THE APOGON SECTION

This section of the Iris genus has already been defined at p. 13 as containing all those species of rhizomatous Irises, in which the central line of the falls is either smooth or only covered with a pubescence of unicellular processes.

It seems, unfortunately, impossible to select any one character or set of characters to form a guide through the maze of species. The nearest approach to such a character is found in the seeds, but, besides the fact that these are often missing in herbarium specimens, those of a few species, such as *Bungei* and *Rossii*, are still undescribed. Moreover, the seeds of the species in each group are readily distinguishable and have only a certain family likeness, which indeed in some cases is only apparent to the practised eye.

The classification of the Apogon species given below is therefore admittedly unsatisfactory, partly for the reasons already given, and partly also because some of the species seem to stand by themselves and to have little affinity to any others. Under each heading in the following list an attempt is made to give the chief characteristics of the species included.

I. *The sibirica group* has seven representatives in Eastern Asia, one in Europe and one in America. Stems hollow (except in *I. Clarkei* and *I. prismatica*); capsule trigonal; seeds disc-shaped, D-shaped, or cubical; leaves thin and grassy; perianth tube short, not smooth but obviously formed of the concretion of the bases of the segments. Stigma a projecting triangular tongue. See p. 19.

II. *The tenuifolia group.* This group of Central Asiatic Irises consists of plants with short unbranched stems, and rigid, linear leaves. The growths are very crowded and the bases of the leaves seem to persist for several years, and form dense bundles which in the wild state have the appearance of being either burnt or browsed off. The root fibres are very wiry. [N.B. *I. songarica* seems to be a connecting link between this group and the *spuria* group.] See p. 32.

III. *The Californian group.* Rhizomes slender, root-fibres few in number. Leaves tough and leathery, scanty, pink at the base. Seeds light brown or buff, spherical, thick D-shaped or even almost cubical. The dying leaves turn a dull red, quite distinct from the usual brown colour of withering Iris foliage. See p. 35.

IV. *The Syrian group.* Rhizome annulate and surrounded with stiff bristles. Spathes very long and narrow, one flowered with the pedicel equal in length to the spathe. See p. 45.

V. *The Chinese group* consists of four species of slender growth, of which apparently only one is in cultivation. *I. minuta* and *I. Henryi* are probably allied to one another. The other two are grouped with them by reason of their geographical proximity and not of any known structural affinity. See p. 46.

VI. *The scarlet-seeded Iris.* The single character of the scarlet seeds, that remain attached to the open capsule, seems sufficient to separate *I. foetidissima* from all other species. Confined to Europe and North Africa. See p. 50.

VII. *I. ruthenica* with its dwarf grassy growth and prominent white excrescence on the fresh seeds seems also to stand entirely alone. This species is found in Hungary, in the Altai region, and thence eastwards as far as Pekin. See p. 52.

VIII. *I. unguicularis* is distinguished by its tough foliage, close-matted growth, long perianth tube and undeveloped stem, and also by the curious and characteristic processes that cover the upper surface of the style branches. See p. 54.

The type is found in Algeria but subspecies also occur in Greece, Crete and Asia Minor, as far east as Alexandretta and Lazistan. See p. 56.

IX. *The spuria group.* The chief characteristics of this group are the double ribs at the angles of the capsules, the loose parchment-like skins of the seeds, the two-toothed stigma, and the panduriform outer segments. Leaves ensiform, tough, emitting a slightly fetid odour when bruised. Its representatives are widely distributed through Europe and Asia as far east as Kashmir. See p. 57.

X. *The laevigata group.* Seeds more or less D-shaped, with smooth polished skins. This group is represented in Eastern America, Europe and Eastern Asia. See p. 72.

XI. *The hexagona group.* Capsules with six ribs, more evenly distributed on the circumference than in the *spuria* group; flowers set in the axils of the leaves. Confined to the Eastern United States. See p. 81.

XII. *Iris ensata.* Ovary six-grooved, passing almost imperceptibly into the pedicel, tube very short. Capsule long, narrow, almost spherical in section, with six ribs at equal intervals. Seeds smooth, pyriform, or slightly compressed. Leaves narrow, linear-ensiform. An Asiatic species. See p. 85.

XIII. *The longipetala group.* The plants resemble *I. ensata* in the characters of the rootstock and foliage. The seeds are somewhat similar, but distinctly larger and not compressed. The capsules are broad at the centre and taper at either end. The group is confined to the Rocky Mountains and to the region lying between that range and the Pacific. See p. 89.

XIV. *The tripetalous group.* The inner perianth segments or standards are reduced to little more than bristles. The members of the group are found in Eastern Asia, Alaska and along the east coast of North America. See p. 92.

XV. *Iris verna* an anomalous species, with the habit of a Pogoniris but beardless. See p. 95.