



Spuria Iris Society Newsletter



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Spuria National Convention Pins for Sale !

What a great gift for your iris friends.
If you missed the convention, this is a way you can share
in the fun & support your society.

\$5.00

Contact Jim Hedgecock for more info



The
Spuria Iris Society
is a section of the
American Iris Society.
We Encourage our
members
to join the AIS.



Dr. Charles Jenkins & Jim Hedgecock

President's Message

Submitted by Jim Hedgecock

It's over. Four years of hard work from a lot of people in Saint Joseph, Missouri culminated in what was termed by many as the greatest spuria convention ever held. Our weather was perfect and the 7 Guest Gardens were spotless. The only question now is when are we going to have another one? If you have an active club that would like to try a mini convention for the Spuria Iris Society, drop us a line and we will talk to you about it.

One of the good things that came out of the convention is the abundance of rhizomes that are left after digging the guest spuria. Enclosed with the newsletter, you will find a list of spuria rhizome that are for sale. The prices are very lucrative on these and it is a good time to get some spurias that are not always easy to find.

A friendly reminder to our hybridizers, when registering your new introductions, please note whether the plants are summer dormant or evergreen on the registration form. Also, for at least the time being, it is ok to list if a variety is small flowered and short under the heading, "other features" on the registration form.

While Charlie Jenkins was here for the convention, I persuaded him to try some hybridizing on my spurias. Why is it that he goes out there and hybridizes 30 flowers and gets 100% pods and I get maybe 50% when I do it? I think he knows something I don't! It's not like he's been at it much longer than I have, is it? Well, maybe a few years. Dave Niswonger says he is sure he saw pink in several of the seedlings at the Convention. Well, maybe!

You will notice that the Society has raised Membership Dues effective with this issue. We have not had a raise in years and nothing has gone down in price. Please continue to support the Spuria Iris Society and encourage other flower lovers to join also. We would hate to lose anyone. In fact we hope to gain many new members! I can tell you that cut flower interest in spurias is exploding. People are beginning to know what a Spuria Iris is.

Have a great summer and grow more Spurias! You won't be sorry.



Letters To The Editor:

Corrections:

1. Hi Joanne, in 2001 Keith Keppel introduced my new spuria as, **Stop & Go**. Later he told me **Stop & Go** had been used before, and we settled on **Stop & Look** for the name. **Stop & Look** (Walter Brendel, R2001) 34-36"
2. Correct the spelling of spuria by Pete DeSantis to **Hasarya**

Things That Got Away

Still waiting for that free rhizome? Check for dues not cashed? Address, name listed wrong?

Help is on the way!!!!

The rhizomes will be shipped this September and the board is addressing the other problems. The Spuria Iris Society is updating, consolidating, and in general, catching up on the things that have gotten away from us. Please contact Jim Hedgecock or Joanne Lee Miller to let us know if you are missing something or have information we need to correct.



Spuria Slide Show

for rent
\$10.00

CONTACT:

Joanne Lee
Miller

Spuria Convention Rhizomes

For SALE !!!

What a screaming deal. Get some well grown spurias for a song & a dance. There is a sales list included in your newsletter. Due to space, the description for each spuria is limited to a vague color.

Now, don't you wish you had the Spuria Iris Society's booklet publication of Registrations & Introductions? This handy source for information is just the ticket to getting what you want! It contains detailed descriptions and other information.

Contact J. Lee Miller to get your own copy of the Spuria Iris Society R & I's.

Sonoran Desert Trek 2005: Growing Spurias in Containers

Submitted by J. Lee Miller



The Tucson Area Iris Society will host the Region 15 Spring Trek in 2005. Also for the first time, the Society for Louisiana Iris will hold their Convention and Spring Flower Show outside the Southeast. As the manager of one of the guest gardens, I had to create growing space for approximately 34 LA's & 60 SPU's. With temperatures in the triple digits, iris become very unhappy campers. As strange as it may seem, water becomes a secondary limiting factor.

Shade, ah glorious shade! Outside the fences, bunnies dig narrow trenches in a skinny ribbon of shade created by a post. Inside the fences, the iris grow in large plastic tubs. Where the tree canopy stops, I hang 75% shade cloth. My iris thank me, the wildlife thank me, and I don't mind the shade for my chores in the Wheeler Garden. This spring, 42 of the clumps bloomed. The TB's, LA's, & Spuria's all bloomed together!

The guest SPU's are planted in 15 gallon nursery containers and many will be bumped up to the 40 gallon cattle-lick tubs. Seeing the drought has not ended, the ranches still have plenty. I drill 1" holes in the bottoms and low on the sides. The soil mix includes alfalfa & cottonseed meal. The tubs are watered by an irrigation system with separate stations for each kind of iris. I use circles of 1/4" soaker tube in each container. Starting in January, the iris were fed 20-20-20 by a hose end feeder. In March, I switched to Super Bloom and a few tablespoons of BT to control the grubs. This season, the pests were few and the weeds.....easy to treat because I could use Round up at the bottom of the containers and not contaminate the iris. Growing Spuria iris in containers makes sense when the soil type in your garden is basically rocks & dust. It is so much easier to divide the rhizomes..... Just dump the tub over & get out the chainsaw (Ha Ha...I exaggerate!).

The best bloom was a raised growing bed made out of rocks. This is where I put all the Spuria that escaped identification. Every spring, it becomes a guessing game to try & name that Spuria. This year, I identified, *Sonoran Sunset*, *My Gold*, and *Rodeo Blue*. When you attend the Sonoran Desert Trek 2005 & visit the Wheeler Garden, maybe you can help me name that Spuria!





Color: Communicating What We See

Article submitted by Robert Dickow Moscow, Idaho

Unlike the glossy color catalogs devoted to tall bearded iris and other garden flowers, few spuria listings offer more than sketchy adjectives, let alone photos. But like many people, I have made many spuria purchases based solely on these skimpy catalog blurbs. Sometimes this works out well, but there can be surprises and disappointments.

For example, I now have a nice clump of *Jet Set*, described as 'burnt umber with bright yellow veins' right next to *Burnished Bronze*, a 'brassy golden brown...', but to me they are almost indistinguishable from each other! More recently I acquired *Amber Gleam*, a 'glowing amber green self.' But if you mix up *Amber Gleam* in a vase with *Burnished Bronze*, you might never know one from another.

So how might we go about communicating what we see as a flower's color? How much can we trust catalog descriptions alone when we plan our garden purchases? The listings' inconsistencies in color descriptions are understandable of course. Even the time of day that we view our flowers makes a big difference in our perceptions, as any photographer can tell you. And have you ever tried to describe in words some of the fantastically subtle blends shown in spurias? It is not easy. We can't expect the pros to do it either. Spurias in my garden that are of almost identical to my eye are variously described in the literature as 'deep purple red,' 'deep mauve red wine,' 'deep wine red, and 'deep red violet.' I like to call this particular color (you know the color I mean) 'oxblood.' But that word does not really quite hit the mark either. And is *Highline Coral* a 'ruffled coral brown' or a 'ruffled lavender pink?' It's both.... and neither.

I'm not sure what to suggest to solve this dilemma. Good pictures do help visualize a flower's character, at least to a degree, and a good photo can instantly sell me on a plant. But a color catalog is expensive to produce. Longer, more detailed descriptions would help. In any case, let's avoid that old RHS color chart for now. I don't think there are any numbers in there close enough to pin down the often rich and subtle blends of pigments in our beloved spurias.

Convention Gardens



Found: Bo Peep's Sheep!



Another spuria for the, "must have" list!



I need more film!



Judge's Training: Can a stalk have too many flowers?

A Cornucopia of Flowers By J. Lee Miller

"I love excess of fruitfulness; let other fools pay more for less"

Thank you to the **Pony Express Iris Society** & the **Spuria Iris Society** for a convention that was very enjoyable. The spuria bloom was a cornucopia of beautiful flowers and green, lush gardens. There were ponds, peonies, and all sorts of other plants that I can only dream about growing. Oh, how I cherish good, rich soil and the smell of humidity in the air.

The weather was perfect, despite the dire predictions of rain & thunderstorms. President **Jim Hedgecock** pointed to the 12 raindrops that splattered on his windshield early Saturday morning and he worried that it really might rain. He just didn't understand that rain was not in the cards because there were two visitors from Arizona. I explained this is how it goes. It would only sprinkle long enough to get his windshield dirty. Sure enough, that's all it did!

The spurias that were planted in the fall of 2000 stood tall in the seven gardens that we visited. The garden owners planted the guest iris in beds with other beautiful flowers and shrubs. Every garden was unique and varied in plantscape. Each garden had personal collections of iris, as well as guest plantings. My favorite, *ZULU CHIEF*, had competition from, *TOUCH OF LACE*. The latter graced the production rows of a peony grower's nursery. It was planted in long rows at the end of peony beds. What a sight! This is one spuria that I will have to add to my collection.

Every convention I promise to restrain myself from buying everything I see, but....Iris Virus strikes again and I must acquire a few more. *REDWOOD SUPREME*, *ADRIATIC BLUE*, *PURPLE KNIGHT*, *MISSOURI IRON ORE*, and a few others must come & live in my garden. I live in the next valley west of Tucson near the Baboquivari Mountains, so I must have **Floyd Wickenkamp's**, *KITT PEAK*.

Continued.....



A Cornucopia of Flowers By J. Lee Miller.....continued

The subject of the elusive pink spuria was discussed by **Dave Niswonger** at the slide show on Friday night and, for the rest of the trek, everybody just had to rib him. From across the garden, you would hear someone say; "Hey Dave, I think I see pink in this one"!!!! Of course, there were many seedlings that caught my eye and that always makes me want to torment the hybridizer. Why do I have to wait? Can't I have it now? I promise to keep it top secret....etc. **Lee Walker** had many seedlings in bloom and was willing to explain the potential of each line. Never before have I been able to discuss chromosomes at the microscopic level with so many people. It was a smorgasbord of genetic speak.

Speak he did! The auctioneer was the real McCoy. A real fast talker! The bidding for spuria rhizomes after the banquet dinner on Saturday night was fun. Numbered cards waived boldly in the air as others bid in a more clandestine way. Many people went home with a great spuria for a very reasonable price. To the others, thank you for your support! Earlier in the evening, a beautiful wood plaque was awarded to **Bobbie Shepard** for her years of contribution to the Spuria Iris Society. I get to visit Bobbie & Don's garden every year because they are neighbors up in Phoenix. Another Sonoran Desert dweller, **Charles Jenkins**, was the speaker for the event.

The convention experience not only gave me a chance to see a bounty of beautiful gardens, but also allowed me time to visit with people from all over the world. I finally met **Glenn Corlew** in person, after seeing his name in many an AIS Bulletin. **Judy Keisling** was as gracious in person as she was in e-mail, and members of the Pony Express Iris Society went the extra mile to show all who attended a good time. I look forward to keeping in touch. You see, I have accepted the position of Treasurer and Membership Chairperson for the Spuria Iris Society. AND.....Yes, Keith....it's for the love of iris!



**This Way to the
CONVENTION
GARDENS**

Wayne & Lucille Boswell

Lucille is a Flower Show Judge and does workshops in flower arranging for Garden Clubs locally. Wayne is a retired farmer and cattle feeder who still maintains a beef herd. Close to their house, everywhere you look, you'll see gardens of flowers grown for use in the hobby of flower arranging, consisting of a pleasing combination of annuals, perennials, bulbs, and shrubs that give continuous bloom throughout the summer and fall. Their interest in iris began in 1990 after retiring. With some extra time, different things became of interest. Wayne and Lucille enjoy working in their garden, having a good variety for local Garden Club Tours and trying some new things to see if they will grow and do well there.



Patty McGuire

We entered the McGuire Garden and saw a beautiful planting of Hostas around a Mulberry Tree. A Girl with Watering Pot was a focal point in one area using brick colored stepping stones and red bark mulch. Patty began growing iris on an Iowa farm where her Great Aunt Hilda purchased new hybrids in the '40s & '50s for \$5 apiece. Patty always enjoyed her visits and also uses peonies as a combination plant. Unfortunately, Patty's guest irises were not in full bloom.

Cinnamon Stick, Niswonger '83, brown falls etched with a bright yellow, yellow style arms and brown standards is a favorite of mine and merited a photo. Lee Walker's seedling, *93-16-30* had a stalk had brown falls with yellow lines and light brown standards. Dr. Rodionenko's, *Lenkoran*, '85, formed a nice clump. It was very floriferous and Dave Niswonger said it is probably a selected species clone. *Sonoran Senorita*, Wickenkamp '89 was a nice bright gold. I remember being in Phoenix and meeting him when *Love for Leila*, '86 bloomed as a guest. I believe the flower was named for his Mother. *Ruffled Canary*, McGown '70, was a vivid yellow, white border falls and white standards.

Though this garden didn't have many spurias in bloom, there were other plantings to enjoy. A variegated maple, bald cypress, an evergreen hedge, and sweet gum trees were delightful in this garden setting.

Don & Lavon Hollingsworth

Don and Lavon's garden is a feast for the eyes of any peony lovers. Don became interested in modern iris while attending Benton High School; Dr. Henry Schirmer was a breeder nearby. In the 1950's, he started growing irises while living in Maryville and working at the University Extension Center. Irises traveled with him in his moves. Interested in ruffles and lace, he acquired *Snow Flurry* and *Chantilly*. By the he was able to give attention to breeding and collecting, he learned of an opportunity to obtain rare peony hybrids from the old Saunders Nursery in New York. He proceeded to develop a breeding program in 1966 that consumed all available time and space. Since retiring to the farm at Maryville, where they operate a peony nursery and collection exceeding 400 named peonies, the have commenced to collect newer irises. With a sage's quip, Done specifies the favorite companion plans as, "we are flexible...whatever grows well and looks good."

Favorite Iris?....."any really nice iris which happens to be in flower at the moment. We prefer them gorgeous, sturdy, floriferous, and harmonious in their characteristics.....In addition to beauty".



Laveta Pierce

The area that is now Laveta's garden was originally a pig lot. In its former stage, she used to view the area from her kitchen window, always dreaming of a change. She credits the start of her garden to her aunt who shared her iris, daylilies, and a membership to the Pony Express Iris Society. Gradually, the pig lot was converted into a garden. It is an extraordinary place for her, her family, and the community.

Laveta says her garden must be looked at in this way: "iris, daylilies, roses, poppies, tulips, annuals, redbud trees, willow trees, paths, rocks, and a spring-fed creek. Each area of the garden overflowing with colors and perfumes.

Gary & Gail Kincaid

About 10 years ago, Gail started our iris collection by purchasing a few plants from local growers and hybridizers. Her efforts sparked an old interest in Gary and the collection started to grow more rapidly after his retirement in 1998. His Mother had been an avid iris gardener on the family farm, and although he liked them, at the time it seemed there were more interesting and fun things to do than weed iris! Today their collection consists of approximately 1300 different cultivars including Spurias, Siberians, Louisianas, Japanese, Species, Species-X, Arilbred, and all types of bearded iris. Now known as Kincaid Garden, many visitors come each year to see their iris and other gardens filled with the usual and many unusual annuals and perennials. A sign beckons everyone to,

"Come into my garden – I would like my flowers to see you. Come and enjoy; you are welcome"



Jim & Lamoyne Hedgecock Comanche Acres

Jim and Lamoyne are celebrating their 22nd. year in the iris business. Jim grew up with his Aunts and Grandmother, all of whom loved flowers. He became really interested in 1978 when the Corps of Engineers started Smithville Lake. Two years later, the iris obtained from the lake site bloomed showing 50 different colors of iris. Jim then ordered a copy of, The World of Iris from a local bookstore and decided to try hybridizing. In 1981, he started selling iris and decided to buy the iris division of Gilbert Wild and Sons. That year, 250,000 irises were moved to the farm, making this stead the largest iris nursery east of the Rockies. Lamoyne's always busy during iris season. They grow over 2,000 varieties of irises including both bearded & Beardless iris. There are well over

200,000 plants on the property and plans to develop a landscape that has water gardens.

LAWRENCE & SHIRLEY MATTHEWS By James W. Waddick

Lawrence and Shirley Matthews have to win the prize for "altitude gardening". Their ever-expanding gardens are built on a steep slope literally in a woodland clearing. Lots of up and down walking is required to progress across the garden. Their handwork is clearly visible in a large workshop building to house the sewing and craft shop and the large wood shop. A nearly complete playhouse looked like a mini-mansion in the forest for the Matthews grandchildren. This garden on the south side of St. Joseph is across the street from and surrounded by Bluff Woods State Park and is a beautiful woodland site. A large wishing well at the hillside base looks real enough that it might even 'work' (depends on what you wish for). Lawrence had placed a seat across the back of the tractor that turned it to an uphill tram for the vertically challenged.

New gardens were constructed for the guest spuria irises, one with a facing white picket fence and ornamental arch. Higher up the hill another garden shows even more including many seedling guests. Around 150 guest irises were growing in excellent conditions. Other large garden beds were dedicated to various bearded irises and other beds were devoted to perennials, annuals and shade gardens including some beautifully grown hostas and a blaze of red poppies. There was no way to take in all sights in one visit.

Dave Niswonger's spurias were well represented with most in bloom here. A large clump of 'Missouri Iron Ore' (deep metallic purple with an intense yellow signal) greeted the visitors as they hill climb began. From his older 'Cinnamon Stick' (maroon red striped in yellow) to the newer 'Missouri Dreamland' (a mix of blue, yellow and cream) were scattered across the garden. 'Missouri Orange' is a very intense gold and the nearest to true orange that we saw during the tour. Two older species crosses, 'Russian Blue' and 'Russian White' were large clumps, flowering well and proof that spurias of all sizes and ages can dazzle.

Speaking of "older" spurias, the much older 'Monspur Cambridge Blue' (1910), 'Mrs. Tait' (1912) and 'Sunny Day' (1931) were all excellent garden landscape material in different gardens and garden sites. These are mostly smaller flowered spurias, but produce dense clumps with numerous flowers. The much newer 'Bellisnado' (Corlew 1989) was a star here—as well as in most other gardens. It performed well everywhere. The purple flowers with a touch of yellow are produced in abundance, as are the fans of good upright foliage.

Perhaps the 'star' of this garden was a separate plot almost totally devoted to numbered seedlings from the hybridizing hand of Lee Walker (Oregon). There were 34 seedlings here and most were in bloom. Although still in the 'seedling' stage, many showed they were worthy of introduction. One Walker seedling (93-16-30) was a rich reddish color that Dave Niswonger might accuse of having some pink, but more of a maroon with large yellow signal. Another similar (93-16-36) had a less intense color, almost rose red with a smaller signal, but garden presence. Both boast nicely colored style arms and crests. But Lee's seedlings were not just red shades, but cover blues yellows and other combinations; all nicely. Lee also showed slides of newer hybrids during the earlier slide session of the meetings. Clearly he is making progress for color, form and vigor. Some of the garden tourists were clambering over him to request that he name and introduce some of these or at least get them into circulation some way.

We visited the Matthews in mid-afternoon and enjoyed the cool shade of nearby woods and welcome hospitality of our hosts (Those cold ice-cream bars hit the spot!). They already have more new iris beds planted in preparation for next year's regional convention. Their hard work and efforts certainly showed off in a grand display of Spurias for our great enjoyment. Thanks to all!



NOTICE of NEW RATES

Membership Dues	Single annual.....\$9.00 Family annual.....\$12.00	Life Membership....\$100.00
	Single triennial \$20.00 Family triennial...\$24.00	
Registrations & Introductions Booklet	U. S. A. \$10 Canada \$11	Foreign \$12

Favorite Iris of the Spuria National Convention

Eligibility – any named guest iris listed in the program book and
seen in bloom during the official garden tours.

Favorite Guest Iris:

First place: **Adriatic Blue** Second Place: **Look Again**

Favorite Guest Seedling:

First Place: **Walker 93-24-41**

Second Place was a tie: **Walker 93-2870 & Walker 93-2-35**

Eligibility – any registered iris (spuria or species) seen in bloom during the official garden tours;
need not be an official guest iris.

Favorite Top Ten

Touch of Lace Look Again Missouri Iron Ore Cinnamon Stick
Missouri Orange Adriatic Blue Handsome Is
Lemon Touch Bellisinado Redwood Supreme

AIS AWARDS 2003

ERIC NIES MEDAL (SPU)

MISSOURI SUNSET (O.D. Niswonger)

Runners-up:

SONORAN SKIES (Floyd Wickenkamp)

MIDNIGHT RIVAL (Lawrence Johnsen)

Award of Merit (AM) Awards

ADRIATIC BLUE (O.D. Niswonger)

MISSOURI IRON ORE (O.D. Niswonger)

Runners-up:

MISSOURI MOONLIGHT (O.D. Niswonger)

MISSOURI AUTUMN (O.D. Niswonger)

Honorable Mention (HM) Awards

HICKORY LEAVES (O.D. Niswonger)

BLUEBERRY SUNDAE (O.D. Niswonger)

BUTTER RIPPLES (B. Charles Jenkins)

Runners-up:

ARIZONIQUE (B. Charles Jenkins)

SONORAN CUTIE (Floyd Wickenkamp)

NOTICE

**To all the Owners
of gardens who
would like to be listed in
the next issue of the
newsletter:**

**The Spuria
Iris
Society**

**requests a copy of your
brochure for our records.**

**Please send the
copies to the Editor.**

**Don't be deleted!
Respond by
November 30, 2003**



Dave Niswonger stalks the elusive pink spuria.



WWW.SPURIA.ORG
Bob Dickow - Webmaster



Take a walk with me, through the bounty of spring,
And pick a bouquet of the spuria we see.

