



American Iris Society

Colorado
Region 20

Colorado Hybridizers
A Salute to the Olsons, *page 10*

Windswept Heights (Olson '04)

Spring 2007



I. stolonifera, L. Baumunk
 AIS 2006 Photo Contest
 Honorable Mention
 Category 4, Iris Close-up



I. laevigata 'Monstrosa,' Lowell Baumunk,
 Littleton, Colorado, AIS 2006 Photo Contest
 Honorable Mention, Category 4, Iris Close-up

Our Web Site's New Look

Spring: time for gardens to awaken, a new suit for the social season, and a new look — a tune up, perhaps an update. So went the imaginative table talk at the first Web team meeting a few months ago. Now those thoughts have taken on a form as our volunteer photographers, graphic designer, writers, hybridizers, and webmaster collaborated to create the new AIS Region 20 Web site. The site has a new look with photos of iris gardens, iris close ups, and people. Source pages introduce each Colorado hybridizer to show photos of their gardens and irises. A visit is worth a thousand words. See for yourself at www.geocities.com/aisregion20. We thank Richard Nolde, the new Region 20 webmaster, for being the driving force in getting this first phase done and his willingness to maintain and update the site as it grows to meet the needs of our members.

Second Annual AIS National Photo Contest Announced

It is official. The photo contest that was launched last year by AIS Region 14 is back this year, under the auspices of the AIS. Two Region 20 members won awards in the 2006 contest. You too can win. Don't delay. The prizes are generous, the entry fee is right (zero dollars), and it's fun. Now is the time to plan your entries for the 2007 contest. The rules, awards, and entry form are available at www.irises.org/photocontestmain.htm.

Want to Learn More about Digital Photography? A Survey

Did I hear you say that you don't know how to use your digital camera to take prize-winning photos, let alone how to load them on your computer for tune-up and printing? Fear not! We propose to convene informal learning sessions (a.k.a. classes) in Denver to get you started. The tuition will be right (free) and the exams easy. We envision three subjects, depending on your interests. They are: 1.) How to use your digital camera — setting the controls for better results, 2.) The art of digital photography — framing, lighting, depth of field, viewpoint, and 3.) Then what? — improving your photos using a computer program. And, here's another idea: outdoor sessions to practice what you learn.

Of course, this will happen only if you tell us you want it to happen. Tell us now that you are interested by contacting Glenn Guenterberg at clrimage@comcast.net or Steve Blecher at sblecher@comcast.net. We will ask you a few easy survey questions, such as what do you want to learn about digital photography, what is your level of expertise, what digital camera do you have, do you have a computer and photo adjustment software, are you willing to meet at a central location in Denver for classes, what days and times are best for you, and so on.

Content

Our Region's New Web Site Look	1
Second Annual AIS Photo Contest	1
Want To Learn about Photography?	1
RVP's Spring Message	3
Editor's Message	4
Welcome New Members	5
Thank You Contributors & Advertisers	5
American Iris Society Membership Gifts	5
AIS 2007 Symposium Ballot	5
Events Calendar	6
Iris Gardens To Visit	8
Commercial Iris Sources	9
Commercial Garden Listing Policy	9
Colorado Hybridizers – A Salute to the Olsons	10
A Half Century & More – <i>The Birth of 'Baby's Bonnet'</i>	15
The Iris Shows Are Coming	17
Iris Garden Tour	18
Guide to the Iris Show	21
Jeanne Plank Visits Elmohr	23
2007 Region 20 AIS Judges	25
A Few Good Irises, Part 10 – <i>Organic vs. Chemical Fertilizers</i>	26
Whither the American Iris Society? Part 2	28
Oklahoma Hosts the AIS National Convention	30
Region 20 Officers	31
Van Liere Wins Dr. Loomis Award	32
Financials and Budgets	32
Nina Winegar Award	32
Iris Sale Dates	Back Cover

Front cover photo of 'Windswept Heights' in Olsons' garden, by Steve Blecher. Back cover photo by Glenn Guenterberg.

For newsletter corrections, ad placement, or article submittal, contact Glenn Guenterberg (editor) or Patrice Van Vleet (design, layout, and production) at climage@comcast.net or call us at Clear Images Design & Photography, 303-933-0663. Mailing address: 10387 Totem Run, Littleton, CO 80125-9008.

Non-member newsletter price: \$5



The RVP's Spring 2007 Message

By Stephen Blecher

For the first time in several years the iris beds have been covered with snow all winter. I couldn't even get into the back yard until the last week of February, and there was snow along the edges of the iris beds. From what I could see, the plants appeared to be in good condition. There was still over a foot of snow on the daylily bed. Now everything is covered with snow again. It will be interesting to see how the spring season develops, but I think that the snow cover will prove to be beneficial.

We had a good turnout at the winter meeting, where the program was a show about the 2006 AIS Convention. This presentation was the joint effort of Glenn Guenterberg, Patrice Van Vleet, Lowell Baumunk, Lynda Love, and me. Bob Van Liere lent us his digital projector for the program. In January, Glenn, Patrice, and I put on a general program on irises at a meeting of the Garden Club of Denver, again using Bob's projector. There were between 40 and 50 people at that meeting, and they really enjoyed our presentation. The Denver Garden Club program served as a good rehearsal for the AIS winter meeting. Digital photography is a wonderful thing!

As we already announced, there will not be an official Region 20 Iris Garden Tour this year, because the Tall Bearded Iris Society (TBIS) is holding its national garden tour and meeting in Denver this year on Saturday, June 2. This will be a mini-convention with an all-day bus tour and a catered lunch, and everybody in Region 20 is invited to participate. (See the insert for sign-up information). Included in the tour will be the Region 20 display garden, so I'm hoping the snow will melt soon, giving us an opportunity to get an early start on spring cleanup. The Region 20 Iris Show will be on Memorial Day weekend, which is earlier than it has been for the past few years, but because the bloom season was early for the past several years, the tall bearded may be at their peak. If the TBs are not quite at peak, we should at least have a good representation of the earlier varieties. In addition there should still be lots of medians and some arilbreds in bloom. Since there will not be an early show this year, a nice assortment of medians would be very welcome.

Sincerely, Stephen Blecher

RVP Region 20 AIS



Editor's Message

By Glenn Guenterberg

The snow had accumulated for months. We thought it would last until May but March fooled us with a warm streak that melted the drifts and revealed the dead brown of the dormant garden. Each spring we

think this is the year the garden will not revive, the dead looking plants will stay that way all year. But a look at the fringes of remaining snow patches showed snow drops in bloom. A week later clumps of *Iris reticulata* and crocus bloomed. In another few days the miniature dwarf bearded irises looked promising and the season was under way. Will there be more snow? Probably a lot more but now we know all is well. Nonetheless, the garden fares differently each year. This winter deep snow flattened some of the more fragile shrubs and cacti in our rock gardens. The irises are unaffected. Old leaves are being pushed aside by new growth and the look of the garden has been transformed in a few days. We thought clean up could wait until April. But here we are in shirt sleeves working in the garden.

In this issue we deliver a parcel of thought provoking articles. Part 10 of Steve Blecher's, *A Few Good Irises* is a clear-eyed analysis of chemical versus organic fertilizers, Richard Nolde's article describes an idea for enlisting members to harness the enormous amount of iris data available on the Internet to help identify those irises you inherited from Grandma's garden or to produce an iris catalog that stimulates fund raiser sales. Catherine Long Gates contributed to the cover article about Lois and Orvid Olson, our annual spring tribute to Region 20 hybridizers. And Lynda Love writes about AIS president Jeanne Plank's presentation on beardless irises at an Elmohr meeting.

Behind the scenes, an energetic, volunteer Web team is collaborating with many of you to create a new look for the Region 20 Web site to be unveiled this spring.

Growing interest in digital photography has prompted an offer to teach an informal class on the subject. Read the offer on page 1 and let us know if you are interested.

This issue has been mailed using non-profit, bulk postage rates, a result of our continuing efforts to contain costs. In a few weeks a PDF version of this issue will be posted on our Web site, joining the already available 2006 issues. Note: Monday, October 8 is our fall newsletter deadline.

Announcements

Welcome to Our New Member

We look forward to meeting you soon, perhaps at this year's garden tour, a volunteer work party, the national convention, or our iris sale.

Kathryn Gifford, from Divide

A Very Special Thanks to All Who Contributed to This Edition

Without your willingness to share, write articles, and contribute your photos, this newsletter would not exist — thank you!

Stephen Blecher	Lynda Love	David Miller
Lowell Baumunk	Rose McClain	Bob Van Liere
Richard Nolde	Darice Zimmerman	Lois & Orvid Olson
Catherine Long Gates		

Thank You, Advertisers

Your support is critical to the success of our newsletter!

Long's Gardens, Catherine & Dennis Gates, pages 14 & 15
Iris Colorado, Lowell Baumunk, page 20
Iris 4U Iris Garden, Bob Van Liere, inside back cover

Membership Gifts!

Give your friends and family members in Colorado who are gardeners a gift membership in the American Iris Society! They will receive the quarterly AIS Bulletin and will automatically become members of Region 20, receiving this newsletter and be invited to our many programs and events.

Annual membership rates are \$25, single; \$30, dual; \$9, youth. Send your check with the recipient's name and address to Tom Gormley, P.O. Box 28, Cedar Hill, MO 63016-0028 or contact him at aismemsec@earthlink.net.

Let Your Vote Be Counted

Vote when you receive the AIS Symposium ballot enclosed with your July issue of the AIS Bulletin. It's your chance to be counted in the annual popularity pole to determine the top 100 tall bearded irises. **Vote before the deadline** by marking up to 100 of your favorite irises among the 400+ listed on your official ballot. Then, send it to Region 20 RVP, Steve Blecher for counting. He will forward the results to the national symposium chairman, Gerry Snyder for tabulation. Region 20 results, which will be published in the fall newsletter and posted on our Web site, www.geocities.com/aisregion20, may be a guide to irises that thrive here. National results will appear in the AIS Bulletin and on the AIS Web site, www.irises.org. To get a head start you can view or download the 2007 ballot at www.irises.org/ais2007symposiumballot.pdf.

2007 Region 20 Events Calendar

Date	Sponsor	Event (Contacts listed at bottom of page)
Fri. Mar. 30 10 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)
Sat. Mar. 31 1 P.M. - 4 P.M.	Region 20	Spring Board Meeting , Waring House, Denver Botanic Gardens (DBG), call Steve Blecher to confirm location
Tue. Apr. 10 1 P.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs
Fri. Apr. 13 10 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)
Sat. Apr. 14 12 P.M.	Elmohr Open to public	General Meeting , Rockrimmon Branch Lib., Col. Spr. Speaker: Leroy Meininger, Monument Iris Garden, Mitchell, NE
Fri. Apr. 20 10 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)
Fri. Apr. 27 10 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)
Thu. May 3 1 P.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs
Fri. May 11 8 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)
Sat. May 12 12 P.M.	Elmohr Open to public	General Meeting , Rockrimmon Branch. Speaker: Howard Matz, flower show judge — Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs
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.
Fri. May 25 8 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)

Event-Related Contacts

Region 20 questions, contact Stephen Blecher, 303-798-9103
 Iris Garden Tour – June 2, 2007, David Miller, 303-277-0358
 Elmohr questions, call Darice Zimmerman, 719-630-0595
 Elmohr's Loomis Test Garden, Russ Eacker, 719-633-5193
 Loomis questions, call Rose McClain, 719-254-3462

2007 Region 20 Events Calendar, *continued*

Date	Sponsor	Event (Contacts listed at bottom of page 6)
Fri. May 25 Sat. May 26 12:30 - 5 P.M. Sun. May 27 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.	Region 20 Show setup Open to public Open to public	Reg. 20 Iris Show , Mitchell Hall — DBG Fri. 3-5 P.M. setup. Sat. 7-9 A.M. receive entries; 9 A.M. – noon judging. Open to the public Sat. & Sun. (exact times listed in the left column).
Sun. May 27 TBD	Elmohr Colorado Spr.	Garden Tour , contact Jackie 719-495-4691 or Grace Syme 719-392-0110, for details.
Fri. June 1 8 A.M.	Region 20	Display Bed Cleanup , Hudson Gardens, Littleton (weather permitting)
Saturday June 2 7 A.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 insert and page 18).
Thu. June 7 9 A.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs
Sat. Jun. 9 9:30 A.M. 12 P.M. - 4 P.M.	Elmohr Show setup Open to public	Elmohr Iris Show , Hillside Community Center, 925 South Institute (across from Hillside Gardens), Colorado Springs. Setup will take place Sat. morning before the show.
Thu. July 5 9 A.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs
Thu. July 19 8 A.M. - 2 P.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Digging Party , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs — digging, cleaning, and labeling for sale.
Wed. July 25 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.	Elmohr Open to public	Elmohr Iris Rhizome Sale , Hillside Gardens and Nursery, Institute and Fountain, Colorado Springs. Open to the public.
Fri. July 27 Sat. July 28 9 A.M. - 4 P.M. Sun. July 29 9 A.M. - 1 P.M.	Region 20 Sale setup Open to public Open to public	Iris Sale , Hudson Gardens – Ph. 303-797-8565, 6115 S. Santa Fe Dr., Littleton (1/2 mile south of Bowles Ave). Setup & receive rhizomes on Fri. 1-4 P.M. & Sat. 7-9 A.M. Open to the public (details in left column).
Sun. Aug. 5 1 P.M. - 4 P.M.	Region 20	Fall Board Meeting — DBG, contact Steve Blecher for exact location.
Tue. Aug. 7 7 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Loomis Open to public	Plant Sale — Pueblo Farm Market at Midtown Mall in Pueblo. Open to the public.

2007 Region 20 Events Calendar, *concluded*

Date	Sponsor	Event (Contacts listed at bottom of page 6)
Fri. Aug. 10 7 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Loomis Open to public	Plant Sale — Pueblo Farm Market at Midtown Mall in Pueblo. Open to the public.
Sat. Aug. 11 8 A.M. - 12 P.M.	Loomis Open to public	Plant Sale — Railroad Park in Rocky Ford. Open to the public.
Sat. Aug. 11 12 P.M.	Elmohr	General Meeting at Jackie's: 10402 Picture Rocks Dr., Falcon. Speaker: George Sutton, Sutton's Iris Gardens, Porterville, California
Mon. Aug. 20 9 A.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs
Sat. Sept. 8 12 P.M.	Elmohr	Elmohr Awards Banquet , contact Darice Zimmerman for location.
Mon. Sept. 10 9 A.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs
Sat. Oct. 6 12 P.M.	Region 20	Fall General Meeting and potluck lunch, Gates Hall, DBG — speaker TBD.
Tue. Oct. 9 10 A.M.	Elmohr	Loomis Test Garden Meeting , East Library Branch, Colorado Springs

Iris Gardens to Visit

All listed gardens are available for viewing during the 2007 bloom season. Some of the gardens have irises available for sale, others are hobby gardens. Give them a call to arrange a garden visit — they'd love to see you.

Lowell Baumunk	Iris Colorado, southwest Littleton	303-791-0456
Russ Eacker	Dr. Loomis Trial Garden, Colo. Spgs.	719-633-5193
Catherine Gates	Long's Gardens, Boulder	303-442-2353
Susan Hannon	Longmont	303-774-8527
Lynda Love	Southeast Denver	303-757-1750
Tom Magee	Littleton	303-730-7417
David Miller	Golden	303-277-0358
Orvid & Lois Olson	Southeast Denver	303-756-5375
Victoria Rule	Willow Bend Iris Farm, Grand Junct.	970-263-4138
Frances Smothers	Fritzie's Iris Patch, Golden	303-279-0496
Bob Van Liere	IRIS4U, Southwest Denver	303-789-4747

Contact Glenn Guenterberg at 303-933-0663 to list your garden.

Local Commercial Iris Sources

Fritzie's Iris Patch — 17046 W. 12th Ave., Golden, CO 80401.

Great intermediate bearded iris selections and many recent tall bearded introductions. For directions call **Frances Smothers** — 303-279-0496

Iris Colorado — Lbaumunk@iriscolorado.com (introductions

by **Lowell Baumunk** and bearded iris species) www.iriscolorado.com 10918 Sunshine Dr., Littleton, CO 80125. Please call before visiting — 303-791-0456

Iris 4U — www.iris4u.com . . . iris4u2@comcast.net (grows 1000 named varieties as well as **Bob Van Liere's** introductions) 2700 West Amherst Ave., Denver, CO 80236. Open Mon. — Sat. 10 to 6, Sun. 12 to 6 — 303-789-IRIS (4747)

Long's Gardens — info@longsgardens.com (Since 1905, family run gardens, many varieties including famous Colorado introductions by Durrance, Magee, D. Miller, Stetson, Olson, and others) 3240 Broadway, PO Box 19, Boulder, CO 80306. Open 7 days a week, May and early June, 9 to 5 . . . www.longsgardens.com — **Catherine & Dennis Gates** — 303-442-2353

Olson's Garden — orvido@msn.com (home garden, over 200 varieties) 4875 E. Louisiana, Denver, CO 80246. Open during bloom season but a call before visiting would be appreciated. **Lois & Orvid Olson** — 303-756-5375

Commercial Iris Sources Outside Metro Area

Greenhorn Valley Irises — greenhornvaliris@sbcglobal.net I-25 south, past Pueblo (exit 74), go south on east frontage road to large iris display at the Colorado City KOA campground. Open mid-May — mid-July. . . www.greenhornvalleyirises.com For paper catalog, send 2 stamps with your name and address to: Greenhorn Valley Irises, PO Box 19609, Colorado City, CO 81019 — **Pat Soland** — 719-676-2952

Susan's Iris Garden — 1558 County Road 20 1/2, Longmont, CO 80504. Call **Susan Hannon** for directions and opening times — 303-774-8527

Willow Bend Iris Farm — drules@0web.net 2331 J Rd., Grand Junction, CO 81505. North of I-70. Exit 28 (Grand Junction mall exit) north on 24 road 2 miles, turn west (left) on J road about 3/4 mile. Watch signs, garden located south side of J road. Garden open anytime Tue. through Sat. closed Sun. & Mon. www.willowbendirisfarm.com . . . **Victoria & Darrell Rule** — 970-263-4138

Commercial Iris Garden Listing Policy

Region 20 listings are printed in the spring and may be up to five lines long. Out of region iris advertisers may submit directory listings of up to five lines, for \$15.00. Make check to AIS Region 20. Questions? E-mail chrimage@comcast.net or call 303-933-0663. **Fall deadline October 8, 2007.**

Colorado Hybridizers A Salute to Lois and Orvid Olson

By Glenn Guenterberg and Patrice Van Vleet

A March day. The snow is mostly gone. A few drifts remain on north sides. But for the first time in a while spring is in the air — 60 degrees — a certain sign. Their iris beds are clean, neat, and ready to awaken. The story starts a year ago when we decided to write feature articles about Colorado hybridizers for each spring newsletter. We made a list of names. Of course theirs were on it. We asked for an interview and here we were at the southeast Denver home of Lois and Orvid Olson for an afternoon of conversation and note taking.

Their story started near Dayton, Ohio (Lois) and on a northern Minnesota farm (Orvid). His parents grew corn, and oats, raised cows, chickens and the like where some winters got to -54 degrees and summers to 110 — now that's extreme even for hardy Scandinavians. All this was long before they would meet in the Southwest, let alone live 42 years in Denver and become iris hybridizers. Along the way Lois, educated in biology and chemistry at Ohio State University and Otterbein College, took a giant step to Phoenix, Arizona to head the Good Samaritan hospital chemistry lab. By coincidence, Orvid, then established as an accountant, also took a giant step to Phoenix where their paths crossed and clicked. They moved to Denver in 1965 where Orvid later became the office manager and accountant for Utility Trailer Sales of Colorado. Lois continued her career as a medical technologist, and the rest is history, including daughters Ruth, Sarah, and grandchildren.

When did their interests in irises start? Back in Minnesota, Orvid preferred to grow gladiolas and dahlias and vegetables. He remembers small species irises (miniature dwarf bearded-size) planted in cemeteries by immigrants and for years he thought those were the only irises there were. Lois was a gardener too but didn't know anything about irises. She recalled seeing a newspaper ad in the early 1970s — irises for sale — at the one-acre gardens of Mrs. Hurlburt and her sister, Mrs. Wedow,* in Glendale, just a few blocks north of their home. One visit and they were hooked. Their first iris purchases were 'Candy Sweet' and 'Dutch Chocolate' followed each year by four more varieties. One year, at Mrs. Wedow's garden, they met Linda Doty (now Linda Doty-Nystrom), the iris enthusiast who convinced them to join the AIS. Lois learned the tricks of hybridizing and exhibiting from Linda and Mrs. Wedow, both of whom passed on to her their iris green thumbs. Mrs. Wedow said,

"You're going to do well at this." She has. Those Glendale gardens were sold to developers; only asphalt and apartments remain. But their heritage lives on in the Olson's beautifully tended home garden and in the irises they sell. Lois recalls that one of her first customers, Harry Kuesel, bought 'Beverly Sills' and that she gave him home grown Swiss chard as a bonus. Harry became a well-known irisarian as president of the Median Iris Society. His son, Tim, was the iris show chairman here for several years.

Lois' hybridizing efforts during 1980 and 81 yielded 'Tintinnabulation' ('Gay Parasol' x 'Pink Sleigh'). 'Tintinnabulation,' named after a line in the Edgar Allen Poe poem, *The Bells* that describes the sound of sleigh bells in winter, was propagated for sale and introduced in 1984 through Long's Gardens. Generations of Olsons have followed suit. In 1980 Sarah

learned how to hybridize irises and nurture them through germination and transplantation to their first bloom — leading to Sarah's 1986 introduction, 'Sarah Marie' ('Christmas Time' x 'Fond Wish'). Sarah's son, Tyler, now in the USAF, received 'Big Buck' as a gift at a club meeting and cultivated it so well that he won the best of show award at a Region 20 show. They quoted all these facts without hesitation. I think meticulous record keeping and sharp memories have served their iris business well.



Lois and Orvid Olson talking irises with the authors. Iris hybridizing log book in foreground.

'Ruth Irene' was named after their older daughter, who is also an avid gardener, and it was introduced through Long's Gardens last year to complete the family name cycle. 'Windswept Heights,' Lois' 2004 introduction, is pictured on the front cover as a gorgeous clump growing in their back yard. Yes, the front and back yards are dedicated to growing their beautifully tended irises; many are for sale, listed in the catalogs they have published for years. Lois' appreciation of poetry came through again when she selected the names, 'Burning Blue' and 'Windswept Heights' after reading the poem *High Flights*, by John Magee, a Canadian Spitfire pilot in WWII who in 1941 wrote — "Up, up the long delirious burning blue I've topped the wind swept heights with easy grace . . ." He died later that year.

Yes, there are more seedlings in the queue. During the past three seasons Orvid has renewed his hybridizing program with several seedlings being nurtured. One is a well branched blue iris (2001E7) with distinctive horns that won an exhibition certificate at the 2005 Denver show. Lois is evaluating a late-bloomer that she hopes will dodge late frosts and extend the bloom season. Three of Lois' introductions and their seedlings are growing as guests in Austin, Texas to be seen at the 2008 AIS Convention. This spring Orvid will plant a large batch of seeds from last season's crosses so there will be irises to go for years to come.

Join the TBIS tour on June 2 for a chance to see their garden in peak form.

Twenty-One Green Thumb Salute

By Catherine Long Gates

Great hybridizing efforts seldom achieve great results unless you can grow a decent plant. This was the admonition from noted hybridizer, Ben Hager, years ago when he was speaking to aspiring hybridizers. If you don't have healthy rhizomes of your promising seedling to send out as a guest iris, to trade with other hybridizers, and most importantly to sell — your creation will start out at a disadvantage when compared to other new irises. Most hybridizers are good gardeners, but because they are often trying to grow hundreds or thousands of seedlings in a small space they have trouble producing good quality plants. This problem compounds as the years go by and irises are grown over and over in the same ground.

Lois and Orvid Olson have overcome these challenges in grand style! Every year when I visit their garden I am impressed by the large plants with their beautiful, clean, healthy leaves. The Olsons are consummate gardeners. Crop rotation, composting, careful attention to soil health, diligent weed control, hygiene — these are all key principals of a truly sustainable farm. The Olsons operate a showcase farm in miniature. This sets off their own seedlings as well as all the other varieties they grow to best advantage. How lucky we are to have such a great example of iris hybridizing and growing in our own Region. Please join me in giving a 21 Green-Thumb Salute to Lois and Orvid!

** Editor's note: Caroline Wedow was well known to Denver iris enthusiasts, including Tom Magee who sold his first iris introductions through her garden in the 1970s.*



Long's Gardens 2007 Introductions



Blanca Peak (D. Miller '07)



Old Faithful (Magee '07)



More Reign (D. Miller '07)



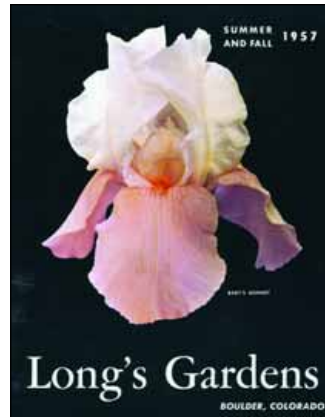
China Cup (Magee '07)



"A good time was had by all..." Part of the crowd that attended the traditional annual coffee and doughnut breakfast at BAKER'S ACRE, Denver, Colo., the home of Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Baker, RVP, Region 20. This annual event is the starting point for the garden tour.



Baker's Acre
get-together
AIS Bulletin #151
October 1958
Long's Gardens,
Boulder, circa same era



'Baby's Bonnet 1957'

2007 Introductions from Long's Gardens



BLANCA PEAK (David Miller) #95-21B TB 32-34" ML This is a sparkling "Colorado Snow" white with a glint of "Colorado Sun" (bright yellow beard) showing through. This one is named after my favorite Colorado 14,000 foot peak. Nicely branched, 7 to 8 buds and good growth make this one sure to please. 'Little Mary Sunshine' X 'Tatiana' \$40.00

CHINA CUP (Magee) BB 24" M White porcelain petals. Upright closed standards. Wide overlapping horizontal falls. White beards with orange pekoe tea at throat. (('Above All' X 'Fuji's Mantle') X ('Mary Randall' X 'Strike Me Pink' sib) X 'Ice Sculpture')) X (('Wedding Cake' X (('Treasure Room' X ('Colorado Sunshine' X 'White Lightning'))

MORE REIGN (David Miller) #97-14A SDB 10" M This nice deep royal blue/purple reminds me of a more and better 'Cats Reign.' Better grower, better bloomer, and better overall color. This, plus consistent 3 buds, make this a real pleaser. 'Cats Reign' X 'Rapsallion' \$15.00

OLD FAITHFUL (Magee) TB 43" M Flower open with power, strong sulphur geyser upright standards touched by red coloring on mid ribs over falls of yellow limestone. Flower folds into hot springs pool. 'Colorado Sunshine' X 'Precious Moments'. EC '97 HC '99 \$40.00

Shipping Charge \$7.50. Orders over \$50 deduct 10%. Phone, fax, or mail orders. Visa, Mastercard, Discover

Long's Gardens; PO Box 19, Boulder CO 80306
303-442-2353 FAX 303-413-1323



A Half Century and More 1957 — The Birth of 'Baby's Bonnet'

By Catherine Long Gates

Fifty years ago 'Baby's Bonnet,' pictured at left, made its official debut in the commercial iris world.

This tall bearded iris was co-introduced in 1957 by Baker's Acre in Lakewood and Long's Gardens in Boulder. The year before, the breakthrough pink amoena had attracted considerable comment at the American Iris Society Convention in Los Angeles. The immediate past president of the AIS, Harold Knowlton, writing in the July 1956 AIS Bulletin described it as having "white standards and flaring falls of a salmon sea shell pink with a faint yellow streak down the falls

and a tangerine beard.” That sea shell pink color could be directly attributed to the pollen parent, a ‘Sea Shell’ seedling from Dr. Loomis.

In its home region in 1956 others took note of ‘Baby’s Bonnet.’ J.O. ‘Jack’ Riley said, “Mr. Baker’s ‘Baby’s Bonnet’ was easily outstanding. The color holds well in the sun; substance and branching are good, and growth habits are very satisfactory. This new color break is definitely a worthwhile addition to any Iris garden.” Another Region 20 member and hybridizer, Lys Housley, wrote: “We have heard from returning conventioners that Mr. Baker’s recent registration, ‘Baby’s Bonnet,’ caused a great deal of excitement at the convention, and well it might, for it is unquestionably unique and will be hailed by all who are working in the amoena field. ‘Baby’s Bonnet’ has a bloom of good size, is slightly ruffled, of excellent substance — and has pure white standards and ochraceous-salmon-pink falls of great smoothness. We saw it in bloom over a period of two weeks and at all times it was covered



O.T. Baker, Region 20 Colorado RVP 1956-58. From AIS Bulletin #143 October 1956.

with bloom and more buds were coming. Mr. Baker reports that it is not only floriferous but also a very good increaser and fertile both ways. Both hybridizers and other fanciers are anxiously awaiting Mr. Baker’s decision to place this on the market and thus make it available to all.” These favorable judgments of ‘Baby’s Bonnet’ earned it a High Commendation (HC) in 1956 and an Honorable Mention (HM) in 1957.

‘Baby’s Bonnet’ was “born” on a one-acre iris garden in Lakewood known as Baker’s Acre. O.T. & Clara Baker graciously hosted many Region 20 events in their garden for a number of years in the 1950s and 60s (see historic photo of crowd attending the traditional annual coffee and doughnut breakfast at Baker’s Acre on page 14). When the Colorado Iris Society (which became Region 20 later in 1948) was formed in February 1948, O.T. was one of the charter members. In 1956-58 he served as the Region’s fourth regional vice president. O.T. used the sales skills honed as a district sales manager for the Carey Salt Company to significantly increase Region 20 membership. He sweetened his pitch with frequent donations of irises for door prizes and the Region auction, the principal fund-raiser of the time. The Baker’s iris birthing didn’t end with ‘Baby’s Bonnet.’ Their 1958 introduction, ‘Wayward Wind,’ received an Award of Merit (AM) in 1961, but perhaps that is a tale for another time.

The Iris Shows Are Coming

By Glenn Guenterberg

The Region 20 iris show opens on May 26 at the Denver Botanic Garden. Are you ready? You may have been wondering what it takes to enter your favorite specimens and to win recognition for your gardening prowess.

Patrice entered many irises in the spring 2006 show and heard from a judge that she wasn’t well groomed. She checked the mirror in the ladies room and couldn’t find dirt behind her ears or a single hair out of place. But grooming can have other meanings to an iris exhibitor, such as nipping, clipping, snipping, brushing, trimming, propping, primping the iris. In short, grooming involves finishing touches the exhibitor makes so that the entry presents the best possible appearance. However, the devil is in the details and the details are described in a rule book called *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials*. You can order a copy for \$15 from the AIS online storefront* at www.irises.org/storefront.htm, or you can read the paraphrased excerpts below to get the idea. So here goes . . .

Stalk Height — Cut the stalk length until it looks good to you. The stalk should be exhibited at a height that is “proportional.” The idea is to avoid extremes. Remember the old carpenters lament, “Three times I’ve cut it off and it’s still too short.” You only get one chance so measure twice, cut once.

Foliage — Remove diseased foliage and trim damage from leaf margins, following the natural contour of the leaf. Remove the foliage at the base of the stalk, but leave foliage that covers the juncture between a branch and the stalk or is at the base of a bud.

Spathes — Leave intact the leaf-like sheath (spathe) at the base of a branch even if a flower has been removed and even if the spathe is dry and papery.



How would you groom this bloom stalk?

Branches and Faded Flowers — Remove faded flowers by cutting the branch off close to the stalk so that no stub is visible. If there is no unopened bud, or if the flowers are faded, the entire branch should be removed.

Cleanliness — Give the specimen the white glove test. The judges think cleanliness is next to godliness. Remove dirt, smudges, or fingerprints from stalks and leaves by wiping with soft tissue. And, brush the bugs away.

As a last resort, get to the show an hour early (say 7:00 a.m.) and ask a judge for a brief coaching lesson on grooming techniques, for irises. Hint: bring a small pair of scissors, a sharp knife, some paper towel, and a steady hand. Entries to the Region 20 show at the Denver Botanic Garden are received from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 26. Judging begins at 10:00 a.m. and you may observe the process to get more insight into judging methods and their preferences. Times and locations for the Elmohr and Loomis shows are shown in the events calendar.

Want to know more? Read the article on page 21, *Guide to the Iris Show*.

*Editor's Note: *The handbook version available now was published in 1998. A 2007 edition will be available in May.*

Iris Garden Tour

By David Miller

Region 20 is not planning an iris tour this year but for good reason. The Tall Bearded Iris Society has asked if they can come to Denver for their spring meeting. Of course this request is just too hard to pass up — especially if you're a hybridizer. So there is an iris tour this year, but it's a TBIS tour. And everyone in Region 20 is invited to join TBIS on June 2 for a full-day tour of four hybridizer iris gardens, plus a lunch stop at Hudson Gardens. The cost covers the bus transportation, lunch and entry into Hudson Gardens. It's a great opportunity to visit with other iris lovers from many areas of the U.S. for a fun-filled day of laughter. See insert details in this newsletter, call Dave Miller at (303) 277-0358 or e-mail DMillerIrisx@att.net for more information.

We will be leaving on our all-day bus-only garden tour at 7 a.m. from the Holiday Inn – Denver West Hotel, 14707 W. Colfax Ave., Denver. The hybridizers' gardens we will visit include Dave Miller, Lois and Orvid Olson, Bob Van Liere, and Lowell Baumunk; several are pictured at right. Hudson Gardens, Region 20's display garden, will be our lunch stop.

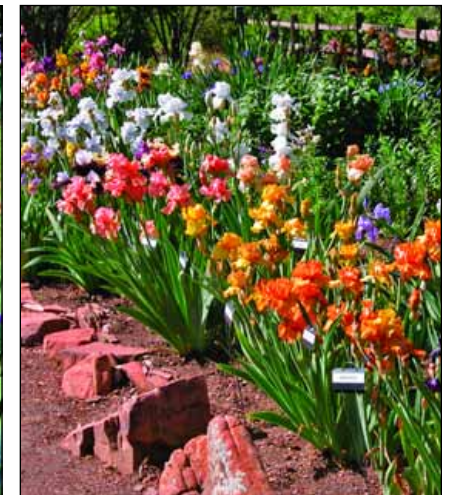
Gardens on the 2007 TBIS/Region 20 Tour



Iris 4U Garden, photo by B. Van Liere



Olsons' Garden, photo by G. Guentenberg



Hudson Gardens, photo by R. Nolde



Iris Colorado Garden, photo by L. Baumunk

A Special Deal for Colorado AIS Members



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Iris Colorado

10918 N. Sunshine Dr.
Littleton, CO 80125

LBaumunk@iriscolorado.com



Guide to the Iris Show

By Lowell Baumunk

The iris show is not a contest to determine the best or fanciest variety! It is a contest between growers to determine who enters the best-grown and best-displayed stalks. Here are some of the criteria — Does the stalk show signs of having come from a strong, well-grown plant? The stalk should appear strong and straight. The flowers should be as large and well formed, and buds as numerous, as can be expected from the variety. Is the stalk in prime condition? All open flowers should be very fresh. No damage should be apparent. Is the stalk displayed artistically? Is there a balance and proportion to the display? Is the stalk clean and well groomed? Is it placed properly in its container to show well? We all have our favorite iris varieties among the show entries, but it is the judge's responsibility to ignore such preferences and judge each entry on its own individual merits.

The Show Awards

Best Specimen of Show — is the stalk that the judges decide best fulfills the judging criteria. It should inspire the admiration of both the iris expert and the casual show attendee. It must be a prime example of the unique and sublime beauty of the iris flower.

Best Seedling — Hybridizers enter their finest, newest creations in the seedling competition. These are recent varieties not yet introduced into commerce. Show visitors get a glimpse of the future of the garden iris. Seedlings don't usually have names, and are known by a code name or number. Colorado has several hybridizers who enter the seedling competition, hoping to win the Best Seedling designation.

Best Iris of Section — The show is divided into sections for the various types of irises entered. The stalk that the judges determine to be the best in each section wins the Best of Section award.

Ribbons — Blue, red and white ribbons and an Honorable Mention ribbon may be awarded to individual iris entries. The blue ribbon signifies that the entry has no significant faults. Red goes to attractive, well-grown entries with significant faults. White ribbons and Honorable Mention go to entries that fall far short of the expected standard of perfection.



The Silver Medal — is awarded to the person who receives the most blue ribbons. Most shows limit the number of entries an individual may make, so that the Silver and Bronze Medals reflect the overall quality of entries, and not just quantity.



The Bronze Medal — goes to the runner-up for the Silver Medal.

Horticultural Sweepstakes Award — is a rosette ribbon awarded to the person who enters the most iris stalks that win blue, red, and white ribbons combined. Usually this award goes to the person who makes the most entries.



“Iris” wood engraving, by Hedwig Brenner, especially created for use in the AIS 1956 Convention booklet.

The Classes of Iris

Tall Bearded — dominate the show. They are bearded irises over 27 inches tall with branched stalks and typically blooming later than the other bearded irises.

Aril and Arilbred — Aril species are native to the deserts of the Middle East. They are exquisitely beautiful, but have exacting cultural requirements. Arilbreds are part Aril and part bearded iris, and grow well in Colorado.

Border Bearded — are a shorter version of the tall bearded, 16 – 27 inches tall. Bloom season is the same as tall bearded.

Miniature Tall Bearded — are also known as table irises, 16 – 25 inches tall with slender,

graceful stalks and multiple well-proportioned small flowers.

Intermediate Bearded — are the same height as border bearded but bloom earlier and are usually a cross between a tall bearded and a standard dwarf.

Standard Dwarf Bearded — put on a beautiful show in the early season, 8 to 16 inches tall.

Miniature Dwarf Bearded — Great for the rock garden, they are the smallest and the earliest, are shorter than eight inches, and start blooming in late March.

Historic — The American Iris Society classes any iris introduced into commerce more than thirty years ago as historic. Historic irises may be

of any class of bearded or beardless iris. Although they tend to look old-fashioned when compared to more modern varieties, the historic irises have a wonderful charm and distinctive beauty.

Species — are essentially wildflowers. Several iris species have contributed genetically to the modern iris. The Rocky Mountain iris, *Iris missouriensis*, is our only local iris species.

Beardless — Although less grown in Colorado than the bearded varieties and often blooming after the iris shows, beardless irises do appear at the shows. They include such popular types as Japanese, Siberian, and Louisiana. They are better adapted to growing in damp surroundings than the bearded iris.

Now that you know more about it, bring your favorite specimens to the Region 20 iris show at the Denver Botanic Gardens on May 26, or to the Elmohr show on June 9, or to the Loomis show on May 20. Check the events calendar on pages 6 and 7 for the times and locations.



The President Speaks Out Jeanne Plank Visits Elmohr

By Lynda Love

Everyone knows tall bearded irises, or ‘grandma’s irises,’ but did you know that some spuria irises grow nearly five feet tall and are one of the more underused landscape plants? This is one of the many tidbits of knowledge Elmohr Iris Society members learned at the first meeting of the year on Saturday, March 10.

Jeanne Clay Plank, who is the president of the American Iris Society and a master judge, used the metaphor of pathways — along roads less traveled, to take us on a journey through varied iris classes that aren’t so well known.

The first lesser-known class included species iris and species crosses. This diverse class of both bearded and beardless irises includes a wide range of sizes and growth habits. Her slides included *I. foetidissima*, a bearded iris species with red seeds that provide an interesting fall decoration. Beardless species included *I. pseudacorus*, which could be considered a weed in the eastern portion of the U.S. and its progeny, ‘Roy Davidson,’ a beautiful yellow flower with brown veins.

The second pathway led to Pacific Coast native irises. Although Jeanne encouraged us to try growing some of these diminutive beauties, it isn’t

recommended in Colorado due to climate differences.

The next pathway led to Siberian irises, a group of beardless iris that will grow here in Colorado. Jeanne showed numerous slides illustrating recent advances in Siberian hybridizing, including new forms and colors. For instance, yellow is a recent color addition to the Siberian class, as are new color combinations, such as the striking color combinations hybridized by Marty Schaefer and Jan Sacks. 'Here Be Dragons,' with lavender standards and yellow falls overlaid with brown veining is an example. Jeanne also showed slides of what a good Siberian clump



'Here Be Dragons' by L. Love

should look like and what a bad clump looks like. A good clump should be vase-shaped and showcase the blossoms above the foliage. The clump should not be hollow in the middle. Finally, the thin, grass-like foliage should stay erect throughout the growing season. Another pathway led to the spuria irises, an undervalued beardless iris class. Spurias are adaptable to different growing conditions: they can be mulched and although they can bear being on the dry side, they don't mind extra water and they don't mind a little shade either. Left undisturbed, spurias can grow into a large clump. Spurias are excellent in the back of the perennial border because their tall leaves provide interest throughout the growing season. Modern hybridizing has produced flowers with new color combinations and more ruffling. According to Jeanne, this class has great potential for modern hybridizing efforts. Spuria irises also make excellent cut flowers.

The final two classes on our path along the road less traveled included Louisiana irises and Japanese irises. As beautiful as these plants are, neither will grow very well in Colorado, except with special extenuating culture practices. Japanese irises, for example, grow in acidic soil, while Colorado soils are alkaline. Jeanne enumerated the attributes of both classes, including the uniqueness of Louisiana irises, and peculiarities in



Jeanne Plank, AIS president, is presented a gardening apron by Elmohr president, Darice Zimmerman. Photo by S. Blecher.

judging them, to details of Japanese iris culture. For example, in Japan, early iris aficionados grew their irises, referred to as ensata, in pots and brought them inside their homes during the plant's bloom cycle. Once finished blooming, the potted ensatas were returned to the outdoors.

Jeanne showed presidential and personal interest in what's happening here in Region 20 as she talked with Steve Blecher about his articles on iris culture and with webmaster, Richard Nolde about his ideas for gaining and keeping members, and previewed our new Web site on Richard's laptop computer. Conversations over dinner after the meeting strengthened new acquaintances, shared new ideas, and left us eager to launch a new season of iris gardening. I'll leave you with this quote, "Cultivate new meanings in your garden." (From a conversation with the editor — make what you will of it.)

2007 AIS Region 20 Judges

At the AIS fall board meeting the titles for judges were revised. Note: Retired judges may no longer judge in iris shows, only accredited judges (Master, Senior, and Garden Exhibition) can serve in that capacity.

Master

(formerly Emeritus)

Catherine Long Gates

Retired

(formerly Retired Master)

Duane Daily

Dr. Carl Jorgensen

Suzanne McCarthy

Mrs. Morris James

Roy Krug

Senior

(formerly Active Master)

Kayellen Daily

Russ Eacker

David G. Miller

Linda Doty-Nystrom

Dennis Gates

Patricia Morgan

Carol Eacker

Tom Magee

Betty Roberts

Garden Exhibition

(formerly Fully Accredited Garden)

Marty Artzberger

Steve Blecher

Ellen McIntosh

Lowell Baumunk III

Lynda Love

Apprentices

Elsie Funk

Glenn Guenterberg

Bob Van Liere

Sally Funk

Grace Syme

A Few Good Irises, Part 10

Organic vs. Chemical Fertilizers

By Stephen Blecher

A fertilizer is defined as a concentrated and relatively fast-acting source of plant nutrients. Strictly speaking, compost is not a fertilizer. Although it contains nutrients, the concentration is low and the release is very slow.

The comments in this article apply to home gardens in Colorado, not commercial farming. The organic gardeners claim that organic fertilizers produce better quality plants and are less harmful to the environment, but are these claims really true? Before a plant can use the nutrients in a fertilizer, soil bacteria must convert nutrients into inorganic molecules, since plants do not absorb organic compounds. Plants only absorb nitrogen in the form of nitrate ions and ammonium ions, regardless of whether they were derived from organic or chemical fertilizers. The same is true of phosphoric acid and potassium oxide.

Some organic fertilizers have the advantage of releasing their nutrients slowly, thereby providing a moderate and steady feeding, which is a definite advantage. The older types of chemical fertilizers like ammonium sulfate or ammonium nitrate are highly soluble and provide a quick shot of nutrients, which is not as beneficial. Nowadays many flower and vegetable fertilizers contain coated granules that dissolve very slowly and supply nutrients over a period of two to four months, similar to organic fertilizers.

Organic gardeners claim that organic fertilizers are better for the environment, but I strongly disagree. Most of us buy our fertilizers and soil amendments at garden centers or similar outlets. A large part of the cost of a bag of fertilizer is transportation, and here chemical fertilizers offer a strong advantage. Chemical fertilizers are a lot more concentrated, usually 5 or 10 times more so, and in some cases, 20 times. This means 5 to 10 times more diesel fuel is burned transporting a pound of organic nutrients to your garden center. An extreme example is kelp meal, which contains 2% potassium, and the nearest source is 1200 miles from Denver. Potash, which contains 44% potassium, is mined in Utah 300 miles from here. This means that shipping a pound of potassium in the form of kelp meal uses 88 times as much fuel as a pound of potassium from mined potash. How does that help the environment?

We should also consider the question of runoff and groundwater contamination. A good-size home garden may contain about 1000 sq ft, and every year it will need one or two pounds of actual nitrogen.

Since the water table is rarely close to the surface in Colorado, it's very unlikely that leaching of nutrients in a home garden will affect ground water. Provided that you apply fertilizer early in the season and work it into the top inch or two of soil, it's unlikely that there will be much runoff. In any case, organic fertilizers are not immune to leaching or runoff. Some of the worst water pollution comes from feedlots, and that's all organic.

Finally organic gardeners claim that organic fertilizers contain growth stimulants, enzymes, trace minerals, and magic ingredients that are not found in chemical fertilizers, and this is partly true. I say partly because several brands of premixed chemical garden fertilizers incorporate trace elements. In addition, most Colorado garden soils naturally contain a good supply of trace elements. As for growth stimulants, enzymes, etc., a good grade of compost contains all these things. Compost is an excellent amendment that retains moisture and nutrients, improves soil structure, and supports beneficial microbes and earthworms. It has the advantage of costing only 5 to 15 cents per pound. According to the soil science textbooks and the CSU Extension Service, the organic content of garden soil can be maintained at a healthy level by adding 30 to 50 lb of compost per 100 sq ft each year. If you are making home-brewed compost, then you're doubly blessed.

There is one point that nobody disputes: organic fertilizers cost 5 to 10 times as much per pound of nutrients than chemical fertilizers. In fact, some of the more exotic organic materials are up 50 times more expensive. However, if you are obtaining good results using organic fertilizers, the added cost in a home garden won't send you to the poorhouse, so there is no need to switch.

Finally, I need to say a few nasty words about bluegrass lawns. A typical old-fashioned residential lot is about a quarter acre. Even if the lot has a 1000 sq ft garden, it probably also has 5000 sq ft of lawn, which is hungry for water and nitrogen fertilizer. In the summer, 80 to 90% of the water and fertilizer that's consumed is going to feed the lawn. Given the thousands of acres of lawn in the metro area, that means millions of gallons of fertilizer runoff, not to mention herbicides. Fortunately bluegrass lawns are gradually going out of fashion, since lots are smaller and xeriscaping is becoming more popular. In some of the newer subdivisions, homeowner associations are becoming more enlightened and are not demanding large expanses of bluegrass.



Whither the American Iris Society?

Part 2

Identifying That Iris from Grandma's Garden

By Richard Nolde

The AIS has a wonderful Web site at www.irises.org. Among the items available on the site are four ten-year iris registration lists (1959 through 1989) that can be downloaded at no cost. Unfortunately, the free lists do not include very old historic irises. The online database for newer irises (1999 to the present) requires registration and a fee for access. Furthermore, the layout of data in the lists can be intimidating for a new irisarian. I downloaded the files and worked them over a bit with some scripts* that I wrote to extract the information in them and present it in a more user-friendly form. I have extracted the following fields from the data files: status, hybridizer, year introduced, seedling, type, height, rebloom, season, extra information, source garden and awards, description, and parents.

The data that are currently available for free download provide a wealth of information, but there are many more things that we might want to know about a specific iris. Does it grow well in hot, dry areas such as Colorado or in colder, wetter areas like New York State? Is the iris subject to diseases or pests? How many blooms appear on each stalk? Is the bloom stalk likely to topple under the weight of the flowers? Even the data that are in the current files can be mined for more information. I would like to be able to extract the color information for standards, falls, and beards but this cannot be done reliably in a script with the current data arrangement. My category of "source garden and awards" could be broken down further, but again inconsistencies in the formatting of the available files make this difficult to automate. The descriptions could be used to identify selfs, bicolors, plicatas, neglectas, and so forth, or cultivars with horns, flounces, or spoons.

There are nearly 30,000 iris entries in the four 10-year registration lists alone, and each decade is indexed separately. By combining all four lists, applying consistent capitalization, and re-sorting the list by iris name, a searcher can now determine from one list if the iris was registered during those four decades. This combined list can be loaded into a spreadsheet, such as Excel, but the individual lines are so long that it is difficult to view on a computer screen and impossible to print for all but the most ardent tree-haters. The printed version requires roughly 50 legal-size

pages per thousand cultivars. This motivated me to provide individual lists for each letter of the alphabet, selected by the first letter of the iris name, and format the output as Web pages or text files that can be imported into a spreadsheet program or database. I can make these lists available to anyone who would like to work with them, but be warned that I cannot guarantee that I have not missed an item or put it in the wrong column in the lists. The scripts allow me to process the entire 30,000 iris entries in only a few minutes, but they were derived by analyzing the data downloaded from the AIS Web site, and there are numerous inconsistencies in the layout of the original data. Many more scripts can be written to find all iris varieties that match a given criterion, for example, all iris cultivars that list a specific iris as a parent or all irises that have been introduced by a specific hybridizer or grower, or within a range of years, or that bloom early, or that are very fragrant. I also plan to write a script to list all the cultivars for each type of iris. Combining criterion in a search is really the realm of a database, which brings us to my next point.

For me, this is just the beginning of an attempt to use the Internet to recruit new volunteers for the AIS and to hold on to those who join for a year or two and then fade away. It strikes me as odd that members have to pay to search for recent introductions in the AIS online database. For the nonmember who is considering joining the AIS, this is surely a real turnoff. Are we not killing the goose that lays the golden egg if we make it difficult for members to search that database? When there are no new members, it won't make much difference if the recent introductions list is free or

not. I hope that someday there will be a database of all the AIS registrations that will contain pictures of as many varieties as are still grown. It could provide lists of cultivars that meet user-specified criteria from the information stored in the database much as I am doing with my scripts. This is not a trivial project, and it is unlikely that one or two people could do the work to bring it to fruition even if they did not have regular jobs. More importantly, it should not be the work of only one or two specialists. The method that has worked well in the free software



Patrice Van Vleet and Richard Nolde trying to identify grandma's iris.

community is to freely offer the initial ideas to everyone and see who can and will improve upon them. People come and go as their time and interests permit, but the work continues.

I suspect that I am not the only iris-grower who inherited or was given a collection of irises and who wants to identify the varieties so that he or she can tell other people about a specific iris when it blooms. How much faster would this go if you could query a database for a list of all irises with white standards and blue or lavender falls and cream-colored beards? What if you could find out which late-blooming tall bearded irises have orange standards and falls with a beard that turns up at the end in a horn or flounce? Perhaps your mother grew a very fine historic iris with lavender standards and reddish-purple falls that her mother had in her garden before 1952 and you would like to know what it was. Could you enter those criteria and see images that help you identify that iris? In this age of digital cameras and high-speed Internet access, it isn't difficult to get decent pictures of an iris onto a Web site. Many growers have realized that new buyers choose an iris variety that is displayed with a picture over one that is not. At our annual sale, hardly anyone purchased rhizomes that we had not matched with a picture.

In the parlance of the Internet, this is a Request For Comment. Send me your thoughts and suggestions on how we can involve the entire AIS membership, the growers, and iris enthusiasts willing to share their computer skills to make this happen. My e-mail address is nrichard8@qwest.net, and I am the new webmaster for Region 20.

*Editor's note: *In the context of this article, scripts are short computer programs that automate tasks.*



2007 Region 20 Officers

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Door Prizes – Carol Eacker 719-633-5193

Garden Tour – Lisa Story 303-233-8354

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Show – To be named

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Parliamentarian – Elsie Funk 719-636-3895

Sunshine – Carol Eacker 719-633-5193

Loomis Test Garden – Carol & Russ Eacker*

*Phone numbers listed elsewhere on page

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VP – Lynne Apker 719-267-3663

Secretary – Karen Tomky 719-267-4012

Treas. – Paula Bennedsen 719-267-3245



Russ Eacker presents Bob Van Liere with a Dr. Loomis Award at the March Elmoehr meeting.

Van Liere Wins Loomis Award

Bob Van Liere's 'Solomon's Treasure' won the 2006 Dr. Loomis Award for second-year tall bearded irises. The award recognizes superior performance in the harsh, high altitude environment of the Dr. Loomis Memorial Trial Garden located in Colorado Springs. The presentation, pictured at left, was made by Russ Eacker. Russ and Carol Eacker tend the garden and evaluate the irises submitted by growers from around the world.

Financials and Board Meetings

If you would like to obtain the 2007 Approved Operating Budget or the Financial Statement Summary, please contact Suzanne McCarthy, the Region 20 treasurer, at hockeynutteh@comcast.net.

If you would like a copy of the board meeting notes, please contact Lisa Story, the Region 20 secretary, at lisarastory@comcast.net.

Nina Winegar Award

Nominate a deserving member of Region 20 for the Nina Winegar Award. This award is named after the first RVP of Region 20, who was instrumental in forming the Region and influential in its early development. Mrs. Winegar was one of those members that worked for many years to see that the society grew and prospered. The eponymous award honors those who have followed in her footsteps. The winner receives a lifetime membership in the American Iris Society, or if already a life member, the winner may choose a life membership in a section of AIS.

The nominee must be a Region 20 member and have performed exceptional work for Region 20 over a minimum of 10 years. Please give as much information as possible about the ways in which the nominee has contributed to the region.

Nominations must be in writing. Send nominations to the selection committee chairwoman, Catherine Gates, at P.O. Box 19, Boulder CO 80306-0019 or e-mail them to catherine@longsgardens.com. The nomination deadline is **August 1, 2007**.

EYE-RISSES
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All Eyes Will be on Us 5/18 - 6/10

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Iris Sale Dates

Iris Sale at *Hillside Gardens & Nursery*
Institute & Fountain in Colorado Springs
Wednesday, **July 25**, 10 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Iris Sale at *Hudson Gardens*
6115 South Santa Fe Dr., Littleton
Hudson Gardens — PHONE: 303-797-8565
Saturday, **July 28**, 9 A.M. – 4 P.M.
Sunday, **July 29**, 9 A.M. – 1 P.M.

Plant Sale, at the *Pueblo Farm Market*
at Midtown Mall, Pueblo
Tuesday, **August 7**, 7 A.M. – 12 P.M.
Friday, **August 10**, 7 A.M. – 12 P.M.

Plant Sale, at *Railroad Park* in Rocky Ford
Saturday, **August, 11**, 8 A.M. – 12 P.M.