

IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE ARTHUR SHOOP

1916 - 1995

George Shoop was born and raised in Nebraska, but moved before college graduation to the Pacific Northwest in order to be near his dream girl, Roberta Dodge. In due course they married and moved to Yreka, CA, then back to Portland, where George worked at the Kaiser shipyards during World War II.

It was while at the shipyards that George met Bennett Jones, and after the war George discovered irises in the form of TIFFANY in Bennett's garden. It was love at first sight, and George was soon hybridizing irises (slowed down by one year, for he first tried pollinating the beards). The crosses continued unabated for 45 years, zeroing in mainly on tall bearded pinks and oranges, tangerine-bearded bicolors and "dark top" reverse bicolors, with a few medians thrown in for good measure.

Eden Road Iris Gardens handled his first introduction, LA PARISIENNE, in 1960. That was also the year of the Portland national convention, and the Shoop garden was on tour. The pink ONE DESIRE was in bloom and established George as a hybridizer almost overnight.

Always working in a small space, he nevertheless was able to produce an impressive array of interesting and innovative irises. Some of his best-known varieties are OLE, SPANISH GIFT, CHINA DRAGON, TODAY'S FASHION, BLUSHING DUCHESS, SPRING TIDINGS, PEACH SPOT, DUTCH MAGIC, BLAZING LIGHT, ISLAND DANCER, LATIN LOVER, RINGO, REGAL AFFAIR and FANCY TALES. In 1990 George was awarded the AIS Hybridizer's Medal.

George was known equally well for his cheerful disposition and sense of humor as for his irises. Decades ago he suffered from throat cancer and had to re-learn how to speak; his whispered quips could project across a room to the delight of all. Chronic pulmonary problems contributed to his health woes, and last year cancer was discovered once more. His optimism never suffered for long. On April 22 he was talking about crosses to be made; on April 24 he was gone.

He is survived by his wife Roberta, children Ben Shoop and Lucinda Sisson, and five grandchildren. He is missed by iris lovers worldwide who mourn the passing of a good friend and innovative iris breeder.