


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INTRODUCING FOR LORENA REID



**A CONVENTION TO REMEMBER**  
**2008 NATIONAL JAPANESE IRIS**  
**KALAMAZOO, MI, JULY 3, 4, 5**

You are all invited to come to Kalamazoo for a good time. There will be 2 large gardens and 2 other very well landscaped gardens with JIs on tour for your enjoyment. There will be 2 days of tours so we promise not to wear you out. We have planted 129 guest irises from 16 hybridizers.

Special features include a Thursday night light warm meal, another "famous fish fry" for one lunch, a Friday night outdoor grille, and of course we will have Anita doing another superb banquet. There will be an auction of plants with proceeds going to the SJI Section. The venue will be the Latvian Heritage Center, 100 Cherry Hill Street, Kalamazoo, MI. Several nearby motels will be selected for your room reservations.

Everyone is invited to bring their slides of JIs and Pseudatas to show on Thursday night. You will be allowed up to 15 minutes for your slides. There will also be one hour of garden training on JIs and one hour of garden training on Pseudatas.

Cost will be \$125 if received by May 15<sup>th</sup> **and \$150 if received after May 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Registrations should be mailed to:

Jim Welch  
9087 S 6<sup>th</sup> St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
Phone 269-544-2211  
E-mail: [joejoe500@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joejoe500@sbcglobal.net)

For more information contact:

Jim Copeland, Chairman, 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065  
Phone 269-624-1968 E-mail [jandjcope@aol.com](mailto:jandjcope@aol.com)

**2008 WILL BE GREAT!**

## ROBINS FLYING !

We are pleased to report that the Robins are up and going. If you are interested in any of the Robins, please contact:

JI General Interest Robin: Cindy Rust, director, 2016 Meadow Lane, Union, MO 63084; 636-583-2745; E-mail: [srrust@yhti.net](mailto:srrust@yhti.net)

JI Hybridizer's Robin: Jill Copeland, director, 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065; 269-624-1968; E-mail: [jandjcope@aol.com](mailto:jandjcope@aol.com)

JI E-mail Robin: Dennis Hager, director, E-mail: [hager@aredee.com](mailto:hager@aredee.com); [www.socji.org](http://www.socji.org)

### SJI REVIEW

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Deadlines for receiving copy are February 15<sup>th</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>, with earlier receipt desirable. Black and white photographs, colored prints (glossy), slides and black and white drawings are welcome.

# **AIS AWARDS 2007**

## **JAPANESE IRISES**

### **PAYNE MEDAL (JI)**

(Total votes cast = 121)

49 DIRIGO PINK MILESTONE (John White)

*Runners-up:*

32 LITTLE BOW PINK (Donald Delmez)

24 RASPBERRY CANDY (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

*(Pictures on Front and Inside Front cover)*

### **AWARD OF MERIT**

#### **JAPANESE**

19 BLUSHING SNOWMAIDEN (Chad Harris)

18 DIRIGO STAR (John White)

18 SLUMBERING DRAGON (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

*Runners-up:*

15 ANGEL MOUNTAIN (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

15 PEAK OF PINK (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

### **HONORABLE MENTION**

#### **JAPANESE**

31 LAKE EFFECT (Robert Bauer & John Coble)

18 BELGIUM WARRIOR (Willy Hublau)

17 WONDERFUL DELIGHT (Donald Delmez)

16 EASTER PASTEL (Currier McEwen, deceased)

15 SNOOK (Jill Copeland)

*Runners-up:*

11 ASIAN FESTIVAL (Chad Harris)

10 ORCHID FOUNTAIN (Donald Spoon)

10 WISPY CLOUDS (Robert Bauer & John Coble)



# SHOWCASE

## The Kalamazoo Japanese Iris Display

Saturday, June 30, 2007

Wedel's Garden Center

The Southwestern Michigan Iris Society put on another annual Japanese iris display at the local Wedel's Garden Center. Again, we amazed the local gardeners that "didn't know you could grow those in this area"!!! With just three exhibitors, we have more fun putting on this iris "display" than when we had officially judged shows. Oh, we have a judged display! Each visitor walking past is handed a blue ribbon and asked to place it beside their favorite stalk. We get a lot more questions about these late blooming iris as they contemplate their one and only "vote"; more so than when we had judged shows and visitors just walked past the stalks with "predetermined" status!

This year we had 231 votes cast among 48 stalks of Japanese iris. You will notice that the public picked for their favorites: singles and doubles and light colored and dark colored varieties!! Every stalk received at least one vote!

**J01E-1** ..... 27 votes (6F, ruffled med blue with multiple white styles)  
(Bauer/Coble)

**J01K-1** ..... 16 votes (6F, white with blue edges, white styles with distinct blue crests) (Bauer/Coble)

**BELLENDER BLUE** ..... 15 votes

**CROWN IMPERIAL** ..... 14 votes

**EILEEN'S DREAM** ..... 14 votes

**J01A-4** ..... 13 votes (6F, white with a blue brush dusting in the center of the petals). (Bauer/Coble)

**SAPPHIRE CROWN** ..... 13 votes

**JAPANESE PINWHEEL** ..... 12 votes

**SKYROCKET BURST** ..... 10 votes

## **Show July 8, 2007 Shelburne Falls, MA**

10 entrants- 9 adult 1 youth. 105 entries and 100 different varieties.  
(Most Japanese although 6 reblooming Siberians.30 seedlings)

**Best in Show** – ‘Heavenly Reflection’ (Delmez 99)-Deb Wheeler, first runner up ‘Nikko’ -Jordan Alber-youth entry, second runner up ‘Ol’ Man River’ (McEwen 87) -Deb Wheeler, third runner up ‘China Spring’ (Bauer/Coble 99)- Kathy Puckett.

**Best Design** and design sweepstakes- Deb Wheeler

**Best Seedling**- Andy Wheeler’s # MJT-020 JI.

*Editor’s Note: Thanks to John Coble and Debby Wheeler for submitting these reports. As of press time, official AIS Show Report results had not yet been released.*

**Have You Looked at the SJI Website Recently?**  
New items are being added all the time!!!

**Complete Index** of The SJI REVIEW back to January 1964. This will be invaluable when researching a particular topic or author. It is in downloadable Excel format and many thanks to Jody Nolin who completed this project.

**Popularity Poll Results 2007**

**Payne Medal Winner Photo** - Dirigo Pink Milestone <http://www.socji.org/>

## CHIRPS FROM THE JAPANESE IRIS HYBRIDIZER'S ROBIN

*Jill Copeland Reporter*

SJI continues to have a very lively exchange of ideas and experiences among many of the prominent Japanese iris hybridizers of today. Many of the postings in this robin pertain to cultural practices that all growers can learn from and show the differences in conditions.

We greatly appreciate the sharing of their Robin with all SJI members. If you have specific questions on a particular item, please send them to the Editor or to the on-line SJI Robin

**Chad Harris, Washougal, WA**—Chad writes: Two years ago I transplanted the named JI field into an old seedling field after amending the soil with approximately 6" of compost. The named JIs took off and are doing great. I did notice this year digging orders that there seemed to be less nematode damage where the compost was put down the heaviest.

And *The Japanese Iris* states on page 57 "A fourth method tested by Hager 1957 is based on the principle that nematodes cannot live long in submerged conditions."

Referring to 'Pleasant Earlybird' growing at the pond with no nematode damage, the soil is saturated at all times. I think that nematodes can be controlled not eradicated but controlled.

In the future I'm resting a field for 2 years with a heavy dose of compost also, a cover crop of crimson clover before replanting. Only time will tell if this takes care of the cultural needs of JIs and the build up of nematodes.

Lorena, I concur with your list of plants that do well... In the past, I've grown about 80% listed – many I still grow. I try to keep the collection down to 100 plants.

Sharon, 'Pleasant Earlybird' has the same growth habits as other JIs if not lifted and the soil amended, it soon declines. I'm very tempted to make another bog setting and try a less vigorous JI.



**Lorena Reid, Springfield, OR** writes: Mike, the 'Mechanical problem with very old plantings' of JI is easy to see with the quantity of twisted old brown rhizomes that form multi-layers criss-crossing each other, till there is scarcely room in between for new shoots to come up through in extreme cases.

Chad, do you have any trouble with water not soaking down through the 6-8" of composted mulch put onto old clumps during the summer? I was going to dig and toss the whole 'old planting' of JIs next spring, but think I will try the heavier composting of some in the spring to see if it will maybe revive them...just for experiment's sake.

**Sharon Whitney, Harpswell, ME** writes: Lorena, I have been sweet on 'Sing the Blues' since seeing it growing in your garden at the convention a few years ago. Congratulations to you for winning the Payne Award! We are fortunate to have 'Sing the Blues' growing in our garden and will be able to show it off to our visitors in 2007.

Jill, I heard such lovely reports about your Region 6 convention! My excitement about the 2008 convention is building!

**Chad writes:** Lorena, The type of compost that I use (rotted leaf mold and yard debris) does not form a water barrier. Woodchips or bark dust do, as I found out at our old house in Vancouver. The wood fibers lock together like a birds feathers and actually shed water. I also do not walk on the compost or compact it in any way. It seems to stay light and airy for three years. At that time it is then tilled into the subsoil in preparation of a new planting bed.

**Jill writes:** Chad, What a good experiment you did! I have been wondering if JIs could be planted like new asparagus by digging a deep hole, planting the plant at the bottom and then filling the hole a little each year. I think JIs must have evolved in a delta (the flood plain of a river) where they were flooded and buried in rich mud each spring. We are using alfalfa as a cover crop.

**Chad writes:** Jill, Interesting thought about JI's evolving in or around the flood plain of a river. Has anyone seen wild native stands of JI's, what are the ground conditions like? The JI that is old and by our pond is never flooded. We have a drainpipe that keeps the water table constant. The soil is always damp, rotting out the old rhizome in a year or two.

**Terry Aitken, Vancouver, WA writes:** Shimizu did an article some years back where he talked about diversity within the wild species. Some of the flowers were 3 fall and some were 6 fall. (I still have the pictures) There are photos from northern Japan of wild JI's growing in grassy fields with the ocean in the background. (Coastal marine climate) I suspect that Shimizu would be a good person to contact about the environment where the wild species is usually found. The photos are dated 2002 so the article was probably printed in '03? He may even write an article about the evolution of JI from the perspective of soils.

Since JI's seem happiest with lots of moisture in the springtime and less need in the summer, this seems to indicate spring runoff from mountains and a cooler environment.

**Don Delmez, St. Charles, MO writes:** Chad, Would like to know more about your compost. Compost can vary considerably in its make up. I have been using compost of various kinds for many years – not necessarily to rejuvenate older clumps but to increase the organic content of the soil. Our soil is clay to heavy clay and must be composted annually to grow JI's at all. I have been planting alfalfa as a cover crop. I, also, harvest it two to three times a year and mulch with it. Then I turn it under in the fall. I winter mulch with straw and leaves. This is in the field of about ½ acre. In my home garden, my JI beds are almost 100% compost about 18" deep. That is compost, manure, and peat moss but no clay. I remove all that soil and replace it with the compost. That only works for about 3 or 4 years then it must be done all over. (My home bed is in three sections each about 30' long and 50" wide.) After all is said and done, I still am experimenting to try to overcome decline.

**Dennis Hager, Millington, MD writes:** I've never seen a native stand of JI's, but did see them naturalized in a bog in New Jersey about 12 years ago. There was periodic flooding and the other vegetation suggested to me that it never dries out. There were a few large shrubs, but no trees. It has been on my "to do" list to go back there to see what they are like.



My experience with top dressing with compost mirrors Chad's. As I see it, the added layer postpones the inevitable process of lifting, dividing and planting deeper.

Speaking of planting deeper, a few years ago, I planted 3 large divisions of 'Iapetus' at different depths in sandy bog. The crowns were approximately 2", 4" and 6" below the surface. All three grew well, but the deeper they were planted, the slower they were to emerge in the spring. For the first year, there also appeared to be a correlation between depth of planting and initial bloom. It occurred to me that bloom season could be manipulated by this technique, but once again, I have not yet repeated the experiment.

**Sharon writes:** Years ago Currier and I mulched some failing seedlings with compost. They had been growing in place for 4 years, bloomed beautifully the 3rd year and started to fail the 4th year. That 4th year, we mulched between the rows with 2"-4" of compost. We also watered the area so that it would receive 2" of water a week. The seedlings continued to fail the next spring, the 5th year. Late that 5th summer we moved the JI to new soil in a section of the garden that had never grown JI. Thankfully they perked right up and were doing great when Don Delmez and Lee Walker visited two summers after the move. I am certain that Lee and Don will remember the seedlings.

I believe it was Currier's visit to Japan that inspired him to mulch between the rows and water every week. He observed that the gardens in Japan were mulched with compost and flooded with water around bloom time. I believe that the gardens had formerly grown rice.

**Chad writes:** Don, The compost I use is 100% plant material from recycled yard debris. The company claims that they cook it hot and long enough to rid it of any pathogens. When we receive a load it is black, crumbly and very hot to the touch. I have found that if I don't spread it out within 12 hours that it will start to ash out. Soil testing every load shows it to be very stable year to year with: N-very high, P-high, K-very high. PH range usually read 6.8 to 7.5. I am not too concerned about the 7.5, the soils that it is being added to read 6.0 to 6.5.



Dennis, I used to transplant JI's in the fall at a depth of 4 to 5 inches. Then top mulch 3 to 4 inches with compost. I found the new growth would push up to the 2 to 3 inch depth of soil before starting to divide. When lifting a plant after 3 to 4 years I would find the original rhizome as a 3 to 4 inch tag on the bottom of the clump. Afraid of breaking the tags off and contaminating a field with stray iris I now transplant to a depth of 3 inches and then add compost as a mulch.

**Sharon writes:** I was able to find correspondence from Irina Pautova sent in 2005. I asked her if she or Dr. Rodionenko had found *I. ensata* growing in the wild.

"Dr. Rodionenko in the Russian Far East once found a small bog, where *I. laevigata* occurred, and on some hillocks there was *I. ensata*. According to his observations, after soil slips taking place from abundant moisture, *I. ensata* first goes ahead to hills, to the fresh earth, and thrives there until sedges appear and displace it. He also saw *I. ensata* on meadow plots together with peony, Dahurian lily and grasses. He never found large thickets, as those of *I. laevigata*. Probably, *I. ensata* holds its populations by means of seeds. From the data of the book "Vascular plants of the Soviet Far East", populations of *I. ensata* occur north of Vladivostok. They are located to the west, near the border of China, reach Blagoveshchensk and somewhat north of it at the Zeya River."

**SJI ENCOURAGES HYBRIDIZERS TO SUBMIT  
IMAGE (DIGITAL, SLIDE) TO SJI LIBRARIAN JOHN  
COBLE WITH EACH NEW JI REGISTRATION.**

John Coble  
9823 E. Michigan Ave.,  
Galesburg, MI 49053  
Tel: (269) 665-7500;  
<ensata@aol.com>

## FROM THE PAST

### JAPANESE IRISES IN REGION 6

by Arthur Hazzard

*Iris kaempferi* or *iris envata*? — The argument goes on, and while I favor the latter, the term “Japanese iris” should keep us out of trouble.

Prior to about 1941 these beauties were available in limited quantities from regional nurseries; but it appears that in the area, no serious effort was made to improve the quality or number of varieties offered except by import. William A. Payne (1881-1971) of Terre Haute had long desired to give them special attention, but they bloomed at a time when he was very busy with other nursery items in connection with his landscaping business; so the matter was deferred until he discontinued the business, which I believe was around 1941 or 1942. In 1957, at the time of my first of seven visits to his planting, he told me he had been hybridizing them for “about 15 years.” His seedling record is about 100,000 grown and 1349 tested.

His introductions appear to support my memory, for his first were in 1950; he tested them for 3 or more years before applying for registration and his earliest averaged 5.7 years. They continued through 1968 — he arranged to have his plantings continued ?or two years after retirement in 1966 — as follows:

10,10,10,2,0,3,0,9,10,5.4,2,10,5,12,31,37,0,10 — total 170. — He once expressed to me some concern about the number of introductions in 1965 and 1966, 31 and 37 respectively, fearing people might think the quality was lower than his customary standard; but those of us who urged him to introduce them rather than have them lost to iris lovers, and who have grown them, agree that his standard of excellence has been maintained.

His interest also extended to organizational matters, as he was a member of the first Board of Directors of the Japanese Iris Section of the American Iris Society and drafted a major portion of the instructions on judging and the point-scoring chart. In addition he was at one time Regional Vice President of Region 6. In honors, he received the

Hybridizer's Medal from the AIS and gold, silver and bronze medals for performance of his introductions in international competition.

Clarence A. Swearengen (1898-1969), "Bob" to his friends, a neighbor and friend of Mr. Payne, became interested in the Japanese iris through Mr. Payne's planting, and he numbered and tested over 300 seedlings from which he registered and introduced 20 varieties in the years 1963 to 1967 inclusive. As he followed the Payne methods closely, the quality of his introductions is high and an effort is being made to keep them in commerce. He was the prime mover in the formation of the Japanese Iris Section of AIS, and its first president.

William E. Ouweneel, another Terre Haute friend of Mr. Payne, has grown Japanese irises seriously since 1957, and his pond planting demonstrates what may be expected when conditions are especially favorable for their growth. He has what is believed to be the largest number of Payne varieties in any current planting and is active in an effort to keep the line intact. He has done some hybridizing and expects to register and introduce some of his better seedlings in the near future. As editor of *The Review*, our sectional publication, he has performed outstanding service.

The Englerth Gardens of Hopkins, Michigan, have grown Japanese irises to some extent since 1940 and have recently increased their planting. Currently, they have 70 named varieties and 300 seedlings for testing.

In 1957, without prior knowledge of the work of others, the writer began a similar program in Kalamazoo, Michigan. There have been 4500 seedlings grown, 777 numbered and tested with 55 introductions. The present planting consists of 138 Payne, 62 Marx, 19 Swearengen, 55 of his own and 38 others — a total of 312 named varieties and 1100 seedlings.

It is apparent that in the commercial field the Payne influence has dominated the progress in Region 6 for the last half century, but the story would not be complete without information regarding the acceptance of Japanese iris in private gardens as well.

An analysis of 9 questionnaire replies shows 114 named varieties and 232 seedlings now grown, and including other known plantings from which no replies were received, the totals could well be 200 and



400 respectively. Almost all are grown under normal garden conditions, two reported some pot-culture, two the use of acidifiers and one acid bed. All depended upon rainfall supplemented by well water as needed; most used a variety of fertilizers and some mulch. Among the unusual are the seedlings from 1960 imported seed grown by Walter F. Brinker of Valley City, Ohio with no special attention but which bloom satisfactorily, and the potted plants grown by Russel Isle of Terre Haute which show excellent blooms and more rapid increase.

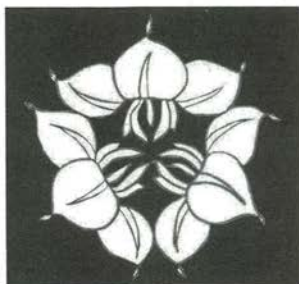
So far as we have been able to learn, three of the first four shows limited to Japanese irises were staged in Region 6 — 1963 and 1964 at Kalamazoo and 1967 in Terre Haute. In 1966 the American Iris Society activated the W. A. Payne Award equal to the Award of Merit. It is a traveling type and in the first six years of its activity, Region 6 varieties have been honored three times, the award going to STRUT AND FLOURISH, DANCING WAVES and NUMAZU.

Grateful acknowledgment is made for data supplied by The Review and individuals.

*Reprinted from Region 6 Newsletter February 1973 and our thanks to Jody Nolin, Region 6 Editor and RVP for providing this glimpse into history.*

## DID YOU KNOW???

Many plants have been used by Japanese aristocratic families as the symbols of their families. The Japanese call a family crest a *kamon*. The iris has been used as a kamon in several variations although the iris involved is almost always *Iris laevigata* not *Iris ensata*.



# SJI WEBSITE QUESTIONS

The SJI website gets interesting questions and our members are very good about posting answers.

## Question:

I've been working on a planting spot for an *I. ensata*. The pH here runs around neutral. It seems the lowest I can get it is 6.5.

I found this though, "Some cultivars, in particular the 'Higo' strain, tolerate a pH up to 7.4." From: [http://www.ibiblio.org/pfaf/cgi-bin/arr\\_html?Iris+ensata](http://www.ibiblio.org/pfaf/cgi-bin/arr_html?Iris+ensata) Does anyone have any experience with this one, 'Higo'?

Thanks. David, Indiana, z5b

## Responses from our members:

David,

"Higo" refers to a type of Japanese iris as originally developed in Japan. The flower petals are arched and wide. They come in 3-fall, 6-fall, 9-fall or multipetal forms. They are more likely to be ruffled and have extra flower parts, such as petaloids. Higo strains were developed at the southern end of the main island of Japan, close to the modern city of Kyoto. Historically, they were grown strictly for their beautiful flower and pot culture was the norm. Considering that 12 inches of rain is expected during the month of bloom in Kyoto, it is easy to understand why they were grown for indoor display. Remember that these irises were developed hundreds of years ago. Japan is a large country (even though it looks small on the map) and the strains developed without significant swapping in the gene pools.

Higo strains rarely bloom far above the foliage. According to AIS standards, this is a serious fault. However Higo strains carry some of the most desirable flower traits. There has been significant breeding with other traditional forms (Edo and Ise) to develop desirable plants for the American garden.

A few years ago, you would find offerings in the US mail-order nursery trade for "Higo strains". These were seed-grown plants with fair

reliability. 20 years ago, I visited a wholesale nursery that grew for that market. The plants were reliably good, but not great. Since the demise of Michigan Bulb (RIP) I have not seen them offered.

I would recommend you try some of Jill Copeland's earlier introductions. As I recall, she indicated that 'Dace' is somewhat lime-tolerant.

### **Dennis Hager on Delmarva, MD**

David, I went to the site you gave (above). You listed the quote about the Higo strain being somewhat pH tolerant. I cannot figure out who put up the site, but the page on *Iris ensata* is so full of mistakes and misinformation .... I'm sorry to see people quote from it. There is no reason for you to believe the statement about the Higo strain. I certainly do not. Nor does it make much difference because one cannot determine which Japanese iris are pure Higo.

Did you believe the statement that *Iris ensata* is considered to be a noxious weed in Nevada? The site has completely mixed up the information of *Iris ensata* and *Iris lactea* (*Iris lactea* is a dry soil species from China whose tough roots can be used for broom and the tough leaves for fiber ..... not *Iris ensata*).

### **John Coble here in Michigan**

Growing *Iris Ensata*, Higo type.

Hybridizer Walter and Louise Marx introduced JI coming from crosses between the Higo Type J Irises, for that reason they were called the Marhigo Irises.

Most popular Marx varieties are Blue Lagoon, Frilled Enchantment, Frosted Pyramid, Gay Gallant, Snowy Hills, Summer Storm, World's Delight, Flashing Koi, Good Omen, Sorcerer's Triumph, Peacock's Dance, Persian Rug, Reign Of Glory, Rose Prelude.

Fred Maddocks was also working with Higo and Marhigo J Irises. Two of his plants became Payne Award Winners (Leave Me Sighing 1967 and Hue And Cry 73) and more of his Higo breeding results are Banners on Parade, Evening Episode, Geisha Gown, Geisha Parasol and Geisha Mischief. (Source; The Japanese Iris, Currier Mc Ewen)



All these plants are growing in my collection. I have hybridized Iris Ensata for many years and I have one breeding line special with Higo Type Irises. All my plants are growing in pots. I mix and prepare the planting soil self? 1/4 peat moss PH 3.5, 1/3 Garden Soil PH 6.5, 1/3 well composted manure, pine tree needles Ph 5.5. Best results by PH between 5.5 and 6.5.

Problem for me is the irrigation water in dry summer PH 7 to 8,  
**I hope this helps a little, Willy Hublau, Belgium**

### **Question:**

Is there hope? I live in Dallas TX - love the Japanese Irises and will be getting a good mess of them in the morning from a dear friend. I have no idea what they are going to need or if they will live here in the heat and clay soil. What do I need to do to get ready and what do I need to make their life here a good and happy one?

Mitch

### **Responses:**

Mitch,

Growing Japanese irises in Dallas is as easy as teaching crabs to walk straight. I would consider growing them in pots. Caring for plants in pots is demanding, but it is the best way to meet their needs in a hostile environment.

Happy Japanese irises multiply quickly, so plan accordingly 1-2 crown divisions should grow out of a 2 gallon pot in one year. I would recommend a potting soil such as ProMix modified with sand. The crown should be covered with at least 2" of potting soil. During the growing season, keep the pots in 1" to 2" of standing water. For mosquito control, you will need to change the water frequently. Alternatively, you can let the water level drop to nil, but never let the soil in the pot get completely dry. They are heavy feeders and respond well to added nitrogen.

They will need protection from midday sun, especially during

bloom time.

In the winter months, they will need much less water and no added nitrogen, but the soil should still be kept moist. As long as the crowns are not in standing water after growth starts, they should need no winter protection.

I would also recommend that you move the pots to a warm sunny spot in late winter to encourage early bloom. You may be able to get bloom early enough to take a specimen to a local iris show!

Good luck.

**Dennis Hager on Delmarva, MD**

Marie Caillet grew Japanese Irises in Dallas. I do know that they will live there but one would have to pay careful attention to the pH. For some reason I think their soil is alkaline and the water may be too. I find the heat with JI is a problem mainly during bloom and doesn't actually affect the plant growth as much as it does Siberians. It can make blooms last for 3 hours instead of 3 days!

I must admit that I don't grow very many JI since most of my room and time is devoted to LA's and right now I keep them in pots.

**Robert Treadway, Carlisle, AR**

**Question:**

Hello,

I am a new member from Baton Rouge, LA . I bought a house a few months ago and am ready to let my flower obsession grow. I have a gazillion plants of all different kinds sitting in pots and am slowly trying to get them in the ground. I've always admired Japanese Irises, but never see them for sale around here. Guess the Louisiana Irises are too popular and easy for local growers.

**Libby**

**Responses:**

Dear Libby,

My friend Chesley Poole of Ruston, LA does grow many registered and several seedlings of mine. He reported to me about very lush growing and blooming Japanese irises.

### **Best Regards, Willy Hublau, Belgium**

Libby,

Welcome to the JI Robin. I understand all too well this thing of having plants sitting around in pots. It's a struggle to keep my "holding garden" from getting out of hand.

I'm not surprised that you don't find JI's being sold in Louisiana. That far south, the bloom season is usually very short, due to the heat. Walter Moores in northern Mississippi once observed that he has more success with very early 3-fall and species type selections that may beat the heat. I'm sure the same would apply for you.

I'm sure that the JI's will require extra attention in your heat, but would be well worth the effort.

### **Dennis Hager**

Libby, I suggest you contact any one of our Commercial Sources listed on the Website and in the REVIEW and you explain you are looking for early season varieties and see what they suggest.

### **Rita Gormley, Editor, SJI REVIEW**

#### **PHOTO CREDITS**

##### **Front Cover:**

Dirigo Pink Milestone	Payne Medal Winner	Bauer/Coble
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##### **Inside Front Cover:**

Little Bow Pink	Payne Runner-Up	Tom Gormley
Raspberry Candy	Payne Runner-Up	Bauer/Cable

<b>Inside Back Cover:</b>	2008 Guest Irises	Jim Copeland
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<b>Back Cover:</b>	Walter Marx Catalogs	SJI Archives
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# SJI POPULARITY POLL FOR 2007

*Ruth Barker, North Carolina*

Thank you to all the members who returned their ballot for this year's Popularity Poll. I received 29 ballots, representing 38 members. Since this was my first year in this position, I found myself eagerly awaiting the daily mail, in hopes of an orange ballot!

John White's 'Dirigo Pink Milestone' continues its reign for the third year in a row, with 12 votes! Of course, 'Milestone' was just announced as winner of the Payne Medal, also! Runners-up received 10 votes, 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> received 7 votes, while the remaining received 6 and 5 votes respectively.

As you can see from the list, we had many cultivars with the same number of votes. We want to welcome 'Flashing Koi', 'Center of Attention', 'Dirigo Red Rocket' and 'Raspberry Candy' to the prestigious top ten and several other new entries to the list.

2007 place	Votes	Cultivar (hybridizer/year)	2006 place
1	12	DIRIGO PINK MILESTONE (White '00)	1
2 tie	10	BLUE SPRITZ (Delmez '98)	10
2 tie	10	JAPANESE PINWHEEL (McEwen '88)	3
4 tie	7	CENTER OF ATTENTION (Rich '86)	17
4 tie	7	DIRIGO RED ROCKET (White '01)	17
4 tie	7	FLASHING KOI (Marx '78)	-
4 tie	7	LITTLE BOW PINK (Delmez '98)	5

2007 place	Votes	Cultivar (hybridizer/year)	2006 place
4 tie	7	RASPBERRY CANDY (Bauer/Coble '99)	17
4 tie	7	SING THE BLUES (Reid '97)	2
4 tie	7	SUE JO (Delmez '03)	5
11 tie	6	ALL IN WHITE (Delmez '00)	17
11 tie	6	CAPRICIAN BUTTERFLY (Marx '85)	10
11 tie	6	ELECTRIC RAYS (Aitken '90)	10
11 tie	6	FRILLED ENCHANTMENT (Marx '59)	3
11 tie	6	LAKE EFFECT (Bauer/Coble '04)	-
16 tie	5	BEWITCHING TWILIGHT (Harris '00)	-
16 tie	5	CASCADE CREST (Aitken '90)	9
16 tie	5	CRYSTAL HALO (Marx '59)	-
16 tie	5	IAPETUS (Innerst '88)	-
16 tie	5	LION KING (Bauer/Coble '96)	8
16 tie	5	OREGON MARMALADE (Walker '03)	10
16 tie	5	PRAIRIE TWILIGHT (Hazzard '77)	-
16 tie	5	TIDELINE (Bauer/coble '95)	-

## DELMEZ DISPLAY GARDEN ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

*Rita Gormley*

When in the St. Louis, Missouri area, THE “must see” Japanese Iris garden is the Don and Sue Delmez spectacular showplace of JIs. Their home garden is a gem of suburban perfection, from the delightful tricolor beech tree to the wide array of intriguing plants, all behaving perfectly in both perennial and iris beds. Specimen plants highlight every view, each one displaying its best in weedless serenity. The Delmez Country Patch Garden, a short drive away, consists of old and new named varieties and many seedlings in his JI hybridizing program. The iris lovers in the St. Louis area are treated to a Judges Training morning each June and comments about Don and his garden are enthusiastic.

Don is Region 18’s leading authority on Japanese Irises. His garden is large and up to date. He grows all types of JIs and the work he puts into them is obvious. Don very patiently explains patterns, forms and hybridizing.

Early on a Saturday morning in mid-June, Don opens the garden for a couple of hours of viewing and then conducts the training. Most students gather around 8:00 to walk through Don’s seedlings, looking for that special iris. Don says, we are helping him evaluate his seedlings, but to most of us one seedling is more beautiful than the next.

The day of our 2007 judges training, Don’s garden had some great bloom, despite the devastating spring heat/freeze cycle that did massive damage to bearded irises in the area.. The “field was alive” with the sight of irises! We were treated to ‘Blue Spritz’, Don’s 96 intro that won the Payne Medal in 2005. Also in bloom were ‘Little Bow Pink’, runner-up for the Payne Medal 2007, ‘Ebb And Flow’ (S. Hirao by B. Hager, 1989), and Don’s 2003 intro ‘Sue Jo’ (named for his wife). One of Don’s seedlings, Sdlg-SDKVO RU-, a very ruffled violet, received extra attention.

So plan ahead to visit some Display gardens in your area and meet some interesting and knowledgeable folks with similar interests.



# SJI DISPLAY GARDENS

One of the best ways to learn more about Japanese irises is to visit gardens which have a good assortment of cultivars. The Society of Japanese Irises has a network of display gardens whose owners are willing to have them open to the public during the bloom season. Most owners are also willing to explain how to grow them well and a few may even show you some of their hybrids which are being evaluated for introduction.

Though Japanese irises have been grown in American gardens for most of the 20th Century, very few people have ever seen them in bloom. Would you like to share the beauty of the Japanese irises growing in your garden? Even if you have only a few cultivars, inviting plant lovers to see them in bloom is very satisfying. If you would like to have your garden listed as a Japanese Iris Display Garden, both here and in the Review of the Society for Japanese Irises, please see the SJI Website <http://www.socji.org/displayrequest.htm> or contact Carol Warner [draycott@qis.net](mailto:draycott@qis.net) or by mail to:

CAROL WARNER  
16815 FALLS RD  
UPPERCO MD 21155-9445

## *INVITATION TO JOIN SJI*

We are pleased to report that the new *SJI Invitation to Join* has received many favorable comments. We have mailed some to each of the gardens listed in the Commercial Directory (in this issue of the REVIEW) and each Display Garden. This is a great tool to solicit new members for SJI.

If you need more of these brochures for meetings or other JI functions, let Catherine Button know and she will mail them to you.

Rita Gormley, Editor

## EDITOR'S ESSAY

You will note that this issue of the REVIEW is smaller than normal and I am asking for help from all of you in regard to material for the Spring issue. I am grateful to those "regulars" who always provide material but really need more articles from our members with some "meat" in them. There are about three hundred members out there and we need to hear from more of you.

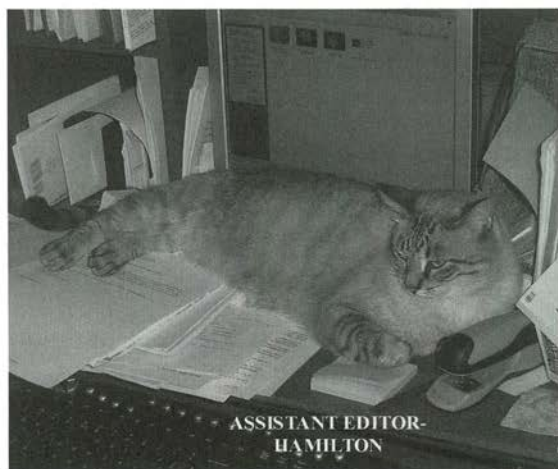
Please drop me a note or e-mail telling about your JI garden bloom, hybridizing program, technical issues of culture, ideas for topics that I can research, advice or complaints. Don't worry about grammar, spelling or format-I can take care of that. We want to continue to publish a quality bulletin of great value to our members so please lend a hand.

As much as we all value the annual Popularity Poll, participation has been less than stellar with only ten percent participation. Look for your bright orange ballot in the Spring issue and cast your vote!!! Many members use the results as their "Shopping Guide" for dependable growers!

I wish you a productive gardening Fall and peaceful Holiday season.

*Rita Gormley*

*now in Dubuque, Iowa and enjoying the glorious black soil!!!*



## **FROM SJI TREASURER CATHERINE BUTTON**

We invite all existing members to use the new on-line membership form to renew your membership with PayPal or credit card.

Don't forget, if you want to check what your expiration date is, you can use the SJI membership expiration lookup.

Go to SJI website <http://www.socji.org/> and go to JOIN THE SOCIETY!

The on-line renew option makes it fast and easy to renew your membership and assures that you will never miss an issue of the REVIEW!

### **Classic Irises And the Men and Women Who Created Them** by Clarence Mahan

The story of how several men and women transformed relatively unimpressive iris species into the plants with flowers of diverse forms and colors so beloved by today's gardeners has never been told until now. This book represents years of research in French, British and American primary and secondary sources. It challenges taxonomists' designation of *Iris germanica* as the type species of genus *Iris* and the generally accepted status of *Iris albacans*. It is also the first book containing extensive information on the native iris species of Florida and deplorable state of taxonomy of these species. This scholarly work was written to appeal to the lay reader as well as the specialist. Many beautiful and original pictures of irises are included along with pictures of some of those whose stories are told.

Hardcover 420 pages. Published by Krieger Publishing Company. ISBN 1-57524-281-8. Limited time offer - \$59.00 USA/Canada, \$67.00 International. (Order now, once the Storefront supply is depleted, this offer is void.)

How to order: Please send/communicate your order to:  
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e-mail: [aisstore@irises.org](mailto:aisstore@irises.org)



**BOOK SPECIAL**  
**THE JAPANESE IRIS**  
**PERFECT GIFT FOR ALL PLANT LOVERS!**

Edited by Currier McEwen for the Society of Japanese Irises. A Brandeis University book. 224 pages. 32 color photos. 7" x 10". Published 1990 at \$29.95. (No longer in print)

The first definitive book in English on history and cultivation, The Japanese Iris incorporates the 300 year history of breeding in Japan and the experience of US hybridizers from East to West coasts. Contents include history, current hybridizing, color photos, and drawings of flower parts in detail; also soil preparation, watering, mulching, and pest control; display gardens, nurseries, and hybridizers.

Available through the Society for Japanese Irises at \$20.00 including US shipping or, for a limited time, two or more at \$15.00 Each.

Contact - John Coble, SJI Sales Chairman, 9823 E. Michigan Avenue, Galesburg, MI 49053 e-mail-ensata@aol.com

**Deadlines for Submitting Articles and  
Information**

**Spring - February 15**

**Fall - August 15**

**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT  
JAPANESE IRISES?**

**GO TO THE SJI WEBSITE AND ASK  
YOUR QUESTIONS!**

## PREVIEW OF GUEST IRISES FOR THE 2008 JAPANESE IRIS NATIONAL CONVENTION

*By Jill Copeland*

How fun it is to get to preview the Guest Irises the year before the Convention. I thought I would share some of it with you. The first to bloom was Phil Cook's Sdlg 4F04 with the garden name 'Maiden Aunt'. It is a jaunty red-violet 3-F with enough buds to keep it in bloom for well over 2 weeks. The second to bloom was 'Coho' (Chad Harris '05). This 3-F clear pink, also, bloomed a long time.

Then came the pseudatas, Hiroshi Shimizu's 'Eye-Shadow' hybrids. Each one was a surprise. These husky plants produced well-branched multi budded stalks and bloomed 3-4 weeks each. The ability to produce more buds, when you are sure they are done, comes from their *I. pseudacorus* parent as does the yellow color that many, but not all, have. The yellow is just what a garden full of JIs need. 'Kokaku' is one such with bright yellow standards, style arms, and falls and deep brown halos around the yellow signals with a deep brown spot in the throat of each signal with the brown veins from the spot to ½ to ¾ inch outside the halo producing the 'eyelash' effect. My favorite is 'Kanamaru', a softer yellow self with bright yellow clear signal with a warm brown halo and darker veins extending for ½ to ¾ inch onto the falls. The falls are rounder than most other pseudatas. 'Kinshikou' (Shimizu by Carol Warner, 2004) is a fascinating kaleidoscope of colors. From light yellow, through peach to red-violet this iris changes through the day. Some of the veins through the deep almost black red-violet halo extend most of the way down the falls. 'Takamagahara' is done up in lavender and violet. You will want to come and see the rest.

There were many surprises in the JIs, too. Here are a few of my favorites. Ron James is a new hybridizer and his Sdlg RJ-631 is a white 6 F with fine red-violet veins, which bloomed on a nice clump. Dennis Hager's Sdlg 03-02-03 is a very clear blue-violet 3 F with large white halos around the signal. It has short white rays into the falls. I wonder what kind pseudata it would father. The standards and style arms, also, have white in the centers. 'Evelyn White' (John White R

'04) is stunning! It is a clean white 6 F with wide bright red-violet edges including the style arms. It is a great tribute to a great lady.

Lee Walker's Sdlg C-96-18-15 is a wide clean white 3 F with blue-violet veins, halos around the gold signals, and small light sanding on the edges. Then the standards and style arms are veined and edged bright violet. I am partial to 3 Fs and this one has wonderful contrast! In the same theme but lighter, Sdlg DWBV-5D by Don Delmez is a white 6 F with light blue-violet veins and slight halo around the bright gold signal. It had light style arms with violet veins. This is a fine iris. Then in darker tones Sdlg J01B-1 from John Coble and Bob Bauer is a white 6 F with deep heavy violet veins, halos around the large gold signals, and edges to an 1/16 of inch of the white falls. This great flower is topped with huge, ruffled, dark violet style arms!

Many of you know that I like tetraploids. So I was very pleased that Lee Walker sent some. One of the best is Sdlg T-99-174-3. This large light 6 F tet has wide blue-violet halos around the bright signals with some veins radiating out of the halos. Its style arms are violet edged in white.

The last flower to bloom in the bed was a pseudata, 'Take No Sato' by Hiroshi Shimizu. It is a light violet with no yellow influence and medium violet veins, style arms, and standards. The halos and 'eyelashes' are deep violet.

I can hardly wait until next season to see them again and I know you will want to see them, too!

*(Pictures of some of the Guests on facing page by Jim Copeland)*

**BE SURE TO REGISTER EARLY FOR  
THE SJI CONVENTION 2008**

**SEE REGISTRATION INFORMATION  
ON PAGE 12**





**COHO (CHAD HARRIS 05)**



**4F04 PHIL COOK  
'MAIDEN AUNT'**



**03-02-03 DENNIS HAGER**



**'EVELYN WHITE'  
(JOHN WHITE)**



**J01B-1 BAUER/COBLE**



**T-99-174-3 LEE WALKER**

STI Copy

