# THE REVIEW

OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES



VOLUME 46 NUMBER #2 FALL 2009





# THE REVIEW OF THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES

# VOLUME 46

# NUMBER 2

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Photo by Don Delmez

# THE SOCIETY FOR JAPANESE IRISES Officers

President Dennis Hager, PO Box 390, Millington, MD 21651

Tel: (410) 928-3147; <a href="mailto:kager@aredee.com">hager@aredee.com</a>

Vice President Sterling Innerst, 825 Hess Farm Road, Dallastown, PA 17313

Tel: (717) 244-7189; <INNIRIS@PA.NET>

Secretary Peter Weixlmann, 280 Seneca Creek Road, West Seneca, NY

14224 Tel: (716) 674-6289; <Pweixl@aol.com>

Treasurer Jody Nolin, 5184 Cty Rd 20, Rushsylvania, OH 43347

Tel: (614) 507-0332, jody.nolin@gmail.com

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

Editor Rita Gormley, P. O. Box 177, DeLeon Springs, FL 32130

Tel: (386)277-2057,cell: (314) 606-9709

<GormleyGreenery@aol.com>

#### **Directors at Large**

2010 Anna Mae Miller, Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson

Way #155, Kalamazoo, MI 49009; Tel: (269) 349-5934;

<irisquilt@aol.com>

2011 Gary White, 701 Old Cheney Rd., Lincoln, NE 68512-116

Tel: (402) 421-6394, <in2iris@yahoo.com>

2012 Chad Harris, P.O. Box 346, Washougal, WA 98671-0346

Tel: (360) 835-1016 <chadharris@prodigy.net>

## **Nominating Committee**

Through 2009 Carol Warner, 16815 Falls Road, Upperco, MD 21155-9445

Tel: (410) 374-4788; draycott@qis.net

Through 2010 Jim Copeland, 78118 M-40, Lawton, MI 49065

Tel: (269) 624-1968; <jandjcope@aol.com>

Through 2011 Bob Bauer, 9823 E. Michigan Ave., Galesburg, MI 49053;

Tel: (269) 665-7500; <ensata@aol.com>

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

#### **Appointments**

Membership Jody Nolin, 5184 Cty Rd 20, Rushsylvania, OH 43347

Tel: (614) 507-0332, jody.nolin@gmail.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; <cindy@riverstonequarry.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; <a href="mailto:red"></a> eachee.com>

Popularity Poll Ruth Barker, 6183 Bar-Mot Dr., Greensboro, NC

274-55; Tel: (336) 644-1573; < ruthbb@aol.com>

Display Garden Chair Open

Awards Anna Mae Miller, Bronson Place, 1700 Bronson

Way #155, Kalamazoo, MI 49009; Tel: (269) 349-

5934; <irisquilt@aol.com>

Web Master: Dennis Hager, PO Box 390, Millington, MD 21651

Tel: (410) 928-3147; <a href="mailto:kager@aredee.com">hager@aredee.com</a>

SJI WEBSITE:

http://www.socji.org/

Includes information on Awards, Bylaws, Commercial Sources, Convention, Display Gardens, Membership, Officers, SJI REVIEW Index, and Member Services

#### **BUSINESS ITEMS**

DU]	ES:	<b>NEW - Effective J</b>	anuary 15, 2009
	Single	annual - \$10.00	triennial - \$25.00
	Dual	annual - \$12.00	triennial - \$31
	Youth	annual - \$4.00	triennial-\$9.00
	Overse	eas	
	Single	annual - \$20.00	triennial - \$50.00
	Dual	annual - \$24.00	triennial - \$62.00
	Youth	annual - \$ 8.00	triennial - \$22.00

Dues may be sent either to the AIS Membership Chairman (www.irises.org) or directly to the Membership Chairman, The Society for Japanese Irises. Jody Nolin, 5184 Cty Rd 20, Rushsylvania, OH 43347

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/

#### SALES AND RENTAL ITEMS

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.

#### **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 COLOR (4 X 3 1/2)	\$45.00
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.

#### Color Postcards - 2 for 1 Sale

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Set #2 – 18 different Payne Award winners

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

2 issues each

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\$5.00

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.

Deadlines for Submitting Articles and Information Spring - February 15 Fall - August 15

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Dennis Hager

## "Google it."

Looking it up online has become the norm. However, getting quick information does not always mean getting good information. You have to learn to sort through spam and advertisements. You must be focused so you are not distracted by something else that pops up on the screen.

When it comes to irises, my best source of information is still the people I have met through the American Iris Society and its sections, especially the Society for Japanese Irises. It beats google every time.

To connect with your Japanese iris friends, go to <a href="www.socji.org/jirobin.htm">www.socji.org/jirobin.htm</a> and join the email robin. The response may not be as fast as google, but it will be better.



ME	MBER	SHIP	REI	PORT-	JODA	NOI	LIN
YEAR	MEM	COMP	L	DA	DT	SA	ST
2003	356	10	70	4	64	35	173
2004	335	10	68	6	58	42	151
2005	302	12	71	4	51	39	125
2006	296	13	70	6	51	24	132
2007	281	14	68	6	46	20	127
2008	264	13	65	6	47	16	117

# SJI POPULARITY POLL RESULTS 2009

Ruth Barker, Greensboro, NC

My mailbox was a little lonely this year, receiving only 30 ballots, representing 36 members. Perhaps the lower response this year was due to not having a convention! A special thanks to all who participated.

The results give us a new winner! 'Sue Jo' was the top contender, with "Flashing Koi' and 'Little Bow Pink' coming in a close second.

There are three newcomers (and returners) to the top ten list this year, 'All In White', Blue Spritz' and 'Raspberry Candy'.

2009 Place	Votes	Cultivar (hybridizer/year)	2008 Place
1	15	SUE JO (Delmez '03)	5
2	13	FLASHING KOI (Marx '78)	7
2	13	LITTLE BOW PINK (Delmez '98)	1
4	11	BLUE SPRITZ (Delmez '96)	13
4	11	FRILLED ENCHANTMENT (Marx '59)	3
6	9	DIRIGO PINK MILESTONE (White '00)	1
6	9	JAPANESE PINWHEEL (McEwen '88)	10
8	8	ALL IN WHITE (Delmez '00)	
8	8	RASPBERRY CANDY (Bauer/Coble '99)	-
10	7	CENTER OF ATTENTION (Rich '86)	10
10	7	PINKERTON (Bauer/Coble '99)	4
Runne	rs Up:		
12	6	BLUSHING SNOWMAIDEN (Harris '00)	
12	6	BUTTERFLIES IN FLIGHT (Aitken '91)	16
12	6	CASCADE CREST (Aitken '88)	10
12	6	CRAOLA KISS (Walker '05)	-
12	6	DIRIGO RED ROCKET (White '01)	16
12	6	LAKE EFFECT (Bauer/Coble '04)	40
12	6	RIVULETS OF WINE (Aitken '99)	-
12	6	SIMPLY STATED (Hager '06)	41

#### COMMERCIAL GARDEN DIRECTORY

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#### 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: cindy@riverstonequarry.com

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

JI E-mail Robin: Dennis Hager, director, E-mail: hager@aredee.com; www.socji.org

#### SJI REVIEW

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

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover: 'Little Bow Pink'-Don Delmez
Inside Front Cover Knight Garden-1987-People
Inside Front Cover Debbie Hughes-Winner AIS

Photo Contest-Landscape Division 2009

Page 13-Graphics Sue Delmez

Page 29 Reprinted from Bates Magazine Page 17 Dr. Shuichi Hirao - reproduced

from AIS Bulletin 256, January 1985, Page 58

Page 18 The Herbert Medal-IBS

Insite Back Cover No. 46 - Bunjikai - C. Mahan Back Cover Bob Bauer-Kalamazoo Country

Club 2009



# AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY AIS AWARDS 2009

\*\*NUMBER OF VOTES LISTED FIRST

#### THE PAYNE MEDAL (JI)

(TOTAL VOTES CAST = 109)
37 LITTLE BOW PINK (DONALD DELMEZ)
RUNNERS UP:
25 DIRIGO RED ROCKET (JOHN WHITE)
23 RIVULETS OF WINE (J. T. AITKEN)

AWARD OF MERIT (TOTAL VOTES CAST = 159)

30 LAKE EFFECT (BOB BAUER/JOHN COBLE)
21 BEWITCHING TWILIGHT (CHAD HARRIS)
RUNNERS UP:
17 ANGEL MOUNTAIN (BOB BAUER/JOHN COBLE)
16 OREGON MARMALADE (LEE WALKER)
13 BEYOND CHANCE (DONALD DELMEZ)

# HONORABLE MENTION (TOTAL VOTES CAST = 276)

24 GINGHAM GEISHA (DENNIS HAGER)

23 CRAOLA KISS (LEE WALKER)

22 KOOL CRAOLA ICE (LEE WALKER)

22 LADY IN PINK (J. T. AITKEN)

22 PINK PUFFER (JILL COPELAND)

RUNNERS UP:

19 ANGELIC CHOIR (CHAD HARRIS)

19 CHRISTINA'S GOWN (JILL COPELAND)

18 FIRST STRIKE CRAOLA (LEE WALKER)

12 SIMPLY STATED (DENNIS HAGER)

12 WISPY CLOUDS (BOB BAUER/JOHN COBLE)

#### AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

THE WARBURTON MEDAL is awarded by the American Iris Society Board of Directors to international irisarians who have made outstanding contributions to the world iris community. The Bee Warburton Medal was awarded in 2009 to Hiroshi Shimizu of Japan.

When Hiroshi Shimizu was awarded the AIS Hybridizers Medal in 2006, Clarence Mahan wrote in the Spring 2007 *SJI REVIEW*:

"Many iris hybridizers have bred irises with new colors and new color patterns. Only a handful of hybridizers have created new types of irises. One man who has created a new type of iris is Hiroshi Shimizu of Japan. Before Shimizu created his eye-shadow irises, a couple of iris breeders had successfully bred hybrids of Iris ensata and Iris pseudacorus, notably Dr. Osugi's 'Aichi no Kagayaki' and Mr. Ueki's 'Kinboshi.' These hybrids all had yellow flowers and yellow-green foliage.

Hiroshi Shimizu was born in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan in 1953. He and his wife Yoko have two daughters, Keiko and Akiko and they live in Sagamihara, south of Tokyo. Shimizu graduated from Nihon University in 1975 with a degree in plant genetics and plant breeding. He also holds a degree from Nihon Medical Technology College and is a qualified medical technologist in blood transfusion medicine. His current position is Chief of Blood Quality Control at the Tokyo western blood center of the Japan Red Cross. He is a director of the Japan Iris Society and is the AIS Registrar's coordinator for Japan. He has written many articles for the AIS Bulletin, The Review of the SJI, and the British Iris Society Year Book. He also breeds Hepatica nobilis var. japonica."

SJI extends most sincere congratulations to Hiroshi Shimizu!

#### INTERNATIONAL NEWS

#### Society of Japanese Irises Aids International Bulb Society

Cooperation among plant societies has long been the norm but little is printed of their frustrations or great successes. The Japanese Iris Society, through its members Clarence Mahan and Ensata Gardens (Bob Bauer/John Coble) were able to assist the International Bulb Society "close the file" on an issue of long standing consternation.

Clarence Mahan, who is internationally known as the "goto person" of information relating to History of irises and their hybridizers especially Japanese Irises, received an e-mail in July 2008 from Dave Lehmiller that outlined his quandary:

I am the Editor of Herbertia, Journal of the International Bulb Society, a small non profit organization although we have been in existence since 1934 My Society was in the process of giving an award (The Herbert Medal) to Shuichi Hirao in the late 80's when he unexpectedly died. His wife subsequently moved, and we lost contact with her. Finally after all these years, we were able to deliver the award to his widow (she was highly pleased). I am going to publish a short follow up article relating the incident and including correspondence from the widow plus a family picture she provided. I thought that it would be nice to include a color image of one of his hybrid Japanese Iris with the article.

#### Clarence responded that very day with:

I knew my friends at Ensata would do well. I am sending a copy of all your correspondence to Rita Gormley who edits the Society for Japanese Irises publication, The Review, because I believe many of our society's members will be interested in your award. I am also sending the information to my friend Hiroshi Shimizu who was mentored by Dr. Hirao. As you undoubtedly know, Dr. Hirao has become legendary in Japan.

Mere hours later, Dave Lehmiller sent this e-mail to Clarence: This morning John Coble provided me with two images of Dr. Shuichi Hirao's Japanese Iris hybrids. Thank you very much for your assistance! We will be able to close an unfortunate chapter in my Society's history "with a nice touch."



Photo reproduced from AIS Bulletin 256, January 1985, Page 58

#### THE HERBERT MEDAL

By Dave Lehmiller

The Herbert Medal is the highest honor that the International Bulb Society can bestow upon a person for meritorious achievement in advancing the knowledge of bulbous plants. The medal is named for William Herbert (1778 1847), son of Henry Herbert, Earl of Carnarvon. William Herbert had a predilection for amaryllids and achieved success in their hybridization. He published his research findings in several monumental works. His contributions as a pioneer geneticist and plant breeder, and his arrangement of the Amaryllidaceae, helped set the stage upon which other workers, both amateur and professional, have been able to advance.

The Herbert Medal may be awarded annually or on special occasions by the Board of Directors of the Society. Candidates for the Medal are recommended to the Board of Directors by the Awards and Recognition Committee. Medalists need not be members of the Society to be considered for the Herbert Medal. The award includes honorary life membership in the Society.



# KALAMAZOO JI SHOW JUNE 27, 2009

Again this year the Southwestern Michigan Iris Society set up a Japanese iris display at Wedel's Garden Center. We only have two exhibitors, the Copeland's and Ensata, so we can't hold an AIS judged show. We set up four tables with 32 entries and a card with the name or seedling number of the flower. Each visitor at the garden center that shows the slightest interest in the display of iris, that they have never seen before, is handed a blue ribbon and asked to place it in front of their favorite choice. This also allows us to make contact with the visitors and "break the ice" that can encourage them to ask some questions.

This year we brought in 32 entries with one Louisiana iris seedling, four Japanese iris seedlings, and a whole table of the new pseudatas seven named varieties and three seedlings. The new pseudatas drew much attention, but most of the ribbons landed on the larger blooms of JIs. 62 blue ribbons were handed out with most of them set before: 'Joyous Troubadour '-5, 'Lake Effect' - 4, 'Reign of Glory '-4, and 4 for Jill Copeland's seedling R-12-T (a very large pure white tetraploid). The count continued for 'Narihira' with 3, 'Victorian Trim' with 3, 'Frilled Enchantment' with 3, and two more seedlings from Jill Copeland with 3 each: a dark wine Louisiana and a large 3 fall violet JI tetraploid P-8-T.

Our primary reason for staging an iris show was achieved by exposing and educating more than 50 gardeners to Japanese iris and the new pseudatas. We were also able to entertain questions about other types of iris and culture questions.

#### **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

The rolls of SJI include outstanding iris specialists, gardening experts and horticulturists with interests in many kinds of ornamentals, but the Society is primarily for the amateur gardener who enjoys growing Japanese irises.

SJI Membership Brings You...

An informative culture sheet, free to new members, on raising Japanese irises.

The SJI Review, with 2 issues each year averaging 54 pages of interesting feature articles on iris varieties, culture, hybridizing, exhibiting, and many other iris subjects.

A wide range of activities at the national, and local level, including the national meetings, conventions, garden tours and round robin corresponding groups, display gardens, exhibitions, and special programs for the enjoyment of SJI members.

Up to the minute information on award winning irises, and the privilege of voting in the "Annual Popularity Poll" of favorite irises.

A library and slide collection offering various books and publications, which can be rented by members.

Helpful sources for assistance with your technical problems in culture and hybridizing, or in finding rare species, out of print articles, and valuable hybridizing records.

You are cordially invited to become a member of the SJI. You can join either by regular mail, using this form and instructions, or JOIN ONLINE, by using our online membership form. Pay with either a Paypal account or using a credit card thorough the Paypal service.

HTTP://WWW.SOCJI.ORG/

#### JI ROBIN

In a message dated 5/14/2009 11:43:15 PM Eastern Standard Time, Otara.birch@xtra.co.nz writes: and John Coble at Ensata Gardens in Michigan answers:

- **Q** How one can distinguish homozygous and heterozygous in both single or double flowers?
- **A** You can't. But all doubles (6F) are homozygous recessive (ff). 6F x 6F will give you 100% 6F seedlings. 3F is dominant. The species are homozygous dominant (FF).

Most single modern cultivars are heterozygous (Ff). But a few are homozygous (FF). You can only find out by crossing the 3F in question with a 6F; if all of the seedlings are 3F (Ff), then your 3F parent is homozygous dominant; if half of your seedlings are 6F, then your 3F parent is heterozygous dominant (Ff).

- **Q** In one of my crosses this season I used "Wind Drift" 3 petal white as a pollen parent and crossed it with "Iapetus" as a 6 petal violet/purple pod parent. Can anyone give me an idea of whether to expect all singles?
- A Yes, you will get 50% singles and 50% doubles. I can say that only because I know from experience that Wind Drift is heterozygous (Ff). If one gets 100% 3F seedlings by crossing a 3F x 6F, the 3F parent is homozygous dominant (FF). And all of those 3F seedlings will be 3F heterozygous (Ff).
  - Predominant whites? A -Probably not. White is recessive.
- **Q** I see that a lot of work has been done with "Iaputus" as a pod parent after looking through an old check list. Also from reference from John at Ensata Gardens with his work with "Iapetus".
  - Q- Is "Iapetus" heterozygous? A -No, homozygous recessive.
  - Q- Is "Wind drift" homozyous? A No, heterozygous.
  - Q In fact are all doubles heterozygous? A -No, homozygous.!
- Q- Is there a list that hybridizers have complied, over time, of varieties that are either homozygous or heterozygous as a guide to new beginners?
- A No. I did try, in an article in The Review a few years ago. I did list a very few 3F that I had used and found to be 3F homozygous (Silverband, and Chitose Hime and Kyokko). I asked for anyone else to write to me about any 3F cultivar that they had used in a cross and found to be homozygous. I did not receive one reply. One can look at the parentages in the Checklist and look for any 3F that was used as a parent of a 6F introduction. That will confirm that the 3F is heterozygous. There is no way to determine 3F homozygous by looking at parents, one needs to know the percentage of 3F seedlings in the whole cross!

This is fun, but often takes two years to get an answer.!

John Coble at Ensata in Michigan..... where seedlings will start blooming in one month! Welcome back, Eddie.

#### JI ROBIN

#### Selling Unregistered Iris

Coming from a daylily background, I'm clear on the rules of selling a registered cultivar verses a seedling there. The recent discussion about the "Queen's Tiara" verses "Fortune" has me really confused about Japanese Irises though. I've only been involved in JI's for about a year. Having only bought from Ensata and Eartheart, I wasn't aware that unregistered seedlings were sold with a name. How often does this happen? Is it true that only 1% are registered? Is the registration process that difficult and costly that the average hybridizer or nursery owner would do without it? I can see some of the con's of not registering, but what would be the pro's?

Thanks, LJ - Growing Obsessions Nursery

Hello there Growing Obsessions Nursery,

I think when Tony Avent said that only 1% were registered, he was referring to plants in general, not just Japanese Iris. A high number of Japanese Iris are named and registered as we have a very active, caring iris society here. Because we do have such an active society, and because people have taken the time to identify the irises, I think it makes it even worse to sell the unnamed varieties. Many other plant species don't have the same control behind them, so it's really a different ballgame, with say campanulas. As you said daylilies is another plant society that is very active in registering its cultivars.

Many unregistered JIs are out there, and you will find out they seem to be sold by the same places, Van Bourgondien, Dutch Gardens, and other nurseries that sell from irises imported from the Netherlands. You will not find unnamed irises at Ensata, or Eartheart, or any reputable iris grower.

The pros seem to me to be that they can, and do, take any Japanese Iris, and send it out as Fortune, Queen's Tiara, or Halo. The companies selling these get a ton of unnamed irises from the Netherlands, and just sell them all under these and other names. Pretty pictures

in the catalogues, but the pictures rarely match the iris. And instead of buying an iris for say \$8.00 from Ensata to propagate, these cost cents to buy wholesale. I have been surprised at some of the nurseries that we normally buy wholesale from selling these "no named" irises. At least Walters sells them as a no name mix.

Some of the unnamed ones from these companies turn out to be lovely irises. Many, many more are just plain looking purple, and when an iris someone bought, expecting it to look lovely, huge and multicolored, turns out to be small and plain purple, they are turned off from JIs forever. And JIs already have a bad rep, as being hard to grow.

The JI society maintains a checklist. It is available to anyone, but not well known,

unfortunately. It is on the website under member services, in case you haven't seen it. (http://www.socji.org/member\_services.htm) I am so glad you are interested enough to check into this. Much success with your nursery!

#### Polly Kinsman @ Siberian Iris Gardens

LJ and others new to the scene.... Wish I could just lay my hands on an article that has already been written about this topic, but it is cold in that room today!

The situation started just about 100 years ago, 110 to 120 years ago, as a matter of fact. Japanese iris were introduced to Europe and North America about 1880 and were a sensation. Everybody who was Anybody wanted some of the plants for their garden. Nurseries could not import and/or propagate them fast enough. Nor could the Japanese propagate named varieties fast enough. Ship loads of potted plants

arrived in New York; tens of thousands! You can imagine how many had name tags properly attached in Japan or on the docks in New York or on into the nursery fields? And this went on for 10-20 years with maybe a 100 ships and pots and bags of rhizomes off to numerous nurseries. Some of the plants carried the same name but bloomed a different color; and today we know that the Japanese did not register any of their names or descriptions, and 10 or 20 different varieties each hybridized by a different jealous hybridizer could carry the same name. And this all happened before there was such a thing as an American Iris

#### JI ROBIN

Society and a system or registration. But that would not have made any difference to the situation. I doubt that more than a dozen of the hundreds of "names" imported during the big rage have survived the depression and two world wars.

Today, the unregistered varieties are coming into our retail nurseries from the large wholesale nurseries in The Netherlands who are trying to fill the demand of orders. The Dutch nurseries have been able to import large numbers of iris from Japan, either with or without names, for very little money over the past few decades. There were no American or European nurseries with sufficient stock of named varieties to supply the Dutch nurseries and fill their demand at low cost. Today, there are very few "garden center" nurseries that care about the name or registration of the Japanese iris that they sell. They just want a color photo card in the pot to sell the plant. And IF they did want to buy and sell only registered named Japanese iris, they will have a very difficult time finding a source. In fact, I don't know of a single source in the US that could fill the demands of more than two or three retail centers year after year.

So, the pro's of a registered variety are that you have a registered description to check what you expect. Also, registered varieties are eligible for the society's awards system which some hybridizers care about but also some don't; the same with retail nurseries.

Most all of the unregistered varieties sold today with a "name" on them, could not be registered with those names today because those names have already been used by someone else. And the wholesale and retail nursery businesses do not want to change the names of their plants. Nor will they throw away hundreds of thousands of plants and start all over, when there are no nurseries to supply them with quantities of registered stock.

It is only our hope that the Dutch wholesale nurseries would acquire more registered varieties, multiply them and gradually replace most of their unregistered stock. But in reality, that is an economic

investment that does not appear to be on the horizon, until the gardeners pressure their local retail nursery to procure registered named stock.

John Coble here from Ensata Gardens in Galesburg, Michigan.

LJ,

Excuse me if this is a little long.

The American Iris Society is designated the international registrar for all non-bulbous irises as designated by the International Society for Horticultural Science. The American Iris Society was incorporated in 1927 and has maintained registration information in some form since the earliest years of the Society. However, it wasn't until 1955 that ISHS formalized the designation.

The AIS encourages registration and introduction by making R&I mandatory for most awards. This policy works very well with the bearded irises. However, it has been much more problematic with some of the beardless irises and particularly with Japanese irises.

The story of the development of Japanese irises as a garden plant is incredibly long, yet beautifully simple. The major steps in the development of the modern form occurred hundreds of years ago in Japan, long before Western organizations such as ISHS and AIS were formed. By 1700, there were hundreds of cultivars of Japanese irises in Japan, but no registration system. So when Japanese irises were widely introduced in the Western world, few of them were registered. For the sake of documentation, the SJI has registered many of these cultivars. Much of this was done in the early 1990's.

In Eastern cultures, competition and awards are viewed much differently. The enticement of the awards system simply does not work, so there are still many Japanese irises in the East that have not been registered.

Most of us understand that the best sources for irises are specialty nurseries. Japanese irises have, for the most part, been available through mail-order nurseries--and some of the most respected mail-order nurseries have offered cultivars that are not registered. My favorite example is 'Nikko', which was offered by White Flower Farms for many years. In fact, it is the first Japanese iris to ever grace my garden.

#### JI ROBIN

Even though it was never registered, it can be found in the parentage of several cultivars which have been introduced. White Flower had a good run with 'Nikko'. Interestingly, since they never registered it, it was rarely, if ever sold by iris nurseries. Iris breeder George Clinton Bush (now deceased) once told me that he corresponded with Mr. Pettingill concerning registering 'Nikko', but to no avail.

More recently, Plant Delights Nursery has offered at least one unregistered cultivar. I have corresponded with Tony Avent concerning this issue, as have several other irisarians. I doubt that we will be any more successful in our attempts than George was with White Flower Farms. However, likelihood of failure is no reason not to try. I would recommend that if you ever have the opportunity to attend one of Mr. Avent's lectures that you ask him about it. Maybe he'll get tired of people asking him about it......

Dennis Hager

JOIN THE SJI E-MAIL ROBIN!!

SJI WEBSITE: http://www.socji.org/
http://www.socji.org/jirobin.htm

#### OF STAMENS AND STAMINA

Don't pigeonhole John White '39 as just another nonagenarian champion swimmer. "Swimming's not all I do, you know," White says during a pause in his daily laps at Tarbell Pool.

For White, who turns 93 in April, there's also a long-term project to hybridize a yellow Japanese iris, and genealogy work to trace the White family forebears further back than their arrival at Massachusetts Bay in the 1630s. And, it being winter, he's got to clear snow from his Minot property riding his 17-horsepower garden tractor with snow-blower.

Around Tarbell Pool, though, White is known as the nonagenarian swimmer. Younger observers simply marvel at his ability, while older swimmers have a more complex reaction: "Jealousy," smiles 80-year-old Professor Emeritus of Economics Ted Walther, another noonday swimmer.

A backstroke specialist since his days as Bates' swim captain 70 years ago, White has been among the best masters swimmers in his age group for about a decade. In 2006, he was crowned the top U.S. swimmer in the 50 and 200 backstroke (yards and meters).

For obvious reasons, the older age groups draw fewer swimmers, and sometimes it's not the speed of the event that's remarkable but its mere occurrence. Like in 2007, when White and fellow oldsters Norman Seagrave, Everett Hanke, and John Woods swam a 200-meter relay in their masters combined-age group (360-399 years). It had never been done before.

Though slowed by eye troubles, aches and pains, and a cold, White swam the 100-yard backstroke in competition last fall, and his 2:20.60 was good for a second ranking nationally in U.S. Masters Swimming. A 90-year-old pup currently holds the 2:01.80 top spot.

As with any competitive athlete, White's near-misses are as memorable as the triumphs. For a guy in his 10th decade, there's a lot to consider, like the race a few years ago when his foot slipped during a turn. "I went right under the lane divider and had to start from a dead

stop," White recalls. "I lost 5 seconds, and the guy who won only beat me by a second."

In short, White's approach to life seems to mock the old saying attributed to the late Claude Pepper, the longtime congressman from Florida: "I'm so old I don't even buy green bananas."

Take White's passions as a genealogist and iris breeder, both of which require an optimistic belief that time invested will yield a positive return.

Looking down the White family tree, he'll tell you that in the 1900s, his mother was expelled from Bates for ice skating on Lake Andrews on a Sunday. In the 1800s, White relatives once owned Mount David, and in the 1700s his great-great-grandfather began the Whiteholm dairy farm in Auburn, where Wal-Mart is now. John White ran the family farm for many years and was later involved in real estate.

With iris breeding, meanwhile, White's achievements include a pink iris hybrid, "Dirigo Pink Milestone," that in 2007 won the Japanese Iris Society's Payne Medal, the highest award that a Japanese iris can receive in its class.

White's current project is to create a yellow variety of the species Iris ensata, the true Japanese iris. "Everybody says it can't be done," he says. "Even the Japanese have quit trying it. The trouble is, they didn't think the problem through."

"There are no known yellow I. ensata cultivars," says Dennis Hager, president of the Society for Japanese Irises. True, there are yellow iris hybrids with I. ensata in their background, he says, but the yellow color "has never been attributed to the I. ensata parentage."

Andrew Wheeler '01 is a Ph.D. student at California's Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, home of the botany department of Claremont Graduate University. He's known White for years, thanks to their mutual iris interest. "In many respects, John is one of the youngest people I know," says Wheeler, who uses DNA sequencing to examine relationships among iris species.

He calls White's efforts "remarkable."

White is also trying to create a tetraploid iris, a plant with double the usual chromosomes. Such a genetic structure often yields desirable qualities like larger, thicker flowers with deeper colors. "Japanese breeders have massive fields of iris but they don't have tetraploid breeding lines because it's difficult and frustrating," Wheeler says. "They don't think they have enough time to do it. But John doesn't care about time."

Beneath White's photo in the 1939 Mirror is a telling quote: "Patience is not the least of the virtues."

"I am now in my third generation, which will have the yellow gene on both sides," he says. "So there's a chance when those bloom this summer I will get a yellow. That will be a true Japanese yellow iris.

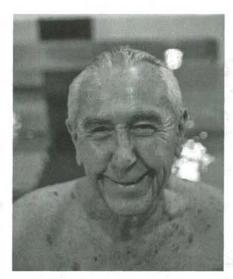
"And if I don't get a yellow, I will cross some of them again. I'll keep going until we get it. It's a slow process and you need luck. But if you get lucky, you get what you're after."

This story used information from an oral history provided by John White '39, part of the Muskie Oral History Project and now housed at the Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library.

John White's oral history for the Muskie Oral History Project http://bit.ly/1M62hf

SJI Editor Note: We appreciate permission to reprint this article from the Spring 2009 issue of Bates Magazine - H. Jay Burns, editor, Bates Magazine, Bates College, Office of Communications and Media Relations, Lewiston ME

Photo credit : Phyllis Graber Jensen / Bates College.



Iris breeder and masters swimmer John White '39 reaps the rewards of patience

#### ENSATA GARDENS AND THE SWMIS JI SHOW

Brock Heilman, Region 6

The day started with a 2 hour drive to Wedel's Nursery in Kalamazoo, MI to view one of the rarest of iris shows, a JI show. This is not an AIS sanctioned show. There are no piles of ribbons, rosettes, medals, or gift certificates; this show is borne from a passion for JIs and a commitment to get them into the public eye. In fact, it is the eyes of the public that choose a winning stalk.

We were first greeted by the warm familiar smiles of Jim and Jill Copeland, and Bob Bauer and John Coble of Ensata Gardens. They had staged a wonderful show that any JI enthusiast would be proud of. There were three large tables lined with stalk after stalk of some of the most beautiful blooms a gardener could dream up. Being especially drawn to pseudatas, I was pleasantly surprised to see they were so well represented that they merited a table of their own. Even less expected were Jill's beautiful LA seedlings.

Personal favorites here were 'John's Fancy', 'Electric Glow', 'Angelic Choir', and 'Saru Odori'. Several new varieties being introduced by Ensata this year were absolutely stunning and quite a few seedlings caught my eye as well. A dazzling LA, a huge pristine white JI (that I later learned won the show), and a pseudata that has been setting pods (could the end of pseudata fertility issues be in sight??) were all welcome additions from Jill.

(During a return visit to Ensata I was saddened to hear that the JI show wasn't well attended this year and that its continuance is in jeopardy. If you live anywhere near southwestern MI, I urge you to support this show. It is far too valuable to the iris world for us to sit back and watch its demise.)

After ogling the beautiful display, avoiding the loss of any self control by viewing the plants the nursery had to offer, and only buying a packet of I. missouriensis seed (the first iris seeds I've ever seen packaged for commercial sale), we were headed to Ensata Gardens. This would be my 4th visit in 3 years and it certainly won't be my last. I could lose myself there for days!

Upon exiting the vehicle I made a beeline for the pseudata seedlings. Bob had told me they were on the southern end of the field and to "just look for the color". He wasn't kidding. Those pseudata rows were overflowing with color! I had traveled with my mother and sister, and between the three of us there was a constant stream of "Did you see this one?!", "Come look at this!", and "Wow!" that lasted the whole visit.

There were so many breathtaking pseudata seedlings that I wonder how anyone could bring themselves to cull even one. A very tall white with mulberry signal and a faint violet blush around the falls, the closest to orange I've seen with black signal and yellow styles, a gold with burgundy signal and hot pink banding each fall. Take your pick, they've all got my attention.

Of the JI seedlings, one that really caught my attention was J02H-1. It had a very dark overall appearance. A white grounded 6F with heavy royal purple veining and bands (with white wire rim), dark halo around yellow signals and royal purple styles. Really nice! I'm told it will be saved and several in this batch have grown 5 bloom stalks from single fans just last June! Keep an eye out for things to come.

This is also where the '09 Ensata intros really shone. A show stalk can get your attention; a clump can knock your socks off! 'Wine Maiden', 'Victorian Trim', 'All The Style', and 'Christina's Sister' especially caught my attention. At the time of our visit, 'Wave Action' was just opening its first bloom and still managed to call me over.

Other standouts included: 'Prairie Twilight', 'John's Fancy' (it really is a gorgeous single bloom and phenomenal as a clump), 'Bob's Choice', 'Chidori-no-Mai', 'Bellender Blues' (chest high with 3 branches), and 'Yae-Gosan'.

For those that don't know, irises are not the only things that draw visitors. One could easily spend their entire visit enjoying the daylilies, hostas, Koi ponds, Ginkgo collection, or just soaking in the incredibly beautiful Victorian home that all these beds surround. Their collection amassed is a rare treasure and if you've considered a visit, but haven't made the trip, you're missing out on an incredible opportunity.

## **CULTURE CORNER**

#### FORCING JI TO BLOOM EARLIER

Willy Hublau, Belgium

Here in Belgium there isn't a lot of interest in JI's. In my small iris display garden I grow many different kinds of irises. Most of my visitors come by to see the TB irises. That means 3 or 4 weeks before the JI's are in bloom. JIs in full bloom during TB bloom season are a good way to promote them and for that reason forcing a group of Ensata's into earlier bloom is very helpful.

This is how I do it.

All my JI plants are growing in plastic pots, so it is easy to bring different plants to the place where I force them. I select 2 year old plants (divided the fall before) that belong to the early or early-mid flowering classes. I locate them on a wall with full sun from early morning until mid afternoon. I start the work in September; my way of working is to dig out 60 cm of the soil, to put in a layer of horse manure (25 cm) it warms up the soil and plant roots in winter. After that, I fill up the hole with the garden soil to let the manure and soil establish itself. Its best is to wait about 20 days before digging in the pots with the Iris plants. Be careful to have 10 cm soil between the manure and the bottom of the pots. If you planned to remove the blooming plants to a show or other display place, be careful for root damage on the blooming JI plants.

For that situation I work as follows. Dig in one or two sizes bigger pots in the soil and put the pots with the JI inside them (see fig 1). In this way it takes more time before the roots grow out of the pots and into the garden soil and it is easier to move them without damage. After planting I put a layer of wood chips mixed with pine needles between the pots as mulch. Next, build a cold frame construction around the forcing place. I wait until January before putting the cold frame glass on

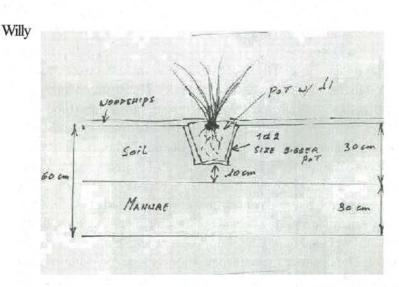
top of the construction. Be careful for the air circulation, don't close the glasses completely. I open the frames once a week during rainy weather. End February (Belgium!) I need to paint the construction white, to protect the plant for sun burning. During normal weather (no frost) starting in March I water every evening, being careful not to use to cold water.

Fertilizing and spraying for thrips or other pests is the same as for the regular garden plants.

I leave the cold frame construction around the forcing place. Never open the glass for a long time in heavy sun. I wait till we have over clouded or rainy weather; this helps the Irises to become more weather resistant. I remove the glass frames from the construction just before the first flower stalks hits the glass. From that moment on the Irises are growing and have the same needs as the regular garden plants.

By this way of working I had JI in bloom at the same moment as the TB Irises.

I hope one of you has a better way to do it, I am waiting for suggestions.



#### **CULTURE CORNER**

#### SUCCESS IN FORCING FLOWERS OF TWO JAPANESE IRIS CULTIVARS

Wray M. Bowden Simcoe, Ontario, Canada

In the fall of 1978, I decided to pot up a few fans of Japanese Iris cultivars with the aim of trying to force them into bloom under artificial lights in the cellar during the winter. I used plastic pots: a six inch diameter pot and five inches of soil for one fan of cultivar Galatea; and an 8g inch pot and 3'/ inches of soil for one fan of Royal Pageant. These rhizomes were the last of all my plants during the first week of September. I used the following soil mixture in the pots: five parts of loam topsoil, one part peat moss, and a small amount of sulphur. In order to keep the soil acidic as well as to supply mineral nutrients, the pots were watered well several times with a solution of Stern's Miracid (30-10-10) at the rate of one teaspoon per quart of water during the period September, 1978, to February, 1979. The plants were potted during the first week of September and left outside at ground level until December 1, 1978. The soil was kept moist but not soaking. By December 1, the soil in the pots was frozen.

On December first, the pots were transferred to bench level in the cellar under artificial lights. I noted that some roots were protruding through the holes at the bases of the pots. The artificial lights consisted of two 40 watt flourescent Westinghouse Agro-lights (tubes) and three 100 watt incandescent bulbs. An automatic timer was used and set so that the lights were on for 15 hours of each 24 hours. The cellar temperature ranged from 63 degrees F. to 74 degrees F. Each pot was placed in a shallow tray which always had some water in it. The pots were watered every day and the soil was flooded at each watering. The pots were placed along the side of the area receiving most light. After several weeks, I noted the shoots of new leaf-blades just above soil level. The distance from the new shoots to the Agro-lites was about two feet. As the plants grew taller, they were illuminated sideways from the

two Agro-Lites and two of the incandescent bulbs. The Galatea plant grew so tall that the top ten inches was above the lower edge of the light fixture.

The plants grew rapidly and by mid-January the leaves were quite long and a deep green. By January 19 I felt a small swelling near the base of each plant. By February 2, each plant had produced a flowering stalk with a terminal green bud. The stalks continued to elongate and the buds became larger and firmer. When the plants produced flower\$, the height of the flowering stems was two feet for Royal Pageant and two feet six inches for Galatea, measured on February 14, 1979. The Galatea bud produced only one flower while the Royal Pageant bud produced two flowers. The first two flowers each lasted three days. The flowers were reasonably good in quality and each plant showed the expected cultivar characteristics for flower colour and pattern of veins as the plants produced outside in the garden during July, 1978. The forced flowers seemed somewhat smaller than the flowers produced in the July garden. The measurement for the first flowers grown inside on February 15 were 61- inches across for Royal Pageant and 6 inches across for Galatea. The second flower of Royal Pageant was slow in developing; it proved to be a small, abnormal flower when examined on February 23 and did not open but gradually atrophied. It was, of course, a real treat to see these plants in bloom inside when it was winter outside with all the ice, snow and cold!

The leaves of the forced plants seemed to me to be narrower and shorter compared with July garden plants. The leaves were deep green at least until mid-January. By early February, some of the newer leaves appeared to be lighter green than normal and a few leaves showed yellowish-green areas. Perhaps the soil was not acidic enough, or there may have been a chemical imbalance, or there may have been a deficiency in iron or nitrogen.

The flower of Galatea was pollinated with pollen from Royal Pageant. The ovary persisted until February 26 and then dropped off. It would be worthwhile to cross cultivars inside that are known to produce viable seeds outdoors. I would think that ideal greenhouse conditions should make it possible to make successful crosses with forced flowers.

I plan on bringing more potted rhizomes inside next winter for forcing. In assessing the first attempts this past season, I suggest that the following experiments can be tried:

- 1. size of pots, perhaps as small as three inches.
- 2. clay pots rather than plastic.
- Compare rhizomes potted in September with rhizomes of the same cultivars potted in May. The May plants might have a much stronger root system.
- 4. Use more fertilizer to keep the soil acidic as well as to provide much more NPK nutrients. I think the solution of Stern's Miracid could be used every three weeks, perhaps at the rate of half a teaspoon per quart of water. Dilute solutions of 20-20-20 or 15-30-15 could also be used as a supplement to keep the level of nutrients high.
- 5. Since the plants grow so tall, there is a problem with artificial lighting in that it is difficult to place the plants so that they receive as much light as possible. It would be worthwhile to try forcing some Japanese Iris cultivars in a well-lit greenhouse or in a greenhouse that has the usual light as well as supplementary artificial light.
- 6. The pots could be left outside in the cold longer before transferring to the cellar, perhaps as late as December 15 or December 31.
- 7. Some of the other cultivars that bloom the best in the July garden might yield good results.
- 8. More water could be provided by flooding the plants two inches deep, with water each day. A deep tray would be needed, as the water drains out of the pots after each watering.

Perhaps some Botanical Gardens or flower shows would be interested in displaying forced Japanese Irises during the winter season, it should be possible to develop a fairly accurate schedule so that one would know how many days would be required to bring the plants into bloom after bringing them inside for forcing under the artificial lights.

Reprinted from: *The REVIEW of the Society For Japanese Irises*, Volume 16, Number 1, **Spring 1979** 

Editor's Note: This topic seems to be of long-standing interest and we would encourage more reports of successes in the "Forcing of JIs" from our readers.

#### LITTLE BOW PINK BACKGROUND

by Don Delmez, St. Charles, MO

Me oh, My oh! When I sat down to write 'Little Bow Pink' pedigree, it brought back a lot of good 'ole memories. Her parentage all came from imports from Japan. I received two orders from Kamo Nursery in the '90's, which gave my breeding program a shot in the arm, as it were.

(We will now refer to Little Bow Pink as "her" or "she" in this writing.) She was a hit from the very start. There was a row of seedling in my country garden for the '95 Convention here in St. Louis, and she and some of her sisters were in full bloom. It was a difficult time, so John and Bob (Ensata Garden) were asked to evaluate them. We chose three out of that cross to line out, ending up with two in the following years. One was a deeper pink, but was slow to increase and was not quite as vigorous a grower as her sister.

Our choice pick bloomed and performed for us so well that all we had to do now was find the name to fit this beauty. Names are always difficult to come up with! "Little Bow Pink" seemed to fit this one quite well, and if you grow her you may see why.

For the most part she blooms mid to early season, which has always been a goal for us. Another good quality of this iris is that she's a good parent and produces some great offspring. We are going to introduce one of her children soon. You may keep your eyes open for this one.

We are so proud of her and very appreciative of that very special award she received-the Payne Medal!

#### **EDITOR'S ESSAY**

NEWS FLASH! Gormleys have relocated to Florida!

If you have been wondering "where is my Fall 2009 issue of the SJI REVIEW when it is now Winter?" Relocation is the reason! My "To Do List" expanded to include all the details of a major move! After gardening in the Midwest, first in Missouri for 18 years and most recently in the "Black Gold Soil" of Iowa for over two years,, we moved in November to De Leon Springs, FL

John Coble did a very funny video clip for the last SJI Convention in Kalamazoo 2008 showing the Gormley (AKA "Ma and Pa Kettle") move to Dubuque and this was similar! Three cats, two vehicles, moving van and a multitude of indoor and outdoor plants: bags both paper and plastic, and planters of Iowa dirt with miniature hosta, rock garden plants, miniature daylilies and irises, and tons of gardening equipment including the riding mover in a U-haul!

We know iris gardening will be a "challenge" to say the least in Zone 8a but we have a large lot in this small town and lots of determination. Good news is that it will NEVER be 30 below zero with 76 inches of snow here! Also we have a blank palette for landscaping, some shade and no rocks or alligators! Digging holes for plants/ containers will be easy - my favorite method of gardening is "Point and Click" with me doing the Point and someone else, usually Tom, doing the Click!

Any advice on growing iris, especially JIs, in this sandy, warm temperate soil will be greatly appreciated! New topic for "CULTURE CORNER" coming in the next issue!

Y'all stop and see us if you come to Florida!

Rita

(who knows what "Grow Where You Are Planted" really means!)

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### John White-Minot, ME - 7-26-09

#### No yellow ensatas this year!

I had seven T3,s this year, four three falls and three six falls. All were white. The flowers were 7 to 7 and a half inches across. Two or three had creamy styles, and a couple had a hint of yellow at the base of the falls.

I have made a lot of crosses this year. T3, s back onto the T2, s, and crossing the T3, s with each other, crossing T3, s with Sakai no Ogon and making the reverse cross, Sakai No Ogon on the T3, s. All these crosses will give the fourth generation of T4, s. Hopefully these may give a yellow ensata.

Have had a great bloom on the ensatas and some interesting new seedlings. We have over twice the normal rainfall this summer which has made it difficult working in the garden.

#### Ensata Gardens, Galesburg, Michigan

A gardener asked John Coble a question:

My yard is mostly shade but I do have some water garden containers made out of horse feeding troughs that I was wondering might be acceptable for Japanese iris. I was worried about over wintering them out of the ground; how do you or the Japanese growers do this and do you recommend it? PS Will I sacrifice 1st years bloom this way?

John answered back:

If you grow JI in containers in your pond or above ground in a horse tank, you must remove the pots of JI in late fall and dig a hole and bury the pot in the ground over winter. Cut the foliage off. Pots of JI above ground will die quickly when the pot freezes (but not if it is in the ground!!). Then in spring you can put the pot back into the water. (put some new fertilize spikes down into the pot first).

First year plants do not bloom well, no matter when you plant them. JI always bloom best on 2 and 3 year old plants. Or if you are doing pot culture in water, repot (unpot, divide and replant and fertilize) immediately right after bloom (early July in New York). Then you will have the best chance of getting bloom the next year.

# **SJI AUDIT**

Upon changing Treasurers for the Society For Japanese Irises from Catherine Button to Jody Nolin in 2008, Jim Copeland submits the following report:

5-26-09

SJI treasurer Jody Nolin asked me to audit the SJI accounts. I have completed the audit and no discrepancies were found. Jim Copeland

#### **SJI NOMINATING REPORT 2009**

The Nominating Committee is pleased to offer the names of the following members to serve as Officers of the Society for Japanese Irises

President - Dennis Hager

Vice President - Patrick Spence

Secretary - Peter Weixlmann

Treasurer - Jody Nolin

Director at Large - Lorena Reid (thru 2013)

Nominating Committee - Terry Aitken (thru 2012)

There being no additional nominations, this slate is duly elected. effective 1-1-2010

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Warner, Jim Copeland and Bob Bauer

IF YOUR MAILING ENVELOPE SHOWS EXPIRATION DATE OF 1-1-2010, THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE OF THE SJI REVIEW!!!

PLEASE RENEW PROMPTLY!!!

#### CLARENCE MAHAN, McLean, VA

I have been working on a book which will reproduce the 100 woodblock prints in the famed Yokohama Nursery wholesale catalogue accompanied by a short essay about the iris and its name.

Editor's Note: We know you will enjoy this essay and print from Clarence's upcoming book which will be of great historical significance to the Japanese Iris community.

### No. 46. Bunjikai

Although the old Edo variety 'Bunjikai' is no longer in commerce, there are many outstanding six-fall Japanese iris cultivars with the same form and color pattern. One of the finest, and a perennial favorite of Japanese iris connoisseurs, is 'Geisha Gown.' This popular iris was bred by Fred Maddocks of Fair Oaks, California.

The name 'Bunjikai' means "World of Cultured Government." The conflict between the Confucian ideal of government by scholars, which in Japanese is *bunji*, and the reality of military government is a major theme in Japanese history. The period 1185 to 1190 in Japanese history is known as the Bunji reign era of the Emperor Go-Toba. In 1192, the emperor, who at the time was only twelve years old, was forced to bestow the title shogun on Minamoto Yoritomo. This was the beginning of the military rule of Japan that would endure for almost seven centuries.

Emperor Go-Toba was an accomplished calligrapher, painter, musician, and poet. His name evokes the ideal of cultured government to the Japanese. On the other hand, Go-Toba also loved swords. He gathered an assembly of expert swordsmiths in Kyoto to teach him the craft. Literature on Japanese swords, which is voluminous, credits Go-Toba with launching a "golden age" of sword-making.

Go-Toba was forced into retirement by the shogun in 1198. He assumed the role of cloistered (retired) emperor, but with many restrictions placed on his authority. Go-Toba led a rebellion against the shogunate in 1221. Known as the Jokyu War, the rebellion was of short duration. Go-Toba's forces lost and he was exiled to the Oki Islands.

Two Shinto shrines in Shimamoto in Osaka Prefecture are dedicated to Emperor Go-Toba. His story is told in the *Heike monogatari* (*The Tale of the Heike*.) The opening words of this classic history are some of the most beautiful in Japanese literature:

The sound of the Gion Shôja bells echoes the impermanence of all things; the color of the sâla flowers reveals the truth that the prosperous must decline. The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night; the mighty fall at last, they are as dust before the wind. <sup>1</sup>

Go-Toba's most famous poem echoes the opening paragraph of the *Heike monogatari*:

For some men I grieve-Some men are hateful to me-And this wretched world To me, weighted down with care, Is a place of misery. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Helen Craig McCullough (trans.), *The Tale of the Heike* (Stanford University Press, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Clay MacCauley, The English translation of Ogura Hyakunin Isshu from Hyakunin-Isshu (Single Songs of a Hundred Poets) and Nori no Hatsu-Ne (The Dominant Note of the Law) (Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1917).

