



American Iris Society

**Colorado
Region 20**

**Lowell Baumunk's
Hans & Jacob Sass Award**

Midsummer Night's Dream (Baumunk '99)
Story on page 8. Photo by Lowell Baumunk

Fall 2006



Mid-America Garden in Salem, Oregon

Photo by Lowell Baumunk during the Reigning Iris 2006 Convention.



Hudson Gardens in Littleton, Colorado

Photo by Stephen Blecher during the 2006 iris blooming season.

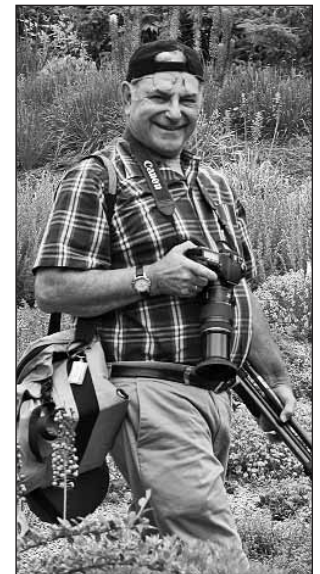
Local Photographers Are AIS National Photo Contest Winners

The first annual AIS Photo Contest produced an outpouring of fine entries from members throughout the world.



Two Region 20 members submitted winning photos. Congratulations to Lowell Baumunk, winner of first place and runner-up in the **Photos of Events** category, plus two honorable mention awards in the **Close-Up** category.

And congratulations to Stephen Blecher for an honorable mention award in the **Iris In Landscaping** category. Do these guys look happy, or what!



Their winning photos are shown on the left inside cover.

Each winner received an introduced iris from a Region 13 hybridizer. The first place winners received an AIS annual membership or extension and their photos will be published in the AIS Bulletin, and on the AIS Web site.

You can view all the winning photos on the Region 14 Web site, www.aisregion14.org. The contest judges have made their final selections and the winners have been announced. Now, you can vote by e-mail for the photos you like best. Review the contest photos and note your favorites in each of the five categories, including the first place winner. Then vote for your choice in each category by sending one e-mail with up to five selections (one for each category) to the photo contest coordinator, Kitty Loberg at loberg@adelphia.net. After December 31, the favorite online vote results will be posted on the Region 14 Web site.

Content

Local Photographers are AIS Photo Contest Winners	1
RVP Fall 2006 Message	3
Editor's Message	5
Welcome New Members	6
Thank You Contributors	6
TBIS Denver Meeting & Region 20, 2007 Garden Tour	6
2007 Region 20 Events Calendar	7
Events Calendar Contacts	7
About 'Midsummer Night's Dream'	8
2006 Region 20 Iris Show Report	9
Whither The American Iris Society? Part 1	10
AIS National Convention – <i>Reigning Iris</i> , Portland 2006	13
Elmohr Celebrates 40th Anniversary – <i>With Frank Foster</i>	24
Deserving Duo Receives 2006 Nina Winegar Award	25
In Memoriam – <i>John Knudtson</i>	26
Region 20, 2006 AIS Iris Symposium Results	27
A Few Good Irises, Part 9 – <i>More About Hardy Irises</i>	28
A Book Review – <i>Irises, A Gardener's Encyclopedia</i>	29
The Elusive Pure Red	30
Fall Meeting – <i>Bill Burselon's Confessions of an Iris Grower</i>	31
Condolences – <i>To Betty Roberts and Family</i>	32
Officers	33
Behind the Scenes, The Short List	34
Join or Renew AIS & Section Memberships Online	34
Region 20 Nonprofit Status and Objectives	34
Financial Statement Summary	35
2006 Garden Tours	36
Region 20 Hybridizers' Introductions	Back Cover

For newsletter corrections, ad placement, or article submittal, contact Glenn Guenterberg (editor) or Patrice Van Vleet (design, layout and production) at clrimage@comcast.net or call us at Clear Images Design and Photography, 303-933-0663. Mailing address: 10387 Totem Run, Littleton, CO 80125. **Non-member newsletter price: \$5 each.**



The RVP's Message, Fall 2006

By Stephen Blecher

Hello Everybody,

This was another eventful year, highlighted by the AIS National Convention in Portland, Oregon. Oregon is generally considered the iris capital of the world, with its large commercial gardens and leading hybridizers. Over 1000 people attended the convention, and were rewarded with spectacular blooms at all the gardens. It rained on and off the whole week, but nobody seemed to mind. Since the convention overlapped our own bloom season, we had to plan our own activities to avoid conflicts, so the Region 20 Garden Tour was the weekend before the convention and the Iris Show was a week afterward.

This year's tour, organized by Lisa Story, was north of Denver and included Long's Gardens, Susan Hannon's garden, and Bev Kroeker's. Most of us hadn't seen Susan's garden before, and we were very impressed with the way she used irises as part of her overall landscaping plan. The Iris Show, chaired by Betty Roberts, was a bit sparse this year, but we were fortunate that some exhibitors had late-blooming gardens. In addition, we had a nice group of seedlings and a number of Siberian irises. In 2007, the show will be on May 26 and 27. If we have an early bloom season, like we had during the past few years, the tall bearded should be at their peak and there should be a good assortment of medians.

The Rhizome Sale at Hudson Gardens netted more sales than in 2005, in part because more people were aware of the new location. Gross proceeds in 2006 were about \$3500. In 2007 the sale will again be at Hudson Gardens on the last weekend in July. We are hoping for further increases in sales, as more and more people become familiar with the date and location.

This has been a great year for Colorado hybridizers. Lowell Baumunk won the Sass Medal for best Intermediate Bearded iris, with 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' plus an AM and four HMs for his other introductions. Rob Stetson won an HM and an HM runner up, and Dave Miller and Tom Magee each won an HM.

The success of all the AIS events and activities depends on the efforts of a large number of volunteers who contribute their time and labor. If I try to list the name of every person who volunteered for one or more

activities, I would surely miss somebody, but on behalf of Region 20 I would like to thank:

The Iris Show volunteers who registered the entries, assisted the judges and tallied the winners, the panels of judges, the members of the Hospitality Committee, and all the people who entered exhibits for the show.

The people who represented AIS at Echter's Echxpo and Tagawa's, giving gardening advice and promoting the Society.

The people who worked at the display bed at Hudson Gardens planting, digging, weeding, cleaning, fertilizing, installing signs, etc. We had a spectacular bloom season this spring.

The people who dug and donated rhizomes, cleaned and labeled them, and packaged them for the Iris Sale. The people who set up the tent and tables, assisted customers, and put everything away after the sale.

Our newsletter co-editors, Glenn Guenterberg and Patrice Van Vleet and everybody who contributed articles and pictures.

Lynda and Brian Love who prepared all the event notices and maintained the Web site.

The Region 20 Board of Directors who planned our events, managed the budget, and performed numerous volunteer services.

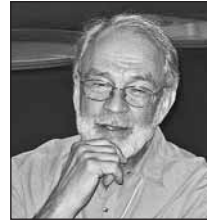
The volunteers and officers of our regional affiliates, the Elmohr Iris Society, Loomis Iris Society, and the Northern Colorado Iris and Daylily Club.

Congratulations to Russ and Carol Eacker, recipients of the Nina Winegar Award for outstanding service to AIS Region 20. Russ has been President of the Elmohr Iris Society for several years, manager of the Dr. Loomis Trial Garden in Colorado Springs, and Chairman of Judges Training. Carol has been supplying the door prizes for all our General Membership meetings. Both Russ and Carol have been members of the Board of Directors, and are active judges who have judged at the iris shows in Region 20 for many years.

The 2006 iris season is drawing to a close, the new rhizomes are putting out leaves, and I just drained my sprinkler system. Hope to see all of you, and your gardening enthusiast friends, at our winter meeting on Saturday, February 24, 2007.

Sincerely, Stephen Blecher

RVP Region 20 AIS



Editor's Message

By Glenn Guenterberg

Five of you contributed musings for the feature article, *Reigning Iris*, on page 13, a collection of impressions from the May, 2006 AIS Convention in Portland, Oregon. Richard Nolde has written a two-part article, on page 10, about his new garden that sprouted almost overnight into an iris show place, plus thought-provoking ideas on how to stimulate renewed interest in our society. The article on page 24 celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Elmohr Iris Society. Many other members wrote articles and contributed photos. Thank you all! Your efforts make our newsletter worth reading.

Continuing, persistent effort by Steve Blecher has resulted in an August letter from the Internal Revenue Service verifying that Region 20 is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Tax Code. This means that contributions to our organization are tax deductible. The board of directors will continue to pursue other possible benefits that may be available as a result of our federal exempt status, such as a Colorado non-profit sales tax exemption and non-profit postage rates. Each of these benefits requires additional approval by state and federal agencies. Thank you, Steve, for keeping on keeping on!

The cover photo is 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' IB, Baumunk, 1999, the '06 Sass Medal winner, and is the second in a series of cover photos of irises by Colorado hybridizers. An article on page 8 describes how this iris came to be.

The Region 20 Web site has been updated, thanks to Brian and Lynda Love. Refer your friends to www.geocities.com/aisregion20 to view the spring 2006 newsletter in PDF format and for information about our activities. After the printed copies have been mailed, this issue will also be available online.

Two of our members submitted winning photos to the AIS National Photo Contest. Read about it on page 1 and see their stunning photos on the inside front cover.

Bring your friends to our winter meeting, on February 24, the program will be a narrated, digital slide presentation of photos taken by our members at the 2006 AIS Convention. In this issue you can read their musings and see a sampling of photos on pages 13 – 23. In February, you will see the convention gardens in glorious wide-screen color. I will

contact each of you, who attended the convention, to gather your photos for the program.

Keep your minds in gear and your articles coming. We will print all the iris news that's fit to print. For the spring newsletter, the submittal deadline is **March 5**. Finally, remember... iris growers raise the flag! (From Steve Blecher, heard quoting an anonymous irisarian.)

Announcements

WELCOME — New Members!

If we haven't already met you, we look forward to getting to know you at our February 24, winter meeting (see calendar, on page 7, for details).

Mary Bruner, from Dolores

Joy Jackson, from Golden

Laurie Kunze, from Grand Junction

John & Karen Streeter, from Centennial

Jean E. Thyfault, from Rocky Ford

Lucille Tourney, from Greenwood Village

Doug & Linda Vogel, from Franktown



New members (left to right), Lucille Tourney and Linda and Doug Vogel, attending the fall Reg. 20 meeting.

A Very Special THANK YOU to All Who Contributed to this Edition

Stephen Blecher	Betty Roberts	Lynda Love
Lowell Baumunk	Carol Eacker	Russ Eacker
Jim Artzberger	Darice Zimmerman	David Miller
Richard Nolde	Catherine Long Gates	Lisa Story
		Rose McClain

TBIS Is Coming To Colorado — June 1 & 2, 2007

Dave Miller announces the Tall Bearded Iris Society (TBIS) is having their 2007 spring meeting in Denver. On Saturday, June 2, four hybridizers; Bob Van Liere, Lois Olson, David Miller, and Lowell Baumunk, have agreed to open their gardens for an all-day, bus-only garden tour.

In addition to touring the hybridizers' gardens, the bus tour will include lunch at the beautifully maintained Region 20 iris beds of Hudson Gardens. Immediately following the tour, TBIS will have their spring meeting and program in room 102 of the Holiday Inn – Denver West Hotel. For those needing a place to stay, a special hotel room rate has been arranged. The best part is, you don't have to be a TBIS member to participate in this enjoyable experience — being an iris lover is all that is required!

2007 Region 20 Events Calendar

Date	Sponsor	Event (Contacts listed at bottom of page)
Sat. Feb. 24 12 P.M. - 4 P.M.	Region 20 Bring friends	Winter Meeting , potluck lunch & Portland Convention slide presentation— Gates Hall, DBG.
Sat. Mar. 10 12 P.M.	Elmohr Open to public	General Meeting , Rockrimmon Branch – 832 Village Center Dr. Call Darice for directions.
Fri. Mar. 16	Loomis	Planning Committee Meeting , Karen's Office, Ordway
Sat. Mar. 31 1 P.M. - 4 P.M.	Region 20	Spring Board Meeting , Waring House (this may be changed to a classroom) for specific location call Steve Blecher.
Sat. Apr. 14 12 P.M.	Elmohr Open to public	General Meeting , Rockrimmon Branch – 832 Village Center Dr. Call Darice for directions.
Sat. May 12 12 P.M.	Elmohr Open to public	General Meeting , Rockrimmon Branch – 832 Village Center Dr. Call Darice for directions.
Sun. May 20 6 A.M. 10 A.M. 1 P.M.	Loomis Set up Judging Open to public	Flower Show , Gobin Building, meet 6 A.M. to groom bloomstocks & set up for show. Judging starts at 10 A.M. Open to public 1 P.M.
Sat. May 26 12:30 - 5 P.M.	Region 20 Open to public	Reg. 20 Iris Show , Mitchell Hall, DBG—setup Fri. May 25, 3 - 5 P.M. Receive/entry placements, judging & placing winning entries, Sat. 7 A.M. – noon. Open to public (details in left column).
Sun. May 27 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.	Open to public	
Saturday Jun. 2 7A.M.	TBIS and Region 20 Bus Departs	TBIS & Region 20 Garden Tour , four local hybridizers open their gardens to a bus-only garden tour (details on page 6).
Fri. Jun. 8 Sat. Jun. 9 12 P.M. - 4 P.M.	Elmohr For show setup Open to public	Iris Show , (confirm setup times & location with Darice Zimmerman, see contact info. below) Sand Creek Branch of Penrose Library, Colorado Springs, Colorado.
Sat. Jul. 28 9 A.M. - 4 P.M. Sun. Jul. 29 9 A.M. - 1 P.M.	Region 20 Open to public Open to public	Iris Sale , Hudson Gardens – Ph. 303-797-8565, Fri. July 27, setup/receive rhizomes 1 - 4 P.M. & Sat. 7 - 9 A.M. Open to the public (see details).

Event-Related Contacts

Region 20 questions, contact Stephen Blecher, **303-798-9103**
Elmohr activities & directions, call Darice Zimmerman, **719-630-0595**
Loomis events & location inquiries, call Rose McClain, **719-254-3462**
NCIDC meeting questions, contact Dwaine Kurtz, **970-352-2044**
Iris Garden Tour – June 2, 2007 contact Dave Miller, **303-277-0358**



About 'Midsummer Night's Dream'

By Lowell Baumunk

There is one fact about 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (shown on the front cover) that I think is truly amazing: It was the first seedling of mine ever to bloom!

1992 was the first spring that irises bloomed in my new garden in Douglas County. I had purchased rhizomes of some recommended new varieties and was intending to make my first attempts at hybridizing. One of my early goals was to

work with reblooming irises, and to this purpose I had obtained Schreiner's tall bearded 'Best Bet' and Ensminger's standard dwarf 'What Again,' along with several others.

I duly made some SDB crosses in mid-May and was making TB crosses in early June when I was surprised by a very late bloomstalk on 'What Again.' I applied pollen from 'What Again' on a blossom of 'Best Bet' with the idea of getting an intermediate rebloomer. That cross led to a nice seedpod with about 20 fat seeds.

That first year of hybridizing was the only time I started my seeds indoors under lights. Several baby plants from the 'Best Bet' X 'What Again' cross poked through the potting soil in January. All my new seedlings seemed big enough to plant outside by April, and I guess they were, but they were not ready to cope with the bright sun and cold nights. Consequently many of the new seedlings died, but there were about 10 survivors from the reblooming intermediate cross.

Throughout the summer of 1993 the new babies grew rapidly. We must have had a mild autumn that year because I was very pleasantly surprised to find bloom stalks on two plants in October. The weather continued to cooperate as I eagerly awaited the first bloom from a hybrid iris of my own. When it finally opened, it was a smooth dark purple self. Cold temperatures were predicted that night, so I cut the stalk and brought it inside.

Well . . . over the next few years that seedling showed itself to be a dependable midsummer and autumn rebloomer here in Colorado. As I learned more about irises I realized that the deep vibrant color, the lack of haft markings and the wide ruffled form were very positive attributes also.

I sent rhizomes to iris growers all across the country and received a lot of positive feedback. Eventually, in 1999, now named 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' it became one of my first two iris introductions.

Editor's Note: 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (cover photo) won the 2006 Hans and Jacob Sass Medal, highest AIS award for an Intermediate Bearded iris. 'Midsummer' outdistanced Marky Smith's 2006 runners-up winners by a large margin. Congratulations, Lowell!

2006 Region 20 Show Report

By Betty Roberts, Show Chairwoman

Total Exhibitors: 14, Total Entries: 67, Number of Varieties/Cultivars: 61
Best Specimen of Show: 'Introspection,' TB, exhibited by Lowell Baumunk
Seedling Judged Most Worthy: 'King of Light,' TB, originated by Lowell Baumunk

Silver Medal:* Patrice Van Vleet — **Bronze Medal:**** Lowell Baumunk

Best Design of Show: exhibited by Betty Roberts

Winner of Sweepstakes for Most Artistic Design: Betty Roberts

Section Certificates are awarded to the winner of the most blue ribbons in each section of a show that has competition in more than one type of iris, provided there are at least three exhibitors and there is competition in at least five varieties/cultivars.

Most Blue Ribbons

Section A – TB: Patrice Van Vleet

Section C – Median: Patrice Van Vleet

Section D – Beardless: Patrice Van Vleet

Section F – Historic: Rebecca and Ed Schlottach

Best of Section

Section A: Lowell Baumunk for 'Introspection'

Section C: Patrice Van Vleet for 'Kashmiriana'

Section D: Patrice Van Vleet for 'Over in Gloryland'

Section F: Lowell Baumunk for 'Quaker Lady'



Region 20 Awards

Anne and Tom Johnson Memorial Award (exhibitor of 3 – 10 entries earning highest percentage of blue ribbons) — won by Lowell Baumunk

Best Plicata: Lowell Baumunk for 'Introspection'

Best Median: Patrice Van Vleet for 'Bumblebee Delight'

Best Historic: Lowell Baumunk for 'Quaker Lady'

Best Pink: Lynda Love for 'Quiet Reflections'

For Horticultural Entries: *Most blue ribbons. **Second most blue ribbons.



Whither the American Iris Society?

Part I

By Richard Nolde

I certainly hope that our society, which is dedicated to the promotion of iris-growing and the education of the general public about irises, will not dry up and shrivel away like one of the leaves on a neglected iris plant in Grandma's garden. As a relative newcomer to the iris-growing world, I would like to offer a few observations on how joining the American Iris Society has enhanced my enjoyment of this wonderful flower and the problems faced by the AIS in attracting new members. I don't claim to be an authority on irises or the AIS, but I am keen to learn more about irises and I want to see our society flourish.

I began growing irises only three years ago, due in large part to a gift of irises from my best friend's wife, which coincided with finding a box of free irises beside the road on my way home from work one day. I had seen irises on the East Coast before moving to Colorado seven years ago, but I had a very limited appreciation of the variety of types, sizes, and colors available, and no knowledge of how to grow them.

I planted my first iris bed in early October after tearing out a patch of grass and importing some compost and good dirt from the back yard. The following spring, only one plant in that bed bloomed, but there were multiple blooms lasting over a week altogether. I later learned that the cultivar was 'Stairway to Heaven,' fitting indeed since with it I began a climb to undreamed-of heights in gardening.

The following year, most of the irises in that bed bloomed and I was dizzy with success. On a lark, I wrote a thank you note and put it in the mailbox in front of the house where I had found the box of rhizomes beside the road. Imagine my delight when my unknown benefactress called and invited me to come and dig more irises from her garden.* She has a large garden and many of her



Richard Nolde's front yard iris garden, in full bloom, replaced the standard lawn landscaping.

irises were still in need of thinning. I was happy to oblige and after many hours, I returned home with a pickup truck full of irises. Two days later, my front lawn had been transformed into a garden crammed full of irises. I was hooked, and soon after seeing the AIS show at the Denver Botanic Gardens last year, I joined the AIS.

I attended the fall meeting and met some of the growers after watching a slide show that revealed more varieties of irises than I could have imagined. In the past year, I've gotten to know some of the local members of the iris society and worked with the other volunteers at the display bed in Hudson Gardens and the annual iris sale. I have bought irises from the local growers and lost sleep and cash to glossy catalogs from Oregon. At this point, turf grass has become an endangered species in my yard as I add more irises and other kinds of flowers wherever there is enough sunlight. I'm learning by trial and error, reading, talking to my fellow irisarians, and so far my only real frustration has been in trying to identify some of the cultivars that were not named or those whose labels washed off during the winter.



Richard getting good iris growing advice from famous hybridizer Tom Magee at Long's Garden.

Why is the AIS membership declining when I find growing irises so fascinating? Why do new members join and then fade away after a year or so? Perhaps I'm not your typical new iris grower? While I am plowing up grass to put in more irises as fast as I can, AIS membership is not following the example of well nourished rhizomes with two or three increases each year.

Our growers are getting older and many young people seem to have the attention span of a butterfly, which, unlike a butterfly, doesn't bode well for cultivating flowers, much less a species that blooms for only a few weeks each season. Iris-growing scores pretty far down the instant-gratification scale and hanging out with oldsters in an organization where there is neither online live-action gaming nor instant messaging just doesn't cut it for most young people. Volunteering is down in many areas and nature seems to have been supplanted by computer animation and

sports contests. Hardly anyone has the time to take care of a garden and it seems like everyone hires out the lawn care. And yet, in spite of this doleful outlook, there are many beautiful gardens in Colorado and irises are well represented in them. Perhaps gardening, and therefore iris growing, is just one of the accouterments of a more settled lifestyle that only comes with age, and today's youth will eventually come to appreciate its rewards. The sky may not be falling.

What's an irisarian to do? How can we capture the heart of a larger public whose knowledge of irises is often limited to drive-by glances or a handful of varieties at the big-box stores? Do we need a new fan club with cheerleaders like the big sports teams? Should we put up Web sites with lurid pictures of iris pollination? Do we hawk our wares in chic boutiques and try to make iris-growing fashionable and upscale? Perhaps, but I think we could take a page, so to speak, from the online world where the audience is vast, if you can reach it.

While working at the AIS sale this summer, buyers frequently asked if there were online listings of the irises they were buying that would include pictures and information about when they bloomed. We had to say, yes and no. There are large listings at grower sites and garden sites, but not every iris you buy at the AIS sale can be found online, nor will there always be a picture of it. I know that even when you find a photograph, the quality and color of the image can vary tremendously (as can the flower under different growing conditions) and sometimes the image isn't even of the named cultivar. I spent many hours searching online and in books for pictures of my unidentified irises, trying to match the pictures with the names in the master list my generous donor had provided. I was very fortunate to have fellow AIS members come by to look at my irises in bloom and they tried to help as well, but there are still many unidentified fabulous irises (UFIs) in my garden. Even with a dozen books and catalogs from the big growers, it isn't easy to make a positive identification.

Next time, in Part 2: Identifying That Iris from Grandma's Garden

*Editor's note: *Lucille Tourney has since rejoined the AIS after a few years away. Her large garden in Greenwood Village is a neighborhood highlight. Richard has transformed his entire suburban lawn into a showcase iris garden with raised beds, an underground soaker watering system, and sandstone walls. Rich soil, ample water, and heat reflected from the walls of his two-story house extend his bloom season in spring and into the fall with substantial rebloom.*

AIS National Convention Reigning Iris — Portland, Oregon

Impressions by Region 20 Members Who Attended

Members of our local iris society flew, drove, somehow got to the convention. For Patrice and me, the garden tours were the raison d'être. Three days, nine gardens, full buses, little sun, a lot of rain, beautiful irises, mud, lots of friendly conversation: reasons enough to enjoy each day and to bring back good memories. So, we asked the intrepid travelers to record their thoughts about the garden visits. Many did. Here are their musings. Their photos are on pages 13 through 23. *The editor, GG*

Keith Keppel's Iris Garden — I pointed my rented economy-model Ford south on Interstate 5 from the convention hotel on the bank of the Columbia River. My destination, an hour away on the outskirts of Salem, Oregon, was the hybridizing garden of Keith Keppel, the creator of some of our most beautiful and distinctive new bearded irises. My goal, learn as much as I could in one day from the work of a master hybridizer.

The day was misty, gray, and cool. The convention tours would begin the next day, but Keppel's garden would not be one of the tour stops. I had visited his garden during bloom season in 1993, when he still lived in Stockton, California. This would be my first chance to see his tall bearded seedlings blooming in Oregon.

There were many other iris enthusiasts visiting Keppel's garden that day. He was kept busy the whole time I was there greeting, and renewing acquaintances with, garden visitors. The iris beds were soggy with mud from heavy rains over the previous several days, and the plants showed the effects of a recent hailstorm. The flowers that had opened that morning and the day before were in fine condition, though.



From left to right, Marky Smith, Jean Plank & members of the Italian Iris Society visiting Keith Keppel's garden. LB

I spent three hours slogging through the mud and admiring the amazing irises. Keppel's recent introductions, his reselected seedlings, and the maiden-bloom seedlings each provided different lessons in hybridizing for me. In an equipment shed there was also a spectacular display of single blossoms of Keppel and Blyth introductions from the past two years.

In the afternoon I found a small stick and spent ten minutes semi-successfully removing the mud from my shoes. Then I said goodbye to Keith Keppel

and drove back to Portland for the opening banquet of the convention.

Lowell Baumunk (LB)

I have been a Keith Keppel fan for 30 years, so I was grateful for the chance to tour his garden. I was not disappointed! I walked the rows and studied the flower show in the shed and decided I had to have one of each magnificent 2007 introduction. Oh, happiness is truly a Keppel iris!

Betty Roberts (BR)



Betty Roberts and Patrice Van Vleet at Schreiner's. GG

Schreiner's Garden — Iris growers covet Schreiner's and Cooley's catalogs, but I had only dreamed of touring their gardens. I was in hog heaven when I saw irises planted among superbly grown perennials: pansies, poppies, peonies, lupines, tiny daisies, and columbines as I've never seen, each bed flanked by clematis-covered trellises. The flower show was a close-up view of new introductions. *BR*

Acres in bloom make it a challenge to just look at convention irises. Steve Schreiner's favorites, 'Royal Slave' and 'High Chaparral,' pictured on page 21, put on a good show. A large tent was a retreat from rain. *Russ & Carol Eacker (R&CE)*

A visual feast. The lushness and colors, all the incredible variety, surrounded by trees. The calmness, coolness of the morning. Robins singing in the background. The mixture of perennials and pansies everywhere and happy irises (most of them anyway). I also liked all the Adirondack furniture painted in crayon-bright colors. *Lynda Love (LL)*

Mid-America Garden — When you learn this garden is only eight years old, you stand in awe. Irises took center stage, not far behind were huge hostas; I thought I was Alice in Wonderland. *BR*



Mid-America Garden. GG

Paul and Tom have done a lot of landscaping since we were there a couple of years ago: many trees and shrubs, irises and peonies in full bloom, chickens in the back yard. An interesting, beautiful place. I found 'Ah Yes' and 'Wild Angel' before we got hit with a downpour and it was time to leave. *R&CE*

I don't want to leave this place. I'm having more fun with the other perennials than the irises. Mom and I are each giving a small hosta a new home, and wishing we could take more. This place is amazing! There are



Keppel's - L. Baumunk



Schreiner's - S. Blecher



Schreiner's - L. Love



Mid-America - S. Blecher



Cooley's - G. Guenerberg



Betty Roberts at Mt. Pleasant

Barbara Aitken talking iris with Lowell Baumunk

Aitken's - S. Blecher



Wildwood - L. Baumunk

unusual plants everywhere, like variegated viburnums, purple-leaved redbuds, and Spanish lavender that's like a bush! The guest irises are okay — I only made a few notes before wandering off to look at the other perennials, shrubs, and trees. *LL*



"Down by the Old Mill Stream" - Cooley's. PVV

Cooley's Garden — Here I could finally feel like I was at an iris convention. No frills garden — just look at the irises, so after getting some breakfast, that's what I did. I stayed out in the guest garden, making notes (my most yet), and taking pictures (most there, too) until it was time to leave. The light rain stopped, but the wind was brutal — my hands were freezing. I didn't think to bring gloves! Best iris clumps yet — lots of nice irises here. *LL*

A scrumptious spread of everything you ever wanted for breakfast. The flower show here had an added bonus of irises in arrangements. I loved seeing all the different containers. *BR*

How can you beat Rick's hospitality and hot coffee? A large garden, a lot in bloom: 'Belgian Princess,' 'Beneath My Wings,' 'Mayme' (pictured on the back cover), 'Elegant Girl,' 'Pagan's Maiden,' and 'Some Enchanted Evening' were outstanding. Again, rain and the challenge of getting around to see all of the irises in bloom. *R&CE*

Aitken's Garden — Larger than I had anticipated, and the bonus of Terry's orchids. Looked at more Siberian irises than TBs. Didn't want to stop looking even though I was sliding all over the wet slopes and rain necessitated an umbrella. *BR*



Florence Darthenay, visiting from France, at Aitken's. GG

A very nice garden in a small valley with irises covering the whole area. Many Siberians blooming. Used the ponchos provided for conventioners. They say Washington and Oregon have lots of rain; this convention proved the point. One I spotted was 'Don't Miss This.' *R&CE*

A hillside of Siberian irises in bloom. Writing in the rain, my jacket hood is soaked, the sleeves of my jacket are soaked (the poncho we were given doesn't offer complete protection from the rain). Trying to keep the camera dry, while taking many, many pictures. The Aitken Garden is a beautiful place on rolling hills. Barbara and Terry are friendly and helpful. *LL*

Collier Garden — Along with the irises, rhododendrons and azaleas in full bloom, and mature trees. Small gardens are a challenge — theirs is nicely developed using plants chosen to provide color in all seasons. Two irises that showed off: ‘Dangerous Mood’ and ‘High Chaparral.’ *R&CE*

Sawdust, very large slugs, and relentless cold rain. Sawdust covered the paths weaving through the iris beds. Small fruit trees along the paths, full of immature fruit, gave the garden a sense of intimacy. Some guest irises were growing fairly well. Lots of beardless irises were destroyed by local wildlife. *LL*



Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm — on a beautiful site in the Columbia River Gorge. Beautiful trees and shrubs in addition to many irises. ‘Vic Brody’ and ‘Sweet Ambrosia’ were blooming nicely. *R&CE*

I liked the long views, especially of Crown Point on the Columbia River, and the openness of the garden itself — a beautiful expanse of irises, with many classes in bloom. Trees embraced the sides and back of the property, behind the house. The rain was steady, but we stayed out in it for one and a half hours, seeing all we could see. Notable were the strange versicolor irises in bloom, their huge leaves growing over four feet tall. (Thinking a plant like that would be about six inches tall in my garden, if it grew at all.) Chad Harris said his soil is on the acidic side (about pH 6) and his happy beardless irises proved it. *LL*

Mountain View Iris Gardens — We found Tom Magee’s ‘Ski Run’ blooming nicely. They had many old and new varieties. The Ludi’s have spent a lot of time working the grounds and some beautiful irises were blooming for the convention. *R&CE*

The rain is getting to me. So is the cold. I barely noticed the flowering trees and shrubs. Beardless iris guests were disappointing. Bearded iris guest growth was disappointing too, although there were a few nice Schreiner and Keppel plants. *LL*



Wildwood Gardens — All types of irises in bloom, beardless and bearded. Many medians, especially MTBs and IBs. Huddled under a shelter; the paths were so muddy that looking at the irises was a challenge. *R&CE*

Woods and rain. Some nice Siberian irises. Good lemonade. Walking up the road to get warm on the

bus. Plants weren’t growing that well. When we got off the bus it was sunny, but the rain moved in. I remembered this garden from the 1994 Portland convention. *LL*

Editor’s Note: The Siberian Iris Convention garden tour was held in Portland after the AIS Convention ended. Lynda and her mother, Marty Artzberger, attended and Lynda offered to write about the tour.



One Day In Two Siberian Iris Gardens

By Lynda Love

Rain is nothing new to those who attended the 2006 Portland iris convention. The rain didn’t spare those of us who stayed another day for ‘Another Shower of Iris,’ the theme of the Siberian/Species mini-convention. Why a mini-convention? Well,

after three days of bus tours for the Portland convention, most of us were maxed out. Hence, a one-day tour of two very different gardens, showcasing what’s new in beardless iris hybridizing.

Our first stop was the garden of Tom and Ellen Abrego, pictured on page 21. The view from the garden was across gently rolling hills of mixed forest and agriculture, and in the distance, a valley. The clouds hung low over the hills, warning of more rain. It was a pretty place to wander through the irises, although I wish the day would have been warm and sunny (I wished this for all the days I was visiting Portland — I didn’t get my wish).

The guest beds were well maintained. There were the usual plant losses, but there were also standouts. The Schafer-Sacks Siberians warranted many notes in my convention book, among them ‘Harmony Hill’ and ‘Here Be Dragons,’ an unusual combination of yellow and purple. Two Siberians by Cole had also formed large clumps: ‘Joyce Cole,’ a nice white, and my favorite convention Siberian; and ‘My First Kiss,’ a large, pretty purple that was later voted the Best Introduced Siberian Iris. A nice clump of ‘Dear Currier,’ pictured on page 21, and named after pioneering Siberian iris hybridizer Currier McEwen, was a striking combination of dark blue-violet falls and pale blue standards.

There were more plant losses in the species iris section, and many in this group were not yet blooming. One species cross that was just coming into bloom and had made a huge, impressive clump was ‘Ally Oops,’ introduced in 2002 by Dana Borglum.

Along the road was a long bed of 200 mature clumps of Siberian irises. I called this area ‘Memory Lane.’ Many older cultivars were there,

such as 'White Encore' (McEwen 1980), 'Pas-De-Deux,' a pale yellow (Hollingworth 1988), pictured right, and 'Liberty Hills,' a beautiful blue self by Anna Mae Miller (1989).

There were many other noteworthy plants in the display beds, but I still needed to visit the catacombs. How else to explain the walled garden?



From the convention booklet: "Begun in 1994 with four stakes in the ground and a twinkle in our eyes, this colossus contains 10,000 wine bottles, each meticulously drained." The patterns in the eight-foot tall walls were from the bottoms of the wine bottles,

allowing light to shine through. It appeared unfinished. Indeed, the convention book lists it as "a work in progress." Too soon, it was time to leave the Abrego garden. The rain had held off for the time being and the plants looked happy — a very nice visit.

Next was the garden of Lorena Reid (pictured right), surrounded by forest. According to her, three funguses that live in the forest have combined in her soil, decimating her hybridizing program. She is still hybridizing, breeding for species crosses resistant to the fungus. As a result, her tidy garden had large empty spaces planted with a cover crop. Fortunately, the irises that were still growing looked pretty good.

We got off the bus in the rain, but the rain moved off and the sun appeared for a few minutes. The swallows and hummingbirds came out and then the clouds moved in and the rain started up again. This cycle repeated three times in 90 minutes.

As in the Abrego garden, there were many standout Schafer-Sacks Siberians here: 'Raindrop Melody' (pictured right) described by Jan Sacks as "a good garden iris;" 'Floating Candles,' a species yellow; 'Fresh Notes' (pictured right), a pretty blue-violet with a yellow signal; 'So Van Gogh' and 'Sun Comes Up,' both pretty, unusual color combinations. Other noteworthy Siberians included two good-looking Hollingworth plants: 'Hello Yellow' and 'Ruffles and Flourishes.' The two Cole plants, 'My First Kiss' and 'Joyce Cole,' looked good here too. Finally, German hybridizer Dr. Tamberg's 'Berliner Ouverture' had formed such a large clump that I couldn't get a good picture.

Once again, it was time to leave and take the long bus ride back to the hotel through the rain. On this trip to Oregon, I had almost decided that



High Chaparral, President's Cup winner. SB



Florentine Silk, voted #1 convention favorite. SB



Sailor's Dream, Franklin Cook Cup winner. PVV



Dear Currier Dunlop '05 taken by L. Love *Bumblebee on Hollingworth Seeding LL* *Fresh Notes Schafer-Sacks '04 LL*



Cooley's Tall Bearded guest garden. Photos at top and of guest garden by S. Blecher.



Reid Garden, left, & Abrego stock plants, right, on the Siberian 06 Mini-Convention Tour, by L. Love.



Siberians: Raindrop Melody and Pas-De-Deux by L. Love, and Raspberry Slurp, 9th of top 15.



Pictured, from top left to bottom right, David & Ann Miller, Lynda Love, Marty Artzberger, Carol and Russ Eacker, Lowell Baumunk with friend, Betty Roberts with Barry Blyth, Patrice Van Vleet, Lynda Love, Linda Doty-Nystrom, Joe Nystrom, Rob Stetson, Glenn Guenterberg and Steve Blecher. All photos above by Glenn Guenterberg & Patrice Van Vleet. Schreiner's, below, by Lowell Baumunk.



Mount Hood was a figment of the collective Oregonian imagination. I saw pictures of Mount Hood everywhere, but never did I catch a single glimpse of it. Oh well, maybe on my next visit to the iris fields of Oregon.

Wait Wait, There's More!

Yes, the convention had more than tours on tap. Much more. Returning from the day's tour at 5, even 6 p.m. left just enough time to clean up, have a quick dinner, and rush to the convention center for evening activities. Such as what, you ask? The list is long: judge's training (with at least one required class — Roy Epperson's Awards and Ballots offered only once a year at the convention), the silent auction (a major fund raiser, that in 2005 enabled continuation of the AIS Bulletin at it's present high quality level), the Geek Dinner (would a geek admit missing it?), the book store, and the culminating event — the annual black tie (I forgot mine), awards banquet. What more could be packed into three days, or five days for RVPs and others in officialdom? I'm sure I am missing something. How can riding a bus to two or three gardens a day for three days be so tiring? I forgot to mention convivial conversation with people we see only once a year and with others we see several times a year here. Oh, the life of the gadfly! Speaking of awards, conventioners vote for three, and the winners this year were: 'High Chaparral,' 'Sailor's Dream,' and 'Florentine Silk,' all pictured on page 21. We had decided several seasons ago that '06 in Portland was a must-do event and we did and we're glad! Tired? Yes, but not tired of. There is a difference.

Photo opportunities were around every corner: Cooley's mill wheel, the red barn, plastic ponchos, umbrellas, muddy shoes, hostas, fair skies and foul, exotic fowl, antique tractors, moss covered trees, towering conifers, an old gas station pump behind the barn, iris harvesting machines (some of these gardens ship irises by the hundreds of thousands yearly), people, ponds, waterfalls, . . . and irises.

Which reminds me — a collection of stunning photos taken at the convention by people from our region will be the feature presentation at our winter meeting on February 24, 2007. Mark your calendar and bring your friends to this once in a lifetime event, or perhaps this will be the first annual of many. The digital slide show will be assembled from the best photos submitted by our members, and will be narrated by regional personalities. If you attended the convention, you are sure to enjoy reminiscing about the tours; if you missed the convention, you will enjoy the vicarious visit. Guaranteed to keep you awake for an hour of fast moving still photos . . . GG&PVV



Elmohr Celebrates 40th Anniversary

By Catherine Long Gates

The Elmohr Iris Society kicked off the inaugural meeting of its 40th Anniversary year in fine style by inviting the society's first president, Frank Foster, to speak. The meeting, held on March 11, 2006, was well attended by longtime members, as well as some brand new to the group. Frank's informal history offered the "old timers" a chance to reminisce and gave new members a glimpse at the foundation of the organization.



Elmohr members celebrating the 40th.

Originally hailing from Mississippi, Frank now lives in Oregon. He also called Colorado Springs home for several years during the 1960's and then again in the 1990's. Frank's aunt, who lived in Colorado Springs, was acquainted with Dr. Phillip Loomis. Knowing her nephew's interest in irises she introduced the pair. This fortuitous introduction gave Frank a friend and mentor in pursuing his love of irises. "Dr. Phil" was one of the most prominent hybridizers of the time (he was awarded the AIS Hybridizers Medal in 1944 and Distinguished Service Medal in 1966) and he was always supportive of other people's interest in irises.

Hoping to find folks who shared his passion for irises, Frank phoned into a KRDO radio show and this resulted in getting connected with Suzanne Rodgers. Frank related how their lengthy first phone call set the stage for the formation of the society and earned Suzanne the title of "First Lady of the Elmohr Iris Society." Soon other iris enthusiasts including Ethel Hollingsworth, Bess Cheevers, Pauline McDowell, and Dixie Freudenberg joined the effort. The group wanted to name the society after Dr. Loomis, but in his usual modest way he declined that honor, so Elmohr was chosen as the group's name in recognition of Dr. Loomis' Dykes Medal winning iris.

While reticent to lend his name to the society, Dr. Loomis freely lent \$50 as start up money so that rhizomes could be purchased for a sale. Frank asked for donations and soon plants came in from Jack Durrance, Everett Long, Keith Keppel, Ben Hager, the Schreiner family, and others. That sale provided the money to put on an iris show. The show was staged in the music room at the Fine Arts Center. Frank exhibited a stalk of 'Blue Rhythm' with three open blooms that won the best of show.

Frank had high praise for all the people who have followed in the footsteps of that original group. One of the most ambitious undertakings of the society, the Dr. Loomis Memorial Trial Gardens, has gained national recognition for the Elmohr Iris Society. When current garden directors, Russ and Carol Eacker, asked Frank to fill in once in their absence, he gained new appreciation for the time and effort involved in point scoring all the plants at the garden to say nothing of the actual planting and maintenance. When Frank returned to Colorado in 1992, he again served the society as president from 1994-1996 and helped to host the AIS convention in Colorado in 1998.



Frank Foster

Frank noted that "the society that was just a glimmer in 1966 has grown to become one of the most active societies within the American Iris Society, and this strengthens the Region." Many thanks to Frank Foster for all his efforts in growing the Elmohr Iris Society!

Deserving Duo Receives 2006 Nina Winegar Award

By Catherine Long Gates

Dependable, dedicated, diligent — three adjectives that only begin to describe the winners of this year's Nina Winegar award. Carol and Russ



Eacker exemplify those three "D's" and more. Region 20 has benefited from all their efforts for many years.

Nina Winegar, for whom the award is named, made a very obvious contribution to the Region by serving as RVP. Just as important were all the untitled positions she filled, quietly stepping up to the plate to accomplish whatever was needed. This year's recipients certainly echo that example of dedication and willingness to get the job done.

Carol and Russ have taken on numerous positions within Region 20. Russ has served twice as president of the Region's affiliate, the Elmohr Iris Society. Carol was the treasurer for Elmohr. Both have filled numerous other roles and were honored by the Elmohr Society with the Hall of Fame award. Carol's choices of gifts for door prizes have delighted many a winner at Region meetings and Russ' conscientious administration as judges training chairman has kept the judges program running smoothly.

The Eackers are the driving force behind the continuing success of the Dr. Loomis Memorial Iris Trial Gardens located in Colorado Springs. They are the directors of the garden, which means that much of the work of maintaining the garden falls to them. This runs the gamut from soliciting plant donations, through all the planting, weeding, and evaluating, to the eventual disposition of the plants. They publish a report on the plants' performance and produce a video for distribution. All these efforts have brought the Loomis Gardens international attention.

Both accredited judges, Carol and Russ have really honed those garden judging skills at the Loomis Garden. All plants at the garden are scored using the scale of points established in the AIS Handbook. It is doubtful that anyone can come close to equaling the number of irises that they have point scored.

We are truly fortunate to have folks like the Eackers who give so generously of their time and energy to fulfill the mission of promoting the culture and improvement of the iris along with increasing the public's interest and appreciation.

In Memoriam

By Catherine Long Gates

Region 20 lost a dear friend this summer when John Knudtson died on July 30, 2006, just a few weeks shy of his 60th birthday. Although John hadn't maintained his membership in AIS the last few years, he was a very active participant during the 1980's and 90's. John served as president of the Elmohr Iris Society in 1989-1990. He planted and maintained the guest iris garden at the Mining Museum in Colorado Springs, a popular stop on the 1998 AIS Convention.



John served as an accredited AIS judge for a number of years. He was an active hybridizer and created many fine new varieties, paying particular attention to good branching, bud count, and plant vigor. John and his wife, Jeri, opened their beautiful garden in the Gleneagle area of Colorado Springs on numerous occasions for tours. A consummate gardener whose farming roots in Minnesota transferred well to the high altitude slopes of Colorado, John was always generous in sharing the plants from his garden.

A truly kind soul, John was a welcome addition at any event. His presence will be missed, but his gentle legacy lives on with his family and the beautiful flowers he created.

Vote and Be Counted — Results Region 20, 2006 AIS Iris Symposium

There were a total of 27 voters this year. Once again 'Acoma,' by Tom Magee, leads the poll.

No. of Votes	Cultivar	No. of Votes	Cultivar
16	Acoma	6	Splashacata
13	Conjuration	6	Superstition
13	Hello Darkness	6	Supreme Sultan
11	Enchanted Mesa	5	Beverly Sills
11	Happenstance	5	Breakers
11	Laced Cotton	5	Champagne Elegance
10	Sea Power	5	Fancy Woman
9	Celebration Song	5	Golden Panther
9	Poem of Ecstasy	5	Mary Frances
8	Stairway To Heaven	5	Queen's Circle
8	Titan's Glory	5	Ringo
7	Bolder Boulder	5	Romantic Evening
7	Crowned Heads	5	Swingtown
7	Local Color	4	Bride's Halo
7	Midnight Moonlight	4	Camelot Rose
7	San Juan Silver	4	Codicil
7	Silverado	4	Crystal Gazer
7	Sotto Voce	4	Dandy Candy
7	Starring	4	Heartstring Strummer
7	Starship Enterprise	4	Honky Tonk Blues
7	Yaquina Blue	4	Immortality
6	Before the Storm	4	Joyce Terry
6	Cloudling	4	Mastery
6	Lady Friend	4	Victoria Falls
6	Lightshine	4	Whispering Spirits
6	Mesmerizer	4	Wild West Wind
6	Old Santa Fe	3	16 cultivars
6	Pond Lily	2	36 cultivars
6	Song of Norway	1	74 cultivars



I. pallida 'Dalmatica'
photo by L. Baumunk

A Few Good Irises, *Part 9* More About Hardy Irises*

By Stephen Blecher

In my article in the spring newsletter, I said that most of the irises growing in the Denver area are at least 50 years old, but this is an understatement. When Lynda Love was showing me her new landscaping, she pointed out a large clump of *Iris pallida* var. 'Dalmatica' growing in front of her neighbor's house, with floppy light blue flowers and a strong aroma of grapes,

I quickly realized how abundant *I. pallida* really is. You see them all over, along with another one with light blue standards and lavender falls, plus a third one that's violet. The latter two also have a sweet aroma, but less grapey. Otherwise they appear identical in form to *I. pallida*, and they are probably varieties of *I. pallida*, or close relatives. These three types appear to outnumber all the other irises combined in the metro area.

I. pallida has been grown in Europe for at least 500 years, and is one of the ancestors of modern tall bearded irises. They have been grown in America since Colonial times and carried westward by the early settlers, so they have been in Colorado for well over a century. These are Grandma's irises. Being little changed from the original wild species and being fully adapted to our climate, they are practically indestructible. Some of the plantings of *I. pallida* grow next to people's lawns or in flower beds, so they receive a little water and fertilizer and, once in a while, some of them are divided. But lacking even minimal care, they can hang on for years, although they will increase very slowly and not bloom much.

I. pallida and its relatives are diploid, meaning that they have two sets of chromosomes, and early plant breeders found it very difficult to develop much improvement in their flowers. In the late 1800's plant collectors discovered a tall bearded species that was a tetraploid (four sets of chromosomes), although they didn't know it at the time, because modern genetics hadn't been discovered. After making a huge number of crosses with the new species, they developed tetraploid hybrids with much improved flower form and color. By the 1920's the newly introduced tall bearded irises were all tetraploid hybrids, and the modern TB iris was born.

Old classics of the 1930's or 1940's, like 'Wabash' or 'Ola Kala' are the product of methodical hybridizing programs, and are very much closer to recent introductions than they are to *I. pallida*. They may not take as much abuse as *I. pallida*, but they are perfectly hardy, given a little care. More recent counterparts of 'Wabash' such as 'Midnight Moonlight' or 'World Premier' are every bit as trouble-free. 'Ola Kala' created a sensation in the 1940's, being a better grower and having clearer color than any of the previous yellow introductions. Now there are dozens of vigorous yellows of all shades in the catalogs.

Each year will bring ever more spectacular introductions from hybridizers, but *I. pallida* will still be with us, because a lot of people are satisfied with its humble appearance, so long as it doesn't require much care. I have a clump of *I. pallida* that has survived 40 years of neglect in a back corner of our yard. This summer I dug a couple of rhizomes and planted them in the main iris bed, along with my newest and fanciest varieties. We'll see how well they perform in more luxurious surroundings.

*For a detailed history of the development of bearded irises, consult *The World of Irises*, published by the American Iris Society.

"Iris growers raise the flag."

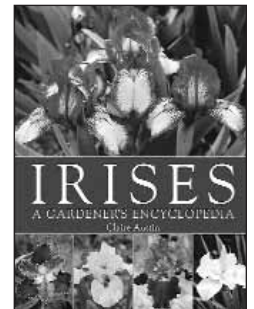
Irises Galore — A Book Review

By Stephen Blecher

Irises, A Gardener's Encyclopedia

By Claire Austin, 2005, Timber Press, Portland, OR

Claire Austin is the daughter of the renowned British rose hybridizer, David Austin. She and her husband operate a nursery in Shropshire, England that specializes in irises and other perennials.



This book covers all the major classes of irises and contains eight chapters on bearded irises, eight chapters on beardless irises, three on bulbous species, plus four on cultivation. Each chapter deals with one class of irises, such as tall bearded or Siberian, and is intended to be complete in itself. Therefore, this book can be read in any order without sacrificing information. All the chapters are organized in a similar fashion, beginning with a discussion of early history and ancestral species and continuing with early cultivars, classics, and recent introductions. Each chapter is profusely illustrated with photographs arranged in alphabetical order, along with a detailed description of each

illustrated cultivar. Since the pictures are arranged alphabetically, there may be a variety from 2002, followed by one from 1930, then another from 1955, etc. By looking at pictures of newer varieties next to older ones, the reader can get a good impression of how each class has evolved in form, color, and pattern. There are over 1100 photographs in the book, enough to provide a representative sampling of each class of irises. The pictures are generally of very good quality, although some leave a little bit to be desired, a situation that's unavoidable with so many pictures.

Aril irises are covered in a 5-page chapter, which is too short for such a complex group. Being desert plants, they are rarely grown in England, and are not easy to obtain anywhere.* Even in *The World of Irises* the coverage of pure aril species is rather limited. On the other hand, Ms. Austin's chapter on Arilbred irises is more extensive and includes a very good set of pictures and descriptions. In the section on beardless irises, the Siberian chapter is very thorough, profusely illustrated and includes a good sampling of recent introductions. Siberians grow very well in Colorado (see pages 19 – 21), and more people should grow them. They are graceful and elegant, and blooming later than tall bearded, they extend the bloom season.

In summary, *Irises, A Gardeners Encyclopedia* is an up-to-date, worthwhile reference book for people who are interested in irises. It's not the type of book that you read from cover to cover, but one to peruse a chapter or two at a time. It will make great reading on winter evenings.

**Editor's note: Members of the Aril Society International benefit from an annual mail-order sale featuring hundreds of Aril and Arilbred selections. Though pure Aril irises are difficult to grow here, many Arilbreds grow well in Colorado. Four cultivars introduced by Lowell Baumunk are shown on his Web site, iriscolorado.com. Check the ASI Web site, arilsociety.org, or contact Reita Jordan at sjordan@unm.edu for membership information.*

The Elusive Pure Red

Competition among iris hybridizers to create a genuine red iris has intensified with Richard Ernst's sponsorship of genetic manipulation experiments at Oregon State University. Richard's plan is described in an article published by *The New York Times* (June 27, 2006). He has worked 14 years toward the red iris goal and now believes it is within reach. According to the article, he is prepared to spend up to \$1 million on the project. Others, including Don Spoon of Winterberry Gardens, have spent even longer pursuing the elusive red one. That's fortitude! The full article can be found online by searching Google using the phrase, "Red Iris NYTimes."

Bull Ridin' Bill — Confessions of An Iris Grower

By Glenn Guenterberg

What started out as a down home Mississippi-style stand-up off the cuff comedy routine soon moved to more serious ground as Bill Burleson, our fall meeting speaker, got down to the practicalities of efficiently growing irises as a cash crop, couched in a series of straight-faced tidbits. Here are a few (some slightly tongue-in-cheek).



Bill Burleson
a.k.a Lazy Bill. GG

Bill's 12-Steps to Success, more or less (more increase, maybe less work, or not) — Light is a constant. Temperature and water are variables. Change what you can control to raise temperature of the rhizome. For example, plant irises in clumps of three with the fans perpendicular to (facing) the sun. The resulting 5-degree F temperature increase will move the bloom season earlier. And add water when needed.

Cure for overgrown clumps — Dig up the whole clump. Pull the rhizomes apart slightly. Drop them back in the hole. Step on them. They will think they had better bloom or they will die.

Cure for slow growth — Irises need nitrogen. Feed them.*

Another cure for slow growth — Break off, step on, or otherwise abuse early growth to force new fans from the sides and even at the back of the rhizome. (You may not want to try this one at home.)

Cure for soft rot — Dig the plant and throw it away. Or, if you're too soft-hearted, cut away the rot, dry the plant in the shade for a while. When the foliage is 1/3 yellowed, the soft rot is cured.

Cure for bad soil — Good soil is about 25%, each, of sand, silt, clay, and organic matter (all by volume). Check yours with this simple, home recipe. Collect a representative soil sample, mixed from several areas of your garden. Fill a quart jar about 1/4 full with soil, add water, shake it, and let it settle for a while. Four layers will settle out. The bottom layer is sand. Next up is silt. Next up is clay. The top layer (some of which might float) is organic matter. Measure the thickness of each layer. Calculate the percentage of each constituent (layer), using the layer thickness. Then adjust the proportions by adding the right stuff. Here, that often means adding lots of sand and some organic matter. Do what you can.*

2007 Region 20 Officers

Cure for the heavens — Plant them underground, deeper than some say. Plant the top of the rhizome about 1/2 inch deep. This will increase performance. Snow, rain, and freeze-thaw cycles will remove the excess soil.

Go and sell more irises (now that you have lots of new rhizomes) — Iris people, even club members, are impulsive. Turn them off at a sale and they will buy little, maybe nothing. Turn them on with a color catalog of each iris on the sale tables and they will buy lots, maybe everything. In Bill's region, printed color brochures tripled sales. Their club determines in advance all the cultivar names that members plan to dig for the sale. An energetic person gathers photos of each and, with software, sorts the photos in alpha name order, prints catalog pages, and reproduces them (cheaply) at a local quick-printer.



Carol and Russ Eacker and Steve Blecher, center, setting up for the 2006 Hudson Gardens iris sale. GG

Bill Burlison (a.k.a. Lazy Bill) writes the regular feature column, "That Bein' Said" in the Tall Bearded Iris Society newsletter, *Tall Talk*. He also has a big iris garden with 1700 varieties in cultivation and has tried all these tricks. His day job as an industrial engineer (think production efficiency studies) and an adventuresome spirit — try something, it might work — have contributed to his folksy, smart approach to gardening and to his memorable talk. He calls it the lazy way to garden. We're glad he came! Thank you, for an entertaining, informative afternoon.

**For more details on Colorado soil composition, testing, and enhancement, read Steve Blecher's series titled, "A Few Good Irises" Parts 3, 4, 5, and 7 in previous Region 20 newsletters.*

Condolences

We were saddened to learn that Region 20 irisarian and former RVP Betty Roberts' husband, Ned died in September, 2006 after a long battle with cancer. In addition to his long career as an educator and as an administrator at the University of New Mexico, he began hybridizing new and unusual forms of daylilies in the 1980's. He registered 125 cultivars, receiving international recognition and numerous American Hemerocallis Society awards. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Betty and her family.

The officers' data for the AIS Region 20 (Colorado) is restricted to AIS members.

The data on this page has been removed.

Behind The Scenes — The Short List

Calls to the Denver Botanic Gardens to settle the year's meeting calendar. More calls to the AIS and the IRS to settle our nonprofit status. Hours photographing show irises, mounting prints, hauling the display board to events all over the place. Coordinating work sessions at Hudson Gardens iris display bed, plus unnumbered solo visits to weed, trim, tidy, water. Board Meetings, e-mails, communication of all kinds all the time. Arranging our participation in gardening events at Echter's and Tagawa's. Getting our society's name out there with ads, signs, banners, photos, Internet posting, articles. Leading the rhizome sale, renting the tent and tables, negotiating the location. I know there is more, but there isn't enough room here for the long list. Besides, you get the idea.

Who is doing all this? None other than our own Steve Blecher, Region 20 RVP. Hurray for Steve! Help him when he calls. Better yet, volunteer. (sblecher@comcast.net) GG

Join or Renew AIS & Section Memberships Online

You may join AIS, renew your membership, or give a gift membership using the new, secure AIS online process and your Visa, Mastercard, or Paypal account. You can also pay dues to one of the Sections or Cooperating Societies if you join or renew an AIS membership at the same time. Check the AIS Web site, www.irises.org, for details.

Region 20 Nonprofit Status and Objectives

Region 20 of the American Iris Society is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Tax Code under a group ruling issued to the American Iris Society. Region 20 exists for the sole purpose of promoting the culture and improvement of the iris with the following objectives: (1) Develop the science of horticulture and any activities related to the study, propagation, improvement, and culture of the genus *Iris*; (2) Stimulate and foster interest in horticultural pursuits; (3) Conserve and protect these plants; (4) Encourage and support scientific research; (5) Investigate and conserve the genus *Iris* in the wild; (6) Collect, compile, and publish data concerning the history, classification, breeding, and culture of irises; and (7) Educate the public through exhibitions, display gardens, and publications.

2006 AIS Region 20 Financial Statement Summary

Financial data for AIS Region 20
is restricted to AIS members.

The data from this page has been removed.



Region 20's 2006 Spring Iris Tour

By Lisa Story

The Spring Iris Tour, on May 21, 2006, turned out to be a very nice journey into the northern reaches of the Denver metro area. It was great to get out of Denver on a very hot spring day.

We started out with about 20 people at 10:00 A.M. at Long's Gardens. Catherine and Dennis Gates greeted us with a wonderful hot breakfast and an invitation to explore the property. A large number of historic and Dyke's medal winners were in bloom, along with many irises in the digging fields. It was indeed a pleasant visit — Region 20 has not been to Long's in a number of years.

On to Susan Hannon's garden in the farmlands east of Longmont. As you could guess, several of us had to miss at least one turn in finding our way there! Susan had several beautiful, extensive iris beds in bloom on a wonderfully landscaped property, including trees and a fish pond! Quite an oasis in the middle of northern Colorado farmland.

At Bev Kroeker's garden in Brighton, we pulled out our lunch fixings quickly, as we were all famished, and sat on the back patio of Bev's house, enjoying her eclectic decorated patio, large evergreen trees, and baby rabbits running around the yard. The irises were just starting, but the *Iris pallida* were in full, sweet bloom, with their wonderful grape fragrance.

And so the end of the day came, and we had to return back home. What fun it was to explore some new areas!

Next year's Region 20 garden tour, on June 2, will be combined with the TBIS garden tour described in the article by David Miller on page 6.

On that note, all of you irisarians take a look at your own gardens. How do you think your garden may be looking in spring of 2008? Please consider showing it on the garden tour. We always want to see the unique, personal ways people grow and display their irises.



Susan Hannon, left, with R20 guests



Hannon's Garden, by P. Van Vleet

Long's Garden



Enjoying Hannon's garden, by S. Blecher

Introductions By Four Region 20 Hybridizers



Grateful Heart (B. Van Liere '05)



Mayme (D. Miller '03)



Phantom Ship (L. Baumunk '07)



Ethel Mae (L. Olson '06)

Top two photos by Steve Blecher, bottom left by Lowell Baumunk, bottom right by Lois Olson.