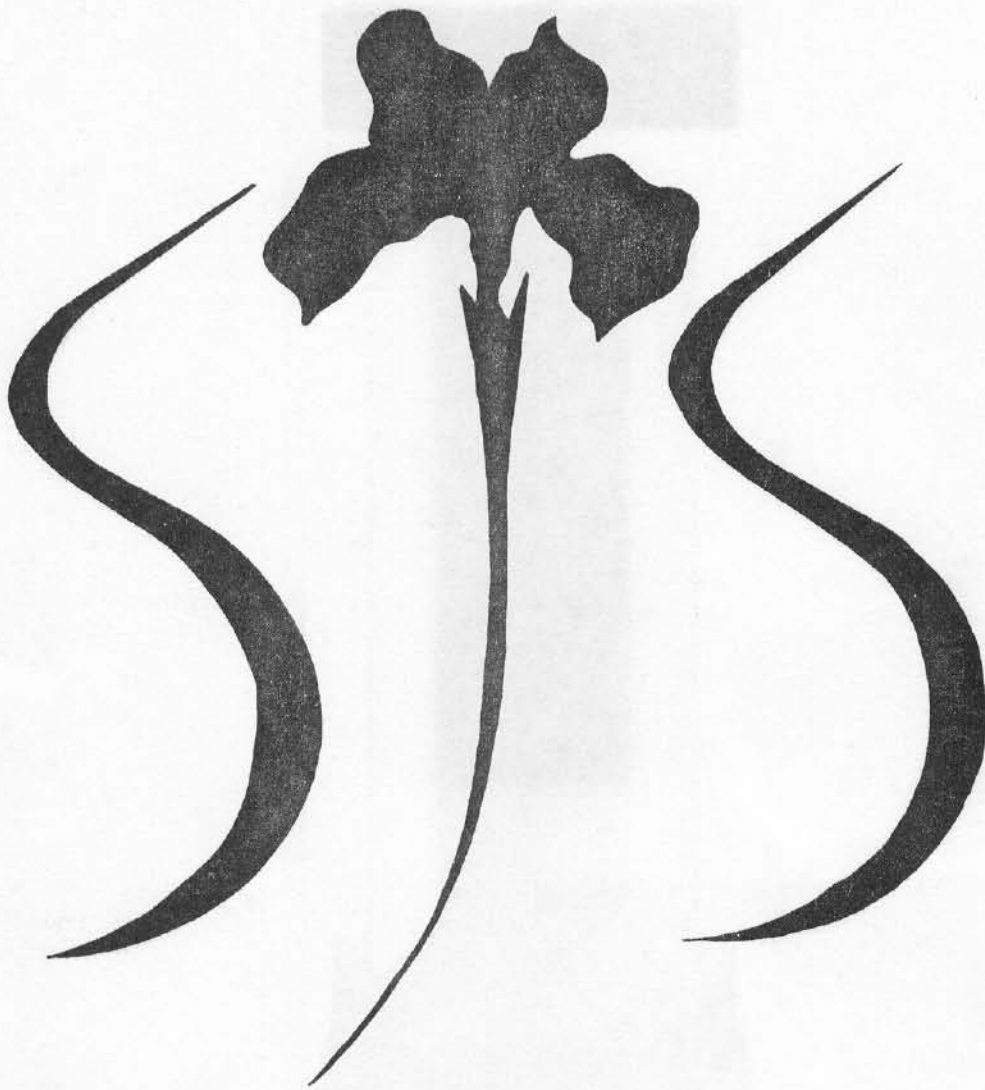


NEWSLETTER



OF THE

SIBERIAN SPURIA AND JAPANESE GROUP
(INCLUDING PACIFICAS AND WATER IRIS)

B.I.S.

The SIBERIAN, SPURIA & JAPANESE IRIS GROUP, (including PACIFICAS & WATER IRISES).
of the BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY.

Newsletter No. 34.

February 1994.

The Aims & 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 Irises and to help with problems.
4. To report on Hybridisation.

The Group's Officers.

Chairman..... Mr. Adrian Whittaker, 'Chestnuts', Hilden Way, LITTLETON.
(Spuria Specialist). WINCHESTER. Hants. SO2 26QH.
Vice Chairman..... Mrs. Hilda Goodwin, Corner Cottage, School Road, GREAT BARTON.
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Hon. Secty/Treas..... Mrs. Joan Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent.
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Hon. Newsletter Editor. Mrs. Joan Trevithick, address as above.
Hon. Seed Distbn. Officer.
Mr. David Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Road, Radcliffe-on-Trent,
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Hon. Librarian..... Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary.
(Siberian Specialist). CLEOBURY MORTIMER. KIDDERMINSTER. DY14 0QU.
JAPANESE IRIS SPECIALIST. Mrs. Anne Blanco White, 72, South Hill Park, LONDON. NW3 2SN.
PACIFIC COAST IRIS SPECIALIST.
Mr. Ray Wilson, 'Daleshead', 100, Blackburn Rd. CHORLEY.
Lancs. PR6 8TJ.

Regional Representatives. (Reporting on activities, events and Irises grown in their area.)

EASTERN AREA..... Mrs. Shirley Ryder, 'Toadshole Cottage', Old Rd. FEERING. COLCHESTER.
Essex. CO5 9RN.

LONDON AREA..... Mrs. Anne Blanco White, address as above.

NORTH WESTERN AREA.. Mr. Ray Wilson, address as above.

SOUTHERN AREA..... Mr. Adrian Whittaker, address as above.

WEST & MIDLANDS AREA. Mr. Philip Allery, 190 Walsall Rd. ALDRIDGE. Nr. WALSALL Staffs.
WS9 0BE.

(Due to family health problems, Philip is finding it difficult to plan attendance at the several W & M. functions. He has recruited Dr. John Beal, the W & M. Show Secretary to take his place. We thank Philip for his years of reporting, and hope that the news will improve in the future. John's address is:- Dr. John Beal, 'Ashleogh', Barnsley Road, SCAWSBY, DONCASTER. DN5 8QE. His interests are Spurias and Japanese Irises. Philip's latest Report is in its usual place in the Newsletter.)

Your response, last year, to our appeal for seeds and plants, has been most generous. This means that we are able to keep the Annual Subscription at £2 per year (payable on the 1st. July.) We look forward to receiving both plants and seeds from you again this year. The Lists are at the end of the Newsletter. Already we are being asked to supply Members, and have offers of plants. Please make cheques etc. payable to 'The S. S. & J. Group. B.I.S.

Thank You. J.T.

Articles and Copy for the July Newsletter, MUST be received by the 20th June 1994. This enables us to print a better N/L. Thank you.

Tri-Editorial.

I have coined a new word, because instead of the usual Editorial, I have asked our Chairman Adrian Whittaker, and our Vice-Chairman Hilda Goodwin to join me in this message to you. We all have different types of soil in our gardens, Adrian's is in Winchester. Hants. Hilda's is near to Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, and mine is in Nottinghamshire (east side).

Here is Adrian's account :-

This small garden is composed of thin alkaline soil overlying chalk, it slopes from back to front and faces South-East. I have found it impossible to add enough humus to improve the overall moisture retention significantly.

After two decades of experience here I decided to concentrate only on those plants which will grow satisfactorily, or at least well, without specialised conditions being created. The exception is a small area which I have dug repeatedly & over a period of time, has been built up and enriched with humus, so that I am able to grow special Pseudacorus and Versicolor seedlings to flowering size. These Irises are planted in open ground, but in appropriate spots for each type.

Spurias are the most successful and they generally grow very well, providing extra moisture is applied when needed.

Siberians are not as satisfactory, they need all the humus which can be supplied as an 'extra' in the area where they are planted.

A few ensatas are 'container' grown on the pool shelf. Pacific Coast Irises are impossible under my self-imposed, cultural rules.

Pseudacorus variants grow easily in the open ground, as long as they are not allowed to dry out. There are three in the pool which grow with their usual vigour, they receive little attention. 'Holden Clough' grows extremely well in the open ground, its vigour exceeds the best Pseudacorus.

I use both 'Phostrogen' and 'Growmore' fertilisers exclusively, in addition to compost when it is available.

Rather than attempting to modify these local conditions, I go along with them growing only those Irises which grow well in them. The results satisfy me!

(Adrian hybridised a lovely Spuria a few years ago, I remember it as a beautiful golden bronze 'Harvest Shadows', we have seed of its sibling in the Seed Distribution.)

To Suffolk now and Hilda's account:-

When we left Loughton, I said goodbye to most of my beloved plants, taking only a few to our new garden in Suffolk. We had no intention of starting again, our new plot, larger than we really wanted, was laid out with lawns, shrubberies and patios, the latter made up of 24" square grey slabs - most uninteresting. However the house suited us. Conveniently close to our son's home. The only site suitable for growing bearded irises was one of the lawns in front of the house, which gets all the available sun in summer. Accordingly an 'S' shaped bed was made to accommodate the few plants I had brought with me. We found a narrow strip by a wall facing the morning sun suitable for the Ungicularis, (this strip has since been considerably widened) and the P.C.I.'s were planted at the front of a shrubbery. The few Sibiricas and Species had perforce to go temporarily(?) at the end of the bearded iris bed (some are still there, seeming to like the position).

Many of the ugly slabs were removed from the patio behind the house, making room for a pond and isolated areas where we planted sibiricas and various species. It, at last has begun to look interesting, with gifts from friends, purchases from plant sales. The pond has been a great success with laevigatas, versicolors etc. Sibiricas are now doing well. 'Eric the Red' and 'Placid Waters' have remonted. The unguicularis are doing well too. Now another season is starting and the reticulatas are beginning to push through. It remains to be seen whether I will be able to cope with it all. Oh! and at the end of December a clump of I. lazica put up two stems.

(There is no doubt Hilda that you are well on the way to building a new garden, we all wish you well, and congratulate you and Don on the Celebration of your Golden Wedding last September. Keep up the good work, and just don't do too much, sit back and enjoy the beauty of the Irises you have so lovingly tended.)

Now it is over to the Rose County of Nottinghamshire, where they assured me that it would be difficult to raise Irises. So I have spent 25 years trying to prove them wrong, with a great deal of help and advice.

On the next page is a short account of our efforts to make a garden from an old orchard.

The soil in our garden is neutral to acid, and it slopes towards the back of the house, which faces North, giving us a lovely South aspect, which occasionally can be too hot. Over the years we have planted trees and shrubs, and to accomodate the slope, made raised well-drained beds for the Irises. On the cooler West side, near the house, we have an area of water gardens, a large pond with three smaller ones connected by waterfalls (well hidden fibre-glass), also two bog-ponds. In these we grow pseudacorus, laevigata, versicolor and Gerald Darby. In a peat wall (very old) at the side 'Holden Clough' flourishes.

Over on the other side beyond a path, a warm, built-up border contains Spuria Irises, ^{they} make an effort to grow, they do not like the acid soil, I will have to steel myself and give them a sprinkling of lime. I do give them 'Growmore' and 'Phostrogen' but it does not seem to be enough.

The best plot in the back garden is a raised bed on the other side of the water garden, lovely soil, plenty of grit, here the Pacific Coast Irises do well, with Hebes and Dwarf Roses to give them some shade in the hot weather.

In the front garden, sheltered by climbing roses and clematis, are the Sibiricas, they grow well, and have loved this wet season. The few Bearded Iris that can be persuaded to grow are under the front wall. Despite the traffic on the main road, they have made progress.

Finally the Reticulatas and Dandfordaie are in tubs under the window, and are in full flower, such a welcome sight this Spring.

This tour of our gardens will give you some idea of the Irises we grow, and some which do not like our soil. We all have our frustrations, but there are ways of overcoming them. Our advice is 'keep trying', the results are so rewarding!

We wish you all a Happy and Successful Gardening Year in 1994!

We extend a very warm welcome to the following New Members, and hope you all enjoy reading our Newsletter, and that you will write in, regarding it as your own.

Mr. G. Socki, 18, Hillside, FARMINGHAM. Nr. DARTFORD. Kent. DA 40DO. Garry has just finished his studies on photography, and is interested in photographing Irises. As there are more than 300 different species, it will be a large subject, but a very pleasant one. I could suggest a good start would be our Siberian, Spuria, Japanese, Pacific Coast and Water Irises, and a visit to Wisley or the R.H.S. Shows would mean you have access to all the best cultivars. All the Best.

Mrs. M.V. Criddle, 5, Storey's Lane, BURGH-le-MARSH, SKEGNESS. Lincs. PE24 5LR. Margaret is the new Seed Distribution Officer for the British Iris Society, having taken over from Ray Wilson. She has spent much time acquainting herself with the lists. Margaret may well have inherited her love of plants from her mother Violet, who, after studying at Glynde went to Kew, where she eventually took charge of three separate 'houses'. She was also a qualified Landscape Gardener, training under Charles Holden. Margaret's collection started with five T.B's from her Mother's garden. These were quickly followed by Siberians and eventually Species and Cultivars. Despite the cold, dry conditions here on the East Coast, they put on a good show each year. Margaret is always prepared to talk about Irises, and is well known in her village. We wish you well as the Seed Distribution Officer, and hope to hear more later on.

Mrs. Marilyn Neale, 33, Woodlands Ave. SPILSBY. Lincs. PE23 5EL. Marilyn (Manny) is a friend of Margaret's. She has been collecting Irises for a number of years in her South facing garden. She has two ponds and a new home-made frame. As her garden is sandy and free-draining she provides lined pits to enable her to grow moisture loving Irises.

Her best find to date was a carrier-bag full of I. japonica from a local pensioner, which she is sending for our Plant Sales. Thank you Manny. You also like to grow from seed, as many of our Members also do. All good wishes, and write and tell us more about your garden, when you have time.

Mr. J. Wilkins, 25, Dundter Rd. SOUTHPORT. Lancs. PR8 3AG. John recently joined the B.I.S. He grows Bearded Irises, but after speaking to Ray Wilson, he was encouraged to join our Group to learn more about Japanese Irises, he had grown them from seed over a period of ten years, not very satisfactorily as they were mainly blue or lilac veined. Although John's pond of Koi Carp was completely frozen over, he has not had any losses. He has now been in touch with Anne Blanco White to find out about known cultivars, and hopes, through our Newsletters to learn more about them. Our Member Norman Payne is an ensata grower. (cont),

He also keeps Koi Carp. His address is at the end of the Newsletter.

Mr. R. Coggins, 'Lovacott', SHEBBEAR, BEAWORTHY, Devon, EX21 5HN. Robert joined our Group at the last R.H.S. Show, where he met Anne Blanco White the Publicity Officer for the B.I.S. We hope to hear about your garden and the Irises you grow please Robert, when you have time. (Thank you Anne for your hard work at the Show).

Mrs Jane Russell, 22, Glenfield Rd, BROCKHAM, BETCHWORTH, Surrey, RH3 7HP. Jane joined our Group after she had enjoyed a splendid holiday in the U.S.A. where she met a well known Irisarian Anna May Miller who lives in Kalamazoo MI., and who grows and hybridizes Siberian and Japanese Irises. Not only does she want to know more about them but Anna May Miller has also joined us, as you will see below, (Thank you June).

Overseas.

Anna May Miller, 6065 N 16th St. KALAMAZOO, MI. 49004, U.S.A. Anna May Miller is a Past President of the Siberian Iris Society, and as such her photograph is well known to us, as well as her writing in the 'Siberian' and the beautiful cultivars which she hybridizes. We are fortunate to have Howard Brookins' account of her garden which he has given during the Siberian Convention Tour, so to welcome you we are printing this under the 'My Irises' section of this Newsletter, with the Editors permission.

Mrs. Ada Godfrey, 9 Bradford Ave. FOXBOROUGH, MA. 02035, U.S.A. Ada has joined our Group through Edwin Furnival and the B.I.S. We hope you will enjoy reading our Newsletter and let us know something about your garden and the Irises you grow.

Mr. Robert Pries, 6023, Antire Rd., HIGH RIDGE, MO. 63049, U.S.A. Bob has joined us to help him in his endeavours to prepare a Species Check List. Already he has well over 1000 entries. He particularly wants to know the origin of I. pseudacorus 'E. Turnipseed' and also I. delavayi 'Didcot'.

Any registration which might be forthcoming this year could still make it to the Check List. Bob would like to hear about it.

In March 1995 an International Symposium on Gardening with Iris Species is to be held. Reserve the last weekend in MARCH 1995 for this extraordinary event. Spring will just be appearing at the world famous MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDENS, St. LOUIS, MO. The Spring Flower Show will be in progress in the main exhibition hall and the Climatron is always beautiful. A collaboration of SIGMA and the American Rock Garden Society Gateway Chapter will create a unique event. An investigation of the amazing world of Iris species. Brian Mathews, author of 'The Iris', will show us Iris of the Near East in their native habitats. James Waddick, author of 'Iris of China' will help us explore the Far East. Panyoti Kelaidis, of Denver Botanical Gardens will show us the wonders of Iris in the rock garden. Alan McMurtrie will unlock the world of Junos in Canada. Colin Rigby will unfold the legacy of our Pacific Coast, and numerous other presentations will help to elucidate the incredible range of garden situations suitable to the Iris and its family. Gardeners who strive for the exotic and difficult, or those wanting less work will all find something of value.

An Iris exhibition of forced plants in flower is planned. Great Iris are now being accepted. Save your photos of Iris for the photographic display, additional details for the limited registration will appear later.

For information regarding Iris you would like to display, please contact Bob Pries.

My Irises.

As promised, here is Howard Brookins account of Anna Mae Millers' garden which was visited during the 1993 Siberian Convention.

(By kind permission of Judy Hollingworth Editor of the 'Siberian'.)

When our bus pulled up in front of the Miller garden all we could see was a vast sea of color. The road is higher than the flower beds, and gave a beautiful overview of large clumps of red, white and blue, with a smattering of pinks, yellows and violets. It was obvious that this was THE day, that one day of the year when the Siberians are at their absolute peak of bloom. Many of the established clumps had over 100 flowers in bloom, and the foliage very upright and dark green; each plant was standing at attention for everyone to see.

Mixed in with the Siberians were beautiful peonies, some of the tallest I've ever seen, and poppies, and many foxgloves of assorted colors. Ron and Anna Mae have many types of

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evergreens around their two plus acres of garden, along with some specimen weeping trees, so the overall view was simply lovely.

The guest Irises were all so well grown, that I can't say anything stood out above the rest, as all were plants one would give one's eye teeth to have in one's own garden. I have visited the Miller in prior years, and the one thing absent from their garden this year was the damage they usually receive from acid rain from the Gary, Indiana steel mills. Usually they have whites and light coloured blooms with small holes from the acid rain, but even the wind cooperated for the First Siberian Iris Convention, and all the blooms were photographically perfect.

Anna Mae's newer introductions were excellent here as they were in the other display gardens. I especially loved her 'Aqua Whispers' and 'Liberty Hills', doing their usual nice thing, but was even more impressed with her 'Cheery Lynn' with its lilac standards with blue lines over falls of deep pink, also veined blue and highlighted with a white edge and green eye. Another outstanding plant I hadn't seen before was her 1991 introduction 'Frosted Cranberry'. I love it when a hybridizer names something that puts a picture in your mind, and then when you see the plant, you know it is what you are looking for.

'Frosted Cranberry' has red-violet standards with aqua veins over darker red falls and red spathes. It is a noteworthy improvement over 'Pink Haze', which is involved in its parentage.

One thing for sure. I won't wait for the next Siberian Convention in Michigan to visit this garden again.

(Thank you Howard for this delightful glimpse of Anna Mae's garden, I agree with you, after seeing the colour plate in the 'Siberian', 'Cheery Lynn' is a lovely Siberian, congratulations to Anna Mae.)

' Our Garden'

by Judy Hollingworth

(Judy is a Yorkshire lass, she now lives in Williamstown, MI. U.S.A. and has edited the 'Siberian' very successfully for many years. She has kindly written an account of her garden for us. Her husband Dr. Robert Hollingworth is very well known for the most beautiful Sibiricas he hybridizes.)

Here is her account:-

Gardening is a passion, a way of Life, a microcosm of one's own life with its triumphs, disappointments, surprises and mysteries. Never boring and endlessly challenging. Our gardens have progressed over the years from pocket-handkerchief size to the five acres we now have, and this will, no doubt, decrease again with advancing years. But, in the mean time what fun it is!

We moved to our present garden in Michigan six years ago, determined that after struggling with a heavy clay soil for 7 years, we would find ourselves some of that sandy loam that the garden gurus praise so highly. And we did. While we were house-hunting. Bob carried a spade in the car. He surprised more than one homeowner with his request to go and dig up a piece of their sod.

Our present property is a rather narrow, long piece of ground, which can roughly be divided into three. The first section is the largest, a long stretch of lawn between our house and the road, surrounded by tall evergreens and dotted with large, deciduous trees. Into this we have cut beds for our Siberian seedlings and named varieties. Twenty old roses are also in residence including 'Rosa semi plena alba The White Rose of York', which has grown to seven by five feet in two years and keeps us mindful of our Yorkshire heritage. Behind the house is the second area that we call the glade. This is a clearing in the woods and is developing into our shade garden with Hostas, Astilbes, Foxgloves, Pulmonarias and other shade-loving plants. It is a popular place, beloved by azalea-eating deer, waddling woodchucks (their favourites are peas) and tirelessly tunnelling moles. Sometimes we feel we're at war rather than in harmony with our environment. The third section is a woodland area which slopes down to the Red Cedar river. To mark the path into the woods we have planted a guard of Lillium canadens, seven feet tall with nodding orange flowers. The woods are a delight in the spring when they are carpeted with white trilliums (T. grandiflorum), yellow trout lilies, little Spring Beauties, blood root, Jack in the Pulpit and other wild flowers. In the heart of the wood is a wetland where wild Versicolors grow and recently we have added I. pseudacorus, I. laevigata and other water-loving plants.

Of course our passion is Siberians. Bob, the scientist, has been hybridizing for twenty years, and I have been the gardener, but our roles have merged somewhat over the years and are not so clearly defined now. We have named and introduced sixteen Siberians, two of which, 'Lady Vanessa' and 'Jewelled Crown' won the Morgan Wood Medal. Our

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Our introductions are almost equally divided between diploid and tetraploid although tetraploids are, I suspect, Bob's first love. We plan to introduce three or perhaps four in 1994, which vary greatly from each other. 'Simple Gifts' is a very pale lavender-blue diploid, with a very tailored and round, flat elegant form; 'That's My Baby' which is about 21" (53 cm) and a small, very ruffled deep wine-red flower with upright standards and style arms. Our piece de resistance is 'Strawberry Fair' a very late blooming tetraploid. It is a very ruffled crushed strawberry pink with blue style arms, and I think it is a knockout!

Our 2000 or so seedlings are laid out in four 100 x 50ft. beds in the front garden on a grid system for ease of identification and cataloging. One of my projects for this winter, is to plan two quarter-moon perennial beds close to the house, left empty by the exodus of the guest irises which were planted there for the 1993 Siberian Iris Convention. We plan to enlarge them a little and then plant one with Siberians and companion plants, so that visitors to the garden can see what wonderful plants they are for the perennial border and the other with late season perennials.

At the moment the garden is under several inches of snow and temperature around zero degrees Fahrenheit. So what greater pleasure then to curl up in front of the fire surrounded by garden catalogues shopping for the best deals on familiar plants, and taking chances on ordering the unfamiliar which might become garden treasures.

Happy Gardening.

(Thank you Judy, I look forward to seeing Bob's 'Lady Vanessa' bloom this year, I managed to buy a plant here in England! J.)

'My Irises'

by Chris Rose, Bristol.

I joined the B.I.S. early in 1989, and began taking advantage of the Seed Distribution Scheme from the 1990/91 offerings onwards. In the meantime I had been considerably encouraged to follow the path of raising Irises from seed by the freedom with which an initial sowing of I. foetidissima had germinated. The photographs of species in Fritz Kohleins' book 'Iris' and the comments 'certain of them were easily raised from seed' persuaded me to take the plunge.

Despite being a complete novice in terms of Iris growing, I feel that I have had considerable success in getting Iris seed to germinate and I hope that this fact and the notes on methodology provided will encourage others to have a go.

The germination data gives those new to raising these types of Irises from seed some idea of how long they may expect to have to wait for them to germinate under 'standard' conditions. Over what length of time certain types of Iris seed continue to germinate and therefore how long they should keep pots of seeds before discarding the contents, and provides comparative information about the germination of seed from different species and cultivars.

(Here I am going to stop and tell you that Chris has kindly written what I would call a Thesis called:-

GERMINATION DATA FROM SERIES LAEVIGATAE AND SPURIAE IRIS and it contains 4 more pages of details. I know from your letters that seed-sowers want to know more about this subject, so I will print as much as our 19 page N/L will allow. The rest will be in July. J.T.)

METHODOLOGY.

Guidance has come from the B.I.S. Iris Guide No.2. 'Raising Irises from seed'. This gives easy to follow advice about seed treatment, pot sizes and composts. As suggested in the Guide all seeds dealt with in this article were soaked and 'peeled', then soaked for several days more, during which time they were rinsed every day or two. I found finger nails were the most easily used tools for getting the seed coat off. Don't worry if you've never done this before, unless the seed inside is rotten and inviable, it is generally hard enough not to be damaged by doing this. Avoid losing the seeds in the carpet, do it over a tray. By this process the physical barrier of the seed coat and its associated chemical inhibitors of germination are removed as far as possible.

Regarding the best seed-sowing compost to use, the B.I.S. Guide recommends a mixture of damp peat and sharp sand for Spurias. Given the habitat of water-loving Irises I have used a similar formulation for these.. Unfortunately, I did not record the precise formula of the peat-based compost, but latterly I have switched to coconut fibre, partly because it seems less hospitable to vine weevil grubs. I also tend to use at least a small proportion of John Innes No.2 in sowing mixes in order to provide and better retain a limited

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supply of nutrients.

Plastic pots have been used throughout, usually 6" diameter either standard or half depth. Up to 24 seeds were sown in each as far as the kinds discussed here are concerned. They were spaced out on the compost surface and pressed in gently with a blunt instrument, to a depth of 2-3 mm.

The Guide states that Spuria seeds need to be exposed to alternating periods of frost and thaw to stimulate germination. An open-ended cold frame was made from intact old window frames, leaning against a west-facing wall; these were floored with opened out plastic sacks to stop the worms getting into the pots. Slug pellets to protect the seedlings and chicken wire to keep out the cats. Some of the pots were moved to a sunnier south-facing frame, before or during germination, I did not keep precise records. The main function of the glass is to prevent waterlogging as well as the churning up of the compost, which can leave seeds exposed on the surface.

(The remainder of Chris' account is 'The Data' and two very interesting pages of Species with periods of germination etc. These will be in the July N/L. Many Thanks Chris. J.T.)

Currier McEwen's New Book on SIBERIANS.

Currier has written to say that he is making good progress. He is at the Appendices stage. We look forward to hearing that it has been published. A report will be published in the July Newsletter.

Some 'Other' Irises Seen in the U.S.A. 1993.

by Jennifer Hewitt.

The first-ever Siberian Iris Convention was a great success and a most enjoyable experience. Getting together with nearly 200 fellow enthusiasts, learning from the experts, swapping ideas and opinions, all in the friendliest possible atmosphere, was the highlight of the 1993 season for me and, I think, many others. The weather was beautiful, the irises at peak bloom - and almost all were superbly well grown; only a few didn't do as well as their raisers and the hosts would like, but this was mainly due to factors beyond the host's control, such as an invasion of voles in one garden and a mystery bug with a taste for flowers in another. The hosts, the Iris Connoisseurs of Michigan, treated not only the guest irises but also the Convention visitors with lots of care, and all the hard work they put in both before and during those days gave us all a wonderful time.

As there is a full report on the events and many of the irises in the 1993 Iris Year Book, there is little I can add about these aspects, but there were other interesting irises on view, sadly precluded because of lack of space... The outstanding 'other' iris (which did receive a mention) was the white Iris pseudacorus called 'Jill's White', a name which has not, so far, been registered, to the best of my knowledge. It deserves another few words, as

it is not only the most vigorous and floriferous white form of this iris that I - and others - had ever seen; it has good-sized, clean almost white flowers with a pale yellow signal outlined in purple, and is altogether a very fine iris.

While I should dearly love to have 'Jill's White' (and I hope Ensata Gardens will introduce this before long), I'm afraid I can live without the double form of pseudacorus which I saw in the Bedford, Massachusetts, garden of Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer. It had come from Monique Dumas-Quesne of Canada and is a confused mass of parts with none of the intrinsic elegance of the genus Iris. If you like curiosities I suppose you might give it garden room... But I wouldn't.

An iris which did interest me at Bedford was 'Holden's Child' raised by Sarah Tiffney from 'Holden Clough' x self. This has wide and attractive form but both form and colour (reddish purple with paler style arms) are more reminiscent of Iris versicolor than of 'Holden Clough' itself or either of its suggested parents I.pseudacorus & I.foetidissima. At the Convention I saw another of Sarah's seedlings, presumably from the same cross as it was numbered T83HC x HC, which was very similar, and I heard the opinion expressed that I.versicolor seemed likely to be involved in the parentage. Most seedlings from 'Holden Clough' that I have seen described seem to bear a more or less close resemblance to the parent, with yellow and brown colouring, but 'Holden's Child' and T83HC x HC are similar to Jack Ellis's 'Regal Surprise' which is bred from I.pseudacorus x I.versicolor. Perhaps a bee intervened in Sarah Tiffney's plans and brought I.versicolor pollen to 'Holden Clough'?

In Currier McEwen's garden in Maine there was a plant of Iris versicolor raised by Eckard Berlin who treated it with colchicine. The result was a plant with broad, very

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blue-toned foliage and shorter than usual stems, but the flowers did not appear very different. Just how many chromosomes it has is a matter for conjecture. Also growing there was 'Moorsee', Eckard's colchicine-induced tetraploid I.setosa, with larger than normal deep violet-blue falls with contrasting cream signals. The standards did not seem at all enlarged but the style arms were held almost vertically, an indication of thicker substance. A third species of interest was labelled I.sibirica collected in Yugoslavia; though the flowers were borne on tall branched stems, in colour, form and size they closely resembled I.sanguinea and had the deep red spathes of that species.

Back in Massachusetts were more versicolors, named cultivars raised by Bee Warburton, Harry Bishop, and Jan and Marty, most of which were described in the Newsletters for February and July 1993. A cross between 'Little Rhyme' (short white) and Uwe Koepnadel's 'Mysterious Monique' (tall, almost black) produced a surprising seedling, short stemmed, white flowers with light violet veining, but with the size and form of 'Mysterious Monique'.

In another Massachusetts garden I saw a form of Iris setosa with white-variegated leaves. Darrell Probst spotted a plant with one striped leaf and has grown it for several years. He now has 8 divisions, very variable in the number and pattern of variegations. Clearly it is, as yet very unstable, but perhaps one of the more regular versions will eventually settle down and, we hope, become available. Then in Barbara and David Schmeider's garden, and also in a large garden specialising in North American native plants there was I.prismatica in several different colour forms, the blue one and I.prismatica alba with which we are familiar and also a pink one, var. rosea, and 'Magenta form' - which it really was! The Schmieders grow a wide range of irises in a lovely semi-woodland garden and beds of modern Louisiana hybrids were beginning to flower. They were very striking, but I'm afraid I didn't make notes on them.

Truly there is a lot to see and learn in other people's gardens, especially overseas. Perhaps other Group Members will go to the next Siberian Convention in 1996, which the Iris Society of Massachusetts is already busy organising. I'm sure you will enjoy it as much as I enjoyed the Convention and my visits in 1993!

(Thank you Jennifer, a question I would like to ask is:- How do they get seed from 'Holden Clough', enough to produce 'Holden's Child', mine look as if they are going to swell and then they wither. Do they hand pollinate, or are the bees special, I wonder!).

Over to Japanese Irises now and our Member Hiroshi Shimizu's account of Hanashobu Display in Japan.

(This is reprinted by kind permission of Berney Baughen Editor of the B.I.S, Year Book.)
HANASHOBU DISPLAY IN JAPAN. by Hiroshi Shimizu.

Improvement of 'hanashobu', which in the West is called the Japanese iris, was first undertaken in Japan, and there are now more than 2000 named cultivars in my country. Hanashobu has been directly related to its display and therefore it is necessary to understand this relationship to appreciate the developments which have evolved.

Garden Display.

When Japanese people want to appreciate the beauty of 'hanashobu' they usually visit 'hanashobu' gardens when the irises are in bloom. There are at present more than two hundred 'hanashobu' display gardens spread over the Japanese archipelago. More than 2 million visit these gardens each year.

Early in the 19th century, several gardens at Horikiri, located about six miles east of the centre of Tokyo, became famous for 'hamashobu' displays. George M. Reed of the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens visited these gardens in 1930, and wrote a very good article describing them - The Iris of Japan- which appeared in the American Iris Society Bulletin No.40.

The most famous of the 'hamashobu' gardens at Horikiri was Kotaka-en. Hiroshige, the great ukiyo-e painter, executed a beautiful woodblock print showing the 'hamashobu' on display in this garden. Three viewing pavilions and a well developed, trained pine tree are in the centre of the picture, and an artificial hill is on the left. From the elevation of this hill, visitors could get a good view of the 'hanashobu' just below.

In the lower garden about 50 different varieties of 'hanashobu' were grown. They were in rows of variable length, and usually only one kind to a row, but each variety was repeated at several different places in the garden. Visitors were admitted to the garden upon payment of a small fee, and they sat in one of the viewing pavilions to enjoy the flowers.

The 'hamashobu' plantings were surrounded by elevated banks or levees, and the visitor walked on the banks, which held water in the beds below, to appreciate the flowers. (cont)

The design of this garden led the visitors to see the garden only from above!

There are two reasons the Kotaka-en garden was designed in this manner. Firstly, it was to protect the owner's house and family from floods. Flood disasters occurred often in the Horokiri area so the owner's house was built on an elevation. Secondly, Japanese people like natural scenic beauty which the Kotaka-en design embraces. The open vista seen from the top of the hill and from the pavilions was very lovely. Japanese garden design principles call for surrounding wood, river and mountain (shukkei) to be incorporated into a total scenic view.

The appreciation of 'hamashobu' in the open vista, looking down upon the flowers, gave impetus to the development of a new flower form, the 'horizontal form' in the Tokyo region. Varieties in this form are very strong and resistant to the wind and rain. We call these varieties of 'hanashobu' the 'Edo' types after the old name for Tokyo.

Indoor Display.

There are three quite distinct types of traditional indoor displays for 'hamashobu' in Japan.

Kumamoto indoor display is practised by the Kumamoto Mangetsu Kai. Kumamoto is the name of a region in south-eastern Japan on the island of Kyushu. The Mangetsu Kai, which means 'Full Moon Society', was organised for the development & appreciation of 'hanashobu', & its annual meeting was held at the time of the full moon in June.

The unique method of display in Kumamoto entails showing the irises in pots. The 'hamashobu' bloom season in Kumamoto is frequently beset with heavy rains, which lead to growing the irises in pots. Gradually, too, rules were developed for the display of irises inside the house. Pots were about 24cm diameter, and flower stalks were about 90cm in height. 7 to 9 plants were arranged along the wall side of the main room. One or two irises were displayed in the 'tokonoma', a special alcove designed for displaying objets d'art, paintings and plants appropriate to the season. The irises displayed in the 'tokonoma' had flower stalks smaller than those on display along the wall.

To the Kumamoto Mangetsu Kai the inner spirit was more important than the form in the display. The heart of the display lies in the 'selfless manner' in which the host serves the guest. Therefore, the host did not put the stalks of his new varieties in the 'tokonoma', a place of great ritual importance in Japan. Likewise, when the host arranged the potted irises along the wall of the room, he put the guest's varieties in the centre of the row.

When the guests appreciated the irises, they sat upright and bowed to them. This marked their respect for the flower. Next, the guests stood up and examined the shape and size of the style arms. They liked large and strongly formed style arms, and very much disliked small or poorly formed ones. Because they believed that the flower's 'mind' is in the style arms, being in the centre of the flower, the style arms must be large and 'right' as the heart of a human being should be.

After appreciating the irises on display, guests talked with the host about cultivation, shape and the colour of irises on display, but there was no 'flower contest'. Thinking that each variety has its own personality and virtue, the individual characteristics must be respected. Competition would be disrespectful.

These Kumamoto iris devotees liked the arched flower form, which resembles the shape of Mount Fuji. This was because they viewed the iris from the side, rather than from the top. Improvement of their cultivars was directed to the creation of varieties suitable for display in a Japanese style room. We call these irises the 'Higo' type after the old name of Kumamoto. Varieties of the 'Higo' type are especially well liked by many Japanese hybridisers.

The second type of indoor display is the Tokyo dwarf plant indoor display. This is a method of pot culture and display devised by Mr. Ichikawa, about 1930. Mr. Ichikawa used a flat pot about 30cm in diameter and 3cm deep to cultivate and display 'hamashobu'. Usually 10 to 20 rhizomes are planted in the pot during bloom season. The following year these plants will bloom seven to fifteen flowers.

The essence of the art of this unique method of cultivation is in skilfully controlling growth. The amount of fertiliser and water is carefully regulated, and the pot is moved in response to seasonal and weather changes. Care is taken to protect against disease & insect pests. The totality of flowers, leaves and pot produce a natural elegance of form pleasing to the eye. The ability to succeed with this method can be said to spring from the resourcefulness of Mr. Ichikawa who, in his love of natural beauty, tried to bring it closer to his life.

The suitable varieties for this method of display are not miniature types with (cont).

with small flowers, but rather smaller growing 'Edo' and 'Ise' cultivars. Undoubtedly, this form of display shows the influence of 'bonsai'. At present Mr. Noboru Kobayashi, who lives in Tokyo, avidly cultivates & displays his iris in this way.

'Ise' is the district in central Honshu where the Grand Shrines dedicated to the ancestors of the Imperial family are located, and which has close ties to Kyoto. A unique type of 'hanashobu' and a unique type of iris display originated in 'Ise', and is the third type of iris display I will discuss.---- At the beginning of the 20th century, cultivation of irises for use in the unique 'Ise' display was rather widespread in the Ise district. Popularity of this display style declined however, & it seems that it is no longer practiced in Japan. As a result, many details of the 'Ise' display remain unclear. Fortunately, the late Dr. Hirao illustrated the 'Ise' in his book *Hanashobu* (Kashima Publishing Co. Japan 1959). Moreover, he provided a short comment about 'Ise' display in another of his books, *The Japanese Iris* (Asahi Shinbun Publishing Co. Japan 1971). (Regretfully the comment in this title is written only in the Japanese language.

In the 'Ise' style, potted flowers were displayed in front of a folding screen or curtain in a Japanese style room. 27 plants were arranged in 3 ranks, 9 plants in each rank. The person making this display gave great care to flower colour, and the height of the flower stalks and leaves had to be about the same. A low screen in front of the first rank was used to hide the pots in which the irises were growing.... Upon viewing and appreciating an 'Ise' display, a guest would say to the host; 'All the falls are sufficiently drooping downwards'. These words were the highest form of praise one could give to an 'Ise' display.

The unique 'Ise' type of Japanese iris was developed for this display. All 'Ise' irises are singles, the height of the flower stalks & leaves are about the same, & the falls droop downwards. I think that the characteristics of 'Ise' varieties, even more than those of 'Higo' cultivars, were influenced by the fact that they were developed for indoor appreciation. Consequently 'Ise' varieties have shorter flower stalks than 'Higo' varieties. Usually they 70cm to 90cm in height. The shortness of stalk was one of the reasons the potted plants needed to be put on a flower stand for display.

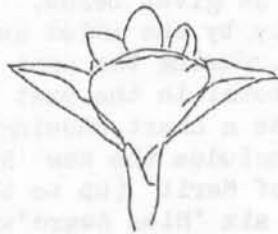
The Japanese Mind and Hanashobu.

Last year I contributed an article to the B.I.S. Year Book & the A.I.S. Bulletin 'Iris Hybridisers in Japan'. Referring to the Japanese people, I wrote 'When we look at a flower we see the beauty of nature through the flower'. Its spirit is suggested by the Tokyo dwarf plant indoor display. The flower, green leaves and soil in the flat pot symbolise or reflect the forms and features of a 'hanashobu' garden landscape. When a Japanese person looks at it, the mind visits a large 'hanashobu' garden and 'takes a rest'. The mind is always hoping for harmony with Nature. This spirit led to the creation of many 'hanashobu' gardens & also to the creation of the Tokyo dwarf plant indoor display.

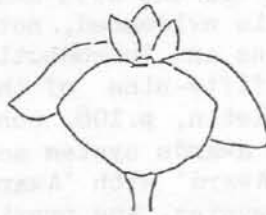
On the other hand, the spirit of Kumamoto ('each flower has its own personality') is important to the Japanese also. Japanese naturalistic religion Shinto, grew out of the everyday life of the Japanese people in primitive times. All natural objects and phenomena were considered as having their own gods (kami). Today the majority of Japanese people have no interest in the tenets of Shintoism, but nonetheless they often sense that natural objects have distinct personalities. This Japanese characteristic has contributed to the various flower forms developed through iris hybridising... The reverence for Nature is an emotional & non-rational influence on the Japanese mind. At the same time, Japanese thought is marked with an insular prejudice, stemming from the relative isolation & freedom from foreign invasion our nation experienced for many generations. This insular prejudice has prevented the Japanese from developing universal concepts so useful for international co-operation. The insularity of Japanese thought has directed the Japanese mind towards the inner spirit rather than towards universal precepts. It is this inner direction of the Japanese mind that is reflected in the elegant ritual of the tea ceremony and in the Kumamoto indoor display of 'hamashobu'.

The development of the unique characteristics of 'Edo', 'Higo' and 'Ise' 'hamashobu' varieties & the different display methods associated with these 3 distinct 'hamashobu' types are creative forms which attempt to express the unique aesthetic sense of the three Japanese regions... Dr. Shuichi Hirao, in his book 'The Japanese Iris', observed that the characteristics of 'Edo' 'hamashobu' may be likened to the smart, sophisticated air of the merchant culture which dominated Tokyo for so long. The 'Higo' 'hamashobu' have the gentle grace of young women of noble birth.

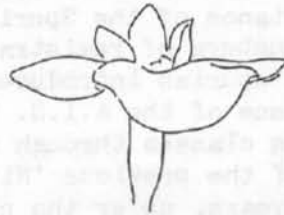
I think the breeding of plants & the manner in which plants are displayed reflect the culture in which the plantsman lives. Unique cultural characteristics have their origin in centuries past... (Thank you Hiroshi for your most interesting account. J.T.)

Flower forms in *Hanashobu*.

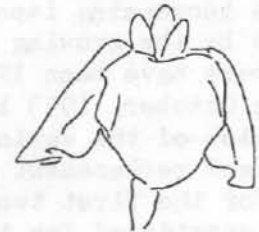
HORIZONTAL



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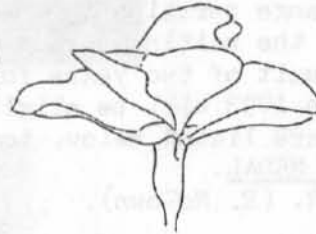
PENDANT



CLAW FORM



BALL FORM



HOSE IN HOSE

Here is some more information about Japanese Irises:-

(Reprinted by kind permission of Evelyn White the Editor of the J.I. Society Review).
YOUR PRONUNCIATION OF JAPANESE NAMES IS EXCELLENT.

This is an extract from an article by Clarence Mahan:-

Please do not imagine that I am fluent in spoken Japanese. I am not. When I attempt to pronounce my very limited vocabulary, I suspect the only reason my Japanese friends do not stay in a continuous state of laughter is their inherent politeness. On the other hand, a good friend of mine, a Japanese businessman who knows quite a few foreigners living in Japan, once told me that he had encountered only two foreigners who pronounced Japanese as it should be pronounced. Like every other Japanese person I have known, he was always pleased when Americans and Europeans made the effort to speak Japanese.

Rule number one, when confronted with a Japanese name for an iris is to go ahead and try pronouncing it, because almost no one you know is going to be able to do it any better than you.

Rule number two, is do not stress any syllable. In Japanese each syllable is given a moderate, even stress and about the same amount of time. (This is the hardest of all rules for me to honor in practice... it is probably the hardest rule for any English-speaking person because of the importance of stress in English.)

In Japanese there are 5 vowels. These vowels are always pronounced, and always pronounced the same way. This is so much easier than English, in which the same vowel can be pronounced several ways, and sometimes vowels are silent. These vowels are 'a' 'i' 'u' 'e' & 'o'.

The Japanese 'a' is pronounced 'a' like in farm or park. The 'i' is pronounced like the 'e' in fee or peel. The 'u' is like 'oo' in pool, while 'e' is said like 'a' in pale. Finally 'o' is like 'o' in oil.

You need not worry about the 16 consonants. They are pronounced just like their counterparts in English. If you remember the correct sound of the vowels, your pronunciation of the Japanese name will be 'pretty good'!

The Japanese language is 'soft' in comparison with English because of the heavy use of vowels. Many words consist only of vowels or use two, three, even four vowels in sequence. Example: 'aoi' which means 'blue'. Remember, each vowel is pronounced as though it were a separate syllable. Try pronouncing 'aiai'... it means 'peaceful'.

The next time you are confronted with a name such as 'MAIKO-NO-HAMA', remember the 'a' is 'ah', the 'i' is 'ee', and the 'o' is 'oh'. Your pronunciation will be excellent!

(Thank you Clarence for such an interesting and clear explanation, I am sure Members will understand the names of their Japanese Irises (ensata) better now. I know I will.)

We now go over to the Spuria Iris section and some interesting and important information from Floyd Wickenkamp. The Treasurer of the SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY.

REVISED SPURIA AWARD SYSTEM.

by Floyd Wickenkamp.

Recent changes in the American Iris Society awards system have meant upgrading (cont)

of the Spuria Awards along with those of a number of others of the beardless classes. These changes went into effect with the awards for the 1993 season as given below.

The increasing importance of the Spurias is evidenced, not only by the added awards, but also by the growing numbers of registrations and introductions. During the past eleven years there have been 124 spurias introduced; fifty-nine of that total in the past 4 years.

The October, 1993 issue of the A.I.S. Bulletin, p.108, contains a chart showing the progression of the various classes through the awards system and includes the new 'Nies Medal', and replacement of the previous 'Nies Award' with 'Awards of Merit' (up to three per year). For the first two years, under the new system, the previous six 'Nies Award' winners will be considered for the 'Nies Medal'. For the following years 'Award of Merit' winners for the past three years will be considered for the 'Medal' award.

Another major change pertains to the time required for eligibility for 'Honorable Mention'. In the past the waiting period was two years; this has been increased to three years with a further wait of two years for 'HM' winners to be eligible for 'AM' awards. Thus a spuria introduced in 1993 will be eligible for an 'HM' in 1996 and for an 'AM' in 1998.

Awards for 1993 are listed below, together with votes received:-

ERIC NIES MEDAL.

56. BETTY COOPER. (E. McCown).

runners up.

50 SON OF SUN. (F. Wickenkamp).

36 CINNAMON STICK. (D. Niswonger).

AWARD OF MERIT.

56 CHOCOLATE FUDGE. (D. Niswonger).

43 MISSOURI BLUE. (D. Niswonger).

30 COUNTESS ZEPPELIN. (B. Hager).

runners up.

28 BELISSINADO. (G. Corlew).

20 SONORA SENORITA. (F. Wickenkamp).

17 KITT PEAK. (F. Wickenkamp).

HONORABLE MENTION.

24 MARITIMA GEM. (B. Hager).

23 CENTERING POINT. (J. Ghio).

(Thank you Floyd, and congratulations to all the Winners (including yourself.)

Having just had a letter from our friend and Member Charles Jenkins, who tells me that after retiring ?? he has now joined Don & Bobbie Shepard in the Nursery. Charles writes that a spuria 'April's Birthday' has been known to re-bloom, and 'Diminuendo' is a small-flowered & is a small plant in stature. He is sending us seed, again. Many thanks Charles!

GROWING SPURIAS IN ARIZONA.

by Don Shepard.

In Arizona we have excellent conditions for growing Spuria Irises, but there are ways of growing that we have learned the hard way. Every year is a new learning experience!

Here at Shepard Iris Garden we plant most of our spurias on flat areas. They are either in rows 4ft. wide or grouped in beds with other flowers. All the beds have drip irrigation or bubblers. One bed receives flood irrigation every 2 weeks & drip in between. Our irrigation is a lot cheaper than domestic water. In the spring, we water at least once a week unless the beds dry out sooner. In spring & throughout the winter they should have all the water they need, but not over wet. Spurias do like to be fed well in order to have nice plants and blooms... Some spuria beds were watered throughout the summer & others were allowed to go dormant. In August, after going dormant, we do not water until fall. During our extreme hot weather, watering dormant spuria will cause rot.

Bloom time in our garden is normally around the 15th. April into May, depending on how fast the weather turns hot.

In the spring we can be bothered with gray tulip aphids, before bloom and then again when seed-pods start to set. We spray once before and then once after bloom has finished. We use Cygon 2E, spraying the plant well, and drenching around the base. The aphids tend to hide in between the thick base of the leaves, not seen unless the leaf is pulled away from the stem.

Our plants grow quite fast. Even when we plant our new seedlings, we have blooms in 11 months. This last year we had from 6-8 increases on each new seedling & 90 % bloomed.

Our inventory has increased tremendously this year. The cultivars (almost 200) & several hundred seedlings will not be included in our catalog, so we invite you to come along and soak up the beauty of Spuria blooms. Your enjoyment gets us through our summer digging!

(Don wrote this in 1991, & I can tell you his catalog is full now. Best Wishes. J.T.)

(This account was reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of the Spuria Iris Socy N/L.)

Spurries in New Zealand.

Frances Love writes from New Zealand that there is a need for more varieties of Spurias to be grown in her country.

At this time, they are in a period of drought, and have water restrictions, they do not expect any rain until the end of February!

Frances notices that when she has visitors to look round her garden, it is the men who seem drawn to the Spurias rather than the women.

As to her future plans, she has decided that Pacific Coast Irises and Siberians seem to grow well for her, so she will be working with them, although Frances has already done some crossing with Japanese Irises and Spurias. At the moment she has one that is a hybrid ochroleuca, which has 3 or 4 blooms up the stem from which she will work, as so many Spurias have overlapping blooms atop the stem. Frances put a stem of this Spuria in water and it lasted 10 days. To her mind each bloom 'in line' down the stem cannot be bettered.

Best Wishes to you all. Frances Love.

(Thank you Frances, we wish you every success with your efforts, and would like to hear about the results. Thank you also for the name of the Editor of your Bulletin (Marion Ball) we will put Marion's name & address under our 'Contacts List' at the end of this N/L. J.T.)

Spuria Notes here in England

by Adrian Whittaker.

The poor Summers in the past two years have had an effect on the Spurias in my garden this year (1993). While this is disappointing, rather than unexpected, it has been very noticeable that the more shaded, lower lying, planting has produced less flowering stems than the group in a more open location. This, I think, confirms the generally held view that for optimum results - Spurias should be planted in an open - and ideally South facing spot, this means that they gain the maximum benefit from any sun in the Spring and Summer. This assists in the production of flowering stems the next year, providing adequate moisture is also available.

There is a possibility that the leaf area on individual plants may have some bearing on the flowering in the U.K. I have few low growing, finer leaved Spurias with which to make comparisons with the larger ones, over a reasonable period, but perhaps a Member who has done this may like to look at the flowering rated of the two loose groups critically, to see if there is a difference.

Spurias grown in the U.K. are generally in marginal or near-marginal conditions for good flowering for the group as a whole.. In good sunny years they do well, in other years less so. The previous year's conditions being the important factor.

This means observation and careful plant selection, over a period, to find the best performers and sites in your garden. Its a question of trying to stack the odds in your favour. Vegetative growth, hardiness and general vigour are rarely problematical, providing the plants are fed regularly and receive enough water at the right times!

Hopefully, before too many years have elapsed, the better performers for Northern Maritime climates will be positively identified, leading to a greater number of suitable cultivars and species becoming available.

This is not going to be a rapid process, because breeding and careful evaluation of the resulting seedlings, takes a significant time here.

I should like to encourage those, with space & interest to try & raise some seedlings to the flowering stage & note the results over a number of years. The more plants that are grown & reported on, the more rapid will be the progress towards better performance!

I would personally regard reliability of flowering and increase as the most important aims for breeding & selection in the United Kingdom at this time! Breeding can then take place with selected parents to produce a whole range of plants with desirable characteristics, but NOT, I hope to move away from the graceful forms of the wild species flowers.

The challenge is there! Why not have a try yourself!

(Thank you Adrian. To add to your enthusiasm, I would ask Members to take a look at our Spuria Seed List, you will not find such a comprehensive one anywhere else due to the generosity of our Members (including Adrian). How lovely it would be to see the magnificent Spurias in our Borders in this country. With care! Why ever not! J.T.)

Regional Report from the East.

by Shirley Ryder.

It is October and I cannot believe that I am sitting indoors unable to work my garden because it is too wet. (Shirley has had a long period of drought, with a rock hard garden). I didn't bother to buy a single bulb this year, because I am fed up with trying to chisel holes to get them in before Christmas. However, I mustn't complain about it, because it means that I might have a normal year next year. We had quite a lot of rain in the Spring and I able to see my plants reach somewhere near their normal size, which hasn't happened for, at least, the last five years. I actually had quite a few Siberians, which gave me very much pleasure as I'd quite forgotten what they looked like. After the Spring rain we went into our usual drought which must have suited my Pacificas as they performed really well. Then, at the end of the season, I had some Spurias in bloom that I had never seen before, and, indeed, had given up hope of ever seeing. What a bonus, but unfortunately I couldn't put names to them, because I bought them from a catalogue without descriptions and as they have grown well and intermingled, without flowering over the years, I have no idea which is which now.

I went on a nursery and garden visit to Holland again this year and have, in the past always been a little surprised that there was never any evidence of Iris growing there. Well! I now know why there are no T.B's - We were visiting the garden of a Museum and the Curator took a 10ft. pole and with one hand pushed it effortlessly into the ground up to the hilt. He said he could take another 10ft. pole and place it on top and push that one down also. Apparently the soil is always like that regardless of the weather and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total cost of building a house is spent on the foundations. With this knowledge I was surprised all over again that they were not growing millions of Sibiricas. I think this might change though as one very good nursery that we visited had a very impressive list of Sibiricas which would not be obtainable by the general public here. I was very tempted to buy some myself, because nothing seems to cost more than £2 there, but it was a very large nursery, the plants were not in alphabetical order and the rain was coming down in stair-roads, so the fainthearted spent most of the afternoon in the coach! Usually when I go on this trip we hire a bus over there, but with all the plant restrictions being lifted this year, we went prepared with our own bus which we intended to fill. It rained every day, and a Dutch lady told me that they got their weather when we had finished with it. So, I filled the bus with confidence, it must be raining in East Anglia, I purchased quite freely. We returned home to our usual concrete, it had not rained at all in East Anglia, and all the plants had to remain in their pots, in the greenhouse until September! As usual, I really enjoyed my trip around the Dutch nurseries, and if anybody is thinking about going I can really recommend it, not only because the plants are very reasonable, but also because they do have old varieties of things there that have disappeared here.

I have the usual number of uninvited visitors to my garden this year, but as well as the rabbits, pheasants and partridges, I had two Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs romping away in an Iris bed. Their owner was out, so it took me two hours to get them home and penned up with the aid of 2 cars, 2 passers by, my next-door neighbour, one large dog and a very young policeman, on his first day at our village Police Station, who regarded me with great suspicion as he was convinced that the whole thing was a practical joke, laid on by his officers!

Summing up the year in the East, I would say, that despite the extremes of floods, drought and floods again, it has been a much better year!

(Thank you Shirley, dare I say 'never a dull moment'. I hope this snow and frost will help to improve your 'rock hard' soil. All the Best. J.)

South of Watford.

By Anne Blanco White.

It has been wet. I shall treasure for a long time the photograph in The Times showing an R.N.L.I. inflatable on inshore rescue duty round a small village on the northern edge of the South Downs. Certainly the weather over the last two months has cast a new light on that phrase about 'Walking on the waters'. I, for one, got only a fraction of the work done that I had hoped for, simply because it just was not possible to move at any speed. One thing is certain and that is. the ground is again totally saturated, and so our water-loving irises should be off to a fair start for this season.

In the main, plants are showing life, though the sibiricas seem to be well down in last year's leaves still and the ensatas are generally 'on strike', just as they were last year. The spurias are not in such good form; the leaves seem to be somewhat shorter,

(cont).

but I suppose that is only to be expected after an autumn as dark as the last. They do seem to like it wet and light, which isn't quite the contradiction in terms that it sounds like. Such Pacific Coasts as I grow tend to be wide leaved forms which are more tolerant of the clay, and they seem to be surprisingly happy; even those with narrower leaves which use a plum tree to help their drainage, are in fair condition, so I have hopes for their performance in summer. The one thing they are all going to need is lashings of food when they start into growth, because anything supplied last year will have been leached out.

Snow has not been a major problem since by and large the little around to date, had melted before the frost. But wet snow followed by sharp frost can be a major hazard for plants where the leaves have made some growth. The resulting ice crystals will cut into and even through leaves. This means that in a warm spell afterwards the leaves can start to rot where they have been damaged and that can work back into the rhizomes. It does pay, in late autumn to cover the plants with a loose mulch, or even to tie their old leaves into a top-knot over the plant, to provide an insulating layer. It may not look so pretty, but it works. If it seems possible in the spring that the plant has been damaged beyond repair, do not dash for a fork and dig it up, unless you really want a good excuse to get rid of it. Cover the whole area of the plant with compost and leave it to its own devices. The chances are that some shoots will come up from buds on the rootstock and you won't have lost the plant at all. This goes for evergreen irises as much as for the herbaceous ones.

Some years ago I dug a special bed down the orchard to experiment with some ensatas. There was no difficulty in providing lots of nourishment or plenty of water and they did well. Then, of course, they needed to be replanted and after that they did not flourish; they just survived. The bed had been given plenty of fresh material, sufficient watering and additional fertiliser. So, last summer, I dug them up yet again, for an investigation and as I did so all became clear. There is a Hereford Pippin some distance away. A useful cider apple which clearly has much the same views on cultivation requirements as an ensata. Since the Pippin has been there for something like a century, it was the ensatas which had to move home. They have been shifted to the other end of the orchard and seem to find the new site a definite improvement: The Pippin, I suppose, must continue to have the extra titbits it was filching before, since I do want the apples. And the moral of this is that if you have ensatas which somehow are not giving of their best, have a careful look around their vicinity. Trees, shrubs and even a very well established herbaceous plant, such as a hemerocallis may well be depriving the iris of its rights. In that case, dilute fertiliser, applied frequently, during the growing season, so that the iris gets priority is the answer. Then it should do much better for you. And if it is a rebloomer of any description this is even more important!

(Thank you Anne, I hope your warning came in time for this snow and frost!).

Regional Report from the West Midlands.

by Philip Allery.

Happy New Year! Most areas of the region have had much higher than average rainfall during the past six weeks, and there are flood alerts in the Gloucester, Shrewsbury, and Worcester areas. It is likely that these very wet conditions will encourage slugs and snails to attack early spring growth, so be on your guard. I have pets as well as a large fish pond, I also encourage wild birds into our garden, so I have to be careful in the choice of slug & snail killer I use. Many Nurseries stock a product containing aluminium sulphate, which can be used either by dry application, spraying or by watering in. I have found it to be very effective, but do use it with care!

The extremely dry weather of February 1993 adversely affected the Japanese iris bloom last summer. I started watering too late! John Coble's advice in the last N/L is very sound and should be followed. I shall start feeding and watering my J.I.'s at the beginning of March, and check Ph levels monthly.

I hope my problems with growing J.I.'s in pots can be overcome as a result of the comments made and advice offered by Anne Blanco White in the last N/L. I now propose to re-pot them each Spring with a liberal mix of generously enriched fresh compost, before returning them to their water troughs or pool-side setting. We'll see!

Anne's further comments about the 'Lurgi' reminded me of a similar incident in my garden in May/June 1992. A tetraploid J.I. seedling displayed, what I thought to be systems of a form of scorch. It became progressively worse & died last year, so I burned

(cont)

what remained. I doubt whether I can be of much help, but have left the area unplanted.

The new bed I referred to in my last report, is my best yet, & I hope for a good display this year. It has been given the benefit of a good depth of compost in an area which has a very shallow topsoil in normal circumstances. The bed can be converted into a bog or shallow pool for laevigatas or other uses, when it is time to give the soil a rest from growing J.I's. Measuring 4.x1.5m. overall, with sub-soil watering, it is very easily managed, & the concrete edging blocks which surround it provide holes to plant small alpinas & lewisias giving longer periods of colour throughout the year.

The new bed is not as high as the one I had built 3 years ago. Originally intended for arils, I changed it to a nursery bed for seeds & plants of water-loving irises. I did not take into account that it might prove attractive to the local Fox population!

After lining with butyl for moisture and installing drainage pipes & control taps to avoid water-logged soil, a vixen, visiting us in dry weather, decided that this was almost ideal for her purposes, so she dug down to explore, wrecking the butyl lining. It was not to her liking so she moved elsewhere, but her mate visited us early this week!

This is always an exciting time of the year, seed lists to read, plans for the new season to be made; and growing hopes for ideal conditions to give better blooms. These are all signs of Spring ahead, time to wish you HappyIris Gardening & success in the 1994 season!

(Thank you Philip, we hope you have better news in 1994, and thank you for your past contributions to our Newsletter. Also thank you for arranging for Dr. John Beal to take over in your spot. All Good Wishes.J.T.)

News from The Kent Group.

Kent Group continues to have its usual very busy year. In April Trudy Birrell gave a slide show of 120 slides with a large number of Mackie's slides of Irises. In May, Ray & Irene Jeffs hosted the Dwarf Iris Show at their home in Nutfield. In June, a disaster struck after the Wisley Show, in the Potting Shed, their beautiful Display, which had been prepared so carefully, and was much admired by the Public, crashed to the floor! Horror!, plants, screen glass and electrical parts everywhere! Berney Baughen, who had been the main exhibitor, was able to replace most of the damaged spikes for the opening of the Show to the Public on Sunday. (Congratulations, and commiserations at the same time. I can remember one year at Newark Show when, everybody but everybody rallied round, and the Show went on! I had never seen anything like it, and was so grateful!)

News from the Mercia Group.

The main news from the Mercia Group is that they have been offered a plot of land by the Royal National Rose Society in their grounds at Chiswell Green, St. Albans. In the 'Mercian' a page has been allocated for Members to design an Iris Garden; to be handed in to Eric White at their February Meeting!

Here are some Dates for 1994:- Feb. 22nd/23rd. Reticulata Show R.H.S. Hall, Westminster.
May 6th/7th & 8th Malvern Spring Show: May 7th/8th. B.I.S. Spring Show. Wisley Gdns.
May 24th-27th. Chelsea Flower Show. Royal Hospital Chelsea.
June 4th/5th. B.I.S. Main Show. Wisley gardens:
July 6th. Hampton Court Flower Show.

(We send Good Wishes from the Group, and hope the weather will be kinder this year!)

We welcome two more New Members to our Group :-

Wishing us a Happy Chinese New Year is our New Member Dr. James. W. Waddick, 3233, McGee, Kansas City, MO 64111, U.S.A. James is very well known for his Book 'Iris of China' which he wrote, together with Zhao Yu-tang, one called 'Chinese Iris in the Wild & in the Garden' and Zhao Yu-tang's part 'The Iris of China'. Opening up a new world of Chinese Irises. James has written that he is trying to find a source for some of Ellis' water iris hybrids such as 'Limbo', 'Teverlae' and others. Anne sent him 'Regal Surprise' last fall, and he hopes to get his 'Chance Beauty' this spring. We hope you succeed James, and that we will eventually have your Book in our Library, it has such a wealth of new information. Perhaps Members really will think about starting a donation list, as we have done before, I am sure they would like to read about Irises from this area, which is so newly charted!

Our other New Member is Mr. G. Lewis, Rancho Lodge, Stone Street, WESTENHANGER, Kent, CT21 4HS.

Gary is interested in growing Japanese Irises, and to this end he has purchased back copies of our Newsletters. We hope he enjoys this copy which will tell him more about these lovely Irises, and that he will have every success in growing them.

The Group Library.

This service is free to U.K. Members only. Sent 1st. Class, Members pay postage. If the books are already 'on loan' they will be sent as soon as possible. Limit of loan, 14 days. Send request if extension required. Books must be properly packed & returned Carriage Paid to Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt, S.S.&J. Librarian, 'Haygarth', Cleeton St. Mary, CLEOBURY MORTIMER, Worc (Any correspondence please send S.A.E.) DY14 0QH.

Publications.

- Alphabetical Table & Cultivation Guide to the Species. (B.I.S.) (56 gr.)
Cult of Irises. (Beardless). (B.I.S.) (56 gr.)
Guide to the Pacific Coast Irises. (B.I.S.) (113 gr.)
Irises for the Water Garden. (B.I.S.) (56 gr.)
Know Your Irises. (New Zealand Iris Society.) (75 gr.)
Raising Irises from Seed No. 2. (B.I.S.)
The Genus *Iris*. Sub-section *Sibiricae*. (B.I.S.) (56 gr.)
The *Spuria* Irises - Introduction & Varietal Listing. 1985. (J.J.Foreman. U.S.A.) (252 gr.)
The Cumulative Check List of Japanese Irises. (1992).
The Cumulative Check List of Siberian Irises. (U.S.A. 1989) (2 copies.)
The S. S. & J. List of Pacific Coast Hybrids - 1990.
A Revision of the Pacific Coast Irises. (Lee W. Lenz. U.S.A.)
Hybridization & Speciation in the Pacific Coast Irises. (Lee W. Lenz. U.S.A.)
Prof. Dr. N.A. El Emery's Papers on *I. pseudacorus* & *I. germanica* var *Alba*.
Journals for the Siberian Iris Society. (U.S.A.) (Twice a Year.)
Newsletters of the *Spuria* Iris Society. (U.S.A.) (Twice a Year.)
Reviews of the Society for Japanese Irises. (U.S.A.) (Twice a Year.)
Almanacs for Pacific Coast Native Irises. (U.S.A.) (Twice a Year.)
Back Numbers of the S. S. & J. Newsletters since 1976.

Books.

- Siberian Irises by Currier McEwen. (U.S.A.) (175 gr.)
 Growing Irises by G.E.Cassidy & G.Linnegar. (Gt. Britain) (420 gr.)
 The Japanese Iris by Currier McEwen. (U.S.A.) (780 gr.)
 The Iris by Fritz Kohlein. (Germany, English Translation.) (990 gr.)
 'Irises' by S.Linnegar & J.Hewitt. (Gt. Britain.)
 The Iris by N.Leslie Cave. (Gt. Britain.)

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INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st, DECEMBER 1993.

		£			£
5.1.93	Postage	5		Subscriptions	190
12.2.93	do	5		Donations	7 .36
20.2.93	Newsletters & Pge.	133. 21.		Interest	.89
12.3.93	Postage	5		do (Res. N/c)	.25
16.4.93	do	5		Seeds.	71 .50
14.5.93	do	5		Plants.	189
11.6.93	do	5		Lit. & N/L's	24
18.6.93	Postage on pcls.	5		<u>Stock</u>	
21.7.93	Newsletters & Pge.	138. 52.		Newsletters	56
6.8.93	Postage & pcls.	5		Covers	3
20.8.93	Postage	5		Leaflets	4
10.9.93	Postage & Pcls.	5		B.I.S.Lit.	6
24.9.93	Postage	5		P.C.I.Lists	4
23.10.93	Postage & Parcels.	5			
26.11.93	do	5			* 486.....
31.12.93	Postage	5		Interest	.89
		£ 341. 73		Cash in Bank	373. 88
	surplus	144. 27		Int. in Res.	.25
		* 486....		Cash in Res.	106. 48
				N/L's & Covers	73
Accumulated fund		410 .23.			
	surplus	144 .27.			
		554 .50			554. 50

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(ccnt)
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Cash in Bank. £ 374. 77.

In Reserve. £ 106. 73. Total £481. 50.

signed Adrian Whittaker.

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Editor. New Zealand Marion Ball, 25, Pufflett Rd. HAVELOCK NORTH. New Zealand.
Bulletin.

We have Back Numbers of the Newsletters:- Original 1976 at 20p. All at 75p. July 1990.
Feb.1991. July 1991. Feb 1992. July 1992. Feb. 1993. & July 1993.

Seed Distribution.

Seeds are 25p. per packet:- Marked (vs) very small quantity(alternatives).(s)small)(p) Plenty.
Send to:- Mr. David Trevithick, 86a, Grantham Rd. RADCLIFFE-on-TRENT,NOTTINGHAM. NG12 2NY.

LAEVIGATAE.

I. laevigata blue(vs). I. laevigata mixed(s).I.laev. 'Semperflorens (s).I.laev.'VioletParasol'
I.laev. 'Colchesterensis'(vs). I.laev 'Aon Ton'(vs).I.laev '3 petalled'(vs). (vs)
I.pseudacorus(p).I.pseudacorus'Golden Queen'(p). I.pseud. 'Bastardii'(s).I.pseud'Tiggah'(vs).
I.pseudacorus'E.Turnipseed'(vs). I.pseud.'nearest to pure white(vs).
I.versicolor(p). VarKermisina(p). I.versicolor'Cat Moussam'(s). 'Rougette'(S). 'Rosea'(vs).
I.versicolor 'C;aret Cup'(vs). 'Pink Peaks'(vs). 'Party Line'(vs). 'Mint Fresh'(vs).
I. virginica(vs). Virginica-de luxe(vs). Gerald Darb,(vs).

ENSATAE.

I, ensata mxd.(s) I.ensata Tet.mxd.(vs). diploids mxd.(vs).Ensata'Banners on Parade'(s).
I.ensata Vitginia Burton(vs). Currier McEwen's numbered seeds, all (vs). 91/55 (Chitose Heine
bee) 91/61 (Chitose Heine x Hekuin x bee). 91/62 (88/108 x Chitose Heine x bee). 90/73 (1)
x bee.(Excellent dark blue). 89/19C & 89/41(2) (my two best pink diploids). 93/4
(Hatsuzume x 89/2(2) Very early.

Three packets Payne Award mixed, with donord names. General mixed Curriers own. Versata.(vs)
I. lactea.

SERIES SIBIRICAE.

I.sibirica Tet.mxd.(vs). Mixed diploids(vs). Older varieties(s). Mixed red diploids(s).
'Glee Hills'(s). 'Silver Edge'(p). 'Dance Ballerina Dance'(vs). 'Teal Velvet'(vs). 'Dreaming
Yellow'(vs). 'Laurenstuhl'(s). 'Avon'(vs). 'Orville Fay'(s). 'Rejoice Always'(s). 'Caesar'(vs).
'Acuta'(vs). Dykesoo x Clarkei(vs). I.delavayi(s). I.delavayi 'Didcot'(p).Sib'HighStandard's)
Curriers Tetraploids.T893/34 (purple red).T893/5B (reddish pink).T893/47 (red). T493/116
(T383/2 x Welcome Return. Both repeaters). T993/3 (T888/1(1)x sister(2) (medium light blue)
Mixed pinks. Mixed Miniatures. Mixed Morgan Awards(winners). I,typhifolia.

SERIEA SPURIAE.

I.aurea(vs).I.orientalis(vs). I.crocea(vs).I.carthaginea(vs). I.halophila(p). I.kerneriana(s).
I.sintenisii(s). I.musulmanica(s). I.sogdiana(vs). Igraminea(vs).Spuria mxd.cream&yellow(s).

Hybrids.

'Abo 6b', 'Adobe Sunset', 'April's Birthday', 'Baby Chick', 'Bali Bali', 'Border Town',
'Clara Ellen', 'Candle Lace', 'Countess Zeppelin' 'Color Focus', 'Dark Circle', 'Diminuendo',
'Easter Color', 'Easter Parade', 'Elan Vital', 'Eleanor Hill', 'Eurasia', 'Evening Dress',
'Elixir', 'Gentry', 'Finally Free', 'Ila Crawford', 'Irene Benton', 'Janice Chesnik',
'Talcon's Crest', 'Lenkoran', 'Lively One', 'My Impulse', 'New Vista', 'Now This', 'Penny
Bunker', 'Purple Reign', 'Popped Corn', 'Pieces of Eight', 'Snow Giant', 'Struttin & Struttin',
'Universal Peace', 'Zeal', 'Zulu Chief', Dark Purple crosses, BF53 Diminuendo crosses.
Mixed (small). Mixed (large). 'Harvest Shadows', Spuria mxd. yellows & browns.

SERIES CALIFORNICAE.

P.C.I.Mixed. 'Banbury Beauty '(vs). 'Banbury Pageant'(vs). 'Las Olas'(vs).I.douglasiana(cream)
'Califancy', 'Canyon Orchid', 'Carmel Gem', 'Little Jester', 'Monterey Snow', 'Pacific
Orphan', 'Sierra Dell', 'Silver Circle', 'Triple Heart', 'Yulovit', Mxd.yellowsMxd.allcolors.
I.setosa(blue-purple.I.setosa hondoensis(vs). Isetosa tall blue(vs). Isetosa(vs).
I. brevicaulis. I.foetidissima. I.foetidissima luyea.

Plants. I have just braved the frost to look at the seedlings. There are 13 of the listed
Spurias.Sibs. 'Silver Edge', 'My Love', 'Castle Grace', 'Anne Dasch' and 'Showdown.

P.C.I.'s 'Sierra Dell', 'Californian', 'El Centro', 'Canyon Snow', 'Pacific Dazzler', 'In the
Money', 'Sundance Eight', 'Bottom Line', 'Deepening Shadows', 'Spring Daze', 'San Carlos' and
'Roaring Camp'. But! it is freezing & they will not be ready until about April, so write
in then, if you would like to order, they will be the usual 50 or 75p. according to size
plus the Postage.

Hope you and your Irises have managed to survive this terrible weather. Best Wishes
and Take Care. More in July. Including Mark Cook's usual letter from Kentucky which has
been held over this time.

One word more, don't forget, if you are parting your plants this year, they would be
very welcome, and we will refund the Postage. Increasing Postal costs mean that we have
had to work hard selling plants to meet this, and also we do not receive, like many others
such good interest from our invested money. We miss it, but we are determined to carry
on and make up for it, with your help.