

THE NEWSLETTER of
THE SIBERIAN, SPURIA and JAPANESE IRIS GROUP
of the British Iris Society.

No. 12.

February 1983

THE OBJECTS OF THE GROUP.

1. Communication between Members in Great Britain and Overseas.
2. A means of exchanging ideas, plants and seeds etc.
3. To assist beginners in growing Iris and to offer help with problems.
4. To report on Hybridisation.

EDITORIAL.

Here in the East Midlands we are experiencing an early Spring, which I sincerely hope will not have to be 'paid for' later on. Iris seedlings (sown last year) are already pushing up their pale green shoots and established plants are showing signs of life. Primroses, Snowdrops, Crocus, Hellebores, Pansies and Bergénias are in full flower, it is quite unbelievable.

Adrian Whittaker has suggested that we should have a section devoted to Members' 'Sales and Wants'. You will find details of this further on in the N/L. For the time being the Plant Sales will be discontinued.

We receive a great deal of help from our parent Society the B.I.S. and I would very much like to resume sending the donation we made some time ago. This can only be done if Subscriptions are paid promptly please.

A warm welcome is extended to 3 New Members Mr. J. Ashford of Nairn, Mr. Ray Wilson of Chorley and Herr. Eberhard Schuster who is a grower and Nurseryman in East Germany. We hope you will all enjoy reading our Newsletter and also take part, by writing and telling us of the Iris you grow in your garden.

The response to the July appeal for items concerning Spuria Iris has been very rewarding, giving us some excellent information and making this a bigger than usual N/L. I am tempted to say.... 'Make 1983 the year in which you grow Spuria Iris and add a new dimension to your Border'.

In July the emphasis will be on Japanese Iris. If you grow them, or would like to do so, please write in and we will see what can be done about it.,.,.,

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL..... GOOD GARDENING..... J.T.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Fellow Members,

Greetings to you all at the beginning of yet another New Year. As we look back on the one just ended, I think we can feel some satisfaction in the progress of our Group. You will have read in the July N/L of our first ever Stand at the B.I.S. Summer Show and the resultant New Members. It is to be regretted that we cannot

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repeat this effort in 1983, as there will not be a B.I.S. Show in the R.H.S. Hall this June. However, there is a real upsurge of interest in the Sibirica and Spuria sections of the Iris family and we must work towards another and even better Show in 1984.

Our Treasurer reports a fairly healthy Bank Balance and David has a good supply of seeds for sale. Please do your best to support this side of our efforts, as the proceeds help considerably to keep the subscription down.

Best Wishes for a good gardening Year.

Hilda Goodwin.

MY GARDEN

by Nora Scopes.

Up to about seven years ago my garden was almost exclusively given over to the growing of T.B's, S.D.B's and Medians, with a background planting of Shrubs and Trees. I suppose for a smallish garden I grew a surprising amount. Then I started to discriminate and did a lot of clearing out, retaining only those shrubs that gave me pleasure and a bonus in the way of Spring flowering and Autumn colouring. These are the times, I consider my garden to be at it's best.

When I began 16 years ago the soil was a dreadful mix of 'clay and rubble'. The old trees surrounding, should have given a lovely top layer of leaf-mould, but the previous owner had burned the leaves instead of composting them. Added to this the pure clay trodden hard by boisterous children, I was nearly defeated in my efforts to cultivate it. The young man I employed broke a spade with a 2' shaft, in his struggle. However there are more ways than one to 'skin a cat' so I laboriously excavated holes which I filled with the appropriate soil mix for the shrub or tree I was planting. I top-dressed with spent ashes, peat, leafmould in fact anything I could get hold of to improve the texture of the soil. After a sticky start they grew away and flourished. At the moment of writing, *Prunus Subhirtella Autumnalis* is in full flower, it shows up well against the darker shrubs. I gaze at it in delight as I do the washing up. This area is underplanted with shade-loving plants... Periwinkle, Silver Lamiums and Ferns of all kinds.

Wherever there is room I plant Pacific Coast Iris, which I have begun to raise from seed. Marjorie Brummitt gave me some of her best a few years ago, I find intercrossing them with good Iris from other raisers, very interesting. One, a descendant of 'Banbury Gem' has a very good branching habit, and when in flower the plant is a dome of rosy-crimson flowers which cover the foliage. 'Gerald Darby' and *I. Foetidissima variegata* do well here.

The garden slopes quite sharply to the south west. Near the bungalow the ground is terraced and as it gets the full sun I grow selected T.B. and S.D.B. seedlings there. At the bottom of the terrace I have recently built a raised scree bed to take my Alpines. It is filled with shingle to a depth of 2 ft. and the plants love it. A 2 ins. slip of '*Cedrus Brevifolia*' brought back from Cyprus, just before the partition, is

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now a spreading bush 2 ft. across. Against the wall of the scree bed, growing in the gravel path, is a collection of *I. Stylosa*, of which I have several varieties. Frances Love from New Zealand, last year, brought me many that I do not have, and they have settled in nicely.

A mixed hedge of Holly and Hawthorn runs down one side of the garden and under it I have built up with peat blocks, an area of about 8 x 2 yards for a peat garden. Here *I. Gracilipes* and *Cristata* revel, also *Cyclamen Neapolitanum*, *Album* and *Coum* seed themselves profusely. Dwarf Rhododendrons, Japanese Maples, Camellias and a Magnolia give shade. Tiny Ferns and Soldanellas run amongst the peat blocks.

On the other side of the garden grow the Siberians.... 'Cambridge', 'Anniversary', 'Dreaming Yellow', Currier McEwen's 'Silver Edge' and 'Orville Fay'. Here too is an 'oldie' of which I am very fond, a cream and white seedling of M. Kitton's with an ethereal, small, fluttery, papery flower and lovely straight narrow foliage. I think this will look well growing at the side of the pool. *I. Sibirica Nanus* has not yet flowered for me, but the foliage looks too coarse and broad for a true dwarf.

Years ago I bought a collection of Spurias, 'Wake Robin', 'Black Point', 'Counterpoint', 'Essay' and 'Golden Lady' to mention a few. These I grew in the front garden which is on a slope, and full of London Clay, thrown up when the Gas Main was replaced. I thought the Spurias would prevent the soil from slipping. They did... and they loved it, so much so that there was little room for anything else, except the day-lilies planted at the same time. I wanted more variety and the soil improved with mulching, so I gave them away to Sidney Linnegar, who dug them up by the sweat of his brow. Needless to say pieces were left behind, which were disposed of later, but I still have 'Counterpoint' at the back of the border. I wish they did not take up so much room. I have, however, recently acquired a few of the less vigorous species as I want to do some crossing. I was interested to read in an A.I.S. Bulletin that Spurias will cross with Dutch Irises. I have tried with English with no success... but what is one failure?.....

Such is my garden.... It gives me great pleasure and delight.... It is not an Irisarian's garden at all..... but I like it that way.

(Thank you Nora, your garden sounds delightful. Records tell us that you have many successes in the past and we hope you will have many more to come. Ed)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

8-9th February	RETICULATA Show	R.H.S. Hall Vincent Sq.
26-27th April	DWARF and MEDIAN Show	do
4th June	SUMMER Show	Reading University
20th September	A.G.M. and Supper	R.H.S. Hall Vincent Sq.

Please note that the SUMMER SHOW will be held at READING UNIVERSITY this year.

TREVOR NOTTLE'S LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

The Iris season finished here on the 25 th November, as seering North winds and 40degrees Temperatures burned the remaining blooms to a crisp. A sudden end to a really top season.

For the first time we flowered I.Milesii, an Evansia with large blue flowers, blotched with purple, the falls hang down, in contrast to the usual flaring form of others of this tribe. We also had I x Japo-Watt (Actually believed to be I. Japonica x Confusa) which has tall rigid stems and many light blue flowers, which emerge from buds, more noticeably sheathed in bracts than others in this group. The axils of the flowering stems and the branchlets are also conspicuously bracted.

I. x 'Fairyland' was another first in the Evansias. The flowers are very small, of thumbnail size and of the palest blue. The whole plant is only 8ins. high and slow growing too.

I. Gracilipes is the last of this family to flower. Rich blue with conspicuous horizontal barring on the white fall marks. It seems to be slow at multiplying but it gets a lot of competition from ferns and Helixine.

Our Siberian Iris provided a real display, especially a bed of 20 seedlings from 'Polly Dodge'. There are at least 3 really good claret-reds, several bi-colours with red blue and white zones. Also many very acceptable deep mid-blues with wide petals and wide standards. A bed of I. Sibirica 'Grandis' seedlings also produced several outstanding colours. Especially good was a very tall Dove-grey and a Deep purple. There were lots of blues too, in the mid-light blue range.

The Spuria Iris have just finished and again there were some really fine new seedlings. Among the best was a dark Ink-blue with gold veins, which I think will be introduced and named after my Wife. The other is a Smokey-maroon colour, which I am going to register as 'David Ruston'. I have taken several slides of these. There were several blues ranging from ice-blue with huge round falls to sky-blue with varying tonings of veins and centre spots.

I was really disappointed with one bloom, the flowers were bright blue with a distinct white halo around a solid yellow centre spot. The combination was eye-catching. I was dreaming up names such as 'Soand So's Apron'; but failed to observe at first that the falls were pinched and turned under. I still hope to use it for breeding: as maybe it will turn out better next year. I am going to move it to a better position in the garden and see if that will improve it's performance.

Iris Setosa did not flower well, I suspect that the weather was too variable and too hot for the flowers to develop well as they opened. Our Winter was very dry and that possibly affected them too. I blame the weather for the poor flowers on the Chrysographes and the lack of growth of the Japs. 'Imperial Palace' a large beetroot-red, usually a good performer, nearly died. I am down to 2 fans. 'Silken Parasol' and 'Nishiki-gi' flowered well the week before Christmas. 'Silken Parasol' is a single lilac-pink with pale green nectaries. Very early. 'Nishiki-gi' is a rosy lavender
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with dense purple streaking, it is single and the petals roll inwards very neatly at the edges.

My seedlings have not done particularly well due to the dry Winter, there are many patches in the seed trays. The conditions, however must have suited *I. Cretensis* because it came up very well, perhaps they were more like those in it's homeland. I guess the other seeds will stay dormant for one more year.

(Trevor has not been well, we do hope he is feeling better now.) Ed.

PAUL RICHARDSON'S LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND.

The Japanese Iris are in full bloom now (December), fortunately in better weather conditions than the *Spurias* had... gale force winds that stripped the standards and falls off as soon as they opened.

I have been doing some detective work for Dr. Marion Wood, about the plant with 'six horizontal, paddle shaped falls'. I saw a plant in the Denver Rock Alpine Garden which seemed to parallel it. Panayoti Callas, Curator of the Garden confirmed that this is *Setosa Canadensis*. I took a photograph of it, which I enclose (this will be sent to Dr. Wood. Ed.) Even with this assurance I am not wholly convinced that *Setosa*, which is recognised by it's 'bristles' could be so generous in flower, even occasionally. However at our Convention in Dunedin last month, I witnessed the phenomenon in detail. One plant of *Setosa Canadensis* produced it's first bloom with 'six' falls. The second bloom had 'five' falls and one 'bristle' and the third was conventional with three falls and three 'bristles'. One implication of all this is that the phenomenon must be relatively common.

I am rapidly becoming disenchanted with the 40 chromosome Siberians raised from other people's seed, or worse, with other people's seedlings, which have been raised more with pious hope than with skill. My 'Bulleyana' and 'Tenax' both have 'branches', but 'Clarkei' has produced, so far, one monstrosity that raises grave doubts whether the supplier was even sure of the 'pod parent! However, I do have, from a reliable source, a nice clump of *I. Delavayi* x *Clarkei* which looks genuine in that elements of both parents are visible in the blooms. It is growing next to what purports to be 'Mirza' and may be, because of the colour 'Mirza Citronella'.. Both plants bloom on 4 foot stems but the former is superior on all counts to the 'Mirza'.. A seedling from 'Delavayi x Clarkei x Bee' x *Forrestii* has produced plants of identical growth but with inferior blooms. The Photograph I sent last year is unfortunately far from typical of the small flabby flowers of the current year.

On the other hand this year's crop of new seedlings from my own hand pollinated 'Delavayi x Clarkei' x *Forrestii* all show blooms almost identical with those on *Forrestii* (just a hint of violet here and there on some of them) on 1-2 foot stems with strong hybrid foliage up to 26 ins. I have another plant with the same dimensions from *Chrysographes* Kew Black seed, again obviously a Hybrid. What look like siblings of this plant with typical *Chrysographes* markings on wider falls, are common round
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Dunedin, apparently grown because they are excellent garden subjects.

The only useful information from the foregoing seems to be that first generation crosses from *Forrestii* and *Chrysographes*, might well grow happily, where their parents tend to be ephemeral.

Despite the wind, the season was a good one for Siberians. 'Butter and Sugar' bloomed for the first time giving me 6 stems of fine blooms. 'Castlegrace' a local introduction and one of the best large purple Diploids, put on a very good show as usual. The Tetraploids seemed to be extra tall and dramatic. 'Navy Brass' and 'Harpwell Haze' were outstanding.

SPURIAS IN NEW ZEALAND..... Introduction.

So far as Species are concerned, thirty years ago Carl Teschner was advertising *Aurea*(*Crocea*), *Graminea*, *Sintenisi*, *Halophila*, *Kerneriana*, *Maritima*, *Monaura*, *Musulmanica*, *Notha*, *Ochroleuca*, and *Sintensi* 'Constantinople Form'. The only one of these likely to be grown reasonably widely by the general gardening public is *Ochroleuca*, although one of the biggest general Nurserymen has recently advertised *Iris Klattii*(sic). Jean Stevens in 'The Iris and it's Culture' confirms that in the 1950's *Ochroleuca* was the best known of the Spurias. She also said that the purple form has naturalised along roadsides.

Among the Iris fraternity, I think that *I. Graminea* is easily the most popular species, deservedly so, since it is an excellent garden plant, with few cultural or disease problems. In the Wellington area I have grown 'Graminea' for many years. *I. Sintensi*, I have had and lost and attempts to grow 'Lilacina' have, so far, been unsuccessful. Currently, I have seedlings of *Sintensi*, *Kerneriana* and *Halophila* planted out this Spring. Like others elsewhere I suffer occasionally from optimistic or confused seed gatherers.... *Kerneriana* has become *Lactea* and *Maritima* has grown into *Longipetala*.

A very good range of cultivars is available from one source--- in the region of 20 varieties, with many of them having won Eric Nies award. There are other sources too, but in the Wellington area, at least, they are not widely grown. The main reasons would appear to be that the sources are limited and they do not advertise widely. Unfortunately in the average small suburban garden, they take up a lot of room and the stiff stems do not stand up to our very windy conditions.

SPECIES SPURIAS IN NEW ZEALAND.

by Frances Love.

New Zealand is a narrow elongated country, which stretches from sub-tropical in the North to sub-antarctic in the far South. As well, there is a spine of mountains running down half of the North Island and almost the whole length of the South Island. By and large, as our weather travels from west to east, our west coast has a much higher rainfall than the east, with local variations, of course.

Our forefathers, who mostly came from Britain, brought with them plants, seed
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and cuttings from their favourite British gardens, no doubt as a remembrance of 'home', so that in some areas there are well established stands of various species which have naturalised themselves. In the northern-most part of the country, the type species of *Iris Spuria* has spilled over on to the roadside, in some areas has even filled the drains. They always make a lovely splash of blue in the early Summer.

In many other parts of New Zealand clumps of them can be seen in the fields. It is quite something to see a neat clump of *I. Ochroleuca* growing in the same manner. As animals never eat these plants, they go on from year to year. Twenty miles or so from here (Wairarapa in the south east part of North Island) there is a neat row of *I. Aurea*, 2 chains long and $3/4$ feet wide, it has been in the same place for many years and does not seem to get any bigger or smaller. In Hawkes Bay there is a whole hillside covered with what was thought to be *I. Maritima*, but we have established it is not as named. We cannot, however put a definite name to it.

I. Lilacina, *I. Halophila* and *I. Musulmanica*, not being as robust, are only found in gardens comparatively rarely. They are shy to flower and grow very slowly. This is a pity because such dainty, personable flowers deserve to be better known.

Of the Dwarf species the best known and easiest to grow is the lovely *I. Graminea* with it's fabulous scent of apricots. *I. Sintenisii* is seen fairly frequently, but seems to be short lived, this is no great problem as it is easily raised from seed. *I. Kerneriana* is harder to cope with, despite germinating reasonably well, it resents transplanting. However for the lucky people who do raise it, it blooms in 2 years and continues to do so regularly, having a good life expectancy. Like all *Spurias* it hates to be broken up or moved. They like to stay put.

(Thank you both for your interesting accounts. Paul's enlarged Photograph was used to great effect as the centre-piece of our Stand last June... many thanks..) Ed.

LET'S ALL GROW SPURIA'S

by Floyd W. Wickenkamp, Arizona. Editor of the *Spuria Iris Society Newsletter*.

With the possible exception of the bulbous Iris, probably no group of Iris thrive with so little care, as the *Spurias*. They are relatively immune to disease (except mustard seed fungus). Rabbits and other pests do not seem to care for the foliage, and they are not normally bothered by insects. One thing they do demand is plenty of sunshine. Of course, as with most plants, they respond to applications of fertilizers, especially those high in Phosphorus, with better growth and more flowers.

Although the homelands of the *Spuria* species are generally a broad band, starting in Spain and extending through the Mediterranean, Black and Caspian Sea Basins to Afghanistan and China. Many of the Hybrids flourish throughout the temperate world. While some cultivars will grow satisfactorily under adverse weather conditions, others do not... so, if yours is a climate with minimal sunshine and sub-arctic winter weather, care should be exercised in selecting those varieties which are vigorous in growth.

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Even in such areas as the Northern Tier of States in the U.S.A. (e.g. Central Minnesota) satisfactory results are possible with many varieties provided they receive adequate sunshine. My own experience, resulting from growing Spurias in Northern Virginia for a dozen years, is that almost any Spuria with Ochroleuca in it's background is likely to grow well, provided the soil is acid(not too much), and with the caveat... 'keep 'em where there is plenty of sunshine'. Since the high humidity, limited sunshine and generally acid soils, typical of Virginia, also are likely to exist in most parts of the United Kingdom, similar techniques should be applicable to both areas. I tried to select a location where the plants would receive more than half a day of sunshine (assuming the sun to be shining). In preparing the soil, limestone was added to bring the pH to an essentially neutral condition. Ground bark, rotted sawdust, composted leaves or other organic material was added to the clay soil to improve it's texture. Any fertilizer with a high Phosphorus content is acceptable, such as 5-10-5 or 6-12-4. It is best to avoid too much nitrogen, as the result is likely to be more foliage and less bloom. Additional applications of super-phosphate may be beneficial, especially where the soil is low in available phosphorus.

To suggest particular cultivars for an area in which one has no actual experience is always rather dangerous. However, the following seem to be good choices for most areas:----- 'Ada Perry', 'Archie Owen', 'Burnished Brass', 'Clarke Cosgrove', 'Eagle', 'Elixir', 'Far Out', 'Forty Carats', 'Highline Lavender', 'Imperial Bronze', 'Imperial Ruby', 'Proverb' and 'Ruffled Canary'.

For some years in the Spuria NewsLetters we have tried to encourage those living in the colder, wetter, cloudier areas to develop their own cultivars, which would be especially suited to such areas. Growing Spuria from seed is not difficult.. I plant mine in place, in the garden and thin out the weaker ones in the second year, to provide space for the stronger ones to develop. Where Winter weather reaches well below freezing, it is probably preferable to plant the seeds in flats and to protect them from cold weather in the first Winter. They can then be planted out of doors after danger of frost is over.

Spuria seedlings are somewhat slower to mature than other Iris. Here in the Salt River Valley of Arizona, flowering the third year from seed, seems to be the norm. Seeds planted in the fall of 1979 should bloom by the spring of 1982. To avoid 'bee crossing', when hybridising, cover the bud with a sack, or force the bloom to open while it is still impervious to the bees and pull off the falls, so that the bees will have no place on which to light. In any event I have found it best to remove the falls at the time the pollen is applied. Then if your pollen doesn't take, at least you will not be fostering a later bee impregnation.

Mention was made about 'mustard seed fungus'. This is a fungus which is active during damp, warm weather. Once established it can destroy. There is no cure, but a dressing of 'Terraclor' incorporated at planting time or after, will readily control it. Paraphrasing the words in a T.V. Commercial, whose name escapes me. With regards to Spurias... 'Try 'em, you'll like 'em'. (Thank you Floyd. Ed.)

IRIS FOR THE WATER GARDEN.

by Eberhard Schuster.

Three years ago our family moved from Erfurt to Augustenhof, a small village near to Schwerin, which is a town in the northern part of East Germany. Our aim was to grow water plants, bog plants, water-lilies and perennials, my favourite flowers for many years. Most of them are hardy, but some species do need winter protection such as... *Anemopsis Californica*, *Selliera Radicans* and some others. I have the only Nursery in East Germany which specialises in water and bog plants etc. I also supply (will) for a big firm. Next year my book on my favourite plants will be published.

I grow all my plants in plastic pools. This is necessary, because our soil is too sandy and dry, even though there are many lakes around here.

Among my collection of 250 plants I have quite a few rare items such as... *Caltha Natans* from Arctic North America, *Freslia Cervina*, *Phragmites Australis Variegatus*, *Hibiscus Moscheutos* var. *Albiflora* and others. The iris (about 100 species as well as cultivars), have an important place in my collection. They include *I. Chrysographes*, *I. Clarkei*, *I. Delavayi*, *I. Laevigata*, *I. Prismatica*, *I. Pseudacorus*, *I. Setosa*, *I. Sibirica*, *I. Spuria*, *I. Versicolor*, *I. Wilsonii* and several others.

I grow *I. Laevigata* the only true 'water Iris', *I. Pseudacorus*, *I. Versicolor* and several other varieties in shallow water, all the year round. *I. Laevigata* 'Variegata' is the most decorative water Iris for me. Other cultivars which I grow are 'Alba', 'Albo Purpurea', 'Rose Queen' (a hybrid with *I. Ensata*) and 'Snowdrift'.

I. Pseudacorus is our native Iris, I grow the following forms:- 'Double (flore pleno)', 'E. Turnipseed', 'Golden Queen' (var. *superba*), 'Illengold' (a tetraploid form), 'Sulphur Queen' (var. *bastardii*) and 'Variegata'.

It is my plan to start a modern collection of *I. Sibirica* cultivars. I already have growing 'Ann Dasch', 'Bee', 'Butter and Sugar' (yellow), 'Cambridge', 'Peg Edwards', 'Pink Haze', 'Steve Varner' and several others. 'Steve Varner' won the A.I.S. Morgan award this year. 'Ann Dasch' was the 82 runner up. This year 1982, I received a collection of Louisiana Iris to test and report for the Louisiana Society of the A.I.S. to see how they grow here ... I wonder if they will survive our Winter. I am already growing 'Ann Chowling', 'Double Talk', 'Ila Nunn', 'President Hedley', 'Professor Ike' and several others.

I. Ensata, formerly *I. Kaempferi* I grow in normal garden soil, with additional watering in the growing season. I use a special fertilizer for plants which prefer acid conditions, as recommended by the A.I.S. bulletin. Foliar nutrition gives very good results, the plants are strong and virile.

Although Water Iris are my favourites, I also have *I. Bucharica*, *I. Confusa*, *I. Demetrii*, *I. Florentina*, *I. Halophila*, *I. Sogdiana* and others. *I. Confusa* needs a cold greenhouse during the Winter. The old plants are about 1 metre high.

All the time I look for more plants to add to my collection. Especially cultivars of *Laevigata*, *Pseudacorus*, *Sibirica*, *Ensata* and also Hybrids. Also I look for hybrids of *I. Pseudacorus* and *I. Ensata* e.g. 'Golden Queen' which is not the var.
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Superba of I.Pseudacorus or 'Kimboshi'.

(Thank you Herr Schuster for your account. If any Member would like to write he will be very pleased. You will find his address in the Member's list. Thank you also for the lovely lot of seeds you kindly sent. Ed.)

The Seed Distribution

Packets are priced at 5p and 10p for rare and specials. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when applying. They will be sent on a first come first served basis. Will you also include one or two substitutes please.

Seed Distribution Officer..

Mr. David Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent Nottingham.

Section Laevigata

I.Laevigata (blue). I.Pseudacorus (deep yellow). I.Pseudacorus Bastardii (pale yellow)

I.Versicolor. I.Versicolor Kermesina

all the above at 5p per packet

I.Pseudacorus 'Sulphur Queen' var. Bastardii.

I.Pseudacorus 'Golden Queen' var. Superba

I.Pseudacorus 'E.Turnipseed'

all the above at 10p per packet.

Series Sibirica

I.Sibirica. I.Sibirica (28 chrs.)

I.Sibirica ' Marcus Perry', 'Orville Fay', 'Tycoon', 'White Magnificent'

I.Wilsonii.

Series Chrysographes

I.Chrysographes 'Rubella'

I.Forrestii x Chrysographes

all the above at 5p per packet

I.Forrestii (Remontant) at 10p per packet

Series Kaempferi

I.Kaempferi 'Ruby Red'

Section Xyridion

I.Graminea. I.Halophila. I.Kerneriana.

all the above at 5p per packet

I.Spuria Yellow/Brown Hybrids (A.Whittaker).

I.Spuria seed from 'Violet Bloomfield' (H.Goodwin).

both at 10p per packet.

Section Spathula

I.Foetidissima 'Citrina'. at 5p per packet.

THE GROUP LIBRARY

Copies of the following American Publications are obtainable from the Hon,
Librarian:- Mrs. J.Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St, Mary, Cleobury Mortimer,
Kidderminster. Worcs.

NewsLetter of the Spuria Iris Society.

Review of the Society for Japanese Irises.

Journals of the Siberian Iris.

The Genus Iris..... subsection Sibiricae.. B.I.S.

Alphabetical Table & Cultivation Guide to the Species. B.I.S. (cont. over)

Please include Postage when requesting items.....

BOOK REVIEWS.

by Jennifer Hewitt.

The Iris' By Brian Mathew. Batsford £12.50.

Those of us fortunate enough to have access to a copy of W.R.Dykes' 'The Genus Iris' may find therein the answers to our questions regarding the species of Irises, but a great deal of new information, and a number of new species, have been discovered since 1913. Brian Mathew's book 'The Iris' brings together all, or almost all, current information. It is a classic reference book, beautifully illustrated and worth every penny it costs, because it will be consulted frequently and rewardingly, not least for its cultural advice. Pleasingly written, it will be many years before we need another such book, although it may be necessary to annotate it as yet newer data becomes available... (for example, and of particular interest to Group Members, The Spuria Iris 'Turkey Yellow' has recently been described by Mr. Mathew as a new species, *Iris xanthospuria*).

'GROWING IRISES' by G.E.Cassidy and S.Linnegar. Croom Helm £7.95 (but available to B.I.S. Members at £6.95 from the Hon. Information Officer, Mrs. W.Tallack.)

This book, also highly readable, is very much in tune with present gardening and our wish to grow irises as parts of mixed plantings in different situations. The two authors' wide knowledge and experience has enabled them to answer, most comprehensively questions on their subject with basic, reliable information on the main groups of Irises (and many less well-known, but equally deserving to be more widely grown) and the conditions and cultivation they require. It is just the book to recommend to anyone who is becoming interested in irises, at a very reasonable price. For those of us who are already 'hooked', it is not only an enjoyable read, but will almost certainly tell us things we didn't already know.

REGIONAL ROUND UP...

South Region. SPURIA NOTES.

by Adrian Whittaker.

Having grown Spurias for over ten years in mid-Hampshire, I find my enthusiasm for these splendid plants, as great as ever. Like my other favourites, the Sibiricas, most seem to flourish in our unpredictable climate, with less sun than they should have. Since my main interest is hybridisation, perhaps some personal comments in this area would be of interest.

Most seedlings grow well here despite our alkaline soil. Generally, the taller ones outperform the shorter ones in flowering, with the exception of Graminea, always reliable. 'Maritima', which I much want to try as a parent, usually grows very slowly and stubbornly, refusing to flower. Of all the species, *Orientalis* (*Ochroleuca*) is quite outstanding, always flowering reliably, even in dappled shade.

The best two cultivars in my garden, so far, are without doubt 'Golden Lady' and 'Belise'. I would recommend both for their reliability. Magnificent, but very different blooms and general health, 'Belise' has about the best flower placement of (not over)

any cultivar I have ever seen. Since my modest hybridising programme is very space limited, my main aim is to select plants which will flower well in this climate, since most of the parent species grow in much sunnier climes than ours. Colour is therefore a secondary objective--- but I admit to a preference for browns and orange.

Regarding form, I feel very strongly that the flowers of the 'native' plants have both beauty and balance of form, which we should not destroy by selective breeding for ever larger, flaring blooms. I would rather see attention directed towards better placement of blooms on the stems, to avoid the crowding of flowers, often seen with Spurias. 'Remontant' varieties would obviously be useful, as well.

Most Spurias are of rhizome spreading habit, so plants which remain vigorous yet do not spread rapidly are worth retaining.

The seed generally germinates well. I sow straight from the pod, as soon as it shows signs of splitting, into 'plunged' pots in the open. The top cm. of the sand/peat mix is covered with fine gravel. Some seed germinates within 3 months, and may require protection if the weather is very cold. Some will lie dormant for a year.

My overall impression is that heavy feeding is not required, so I only fork compost in around the plants during the winter, then give a very mild dose of 'Growmore' in the early spring.

I hope more people will try a Spuria or two, then, perhaps, you will come to like them as much as I do... At least one or two of you will try a bit of 'pollen dabbing'.... it is very rewarding and who knows you may come up with a winner, which does very well in our climate!!!!

Eastern Region by Jack Vennor.

I grow a few Spuria Iris, but new varieties take a long time to establish in the cold, wet, clay soil here in East Anglia. 'Ochraleuca', 'Ellison', 'Ticehurst' and an unnamed Yellow, I had from Alex Back, all grow and flower very well. Recently I acquired a number of new varieties. Some imported in the autumn of 81. and others in September of this year(82). Sadly they do not look very happy at present, I am hoping that growth will speed up in the spring. Then I look forward to them flowering for the first time. The New varieties are as follows:-

- 'Adobe Sunset'--- Dark orange and Tan (McCown 76).
- 'Empathy'----- Greenish Tan and Brown (GH 10 80)
- 'Fergys Poetry'-- Red-Violet (Ferguson 74)
- 'Forty Carats'--- Deep Yellow (Ferguson 71)
- 'Imperial Ruby'-- Red-Purple (McCown 73)
- 'Looking Glass Eyes'---- Blackish-Violet and Yellow (Niswonger 76)
- 'Pink Candles'----- Lilac-Pink (Ferguson 69)
- 'Protege'----- Mainly Blue (Hager 66)
- 'Social Circle'--- White and Yellow (Corlew 78)

If they prove successful, I will be glad to participate in the Plant Exchange, I would certainly like a piece of Adrian's orange and tan seedling, it sounds good.

(Thanks Jack, I do hope your Spurias take a turn for the better, let us know in July)

North East Region.

by Ruth Conley.

Our garden suffered neglect during the worst period of my illness, but we hope
(cont)

no irretrievable damage has occurred. With a bed in the garden room, I am sure it was better therapy to talk to Donald and the cats and have a full view of my garden, than to look at 4 walls of the bedroom. I can recommend it to any convalescent...

The Sibiricas we brought from Kent flourished exceedingly well, so that we had to reduce them. Foolishly we dug out the whole clumps, and only replanted small pieces from the edge. The larger clumps were taken to the Wild Fowl Trust at Martin Mere, where they were gratefully received, and planted. The retained bits have since languished or perished, among them 'Sea Shadows', so I felt that more recent developed ones would not come amiss.

As regards T.B.'s it was a marvellous year. We are not able to carry out such a large programme of pollination as we did in our old home, but seldom have we had such a large number of seedlings that we considered worth showing. Had we been able to get them to London or to the Kent Group Shows, we would have presented any of a dozen from 2 crosses, that would have been in condition at the time.

We have now met Ray Wilson and his wife... It is so nice to have someone sharing our enthusiasm, to talk with in this rather remote area.

I am hoping that by the spring I shall be able to take a more active interest in my garden again, especially my beloved Iris,.....

(Thanks Ruth, so pleased to hear you are feeling a little better. Best wishes from us all for a complete recovery. God Bless. Ed.)

Member's Letters (Extracts).

Because so many of you have kindly written in this time, I am giving extracts from the letters as follows:-

Prof. David Dixon from Whitburn Writes.... Some 10 years ago I had a generally decent collection, but a period, teaching in Australia meant losing many. Now mainly, I have a border of Ferguson's Spuria Hybrids, which make a very good show. They are planted together with I. Halophila against a wall (15 yards) which gives them enough sun and heat to flower well. There is a good variety of colour and also some of the short-petalled form, on which I have mixed feelings. They really give a quite different appearance to the plant. In September I visited the Harlow Car Gardens in Harrogate and there was a very good show, especially of Sibiricas. Amongst the other forms I noticed a number of the Langport Intermediate Hybrids, which are sold commercially. The rather long falls seemed out of place on the shortish stems, in some examples perhaps. I still have some personal Hybrids of Intermediates, and I rather like the small-flowered forms on one foot stems, which flower prolifically and stand up to the wind here. Actually I call them 'Geordie' Iris, as perhaps they are not as good as they should be, but they are very 'hardy'.....

Mrs. Eileen Wise writes from Iver that although they are best known in the T.B. World, they have a pond full of I. Pseudacorus. I. Chrysographes which is almost like black velvet, I. Kerneriana which is lovely, but blooms fitfully, as well as many of Mrs. Brummitt's Lovelies. Some of the McEwan Sibiricas such as 'Polly Dodge', 'Ruffled Velvet' and 'Silver Edge'.....

Margaret Owen from Acton Pigot makes an urgent appeal concerning Remontant Spurias, she has kindly sent in a list of these known to 'Remont' in the States:-

'Premier' (Barr 1899) Spur. - B.3.M. bred here.
(not to be confused with 2 later T.B.s)

'Peaches and Cream' (F.E.Taylor 47) Ochroleuca x Lemom 7 Seedling.

'Spring Island' (Walter Ferguson 71). Charm x Premier.

'Repetorie' (Walter Ferguson 72). I.Halophila Alba x Blue Acres

Margaret would like to hear from anyone who has a Remontant Spuria please. She goes on to say that Marlene Ahlburg has a Remontant clone of Iris Halophila. Also that I.Sintensii is said to Remont.

(Now I have had a lovely long letter from Marlene and Remontancy is a big subject which has a Group of devoted Pilgrims, so I propose that we continue this in the July NewsLetter. Marlene's account of her lovely garden, and any more comments on whether your Iris Remont, something to look forward to.....Ed)

A late letter from New Zealand by Heather Collins a senior and experienced Irisarian.

I have grown Spuria Iris in three gardens in South Canterbury, which is situated on the East Coast of the South Island.

To obtain blooms each season, the fibrous rhizome needs to be planted in well prepared soil, preferably enriched with farm manure. Each autumn I apply a top dressing blood and bone, sawdust and pea straw. I have noticed the last two years when there have been few frosts (previously 12 degrees F was the norm, during winter) that new growth started early in the autumn, and was well advanced by early spring. Spurias grow best in full sunshine with good drainage. They appreciate a good soaking from time to time when the weather is dry, from spring to late summer. Our rainfall is about 59 cm. My present garden has few areas of full sunshine, I find that those planted in partial shade, flower intermittently, but they do increase. Not so, the Dwarf forms, which prefer a position where they are sheltered from the afternoon sun. The miniature Sintensii is, however the exception, as this revels in a hot position, covering the short, stiff, finely ribbed foliage with blooms of a beautiful mid-blue with fine white veining. Growing beside a path, the full beauty is enjoyed for many weeks.

I.Kerneriana is completely deciduous and I find is more exacting, as it demands an open uncluttered position to flower well- like Sintensii it prefers good compost. One species, which does well, I grew from seed I collected near Alès in France.. I am wondering if it is 'Maritima'.

In my experience, moving Spurias immediately after flowering is the best time. A rhizome with growth around is preferable. I place a stone beside it, this gives the roots a chance to stabilise, and to start growing immediately. New shoots usually appear within a couple of months.

(Paul adds that their rainfall in Upper Hutt, nestling under the Tararua Mountains averages 140 cms. per annum.)

Sincere thanks to you all for your most valuable information.. Ed.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st December 1982

	£		£
23.3.82 NewsLetter and Postage	32.40	Subscriptions	42. 50
additional printing for Show	11.00	Donations	8. 00
22.7.82 NewsLetter and Postage	25.92	Seeds & Plants	10. 23
Surplus	9.56	Items sold at Show	8. 25
		N/L's unsold	9. 90
	<u>78.88</u>		<u>78. 88</u>

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st DECEMBER 1982.

Accumulated Fund	53. 16	Interest	2. 98
Surplus for Year	9. 56	Cash in Bank	49. 84
		N/L's in stock	9. 90
	<u>62. 72</u>		<u>62. 72</u>
		Total Cash in Bank.	<u>52. 82.</u>

TREASURERS' REPORT

Subscriptions 75p per year, payable at the end of June.

Although there is no cause for concern at this stage, I would ask you again, if you will please pay your subscription promptly. Then we will be able to send a donation to the B.I.S.

Copies of Alex Back's original NewsLetter printed in 1976 are available...

The cost is 20p. plus 12½p. Postage.

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The cost is 30p. plus 12½p. Postage.

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Mrs. M.Owen		Spurias:-
Acton Pigot' Acton Burnell		'Premier' (Barr 1899)
Shrewsbury Salop.		(not to be confused with 2 later T.Bs' &
		'Peaches and Cream '
		(F.T.Taylor 47)
		'Spring Island'
		(W.Ferguson 71)
		'Repertoire'
		(W.Ferguson 72)
		'Blue Acres'
		'Charm'.

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