

SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1989

SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
Spring 1989, Volume 30
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY is a Section of the AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY and membership in the S.I.S. is contingent on membership in the A.I.S. All A.I.S. members are encouraged to join whether or not they are spuria growers. Dues are as follows:

SINGLE ANNUAL \$3.00	SINGLE TRIENNIAL 7.00
SUPPORTING ANNUAL 4.00	FAMILY ANNUAL 3.50
FAMILY TRIENNIAL 8.00	LIFE MEMBERSHIP 40.00

Membership information is located on the inside back cover.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We hope that you will find membership in the Spuria Iris Society a rewarding one and that you will participate in its activities. Articles, letters, etc. are always welcome regardless of the subject so long as they pertain to spurias. If you attend the National Conventions of the American Iris Society, be sure to include our Annual Meeting. We always try to have something of interest for both the new members and the old-timers.

FROM THE EDITOR

When I read Floyd Wickenkamp's plea in the Fall 1988 issue of the Newsletter, I couldn't resist volunteering as Editor because in my retirement hobby of hybridizing flow-ers, I have become deeply involved with spurias. In fact perhaps I may become to spurias of the 90's what Walker Ferguson was during the 60's. While we do have different backgrounds, we both started improvement work on spuri-as upon retirement. If I can equal or surpass Ferguson's contribution it will be a worthy goal to strive for.

Now that the reality of what I have gotten myself into has settled in, I am having some second thoughts, because I really didn't need another job. Floyd was very helpful in turning over articles and mailing labels in plenty of time, but I miscalculated how much time it takes with every-thing else going on, after going to press(computer).

I regret that this, my first issue, is going out later than ex-pected, but I can only hope that having had this experi-ence it will not happen again.

I hope the spuria people who attended the 1989 American Iris Society Convention in Memphis were able to get to-gether and have an enjoyable exchange.

NOTE: The editor can only process and publish the infor-mation that is provided. My hope is that the Newsletter can continue to be a medium through which those persons interested in spurias can exchange information that is helpful and at the same time promote friendly relation-ships. My personal wish is that we can feature on a pro-gressive basis a description of the garden and the person involved, for those who are willing, so that we can get bet-ter acquainted with each other even though we may never have a chance to meet or see the garden. Who will be first to send the necessary information?

Please feel free to write me, at any time, with your sugges-tions or criticisms. HAVE A GOOD YEAR WITH SPURIAS ! ! ! !

SPURIA JUDGES TRAINING REGION 7

RUTH WILDER, Region 5

On a cold dreary week-end in February, about eighty Iri-sarians braved the weather and came to Lewisburg, Tennessee for a weekend of Spuria Judges Training. They came from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Phil Williams, Judges Training Chairman for Region 7 really put a great week end together. On Friday even-ing, after a potluck dinner (you could not believe all the food that was brought) there was a panel discussion on soil preparation. In our areas we have a lot of hard clay so the panel consisted of a member from Alabama, one from Mississippi and one from Tennessee. After this discussion we viewed slides of newer as well as some older spurias. Saturday morning Ramona Howard of Lubbock, Texas gave an excellent job of instructing. A handout that she gave us is included. (See Page #6)

I, for one, really enjoyed the fellowship, the very infor-mative Judges Training, and the interest that was shown in growing spurias.

Thank you Phil and Region 7 for sharing with members of other regions. Thank you Ramona for your training sessions and for giving permission to send the culture handout to the Spuria Newsletter Editor.

SPURIA IRIS CULTURE

Ramona Howard, Region 17

If you grow tall bearded or bearded varieties successfully, you can grow Spurias.

They are not as difficult to grow as some other beardless species and cultivars.

They prefer a neutral to slightly alkaline soils. Spurias must have good drainage and prefer full sun, but will tolerate partial shade, especially in areas that have extremely high temperatures in the summer. Most of the garden hybrids have a late summer-dormant period and a drying off period during July through August, which is beneficial. Too much moisture combined with summer heat causes a rot that takes the new growth in both the summer-dormant types and the summer-green types also. In some very dry areas you may need to water through July, but hold back on the water during August and it should be withheld in established clumps until fall growth begins. Foliage of the summer-dormant types can be cut back to the ground for garden neatness after the foliage dies down about the first of August without harming the plant growth. This can be clipped and removed when completely dried.

Spurias are very heavy feeders and will reward you with superior plants and flower stalks if you incorporate plenty of barnyard manure and/or commercial fertilizer into your soil. If fertilized annually, clumps will persist and bloom for years - 10 to 15 year clumps are not unusual, and eventually spread to as much as 5-6 feet.

It is best to transplant in the fall and water well until they start to grow. Once established, spurias are drought resistant. Heavy irrigation in the spring increases growth and bloom. When spurias are dug to be transplanted, be sure so keep the roots and rhizomes moist. This is most important, as they will not tolerate drying out, or being out of the ground as some bearded types will.

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MORE ON SPURIA SUMMER ROT

BEN R. HAGER

We used to have a lot of trouble with the "mysterious illness" described in the Fall 1988 Spuria Iris Newsletter, but have not had very much trouble with it since we figured out what was causing it - - at least in our conditions. We called it summer rot because it occurred in the period between flowering and fall transplanting. Of course it was at that time that we found the damage and it was too late to do anything about it. Most of the time the increase was not harmed and would continue to grow so the plant was not lost, but we certainly had problems filling orders.

It was also about this time that we began soaking the rhizomes in Benlate before planting and worked Terrachlor Super X into the soil. Whether these two operations had any effect on the summer rot we still don't know because we decided that the rot was caused by summer irrigation. The combination of summer heat and moisture seemed to be the causative agent.

We then began withholding all irrigation from mid-June/early July until fall digging time before we irrigated again. For us this was about mid-August because we dug at that time to fill orders to be shipped to the coldest areas. It worked. Even this short period of complete drying out seemed to have the effect of controlling the summer rot. We now get only an occasional rhizome that is damaged.

The native ground of most spuria species is described as marshy spring conditions with complete drying out in summer. This is probably why all of the 40 chromosome spuria iris go into dormancy in the summer, but it is equally important to dry out the summer-green types in the summer. These latter maintain green foliage throughout the summer months but have no active roots growing during this period.

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1988 REGISTRATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS

The American Iris Society "REGISTRATION AND INTRODUCTIONS IN 1988" lists 21 spurias registered and/or introduced during 1988. Introductions are indicated by an asterisk (*) preceding the varietal name.

ABBONDANZA (G. Corlew, R. 1988). Sdlg. SP-11H. SPU, 48" (122 cm), M. Deep gold with orange undertones. Gilded Chalice X Forty Carats.

*ARIZONA CONVENTION (O.D. Niswonger, R. 1988). Sdlg. Sp 21-78. SPU, 40" (102 cm), M. Yellow self. Camelton X Cinnamon Roll. HC 1987. Cape Iris 1988

BALI BALI (C. Jenkins 1988) Sdlg. A33-34A. SPU, 39" (100 cm), M S. ivory; F. Yellow, ivory margin, flaring. Struttin' X Yellow Wings.

BELISSINADO (G. Corlew, R. 1988). Sdlg. B-88. SPU, 34" (86 cm), M S. medium violet, veined deep violet; F. yellow, lighter toward edge, heavily veined deep violet, slightly deeper yellow signal. Belise X unknown.

BETTY MY LOVE (F. Wickenkamp, R. 1988). Sdlg. SP-83-5. SPU, 35.5" (90 cm), M. S. white, yellow center stripe; white style arms with yellow center stripe; F. golden yellow, narrow white rim. Burnished Brass X SP-70-1: (Burnished Brass x unknown).

*CHOCOLATE FUDGE (O.D. Niswonger, R. 1987). Sdlg. SP 1-77. SPU, 42" (107 cm), E. S. deep brown; F. Golden yellow with deep brown rim. Ferguson dark seedling X Crow Wing. Cape Iris 1988.

FINALLY FREE (C. Jenkins, R. 1988) Sdlg. SP87A. SPU, 44" (111 cm), VE. Clear yellow self. Yellow Wings X unknown.

*LACED COFFEE (H. Rowlan, R. 1987). Sdlg. 82 SP 23. SPU, 34" (86 cm), ML. Yellow, overlaid greyed orange-brown (RHS 165B), F. edged brown (165A); yellow styles with 165B rib; greyed orange-brown crest, 1" claw. Prairie Shadow X Burnished Brass. Comanche Acres, Rowlan Irises 1988.

LIVELY ONE (C. Jenkins, R. 1988). Sdlg. B5-1F. SPU, 46" (117 cm), M. S. white; F. lightly ruffled white, large yellow signal. Equality X Ada Perry.

*LOOK LIVELY (B. Hager, R. 1987). Sdlg. S845Pr/Wh. SPU, 41" (104 cm), M. S. bright deep purple, veined white on inner surface; purple style arms; F. white, thinly veined purple, narrow violet-purple edge, small yellow signal. S502A: ((Connoisseur x Red Oak) x Marilyn Holloway) X Purple Profundo. Melrose Gardens 1988.

1988 Registrations & Introductions (Cont.)

*LUCKY DEVIL (J. Ghio, R. 1988). Sdlg. SP82-266C. SPU, 36" (91 cm), EM. Deep blue-purple with black sheen. Vintage Year X Border Town. Bay View Gardens 1988.

*MEZCAL (P. Anfosso, R. 1988). Sdlg. P 81 S 12. SPU, 39" (100 cm), L. S. lavender-blue; F. golden tan, edged deeper. (Marilyn Holloway x Fort Ridge) X Fountinflow. Iris en Provence 1988.

*PICACHO PEAK (F. Wickenkamp, R. 1987). Sdlg. SP-83-1. SPU, 36" (91 cm), M. S. reddish maroon-brown; F. bright golden yellow, edged brownish-red. Son of Sun X SP-79-6: (Fergy's Poetry x Proverb). Shepard Iris 1988

*RESPECTABLE (J. Ghio, R. 1987). Sdlg. SPP82-266B. SPU, 44" (112 cm), M. S. white outside, inside white flushed and veined yellow; F. golden yellow narrowly edged white. (Dawn Candle x Archie Owen) X Social Circle.

SENTRA (G. Corlew, R. 1988). Sdlg. SP-11A. SPU, 48" (122 cm). M. Deep gold self. Gilded Chalice X Forty Carats.

SIERRA CHIEFTAIN (G. Corlew, R. 1988). Sdlg. SP-10FF. SPU, 44" (112 cm), M-L. S. Maroon with gold at base; F. yellow veined maroon, intensifying at edge. Fergy's Poetry X Gilded Chalice.

*SNOW HAWK (G. Corlew, R. 1987). Sdlg. SP6-6B. SPU, 48" (123 cm). E-M. S. white; F. white, gold signal spreading almost to edge. Marilyn Holloway X Dawn Candle. Bay View Gardens 1988

*SOCIAL LADY (H. Rowlan, R. 1987). Sdlg. 75 SP 1. SPU, 38" (97 cm), EM. Ruffled white, 1.5" yellow signal; white styles and crest. Good Thunder X Connoisseur. HC 1987. Comanche Acres, Rowlan Iris 1988.

SONORAN CABALLERO (F. Wickenkamp, R. 1987). Sdlg. SP-84-2. SPU, 41" (105 cm). EM. Dark violet-blue (near navy blue), small tan signal with dark grayish lines; white to lavender style arms. Imperial Plum X Love for Leila.

SONORAN SENORITA (F. Wickenkamp, R. 1988). Sdlg. SP-84-1. SPU, 35.5" (90 cm), EM. Orange yellow; fuffed F. Imperial Bronze X Archie Owen.

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SPURIAS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

RUTH WILDER, Region 5

I can truly say that I have learned a lot since moving the spurias from Alabama to South Carolina almost three years ago. If you remember I had to plant in pots since we had a severe drought in South Carolina that summer. I wrote in an article that some plants were really pitiful when I put them in the ground. Now I know the reason for their lack of growth. Due to the good intentions of my new neighbors those pots of spurias were getting watered at least once a day but usually twice a day. Those poor pitiful spurias almost drowned. After they had time to dry out some of these plants began to grow and have done quite well since then.

As I had stated, red clay was a problem. I have added much gypsum, dehydrated manure and some sandy loam so the soil is much more pliable now. I have them in full sun; they also have good drainage. In the past two years I have added at least a dozen newer spurias but have lost two of these. One was lost by the presence of a hungry chipmunk and the others just seemed to fizzle away.

I do not have the problem of too much water in the summer in this area since we are rather dry. I am pleased with the growth of the spurias and, last year, I had quite a few bloom stalks. In checking this year a lot of new growth is showing.

I had the opportunity to attend a Spuria Judges School in Region 7 in February. Not only did they have a good training session but we had the opportunity to see some of the new introductions. I have my list started for this year.

Since Region 5 is having the '92 convention in Atlanta it would be nice to see spurias in some of the southern gardens that will be on tour.

SUMMER ROT (Cont.)

We have theorized that this may be the problem in colder and/or summer rain areas that get growth of plants but little bloom. The plants have lost their growing point where the bud is formed for the next year's bloom stalks.

When water is furnished to the plants in the fall there is an immediate response of vigorous root growth and irrigation must continue from that point until winter arrives. This is so even with our mid-August irrigation. However, it would be reasonable that growers who do not ship the iris to the more northerly and eastern climates should hold off the first irrigation until the first of September or even later in the areas with long summers. Or it might be that a period of complete drying, even a fairly short one, is all that is necessary. Areas with summer rain will not be able to guarantee such a drying period, of course, so the alternative is to give as complete a drainage condition as possible; raising the planting up on ridges is one of the best ways of doing this, but it is possible that shallow planting would not be advisable as with TB's since the beardless iris do require covering if not deep planted.

Raised beds are not the answer to drainage problems in most cases, since all that is being done is raising the level of the soil and putting a wall around it, unless the bed is tilted so that the water runs off or the soil is so porous that it cannot hold fertility.

SPURIA IRIS CULTURE (Cont.)

Why not try some of the inexpensive varieties of Spuria irises to start with and do remember to plant them where they will get lots of sun and have good drainage. It really is as easy as growing bearded irises. It might take a little more food and water, but the results will be worth it. They make excellent cut flowers and last well in flower arrangements, so your efforts will be well rewarded.

SPURIA IRIS CULTURE (Cont.)

Planting depth depends on type of soil. If you have heavy soil you will need to plant at least one inch deep and in light sandy soils plant two or more inches deep. Space them far enough apart to grow in the same location for several years as Spuria irises are very tempermental, in that they resent being transplanted and usually do not bloom the first year after planting. The second year you will be rewarded with several bloom stalks. Although the fall is generally thought to be the best time for transplanting, they may be transplanted at other times if you are careful to not let the roots or rhizomes dry out. Spuria iris clumps may be left in the same location for years, but remember they will need to be well fed so that the quality and quantity of bloom will continue to be good.

Virus affects some Spuria irises and can be worrisome, although it is almost never fatal among the named cultivars and seldom is very debilitating under good cultural conditions. It causes some disfigurement of the plant, petals and texture. There is no known cure, but resistance must be bred into the spuria plant by using virus-resistant parents and making careful selections of seedlings for future breeding. The only serious disease is mustard seed fungus or crown rot which also affect Louisiana and bearded irises and daylilies. Soaking rhizomes in 5% sodium hypochlorite solution and thoroughly mixing Terrachlor into the soil before planting are effective controls. Also dust or spray annually in the summer for prevention as it is much easier to prevent than to get rid of, once your irises are affected. The mosaic caused by one type of virus, has symptoms of a light green-and-gold streaking and mottling of leaves. In some varieties the plant may be stunted, buy hopefully a variety that is so susceptible would not be put on the market. Evidence of the mosaic infection may be striping in the foliage, dark flecking or watermarks in the flowers and distortion of petals.

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SEED COLOR

DAVE NISWONGER

Spuria iris seeds vary in color from black to near white with shades of brown and pink in between. I have often wondered if the color of the seed could predict in any way what shade of flower would grow from that seed. I had envisioned that perhaps if the seed came from a yellow or brown iris that the dark seed could very well be dark brown and the lighter shades of seed could be various shades of yellow, perhaps with a lighter seed being lighter yellow. In the dark purples, blues and whites, I have wondered if the darker seed would turn out to be dark blue and the lighter color seed would turn out to be white.

It could very well be that some spuria hybridizers, or even other types of hybridizers for that matter, could have thought of the same question and may have experimented with it. If so, it is my hope that that person will write the editor of the Spuria Newsletter and give a report on the outcome of that particular experiment.

Last year as I was shelling seed pods from BLUE LASSIE which were chance pollinated, I noticed that some were dark brown and some were very light pink. I split the two groups of seed in light and dark and have planted those seeds so that the seedlings should be lined out the spring of 1989. Hopefully, I will have some report to make to see if there were any groupings of colors by separating the dark seed from the lighter colored seed. In the past, chance pollinated seed of BLUE LASSIE has produced both whites and various shades of blue. It will be interesting to see if the lighter colored seeds come out to be whites and the darker ones blue. Only time will tell. Again, if anyone has experience in or observed this particular idea, a letter to the editor would certainly be appreciated.

MANUSCRIPTS AND LETTERS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

One of the most pressing problems for the Newsletter Editor is finding enough material to fill up the available space. Many persons are hesitant to send in material because they are afraid that it will not be of interest to others or because they feel that there are others more qualified to expound on the subject.

Hesitate no longer !!!!! There must be something that almost any spuria grower can put down on paper that would be of interest even if it is just a list of their favorite spurias or describing methods they have tried to increase bloom, get earlier or later (not likely) bloom. After all, we have many newer members who are just getting started and they might find such information useful. Which varieties do especially well in the colder climates and which ones should be avoided in certain areas? How do you protect your plants in areas where there is inadequate snow cover and still the temperature often gets below zero? GET THE IDEA?

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SLIDES FOR OUR SLIDE SETS

As mentioned elsewhere, the Society has two sets of slides available for rental. We try to keep these slides up-to-date with photos of the new introductions and must depend on the hybridizers to make sure we have their babies included. Here is a good way to get some free publicity for your new ones. Send them to Ray John or Marilyn Holloway, or to both.

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SPURIA SLIDE SETS AVAILABLE FOR RENT

The Society has two sets of 35 mm. slides containing photographs of many of the newest cultivars as well as a cross-section of the older but still popular varieties. To reserve a set forward your request to one of the two individuals listed below, indicating the date or dates you need them for:

MARILYN HOLLOWAY

673 Acacia Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95818

RAY M. JOHN

1004 Springfield
Forth Worth, TX 76112

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues may be sent either to the Secretary-Treasurer listed inside the front cover or to the American Iris Society Membership Secretary.

The membership rolls for the Spuria Iris Society are kept by the S.I.S. Secretary and NOT by the A.I.S. Membership Secretary. Therefore, in case of a change in your address, PLEASE advise the S.I.S. Secretary; otherwise you may not receive future mailings.

*This issue of the Spuria Iris Newsletter was produced by:
Life Unlimited Graphics*

BACK ISSUES OF NEWSLETTER

A limited number of copies of certain of the back issues of the Newsletter are available as follows:

Fall, 1979

**Spring 1981
1981**

Fall

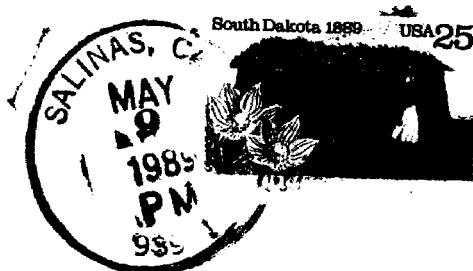
Spring, 1982

Fall, 1982

The cost is \$1.00 each, postpaid, or you may have all five for \$4.00. Make your check out to the Spuria Iris Society and send it to the Sec.-Treas. This will probably be the last offering of these issues, except for the Fall, 1979 issue of which we have considerable stock.

From:

B. Charles Jenkins, Editor
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**FIRST
CLASS**