

WHERE TO BUY SPURIAS - continued

Sources tell us we should also be listing the following:

COLLINS IRIS GARDEN
R.D. 1
Teuranga, New Zealand

Barry Blyth is the foremost commercial iris grower and hybridizer in Australia. We do not know just what work he is doing with spurias.

TEMPO TWO IRIS GARDENS
P.O. Box 444
Frankston, Victoria 3199
Australia

Jean and Hector Collins have a beautiful garden in a climate where spurias do especially well.

IMPERIAL GARDENS
202 N. 4th St. Box 255
Cornell, Ill. 61319

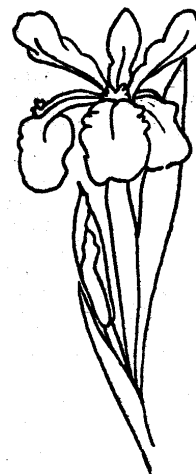
Has listed several species in past years.

PACIFIC COAST HYBRIDIZERS
P.O. Box 972
Campbell, Calif. 95008

Previously introduced for Bruce Williamson and Bernice Roe. Current list?

If we have left anyone out, we are sorry. We tried! and we'll do better next time with your help.

Let us know who we missed.



NEWSLETTER

SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

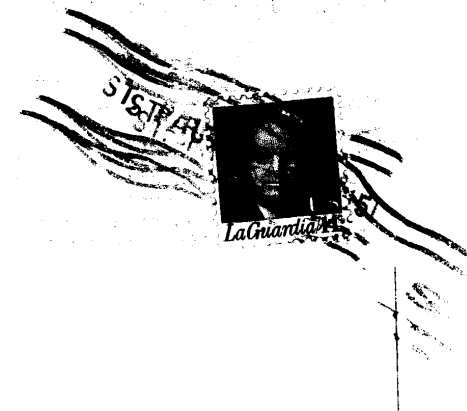
SPURIA SECTION OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

SPRING, 1977

Vol. 18 No. 63

Joan Cooper, Editor
212 W. County Road C
Roseville, Minn. 55113

THIRD CLASS MAIL
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED



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OFFICERS OF THE SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

President, Marilyn Holloway, 673 Acacia Ave., Sacramento, CA 95815
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Stillwater, OK 74074
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Secretary-Treasurer, Ila Crawford, Rt. 2, Box 83, Purcell, OK 73080
Editor, Joan Cooper, 212 W. County Road C, Roseville, MN 55113

SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP: A section of the American Iris Society under approved by-laws. American members of SIS must also be members of AIS.

DUES:

Annual:	Individual \$2.00	Family \$2.50
Triennial	Individual \$5.00	Family \$6.00
Supporting Annual Membership	\$3.00	
Life Membership	\$30.00	
Honorary Life Member	no dues	

Notices of dues payable are included with AIS dues notices. Please pay SIS dues along with AIS dues. Inform Secretary-Treasurer of change of address or other membership problems.

Published twice yearly, Spring and Fall

All members are invited to submit material for the Newsletter to the Editor, typed and double-spaced if possible. Deadlines: Sept. 1 and March 1.

J & J Iris Gardens
Route 1 Box 329
Cashmere, Wash. 98815

Though Jack Boushay grows mostly TBs and medians, he now lists about 30 fine spurias, hopes to have his 1977 catalog ready by the time you see this.

MELROSE GARDENS
309 Best Road
Stockton, Calif. 95206

Ben Hager and Sid DuBose list about 65 of the finest spurias available, feature growing instructions and colorful descriptions. Ben is a leading hybridizer of award winning spurias.

SCHREINER'S GARDENS
3625 Quinby Rd. N.E.
Salem, Ore. 97303

Robert Schreiner introduces spurias for Marion Walker of Ventura, Calif., lists about 25 varieties. New for 1977 is NAVIGATOR, a new blue with broad upright standards and wide falls.

STANDENGARTNEREI
GRAFIN von ZEPPELIN
D 7811 Sulzburg 2
Laufen/Baden, W. Germany

Helen von Stein-Zeppelin grows over 40 cultivars and species, including several species from Rodionenko in Russia. We understand this is the largest German nursery.

TERRACED HILLS
2241 Sharp Drive
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504

Ed Winske says he will be listing 40 varieties of winter-hardy, Michigan grown spurias, including many recent introductions. He expects to continue expanding to look for those varieties that do grow and bloom in cold areas.

continued on next page

WHERE TO BUY SPURIAS

We've asked all growers listed in previous Newsletter, and any others we know of, to help us bring our commercial list up to date as a service to our members. We're afraid we may have missed some, but we did our best and invite corrections.

BAY VIEW GARDENS
1201 Bay St.
Santa Cruz, Calif. 95060

Joe Ghio lists about 40 spuria varieties and this year will introduce FULL SUN which he describes as recapturing the airy grace of older varieties without losing width or ruffling. A full yellow self. (Archie Owen X Dawn Candle)

CAPE IRIS GARDENS
822 Rodney Vista Blvd
Cape Girardeau, Mo. 63701

Dave Niswonger lists about 50 varieties of spurias, some of them old and some are the newest. He considers himself more a hybridizer than a grower, will have about 2000 spuria seedlings in first bloom this year.

CORDON BLEU FARMS
418 Buena Creek Rd.
San Marcos, Cal. 92069

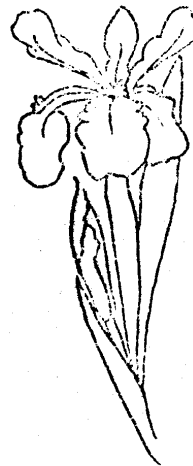
Bob Brooks and Ray Chesnik listed 126 spuria varieties in 1976 and introduce for Eleanor McCown as well as results of their own hybridizing, introducing in 1976 ADA PERRY, HIGHLINE AMETHYST, HIGHLINE ORIOLE and PLAIN JANE.

FLORICA GARDENS
P.O. Box 82, 2^o Boeing Rd.
Bedfordview, Transvaal
South Africa

Audrey Wessels has imported at least three dozen cultivars from the U.S. They thrive in her climate - she says her plants grow much larger than those she saw at the Denver Botanical Garden in 1976. She is also hybridizing.

HAMNER'S IRIS GARDEN
960 No. Perris Blvd.
Perris, Calif. 92370

Celeste Hamner writes that they don't grow as many spurias as they did a few years ago, having discarded some of the older varieties. They will be adding some new varieties to the 26 they listed last year.



SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

SPURIA SECTION OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SPRING, 1977

Dear Members

We all look forward to a New Year and Iris Season. 1977 started out with severe weather in most parts of the country. Too much snow or not enough snow -- excessive rain or drought conditions. So hopefully the coming weeks will bring more settled or normal weather so that the Iris will grow and bloom.

Much appreciation for those answering the plea for copy for the NEWSLETTER. With the coming season please jot down a few words on Spurias seen in your travels or in your own garden and send to Joan Cooper, Editor.

We are planning the program for the annual meeting in Memphis, during AIS convention. I'm looking forward to meeting many of you attending.

When your AIS dues are payable, do not forget to send your Spuria Iris Society dues along with them. We would not like to delete you on the membership roster next issue.

With the daffodils blooming in California, Iris Season is not far behind. Remember to keep those spurias growing for better blooms this coming season. Neglecting the spuria beds during the early growing months will result in inferior quality flowers and bloomstalks. Good luck to the show exhibitors.

Best wishes for a successful Iris season in your area.

Marilyn

Marilyn J. Holloway
President

EDITOR-REALIZING

Editing the SIS NEWSLETTER has been an interesting experience in ways I had never expected. It has been an experience in making new friends, many of whom I had not even met before. I especially appreciate Bill Gunther, former editor, who has provided help and encouragement only possible when you have been there yourself. And Eckard Berlin, a German landscape architect, who has provided new looks at the iris world as has Audrey Wessels of So. Africa, Helen von Stein-Zeppelin of W. Germany and others. I am most happy to share their letters with you. And fellow species buffs, Roy Davidson and Homer Metcalf, and our president, Marilyn Holloway, our Secretary-Treasurer, Ila Crawford, none of whom I have ever met, have tried to help in ways they could. Of those I have met very briefly, I especially want to thank Virginia Mathews, Bob Brooks, Jack Riley, Archie Owen and Eleanor McCown whose advice and encouragement mean so much to me. These are just a few--I have really loved all your letters and do hope to hear again from all of you who have written and those that haven't yet. I've tried to answer every letter, but I'm afraid I've missed a few--I'm really not too well organized!

We threatened last fall and in some letters, an all-Minnesota NEWSLETTER--well, it isn't, but whatever happened to "Spuria Country"? We printed what was offered. We hope you all enjoy the difference.

Plans for the future include a memorial issue for Walker Ferguson. Your editor never knew him but has enjoyed his iris, his poems, his articles in past issues. Won't those of you who knew him tell us some of your personal recollections of the grand old farmer from Minnesota who put Spurias on the map, so to speak, after his retirement to California. And please send any of his poems you can find so we can all enjoy them.

We're also thinking of memorial issues for PREMIER and WADI ZEM ZEM. Does that turn you on? Your editor is a relatively adept researcher, but, YOU OUT THERE need to make the NEWSLETTER come alive. "We" are just one fat grandma who likes Spurias! (I wonder why we can't keep our mouth shut sometimes.)

Please remember that one of the most popular items in any Iris newsletter is varietal comments. Write us about what you grow, what you see, what you like best, where you saw them, whether you have tried to hybridize them and what happened then. We (and this "we" is bigger than I am) really want to hear about your experience with the Spurias--that's why we all belong to SIS.

Bill Gunther assures me that you have read every word. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Just in case anyone wonders why we don't do the whole NEWSLETTER in this nice sharp type, it's one my daughter rented for a few days and I've appropriated for a little while--besides, with me typing, the SIS could go bankrupt buying correction fluid!

See you all in Memphis!!

Joan

Joan Cooper, Editor

SPURIA HYBRIDIZING FOR THE SEVENTIES - continued

produce a reddish purple. If one likes surprises, crosses with a honey coloured variety such as 'Connosneur' with a deep blue such as 'Proverb' will produce a number of shades and plicatas or bitone colours.

As to the mechanics of breeding Spurias, my own experience in this dry desert region, is to catch the flower as it opens, usually in early morning. Using tweezers, I take the stamen from the pollen parent I have chosen and brush it across the stigma of the pod parent and tag it. Pods are harvested here in mid-July and placed in envelopes with the name of pod

and pollen parents and stored until late October. At this time I plant them in the ground in raised rows and flood irrigate them. Usually seedlings start appearing in January, and as I write this article, they are from four to eight inches high. Yearlings are replanted and thinned in early November to about eight to ten inches apart. Some few will bloom in the spring of their second year and almost all will bloom in the third year.

As they bloom, promising seedlings are numbered and listed in a note book as to colour and parentage. Others that may be pretty but have no outstanding new characteristic are dug out and tossed on the compost heap as they bloom. Usually out of several hundred seedlings that bloom, about twenty will be saved and replanted in the fall of the year. These are then compared to other introductions and also distributed to test gardens for outside judgement. Approximately the third year after a seedling has first bloomed, some two or three will be judged worthy of introduction and the rest will be discarded.

The purpose of this notice is to express my deep appreciation to Perry L. Parrish who took over the executive position as Treasurer of the Spuria Iris Society when I could not serve and helped me over a difficult time. His fine manifestation of loyalty to a friend and to the Spuria Iris Society is deeply appreciated by me and the whole Society. I took over his records on February 8, 1977, and found them in immaculate order.

I shall try to live up to the fine example he has exhibited as Secretary-Treasurer of the Spuria Iris Society. He is a great irisarian and member of the American Iris Society and the Sections to which he belongs. He is a past R.V.P. of Region 22 and earned high regard in that office. To my friend and your friend, I thank Perry Parrish for his outstanding service to a friend and to the Spuria Iris Society.

Ila

Ila L. Crawford
Treasurer, Spuria Iris Soc.



BORROWED FROM B.I.S.

BRITISH IRIS
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
AUGUST, 1976

SPURIA HYBRIDIZING FOR THE 70's BY ELEANOR MCGOWN

During the late fifties, sixties and early seventies great strides were made, in spurias mostly in California. A wide range of colours were developed, some near plicates, bitones and bicolours. Flower size was increased, form has become more rounded and substance of flower parts increased.

Few modern varieties can compete however, with that cross made in England in the 1890's called 'Premier' in branching or number of flowers. There are many challenges still facing the Spuria breeder.

Real red, pink and orange and an all white are still undeveloped. More resistance to virus, more vigour and adaptability to different climates are features to be worked on. Some modern Spurias are six feet tall and none are really less than three so dwarf varieties would be welcome. To attain this last characteristic it would probably be necessary to cross back to some of the shorter species that make up the Spuria group of iris.

Some of the older varieties that have proven to be good parents are 'Morning Tide', the first to produce wider and more rounded form, 'Driftwood', a vigorous large flowered brown, Windfall, a large, vigorous white and yellow that has good branching, 'Baritone', the top deep brown coloured iris, older varieties, 'White Heron', 'Wadi Zem Zem', 'Lark Song', 'Golden Lady' and Imperial Song.

Some of the newer introductions that promise to be good parents are 'Highline Lavender', 'Archie Owen', 'Forty Carats', 'Connoisseur', Dawn Candle 'Fort Ridge', 'Imperial Bronze', 'Proverb' and 'Redwood Falls'. Two very new varieties also are promising. They are Ben Hager's 'Far Out' a deep orange yellow with such wide parts as to give the flower a totally new form and 'Plain Jane' a W. Ferguson seedling being introduced this year by Gordon Bleu. This is an extremely large flowered white, with yellow signal, that dwarfs such oldies as 'White Heron'. It has good branching and is very vigorous.

As to which varieties to cross in order to produce a desired result, there are no hard and fast rules. Almost all modern hybrids will produce some yellows and whites since these seem to be predominant colours in Spurias. A cross of a brown and a yellow will produce some brown and heavily veined flowers. A cross of a darker blue purple with a brown can

SPURIAS - HERE and THERE IN WISCONSIN

by LA VONNE NEY Milwaukee, Wisconsin

It started when someone said, "Did you see the room full of spurias?" I went in and found myself marking multiple stars after the names of so many lovelies of a species that I hadn't known before. This was the spuria display that had been flown in for the 1971 Wichita Convention.

That summer I sent in a small order and wondered where to fit them into an already crowded garden. First try was against the south side of my house where I figured that, since they grew so well in the hot areas of the southwest - the reflection from the white aluminum siding would somehow add to the desired result.

ARCHIE OWEN, LYDIA JANE, WAYS ROBIN, ANACAPA, PLENTY OF SUNSHINE and PREMIER bloomed the following year. The ground they had been planted in was well fertilized with manure as it had been the home of a planting of mums. Aesthetically, they didn't look as well the next bloom season as they all developed leaning ways. So they were moved to raised beds in the rear of the garden where, with the addition of about 20 more spurias, they provide continued color when the tall bearded are finished.

ARCHIE OWEN, LYDIA JANE and PREMIER continue to be dependable performers, joined by MARYLYN HOLLIGAN, BLUE PINAFORTE, SPRING ISLAND, PRAIRIE SHADOWS, IMPERIAL PLUM, INTENSITY, ARBITRATOR and RUFFLED CANARY. The latter outdid itself with four bloom stalks from a first year planting.

The near-pinks TRANSITION and PINK CANDLES, although making excellent increase, have yet to bloom after several seasons. FORT RIDGE, which received the most stars on that first list, has sulked for several years; no bloom and little increase.

What I enjoy most about them is that they bloom during a period of early summer after the other iris and before the midsummer perennials and annuals. Their distinctive veinings and blendings of colors invite close inspection and prompt many neighbors to look over the alley fence and be "introduced".

A few members of the Wisconsin Iris Society have included spurias in their gardens in the past few years with varying results. The consensus seems to be that they are not too difficult to get established here, but bloom best in the sunniest area of the garden. They have rotted after being too well mulched in fall - but a very light covering of hay or covering with boxes seems to bring them through the winter without losses.

Fred Jehnke is adding more spurias to his Cedarburg garden. He favors raised beds and makes a box-like structure each year over all his beds. His favorite is IMPERIAL BROCKE because it doesn't fade and has a long bloom season.

Alice Grivetz of Brookfield grew GOLDEN NUGGET for many years and recently has become introduced to the newer spurias. She grows them in the center of a large bed

SPURIA NEWS FROM THE BRITISH IRIS SOCIETY

With thanks to Don Koza and Bill Gunther for information and sources.

The "Siberian and Spuria Iris Group" affiliated with the British Iris Society was launched on June 14, 1976, in conjunction with the B.I.S. Iris Show at the Royal Horticultural Society Hall. By the day of its inaugural, it had expanded to include Japanese Iris. Mr. F. I. L. Knowles, president of the B.I.S., gave an inaugural speech pledging help from the parent organization and suggesting that the group expand to include all beardless irises.

First officers of the Siberian, Spuria and Japanese Iris Group elected to one year terms were: chairman, Mrs. Jennifer Hewitt; secretary, Alex Back; and treasurer, Mrs. Doris Hansford. No dues have yet been established, but donations are requested until such time as costs of operations are determined. Donations can be sent to Mrs. Hansford, The Little House, 58 Oakley St., Belle Vue, Shrewsbury, Salop, England.

Dr. Don Koza of St. Paul, Minn. has arranged for an exchange of publications between the British group and related groups including S.I.S. Eleanor McCown and Dave Niswonger helped the group with excellent, informative articles on Spuria breeding published in the B. I. S. August, 1976, Newsletter. We hope many others will give our British sibling a helping hand.

The June, 1976 Show was the first in which a Spuria section appeared in a B.I.S. show schedule. First prize for three spikes of Spurias went to Eleanor's DESERT SEA-GOLD and HIGHLINE LAVENDER with Eric Nies' DUTCH DEFIANCE. Apparently the British are more interested in the name of the winning flower than in that of the exhibitor, since they didn't mention the latter.

Sadly, Alex Back, one of the chief promoters of the new group and the first secretary, was killed in September, 1976 when he was hit by a car. We all mourn their loss, and ours.

SPURIAS--HERE AND THERE IN WISCONSIN - continued

of flowers where their leaves provide a striking foil for the annuals. Her current favorite is OROVILLE.

The main deterrent to wider acceptance of the spurias in our area gardens is that borers are much harder to eradicate than in any other iris. The very stiff stems and tough leaves make it difficult to crush the maturing borer in the leaf end sometimes they have to be cut out ruthlessly to control them. However, this does not hurt the plant during its dormant period. Early spraying and constant checking are about the best ways to control the borer problem. Once established, the spurias seem tough enough to overcome borers and very seldom is a complete plant lost this way.

A Lawn

by Walker Ferguson
Iris Hybridizer



WALKER FERGUSON

*A lawn to me is just a pain
Here in this land of little rain.
The work you do is so in vain—
You grow it and you mow it.*

*You buy and plant expensive seed,
You try to keep out every weed
And fertilize,? Oh, yes indeed—
To grow it and to mow it.*

*All year, you have to irrigate;
The blame thing will not hibernate.
So there's no time to hesitate
With growing and the mowing.*

*It must be watered once a week
To keep it growing at its peak,
And tho' the joints begin to creak
You have to keep on mowing.*

*There's nothing you can sell or eat—
It doesn't smell so very sweet,
And still you strive to keep it neat.
You grow it and you mow it.*

*It doesn't have a fragrant smell,
There's nothing you can eat or sell.
So what is there that does impel
The growing and the mowing?*

*If those two verses may seem trite,
I think they really are as bright
As keeping up the steady fight
Of growing and of mowing.*

*The better you can make it grow
The oftener you have to mow
You must admit this all is so
But—go on with the mowing.*

*The remedy would seem to be
A nice big houseboat on the sea.
But ocean life is not for me,
And so, I'll grow and mow it.*

MORE EDITOR'S MAILBAG

St. Paul—my old home town. We lived out S. Robert St. and the first iris I ever grew, alongside my father's garden, were at this place. We have always grown mainly tall bearded and dwarf iris. I did grow a few spurias then—long, long ago it seems—imported from England. Peter Barr & Sons had a fairly good collection of various Iris. Sir Michael Foster's SHELFORD GIANT grew and did well in Minnesota. Another fine performing variety was the Sass's SUNNY DAY. My first trip west to California I was most fortunate to meet Mr. Eric Nies and I viewed the "crop" of his significant break-through from which most present day spuria cultivars have come. More recently, of course, other species are being infused. Sounds interesting and promising for the future.

BOB SHREINER

Salem, Ore.

I will have around 2,000 spuria seedlings blooming for the first time this spring. Among them will be some I. Klattii crosses that may be of interest, so maybe I can write about some of my hybridizing experiences after bloom season.

DAVE NISWONGER

Cape Girardeau, Mo.

Q & A -

But I've seen nothing in the Spuria Newsletter on today's classification problems: what gives with the project Lenz commenced at RSABG? Two have been published legitimately elsewhere as subspecies of Iris spuria itself. "Is that all there is?" (to quote my old heart throb, Peggy Lee).

B. LE ROY DAVIDSON

The only study I have made of the spuria irises was done several years ago. At the time I was interested in their cytology and did publish a paper on the chromosome numbers found in the group. It was reprinted in the AIS Bulletin number 169, April 1963. I regret that I have no reprints available. I would have liked to have continued with the work but that would have necessitated a great deal of travel in Europe and Asia which I was not able to do at that time, so I discontinued the study. Although several papers have been published in recent years the spuria irises still remain one of the most poorly understood groups in the entire genus and I do not foresee the condition changing within the near future.

LEE W. LENZ

director, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, Calif.

MICHIGAN '76 - THE SPURIAS



Chart made by Ed Winske -- the very young man with the immaculate commercial garden at Grand Rapids. (From a letter he wrote to Bob Brooks)

Name	Bloom dates	Age	Stalks #-ht.	Leaf ht.	Buds	Increase
	June					
DAWN CANDLE	15-23	2 yr.	5 30-35"	24"	4	13
IMPERIAL BRONZE	20-24	2	3 23-26"	30"	3	10
IMPERIAL BEAUTY	23-30	2	2 32"	24"	4	3
MEDIA LUZ	19-23	2	1 37"	25"	3	4
ELIXIR	6-17 - 7-2	2	1 35"	28"	5	7
ARBITRATOR	15-22	1	1 42"	24"	2	7
RUFFLED CANARY	15-30	1	1 35"	25"	5	8
WESTERN LARK	16-20	1	1 32"	24"	2	7
CONNOISSEUR	19-21	1	1 18"	16"	2	3
DESERT SPAGOLD	17-21	1	1 27"	23"	3	4
GOLDEN LADY	18-29	1	1 25"	28"	3	6
TRANSITION	16-27	1	1 32"	24"	4	11
HIGHLINE SUNSET	16-21	1	1 39"	27"	2	20

Conclusions that Ed has reached from his careful charting, and observations of the genealogy of his cultivars, are that best bloom and performance were from those with WADI ZEM ZEM and/or DRIFTWOOD in their background. Two-year plants that did not bloom but made good growth were BLUE PINACORE, GAY LAKE and VIOLET VEIL. Poorest performance came from IMPERIAL SCNG/THRUSH SCNG background according to Ed's calculations. His poorest performers were HIGHLINE LAVENDER, PROVERB, RED OAK and PORT OF CALL.

Ed has made several crosses with at least 15 different takes. The ones he considers most important involve ELIXIR crossed with TRANSITION, DAWN CANDLE, AND GOLDEN LADY. We hope Ed will keep us informed on his results, and that others, especially in the north, will keep similar records aimed at judging performance outside of "Spuria Country".

A SPURIA BEGINNING IN ARKANSAS



by HENRY C. ROWLAN Little Rock, Arkansas

A few years ago we had a speaker here in Little Rock who gave a program on irises: growing, hybridizing, etc. Spurias entered into the program as one of the topics, but I did not know at the time that I would get so gung ho on them. The man responsible for this has introduced many spurias since that program, including GOLDEN CHOCOLATE, BUTTER PADDLE, SAHARA SANDS and MISSOURI GAL. Yes, he is Dave Niswonger of Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Richard Morgan, also of Little Rock, and I were able to visit Dave's garden last May at spuria blooming time where we enjoyed viewing his seedlings and getting some much needed advice on growing and hybridizing spurias. The last time I looked at my slides from the trip I noticed that three of his seedlings I had marked with a double XX as ones to watch, Dave has now named. As soon as they become available I hope to get all three: HAPPY CHOICE, which I am in love with; LOCKING GLASS EYES, with charcoal coloring in it; and REMOCD SUPREME, with brown and orange coloring that may lead to new and different colors in spurias. I would have been hard-pressed not to register and introduce more than he has because he had so many very good seedlings.

In 1973 I decided to get a few spurias -- HIGHLINE LAVENDER, BARITONE, ELIXIR, DAWN CANDLE, PORT OF CALL and CONNOISSEUR. The bloom in 1974 was out of this world and six seed pods set and were planted. I didn't move them until fall of '75 but hope most of them will bloom this year. In 1974 I was not yet all that hep on spurias but I liked what I had seen. 1975 arrived with a bang and I went wild over them, and in 1975 and 1976 increased my spuria plantings to 110 named varieties and 15 species. Among those I have seen in bloom in my garden and am very fond of, I find Ben Hager's CLARK COSGROVE and FAR CUT the most outstanding for size, and I would say Ben is way ahead of anyone else's breeding program. Others I especially liked were Dave Niswonger's BUTTER PADDLE, GOLDEN CHOCOLATE and SAHARA SANDS; Marion Walker's CONQUISTA; Hager's ILLA CRAWFORD, SPRING REVERIE and FABLE; and Eleanor McCown's ADA PERRY and HIGHLINE AMETHYST among the 1975 and '76 introductions. The older spurias that I really like are EAGLE, CONNOISSEUR, IMPERIAL BRONZE, HIGHLINE BLUEBIRD, ANTIQUA, SARONG and BURNISHED BRASS. Some I have not seen in bloom yet but am looking forward to seeing are PRAIRIE SHADOWS, JET SET, CHAMELLOW, FOUNTAIN FLOW, URBANA, SIERRA NEVADA, and PURPLE PROFUNDO.

My biggest problem in starting to grow and hybridize spurias has been lack of information except for that Dave Niswonger furnished us on our trip to his garden. Most of my work has been on a trial and error basis during the past two years. This past spring I thought I had my seedling bed in good condition, having mixed fertilizer into the bed in January and so started lining out spuria seedlings the first of March. This turned out to be a big booby as I lost 50% of those seedlings. About 200 seedlings were left over from this bed and planted in a bed where I had used no fertilizer. There my percentage of loss was low--two out of 200 spurias and 2 out of 300 Louisiana seedlings. Part of the trouble may have been that I did not give the first bed enough water during this transplanting period and we did have a dry March. In the future I will watch the watering and fertilize earlier or not at all except to use a liquid type when lining out the seedlings.

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continued on page 14

MORE EDITOR'S MAILBAG

.....One of the American firms wrote saying they did not like our internal policies and thus refused to sell but since has apologized. ...Darn the politics--I am a flower grower.

(Walker Ferguson took pity on Audrey and sent her a number of Spurias in 1971.)

I was in the States in July and August (1976). I ordered a batch (of Spurias) from Cordon Bleu and they are all growing well after being carried around for three weeks in the States due to changing of plans. I arrived back home on August 25 and before even putting my feet up, the irises were planted.

I rang Mr. Hooker (I think the name was) who was in charge of the Botanical Garden in Denver, the iris section, and had a chat with him. I went to see the plants....My plants grow twice that height.

....In Minneapolis....they ripped open my bag of irises for they looked very suspicious in my coat bag, and said, when seeing the bearded irises, "What are you doing with all those artichokes?" Did I laugh when telling them they were irises at twenty odd dollars each. I'm sure they thought me mad.

Mr. Riley
on Hooker
it.?

AUDREY WESSELS

Transvaal, South Africa

I don't have enough really sunny areas to grow spurias well, although Iris graminea does very well and blooms prolifically - if it is divided frequently enough. Have also had occasional bloom on Iris ochroleuca, I. halophila, and CANARY CAPRICE. The lilacina sold by Ben Hager also blooms every year and is very gradually increasing. Have not succeeded in getting pods on it, however - neither have the bees.

MARJORIE BARNES

Seattle

Among spurias, I think you might like to grow subbarbata, as it blooms with the TB irises, and has some delightful blue-flowered material in it. I've not yet discovered the right time to transplant it, however. The usual statement re fall transplanting for spurias, siberians, etc. doesn't work out too well here because the post-transplant establishment period before bad weather is too brief. Bill Gunther says he transplants spurias whenever the spirit moves, but his garden in Del Mar is frost-free (and full of palms as well as irises). I've had good luck with plants he's brought me in June, so if you could get southern California's dealers to send you spurias in June, I think things might go well.

HOMER METCALF

Bozeman, Mont.

-17-

THE EDITOR'S MAILBAG

My chief work with spurias is with colchicine to double the chromosomes of the European spurias which, so far, have 22 c. while your spuria cultivars have mostly 40 c. I have doubled both and this year the first 80 c. cultivar flowered. I hope to cross this new tetraploid $4n = 80$ and $4n = 44$ to produce an amphidiploid with $2n = 62$ c., which should be partially or fully fertile. My goal is to produce a spuria iris for cold climates like ours and yours in Minnesota. My tetra spuria which bloomed had two capsules of glassy seed. The pollen, examined microscopically, shows the plant should be a chimera or a full tetra.

My work with colchicine has been rewarding. So far, I have tetra-setosa, tetra-versicolor, tetra-ferrestii, tetra-siberian, probably tetra-kaempferi, and, above all, tetra-pseudacorus, already in the second generation. I think the future belongs to the beardless iris!

ECKARD BERLIN

Markplatz, West Germany

I will try to give you some details of my experience with Iris spuria. I grow a number of varieties, mostly from Ben Heger. Some species I got from Rodionenko.

We have the warmest climate in Germany and they are doing fairly well. Two years ago I observed an illness - the leaves became entirely brown and the plant died. More recently, they are growing well.

I was told by customers of mine living in northern Germany that there they have lots of leaves but few or no flowers. Their summer is too wet and not warm enough.

All the fine American varieties are from hybridizers living in the south. The first cross of Foster is probably an ancestor of all the modern clones. Wild spurias grow in Spain, southern France, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Denmark. I have tried to find out what spurias Foster used for his cross. I was told Foster left very exact notes of his work but perhaps not of this cross. If Foster made this cross with one of the southern species (and I think he probably did) all the future offspring would be difficult to grow in northern climates.

My idea is that Iris spuria hybridizing should be started over from the beginning in a northern climate. Then we might get reliably beautiful plants for all climates. I wish for a new race that would grow well in places like Canada.

HELEN von STEIN-ZEPPELIN

W. Germany

WHY NOT IN SEATTLE?

by B. LE ROY DAVIDSON Seattle, Washington



Knowing that an editor can't print what's not sent in, I contribute -- lamely, I admit--- that if this Puget Sound territory was better suited to Spuria cultivation, then I would be inspired to report at great length. This leads to the thought, "OK, so they do perform in Montana, Minnesota and New England, all as far north as Seattle-- why not here?" Well, just across the Cascade Mountains, east of us, where I used to grow them near Spokane, they were entirely successful. So, what is the difference? What do Spurias want that we don't have here?

I recall a member recounting flowered clumps of *I. ochroleuca* in the local U. of W. Arboretum, but by-and-large they are, as a group, just given to greenery and no flowers. Why? I believe that it is the lack of any great amount of warmth here in early - or even late - spring, because we ordinarily get a baking summer (late in '76).

Before I go further - and there's not much more to report - the only cultivar successful with me is GOLDEN LADY. Combsie made me a gift of it before it got famous (or was even registered for that matter). Anyplace else it would now cover a city lot; with me it travels slowly and is a "wandering clump", spread out to about 2 X 5 feet, and gives a few stalks of splendid flowers every year. Of course, since it grows and flowers here, it should become the inspiration to breed a strain for such climates as are not favored by insolation.

My garden is on a cold east slope and in a quite low and dampish situation. The sun only warms the soil in July and August, partly due to trees on the south; thus it is inclined to be shaded for the most part. *I. freminea* and its variants (long ago they came to me from Henselmayer) all do fine in a sunny spot in the rock garden, a meadow part really, though not a wet one.

Perhaps there are other cultivars that would do even as well as GOLDEN LADY, but truthfully Spurias are not for the majority of us here; only the really hard-bitten irisarian* would bother with them here. But how they might be rewarded!

*Yes, I consider myself "hard-bitten" but Spuria folings is not quite enough; it is coarse in my kind of garden. But a big area, newly raised a couple of feet above water-level at pondside, just might be suitable for them; it gets full sun. Yes, I'm hard-bitten; I'll try again.

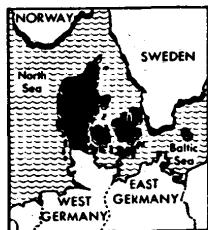
"Insolation" (in'-sō-lā'-shen) n. treatment by exposure to the sun's rays so as to dry bleach, etc. Or to grow Spurias by. Jc.

IRIS DANICA & OTHERS

Iris spuria L.

by TYGE W. BOCHER

Institut for Planteanatomi og Cytologi
Kobenhavns Universitet
Sølgade 83 København K



Location Map of Denmark
(shown in black)

In Danish this *Iris* species is known as Blue Iris, but in certain Swedish works it is named Danish Iris. Perhaps it deserves this name, since the plants in Denmark seem to be slightly deviating. At any rate there are, as most owners of gardens will know, several iris species with blue flowers - for instance *Iris germanica* - and it would therefore have been better to name the species according to the place where it grows and to describe it as Saltholm Iris or Salt Iris because the place where it is found most abundantly is the island of Saltholm in Oresund, and here it grows on salty soil - something which is on the whole characteristic of the species.

Iris spuria has bluish-violet flowers and narrow, sword-shaped, bluish-green leaves. The flowers are arranged in a spicate inflorescence having few flowers at the top of a stem which reaches a height of 30-40 cm. Stem and leaves grow from a rhizome which Reunkiaer (1895-1900) described as more compact than the rhizome of Yellow Flag Iris, a fact which he ascribes to the greater firmness of the soil in which it grows. On Saltholm it grows particularly at the northern end of the island in places at such a level that they remain uncovered at high tide. In the same zone of vegetation we find *Festuca arundinacea*, a species which prefers fairly dry salt meadows and which at any rate requires a large content of electrolytes in the soil.

Reunkiaer shows the structure of shoots of *Iris spuria* in his fig. 109. The rhizome grows monopodially until the plant sends up a flowering shoot. The rhizome is divided in corm-like sections, each consisting of a number of short internodia with annular leaf-scars. Each section corresponds to the growth of one year. When the plant has flowered, the rhizome usually branches, and two opposite innovation shoots appear - at any rate it is side shoots on the foremost part of the rhizome which continue the growth. However, smaller buds are also formed at a greater distance from the ends of the shoots. They are "spare buds" which may grow to form rhizome branches.

As mentioned, Saltholm is by far the most important locality in which to find *Iris spuria*. It grows also at Aflandshage and at Koklapperne near Amager and at Skanor and Limhamn in Skane. It has previously been found at Naksrov and at Odense fiord. Its distribution in Denmark has been studied by Knud Jensen (1935) and Alfred Pedersen (1962).

The small population of *Iris spuria* at Oresund is very isolated. The nearest locality of typical *Iris spuria* is in south-eastern Europe at the salt lake, Neusiedler See, near the border between Austria and Hungary. The greatest of the areas in which it is distributed are in Hungary and Roumania. It should be noted that there are closely related *Iris spuria* forms at certain places in southern England, France and Spain, but that the Danish plants most closely resemble those of south-eastern Europe.

continued on next page

ROBBIN' THE ROBINS

All persons should grow ARCHIE OWEN. This has produced a blue ribbon for me three straight years, has been a section winner two, and runnerup for Queen of the Show once. In a show with nearly 500 entries, this is not bad.

Several years ago I was sent some seed of *I. notha*. I planted it and got three plants up. *I. notha* is a 41-chromosome species. One plant flowered this year. Instead of blue *I. notha*, it was a very lovely white flower, fluted instead of ruffled, tiny gold signal, standards held in the modern open form, and both standards and falls with a tiny gold-wire rim. In addition, it carried a lovely fragrance, not over-powering, but quite sophisticated. It set seed both ways with WINDFALL! Needless to say I am most excited. It is an unknown hybrid and lovely. It is most unusual for the 40-44 chromosome hybrids to exhibit much fertility with anything, so I feel most blessed.

BOBBIE BENSON

Lubbock, Texas

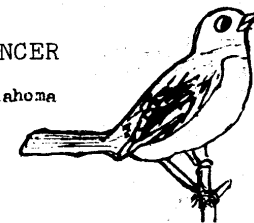
Where have all the Robins gone?

If FAR OUT is better next year than this year, it will surprise me. As I figure it, only about 10% of first year bloom reaches its potential. Yes, PINK CANDLES, TRANSITION and LA SERDA are so nearly alike and as you say strongly mauve instead of pink. But then everyone is calling mauve, pink. FAR OUT is a better ARCHIE OWEN as I see it. Great form and a little more compact.

MARIE SPENCER

Tulsa, Oklahoma





I am trying to decide whether Ben Hager is way ahead of the other spuria hybridizers or just plain lucky. FAR OUT and CLARK COSSGROVE had such large blossoms that they out-shone the other never things in the spurias. They really stood out in my patch. Others that I like a great deal are IMPERIAL BRONZE, BUTTER PADDLE, BELISE, HIGHLINE BLUEBIRD, HIGHLINE LAVENDER, FROST, ELIXIR, ARBITRATOR, EAGLE, ANTIQUA, BARI-TONE, INTENSITY, GOOD THUNDER, CONTRADICTION, REDWOOD FALLS, CONQUISTA, SAHARA SANDS, SARCIS, PURPLE KNIGHT and GOLDEN CHOCOLATE. These were some of the best I saw this year in my garden, Richard Morgen's garden, and Dave Niswonger's garden.

HENRY ROWLAN

Little Rock, Arkansas

The only ones we've seen since fall are in the yard. Je.

DENVER BOTANICAL GARDEN

During a lunch break at the AIS fall board meeting 1976, those attending were treated to a tour of the iris planting at the Denver Botanical Garden and adjoining conservatory.

SIS President Marilyn Holloway was pleased to help with planting the spuria HIGHLINE ORICLE (McCown 76) in the spuria bed of the garden. Harry Kuesel handled the shovel duties.

The plantings have been redone since last viewed by AIS members. Those in the Denver area are fortunate to have a beautiful planting and the spurias looked great. Spring should bring a lovely display.

MARILYN HOLLOWAY

A SPURIA BEGINNING IN ARKANSAS - continued

I found out in hybridizing spurias that the lip of the stigma is much harder to work with than the tall bearded iris because it is tighter against the crest and style branch. I did some experimental work on this and found that I could, if I did it with light pressure, gently crack open the style branch just below the crest so that I could put the pollen directly in the tube that goes to the ovary. Bear in mind that this has to be done gently to not break the style branch, and not get a pod. Also close the small crack made in putting the pollen inside the tube. I used this system this past year on all my spuria crosses and out of 82 crosses I had 78 tubes which produced some 3300 seeds. This system does not work as well on Louisianas because the style branch is much harder to crack open. I have not tried it on TBs. What works on one type may not be that good on another type.

I would like to request articles from the spuria hybridizers such as Eleanor McCown, Ben Heger, Joe Ohio, Dave Niswonger, Marion Walker and others on the problems, cures and any tips they might have for a newcomer in spurias. I know that two newcomers here in Little Rock, Richard Morgan and I, would welcome all the information they could give us. I would also like to see a new spuria checklist like the one a few years ago. I would be only too happy to pay extra to get a new one.

Don't forget to make lots of notes in Spuria season and send them to the editor. Every little bit helps!!

-14- We'd also like to get black & white pictures. Je.

IRIS DANICA AND OTHERS - continued

Iris spuria belongs to a polymorphous species complex or, rather, a group of closely-related species also including Iris halophila which is widely distributed in steppe districts from the Black Sea and eastwards to Central Asia. Southwards the distribution of the group reaches Asia Minor and Persia. The distribution of the different forms are described by Meusel, Jäger & Weinert (1965, p. 102).

The chromosome cytology of the group has been studied for a long time, the first chromosome counts being made by Simonet in the years 1928-34. The Danish form from Saltholm and an Austrian from the lake Neusiedler See were examined in 1938 by M. Vestergaard. Both had $2n = 22$, but the plants from Saltholm proved to have a pair of chromosomes with small and a pair with large satellites. Simonet has found the numbers $2n = 38, 40$ and 44 in various taxa from western France, Asia Minor and Persia.

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Bernatsky & Janchen (1910) consider the plant from Saltholm to be a special taxon which they call I. danica. It is more sturdy than the one from south-eastern Europe, and the leaves uppermost on the stem almost reach the inflorescence - something which is seen infrequently in plants from south-eastern Europe.

How and when did I. spuria arrive at our sounds and belts? According to Jessen the seeds are able to float on water for a short time only. Jessen concludes that the species has spread to Denmark without human aid, and that it occurs here in the form of small relict populations. The question is then from which period is it relict? Considering its relationship to Pontic-Central Asiatic species it must have come from south-eastern Europe. But it has hardly arrived here recently - more probably when the climatic conditions were more continental. Originally it has spread in the most southerly parts of our country - wherever it could find salty soil which resembled the salt steppe soil to which it was accustomed - and it has now disappeared from most of the places except Saltholm. It may perhaps be considered a relict of the late-glacial period.

Iris spuria on Saltholm is not only a beautiful and rare plant. It is undoubtedly also a relict from a previous climatic period, but it is first and foremost a living organism presenting a number of interesting and, in part, still unsolved biological problems. The population left on Saltholm is something unique. At some time or other it has become isolated, and this isolation may have resulted in a selection of certain gene combinations here.

Thanks to Edoard Berlin for sending us this article. Saltholm is very near Copenhagen. Je.

SPURIAS IN A PALM JUNGLE

by Bill Gunther

Some years ago, in deliberate preparation for the 1975 AIS Convention in San Diego, we planted my garden with many many irises – particularly with spuria irises. By 1972 there were 135 different spuria varieties in the garden; they were tabulated by name on pages 8 and 9 of the Spuria Newsletter of April 1972. Even more spurias, primarily 'guests' for the Convention, were added in 1973 and 1974. Accordingly, by the time of the 1975 Convention spuria irises truly dominated my garden – even though they were not in peak bloom until two weeks after the Convention had passed.

Nearly all of those spurias now remain in my garden. But no longer do they dominate it. The reason why they no longer dominate it is that they have become overshadowed by palm trees.

Palms do very well in the frost-free area where I live; Del Mar is at the extreme southwest corner of the USA, right on the Pacific coast. At the time of the 1975 AIS Convention there already were scattered palms in my garden. Many many more palms have been added since then. All these additional palms have been planted in deliberate preparation for a forthcoming international convention of The Palm Society, which is scheduled for this area sometime in 1978. All these palms, representing many many species, now are growing up to the degree that most of the irises in this garden now are becoming just undergrowth in a palm jungle.

Surprisingly, the spuria irises seem to be holding their own in this new palm jungle environment, while the other types of irises in this new environment definitely are on the decline. One possible explanation is that the spurias have a tougher and more wiry root system than do the other types of irises; thus they are better able than the other irises to compete with the palm roots for the available moisture and the available nutrients in the soil. And although we know that spurias like full sunlight, they here also seem to perform quite well in the 'latticed' sun and shade situation which predominates under the palms.

Recently, a botanist who was touring my garden expressed the opinion that in all the world there is no place where palms and spurias, naturally and indigenously, grow together in immediate association. Accordingly, he was surprised to see that in a garden they perform beautifully together as 'companion plants'.

It is my real hope that the 1978 Convention of The Palm Society will come here on a date when the spurias are in full bloom; the beautiful spuria bloomstalks would be a real sensation to all those palm enthusiasts who presently think that ferns (which never bloom) are the only practicable ground cover in a palm-jungle garden. Every one of those palm enthusiasts would immediately decide to add spurias to their own palm gardens.

And now, in the perspective of what has been said above, it is time to sermonize and moralize: The knowledge that spurias (but not other irises) will thrive under palms did not derive from any deliberate experimental research on the part of the Spuria Iris Society; rather it was learned through pure chance or 'accident'. This points out the fact that in truth the Spuria Iris Society is doing nothing towards exploiting the fact that spurias have greater versatility than other irises. This is a pity. We know that spurias, generally speaking, are tougher and more adaptable than other irises. Therefore, as members of the Spuria Society, we should act positively and purposefully to try spurias in diverse situations in order to learn and utilize their special qualities and abilities. Each of us, in our own areas, should show other gardeners unexpected ways in which the versatility of spurias might enhance their gardens. Very certainly, we are not doing spurias justice if – by default – we continue to limit them and restrict them to a subordinate role in the traditional and conventional 'iris garden'.



FIVE YEARS OF CHANGE

IF YOU STILL HAVE YOUR APRIL 1972 COPY OF THE SPURIA NEWSLETTER ON FILE, LOOK ON PAGE 13 THEREOF AND SEE THE SAME PHOTOGRAPH WHICH IS REPRINTED ABOVE. THIS PHOTO SHOWS A PORTION OF BILL GUNTHER'S GARDEN IN DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA, AS IT LOOKED FIVE YEARS AGO. AMIDST THE ROCKWORK TERRACING THERE ARE GARDEN POCKETS IN WHICH MANY VARIETIES OF SPURIA IRISES ARE GROWING IN ABUNDANCE. A FEW PALMS GRACE THE SKYLINE ABOVE THE TILED ROOF OF THE HOUSE. IN CONTRAST, THE PHOTO BELOW SHOWS THE SAME AREA OF THE GARDEN AS IT LOOKS NOW. MANY ADDITIONAL SPECIES OF PALMS HAVE BEEN PLANTED AMIDST THE IRISES, AND THESE PALMS NOW ARE OF SIZE SUCH THAT NEITHER THE ROCKWORK NOR THE IRISES NOR THE HOUSE CAN BE SEEN IN THIS VIEW. BUT UNDER THE PALMS, THE SPURIAS STILL THRIVE.

