

factory in which the food for the plant is manufactured and transported downward to build husky rhizomes for next year's bloom. Of course, if the leaves become badly diseased, cutting back the foliage and burning the infected leaves will often help in controlling the disease. It is advisable to remove completely and burn all dead and dying leaves, as these may contain fungus spores that will carry the disease over to the next season.

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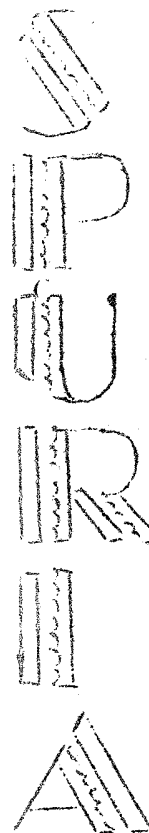
IRIS SPURIA var. subbarbata

This variation of *Iris spuria* was named by Jos in 1851 "subbarbata" in reference to the tiny beard which is visible to the unaided eye on close examination of the central ridge on the falls. The "hairs", however, consist of single cells rather than many cells as in the hairs of the bearded iris. This type of beard also occurs in other forms of *I. spuria*.

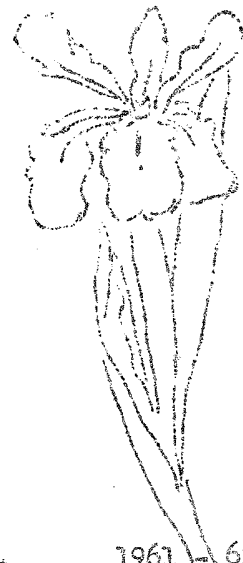
I. spuria subbarbata is found native in southern Germany, Austria and Hungary, and is stronger and more vigorous than most forms of *I. spuria*, being surpassed in vigor only by *I. spuria* var. *halophila*. The height and color vary, but generally the plants are shorter than most named varieties which seldom include *I. spuria* in their ancestry.

The most common coloring found in the falls is a deep blue purple with standards of deep violet blue slightly edged with yellow in the lower part. Wide variations in color can be found.

A great number of seeds were collected in Austria by Karl Ajdovic and were sent to Ben Hager of the Melrose Gardens. There were sufficient seeds to distribute to all members of the *Spuria Iris Society*. Members are urged to try germinating these and to report variations of forms they raise.



NEWS LETTER



FALL - WINTER ISSUE

1961 - 62

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR 1962

Back in 1940 Earl E. Evans in an AIS Bulletin made eight resolutions in regard to his breeding program that are good guides for any hybridizer. Although his comments are not all applicable today, where they are they have been freely borrowed for a framework for the NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR 1962. "It's what we learn after we think we know it all that counts."

1. RESOLVED to learn something of how genetics operate from every definitely planned cross.

When Mendel crossed a tall pea with a short pea the science of genetics was born. His parent plants differed in one factor, that of height. The seedlings were monohybrids, because only one factor, that of height, was involved. Dihybrid iris would be those whose parents differ in two characteristics such as tailored and ruffled falls and blue and white color. But iris are polyhybrids, which if they had as few as 10 factor pairs would give 1,048,576 variations in the second generation. This should explode the idea that a breeder must keep secret the name of parent plants he is working with, for, as you see, there is only about one chance in over a million of duplicating any specific result in its entirety. In no better way can a man broadcast to the scientific worker that he does not understand the mechanics of breeding than to be secretive about the plants he uses in hybridizing. The sharing of information as to hybridizing results would advance the breeding program of all who plan.

2. RESOLVED to work with only one pair of hybrid factors at a time, until their behavior is known.

What an addition to the breeding program would an iris parent to that would always give height to its seedlings, or twice blooming, or any other characteristic we were interested in. It is possible if we get a plant that is pure, either dominant or recessive for the factor determined upon.

If the factor is recessive and appears in the seed-

ling, the plant is pure (homozygous) for this characteristic which had to be inherited from both parents. But to secure the pure dominant is harder and may take one more generation. The solution here is to back-cross to the pure recessive. For example an unknown tall, which might have short recessive in its blood, is crossed back to a pure short, and if every seedling is tall, one is working with a homozygous tall plant, but if some are tall and some are short then the tall parent is heterozygous, containing both extremes for height in its make-up.

3. RESOLVED to discover and list everything possible that is dominant and recessive.

The amount of information on recessive and dominant characteristics in spuria iris is very limited. Some can be gleaned from the literature, more can be learned by listing the characteristics of every seedling that results from a cross together with those of the parents. It is here that we need a greater sharing of information obtained.

4. RESOLVED to practice self-fertilization in an effort to separate pure or homozygous plants.

For instance, one could put the pollen of Sunny Days on its own stigma. In the seedlings of this cross, discard all the blue, cream, or white - in fact, everything except the yellow plants which are again self-pollinated - and finally one will be found that, when self-fertilized, will give nothing but yellow seedlings. That plant should be saved and marked pure yellow.

5. RESOLVED to work with high chromosome count plants, that is, at least 40, unless the goal is small size.

Super-size will never come from parents of 22 chromosomes (diploids with two sets of 11 chromosomes) but some of the greatest breaks have come from successful crosses of a diploid with a tetraploid (44 chromosomes in four sets of 11 chromosomes).

6. RESOLVED to continue breeding until the second generation when in doubt.

First generation seedlings may not reach the goal, especially if the quality aimed for is recessive and hidden by dominant traits. It is believed that more than half the desirable things from the iris fancier's viewpoint are recessive, yet all the seedlings from cross after cross are discarded each year because a finished iris is not among them.

7. RESOLVED never to be afraid to cross desirable flowers with undesirable if it will serve one's purpose to use the good of both.

8. RESOLVED to name and release only super-creations. Practice restraint, for it is just as important in introducing iris as in eating, drinking, or making pre-election pledges.

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SPURIAS IN NEW YORK STATE

by Duncan Crawford

I have come to the conclusion that there are certain ordinary elements of care which are needed in trying to raise spurias and Louisiana iris in the North: reasonable soil elements and fertilizer, proper supply of water, and good mulching. Local conditions would determine how these factors would be varied for different gardens and localities.

You must learn the hard way. For four years I had reasonable results, then last winter proved an unusual one - an extremely long period of snow and cold followed by weeks of rain, then no rain at all. All of the Louisiana iris were lost. Spurias survived but gave very little bloom during iris season.

Mulching consisted mostly of a deep covering of pine needles and cocoa hulls which for three years had

proved effective. I do not like oak leaves because they tend to pack. Mrs. Nesmith has had satisfactory results with her spurias for many years using salt hay as a mulch. I would have used it if it were easily available. In spite of the extra effort I am going to try to get it as I think my mulch may have been part of the cause of my losses.

However, even if all things were done as they should be, there is one very serious question left - Is the plant stock one that will survive in the North? When I first bought stock I was fascinated by the new varieties, by the size of their flowers and their colors. I now feel that it is more important that the main part of the planting is composed of root stock which has survived in this climate for a sufficient number of years to be thoroughly tested, then experiment with a few of the exotic on a chance venture.

From proven hardy stock other varieties can be developed with this hardiness. For instance, Mrs. Nesmith wrote me that the Louisiana iris Dorothea K. Williamson usually survived in this climate and many of my friends have had it bloom profusely with no great care, almost without a mulch. Therefore, one would think that seedlings from it might show similar tendencies. Mrs. Nesmith has several varieties which were so bred and which have been successful for her.

Unfortunately for us Easterners, many nurseries have moved to the Pacific Coast and we cannot tell whether the stock will stand our winter cold.

The only answer I know is to use proper culture and probably salt hay as a mulch, and get most of the main stock from a nursery in the same climate as you are and who has grown them for a number of years. Then start experimenting in a small way with stock from other areas.

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GIFT TO SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY TREASURY

Mrs. J. H. Richardson has sent to the Spuria Iris Society treasury the residual funds from the Houston Test Garden in the amount of \$29.55. This is greatly appreciated by the members and officers of S.I.S. The Houston Test Garden, in the birthplace of the Spuria Iris Society, was maintained faithfully by the Houston members until circumstances brought about its discontinuance. The interest in the spuria varieties carefully tended and reported on there contributed, through S.I.S. Newsletters and AIS Bulletin articles, to the spreading interest which developed the society in a few years to national and international scope. The Spuria Iris Society wishes to again thank Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Slaughter, Mrs. Nunn and every other member of the Houston group for their earlier efforts, their present assistance, and the gift of this check.

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FROM THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

From New Zealand where the seasons are reversed from ours Jean Tunnicliffe wrote on October 2nd:

"The first spurias are in bud, but they are just the original species, ochroleuca and monaurea. The bearded are quite early, quite a lot flowered out of season in the winter and the first stalks are ready to unfold in two or three days. That's at least two weeks ahead of time - late October and early November are the main flowering times. It isn't quite warm enough yet for cotton dresses, but trees are simply bursting out all over with bloom."

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NEWSWORTHY - NEWSWORTHY - NEWSWORTHY

Eleanor McCown, Holtville, California

"I had no luck with cross pollination between the

Louisiana and the spuria using the spuria as the pod parent, but I have three very large pods on my Louisiana iris that could be a cross. I was concentrating on the spuria for seed and gave the Louisiana no protection from a natural pollination. However, the only three pods that were set on Louisianas were those I had hand pollinated with spuria pollen."

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Walker Ferguson, Escondido, California:

"I watered the spurias a little later and more than usual last year as we had such a very dry winter and spring and the growth and bloom was greater than usual. I think we would like to hear any reports of the display gardens."

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William Wylam, Pasadena, California:

Has a seedling from a cross of Saugatuck x Wadi Zem Zem which is a large light blue. It received a Certificate of Commendation at the Southern California Iris Society Show in 1960.

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Ralph Johnson, Phoenix, Arizona:

"My crops of Morningtide, Orange Delight, Ruth Nies Cabeen, Sunlit Sea, Driftwood, and Larksong were in full bloom this past spring when I returned from the show at Arcadia, and Sunny Day bloomed until late May." (NOTE: Ralph (Johnny) Johnson is AIS Chairman for Arizona. He and his friend Dr. William J. Johnson, past Vice-President of SIS, compost and mulch heavily and grow their large spuria and tall bearded collections in long rectangular beds edged with concrete, separated by gravel paths. Johnny had good seedlings in 1961 from his own crosses and from the Marion

Walker strain.)

New Zealand Iris Society Bulletin: From "IRIS TIME EXTENDED" by E. J. Adams:

"Visiting the tall bearded iris in the garden one may give a thought to the iris species some of the spurias will be in flower. Probably, a late flower on *I. ochroleuca* and an early one on a yellow spuria, which could be *I. monnieri* or *I. crocea* (syn. *aurea*) but is probably a hybrid, *I. monaurea*, also the blue hybrid, *I. monspur*. The new garden varieties, of which Mrs. O'Brien has flowered about a dozen seedlings, are a little later. The dwarf spurias, *I. sintenesii*, *I. halophila* and *I. graminea*, will have commenced to flower and still carry on for several weeks." (NOTE: Mr. Adams writes from Nelson, New Zealand, and Americans who are unaccustomed to thinking of our autumn months as the New Zealand spring, will be a bit startled to read in his final paragraph that "Christmas is fast approaching when a final round of visits, to see the Japanese irises in bloom, is called for.")

Miss Jean Tunnicliffe, Edgecombe, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand, gifted one of our group with a membership in the New Zealand Iris Society. Jean Stevens and Molly Emms, both well known to American irisarians, are officers and frequent contributors. In spite of the upside-down seasons, their cultural and hybridizing notes and varietal comments are as pertinent and useful in this country as in New Zealand. The New Zealanders run an active Seed Pool for distribution of iris seeds - almost everything, in fact, EXCEPT spuria seeds! Perhaps some of our hybridizers who have a surplus of good seeds might like to send them to the New Zealand Society's Seed Pool Distributor, Mrs. H. E. Collins, 72 Campbell St., Wairoa, N.Z.

SLIDE LIBRARY

Mrs. Lura Roach, Librarian of S.I.S., 2931 Tyburn Street, Los Angeles 39, California, has assembled the beginnings of a good spuria color slide set for loan to S.I.S. members. Most of the slides were contributed by Houston members, Houston having been the original home of the Spuria Iris Society and the original Spuria Test Garden. Other slides are being contributed by interested members, and further gift slides (either originals or duplicates) will be welcomed.

SLIDE LIBRARY RULES

1. Any group or member wishing to borrow slides should notify the Librarian well in advance, stating dates and alternate dates.
2. Rental fee of \$2.00 is to be enclosed with application. Return postage and registration are to be paid by borrower. Slides must be returned by registered mail.
3. Librarian is to be informed by postal or letter of date the slides are returned.
4. Slides must not be loaned to anyone else during the time they are in the borrower's possession. Color slides are costly and often irreplaceable.

SPURIA ROBINS

Mrs. Stayton Nunn, 11122 Claymore Drive, Houston 24, Texas, is Robin Director for the Spuria Robins of the AIS. Mrs. Nunn is a Past President of SIS, past Regional Vice-President of AIS in Texas, and is on the Advisory Board of SIS. She has long been a spuria fancier. When highway developments necessitated closing the Houston Spuria Test Garden, she set up her own grounds as an extensive planting of spurias for the benefit of the Houston gardeners. She urges SIS members to join a spuria robin and correspond directly

by round robin letters with other spuria growers, to share information and advice in the friendly personal contacts which the robins engender. Join a robin and find yourself part of a friendly circle, busy swapping notes and questions and answers - and often pollen, plants, and seeds!

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Thurley Bruce, a member of the El Paso (Texas) Iris Society, writes:

"At the last meeting of our iris society everyone was talking about the proposed new Spuria Display Garden. Our El Paso Society President, Ted Harris, planted the tall bearded bed at the library in the Tigua area and last spring it was beautiful when it bloomed. The spurias will be planted there also as an added attraction along with roses, shrubs, bulbs and rock garden plants. This garden which will be the Spuria Display Garden is, if anything, more beautiful than the Rose Test Garden which Ted designed and planted in El Paso some years ago." (NOTE: Theodore Harris, President of the El Paso Iris Society, is a long time irisarian, a graduate of the Kansas Agricultural College, whose work in horticulture and floriculture may be seen in the design and planting of several El Paso city parks as well as in the El Paso Rose Society's Test Garden.)

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HELP WANTED!

Remember to send our librarian, Lura Roach, information about newspaper or magazine articles on spurias for the Spuria Bibliography. If possible, send her the actual clippings or magazines. Articles on spurias in foreign iris society publications would be valuable. Watch your local garden editors' columns for spuria stories to enlarge our research library.

How about those of you who have a flair for

writing sending spuria articles to your local publications and thus passing on the spuria word? More people need to know about this excellent, hardy, beautiful member of the iris clan.

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DEUTSCHE IRIS- UND LILIENGESSELLSCHAFT

The newsletter of our iris neighbor, the German Iris and Lily Society is now bound in booklet form similar in size and format to our AIS Bulletins. Earlier mimeographed newsletters had beautifully drawn plant designs almost like etchings, signed by Hermann Hald, President of the German Society. References to American iris names and personalities make these backissues of interest even in a rudimentary translation, and Professor Alwin Seifert's article titled "Kompost - die natuerliche Nahrung" has a familiar sound to any gardener in any language.

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A CENTURY AGO

Iris pseudacorus with its angular seeds is praised as a good substitute for coffee if well roasted according to an 1862 report.

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CUTTING BACK FOLIAGE

Probably there is no point in iris culture that is so little understood as the matter of cutting back the foliage. There is a widespread belief, apparently passed from one gardener to another, that all forms of iris should regularly have their healthy green leaves cut back after flowering. Why? No one seems to know. We don't do it, as such treatment ordinarily sets the plants back and reduces the likelihood of flowering next year. This is because the leaves are