

REGISTRATIONS FOR 1958 - Continued

were origins of four hybridizers; Myron Biggers of Kansas, Dr. Philip Corliss of Arizona, Marion R. Walker, and Walker Ferguson of California. The registrations were as follows:

- Bronze Corsage (Corliss); 48" tall, midseason, standards medium brown, falls medium dark brown. (Parentage lost)
- Brown Glory (Corliss); 50" tall, midseason, standards brown with slate tones, falls brown with mauve tones, small yellow signal. (Larksong x Nies #4956)
- El Camino (Walker, M.); 50" tall, midseason, deep orange-yellow self. (Grace Perry Nies x Wadi Zem Zem)
- Gay Lark (Walker, M.); 55" tall, early, standards white blended yellow at base, falls yellow overlaid orange-yellow, white border. (Grace Perry Nies x Canary Island)
- Golden Notes (Ferguson); 52" tall, midseason, deep yellow self. (Larksong x Wadi Zem Zem)
- Good Nature (Ferguson); 52" tall, midseason, lemon yellow self. ((Wadi Zem Zem x Larksong x Two Opals))
- Grey Butterfly (Corliss); 48" tall, midseason, standards leek green, falls garnet-brown. (Golden Agate x Two Opals)
- Heart of Blue (Corliss); 52" tall, early to midseason, cobalt blue bitone, yellow ochre signal. (Parentage unknown)
- June Lemon (Biggers); 36" tall, late, standards light lemon yellow, falls lemon yellow. (Sunny Day x unkn.)
- Primrose Butterfly (Corliss); 38", early, standards light yellow, falls straw yellow. (Larksong x Hazy Hills)
- Ruffled Pharoah (Corliss); 48", midseason, hyacinth blue self. (Parentage unknown)
- Secrets (Ferguson); 44", midseason, standards white, falls yellow white bordered. ((Azure Dawn x Color Guard) x (Larksong x Two Opals))
- Thrush Song (Ferguson); 36", late, blue-purple self, small gold signal. (Lark Song x Color Guard)
- WakeRobin (Ferguson); 54", early, white self with yellow signal. (Color Guard x Wadi Zem Zem)
- Windfall (Ferguson); 48", early, white self with large yellow signal. ((Investment x (Larksong x Color Guard))

SPURIA

NEWSLETTER

Publication of the
SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

WINTER 1959

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Progress in our organization has been necessarily slowed down in the past few months while we wait for the Committee on Interclub Relations of the AIS to report its findings and for the Board of Directors of that organization to reach certain conclusions and make their decisions. They have quite a problem and we appreciate that fact, but in the meantime our activities in the Spuria Iris Society are limited until their report is made. We do, however, have to have some sort of "rule" to work under in order to be an organization, so it has been thought necessary to install a "temporary" set of By-Laws to direct us in our procedures. This set of By-Laws is included with this News Letter. Please note the instructions for acceptance of these By-Laws that preface their presentation.

Other matters of SIS activity which should have originated in this office have also been slowed down because this officer has been inundated with business affairs, specifically, the moving of his complete commercial gardens to a new location, with all of the involvements that go with such an undertaking. I promise, herewith, that I will get back "on the ball" this winter, and perhaps we can finish up the year with a flourish or so.

Several things of interest did occur this year, and from those most closely associated with these occurrences there are reports in this News Letter. The first big event was our first annual SIS meeting in conjunction with the National Meeting of the AIS for 1959. As you know, this meeting was held in Oklahoma City, and several of our members and officers were present. The officers were represented by our Immediate Past President, Mrs. Ila Nunn, our Editor, Clarke Cosgrove, and myself. Polly Anderson, chairman of the Spuria Iris Display Garden at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum in Arcadia, arrived too late for our SIS meeting, but was present for the rest of the convention. Mary Wakefield, of Oklahoma

City, our Membership Chairman, was also present with a good representation of hospitable and enthusiastic members from the Oklahoma area in attendance. These were the most wonderful people you could find anywhere and we certainly want to thank them for making our visit to Oklahoma one to be long remembered. I also understand that the Iris Society of Hot Springs Arkansas paid the rent for our meeting halls and we wish to thank them sincerely for that assistance. It was a fine meeting.

Now is a good time to start the campaign to urge as many members of SIS as possible to attend the National Meeting in Portland, Oregon in 1960. It would be a great boon to the Society to have a huge turnout of Spuria Iris Society members attending our second annual meeting. Bennett Jones, RVP of that region, has assured us of plenty of time for this meeting and the details of meeting places, etc. are being taken care of. Now that we know the ropes, so to speak, we should really have a splendid time if as many of our members as possible will join us.

NEW MEMBERS -- we need you! Present Members -- see if you can't interest your friends in taking out memberships in our organization. The more members we have, the more activity we can support and the more interesting your organization will be. Go out and round up a whole herd of them and drive them into the corral. It is up to each one of you, Partners, to rope a greenhorn or two and start them on their way to becoming old hands at this Spuria game. If you know of people who might be interested, please send their names and addresses to our Membership Chairman, Mrs. R. J. Wakefield, 5920 N.W. 43rd Street, Oklahoma 12, Oklahoma. She will soon have brochures to send to prospective members and will do all she can to interest them in becoming members. Do your part in this, too.

Perhaps the greatest promise for the furtherance of progress with the spurias and the increase of knowledge of our iris came in the announcement of Dr. Lee Lenz at the National Meeting that the National Science

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Continued

Foundation had added \$7000.00 to the \$600.00 already donated by the Houston members of our organization for research on spuria iris. As a Society, we hope to be able to contribute to this fund as it is necessary in the future. It has been indicated also that our membership will be called upon to aid in this research in such ways as making experimental crosses and keeping records and it goes without saying that many of us will be enthusiastic in any effort we can extend to assist in this project.

We would like to see our membership as active as possible in the work of the Society. Will any of you who would like small jobs to do for SIS please write to me and indicate what type of work you could do and how much time you have available for such work? Even an hour a week or less, would help immeasurably in many of our projects. For instance, the Society has been asked for and needs a complete check list of all spurias that have been registered, and with indication made of those that have been known to have been introduced or distributed, and with complete parentage, name of hybridizer and introducer where available. This project has been completed up to 1949, but the list is not completed for the years 1949 to 1959. Would someone like to take on this assignment? We also need a list of all spurias that have won AIS awards and when the award was made. Anyone for this list? There will be other such work to be done, but these two need to be accomplished as soon as it is possible to do so.

Now to get away from organizational subjects and into the field of talk about Spuria Iris. This, of course, is the aim of the Society and should be the greater part of our discussions and interchange of ideas. I believe that besides the encouragement of growing Spuria Iris as garden subjects and the associated areas of appeal such as landscape possibilities and flower arrangement ideas, the subject of greatest interest and importance is that of the development of

this iris through breeding. I have said before, and I still believe it true, that if we get enough breeders interested in working with spuria iris we will see spectacular results. We have as much or more to work with at the species level than was available to the first breeders of the tall bearded iris. There are all the possibilities present for a wide range of improvements and variations. I usually use the example of the progress evidenced in the two generation jump from the species iris, *I. Ochroleuca*, to the wonderful Eric Nies Award winning spuria, White Heron. If such can be accomplished in two generations from the species level it would seem to me that there is much encouragement for unlimited future developments.

We do not know, at this point, too much about the chromosomal and cytological makeup of this iris, but it appears that this is about to be corrected. Perhaps we can, in the meantime, experiment with success in combining some of the features that would improve our present varieties. The number of flowers per stem is being increased through selective breeding in many of the newer introductions and this is an important feature as it will lengthen the bloom season, one of the complaints against the iris. Also early and late varieties are appearing which will stretch the season. Some of our best flowers have the fewest buds per stem and this is something that our breeders should keep in mind in planning their crosses.

Another aspect of the spuria iris which is sometimes frowned upon by the gardener is the fact that many of the spurias go dormant in the summer and the foliage starts to die back during the season when the appearance of the plant is most important. Yet there is a whole series of spurias which retain their foliage throughout the summer months and only lose it as winter approaches. The reason for this seems to be fixed in the background of the species and the locations in which they originated. Those species that apparently came from the Mediterranean region and the Near East start their growth in the fall and continue to grow

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Continued

if not set back by low temperatures, until after the bloom at which time they tend toward dormancy. On the other hand, those spuria iris which have come from the colder areas of Europe tend to keep their foliage through the summer and enter the defoliated period in the fall. The plant habit of the latter obviously makes the better garden plant, but the former species have the large flowers which we most appreciate. The question? How to combine these features so that we get the large flowers and the summer green foliage in one plant. The closest approach to this among our present varieties is the late flowering Blue Zephyr. But we do not know its background so that we cannot know why it inherited this combination of features. The so-called Monspurs that we know are understood to be crosses of *I. spuria* (European) by *I. Monieri* (possibly a form of *I. ochra-leuca* and from the Near East regions) seem to retain the summer foliage characteristics of *I. spuria* but the flower size also seems to be influenced by this species and we get smaller flowers. From what records we have, the combination of Monspur (which is often pretty infertile) with the southern species tends to lose the summer green foliage and to increase the size of the flower. This, naturally, would be expected, but how can we retain the two desired features in future generations? Another item to consider in the combination of these two groups is the ability of the European species to take the coldest weather and the fact that the southern group can be grown successfully in the near tropical climates. If a combination could be made so that varieties could be grown successfully in both hot and cold climates, the popularity of the spuria iris would gain greatly. It is noted, however, that the first generation from crosses involving Monspurs do not generally do well in the warm climates. Premier is a vigorous exception to this observation.

There is a chromosomal difference in these two groups of species spurias that throws up a barrier to successful hybridization, especially for carrying the

line beyond the first generation. There is another spuria species which has the summer green foliage that is nearer to the southern group of species in chromosome number than the typical *I. spuria*. This is *I. halophylla*. The flowers of this species are even smaller than *I. spuria*, but we do not know what would come of a line bred family based on the cross of *halophylla* and the southern species as it seems no one has done any work with such crosses. They may not even be possible, but it should be worth trying. It has been reported that some of the spurias that have been considered variations of *I. spuria*, such as *I. cartheliniae*, have a higher chromosome count than the typical *I. spuria* as we know it. It is possible that these should be sought out and used.

We are limited for the present in not really knowing with what we are working, but with the work that Dr. Lee Lenz is embarking on, we will some day know these things. We do not need to sit back, in the meantime, and wait for these results as I see it. I believe we should seek out the various different types of spurias available and begin experimenting with crosses of them just in hopes that we might hit upon something in advance of the certain knowledge of what we are doing. Scientific knowledge, more or less followed the big developments in the bearded iris section, and it can be the same here, except that we will undoubtedly have the scientific knowledge sooner to use in our attempts than the breeders of the bearded iris did, sue to men like Dr. Lenz and those who are sponsoring his research. It will be interesting to see if the puzzle of such Nies spurias as Bronzspur and Azure Dawn can be solved. These iris were supposed to be crosses of a Monspur (*I. spuria*, 22 chromosomes x *I. Monieri*, 40 chromosomes) by *I. ochra-leuca*, 40 chromosomes. The question is, "Why did these two iris come out with 40 chromosomes like the parent *I. ochra-leuca*?" Is this a case of polyploidy like the famous Snow Flurry cross in the bearded iris? There are many fascinating areas of investigation opening to us in our work with the spuria iris, so let us prepare for an exciting future.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY - May 6, 1959

The Spuria Iris Society held its annual meeting, May 6, 1959 in the Hotel Skirvin, Oklahoma City, with the President, Mr. Ben Hager, presiding. Those present, numbering 22 were introduced with the following states represented: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas.

Mr. Hager reviewed the purpose and objectives of the Society, which include sponsoring Test and Display Gardens. On the Scientific Program he reminded the group of the work initiated by the Houston members in 1954 when Dr. Henry H. Hadley began a cytological study of chromosomes in spurias at the Texas A & M College. The new program of this work at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden by Dr. Lee Lenz was announced.

Mr. Hager announced that dues will be used not only to publish a Newsletter but also a proposed book on spurias, and to help the Test Gardens.

He discussed briefly the species types of spuria iris: *sintensisii*, *halophila*, *kerneriana*, *aurea*, *ochroleuca*, *Monnieri*, *graminea*, and *I. spuria*, and stated in commenting on the future of hybridizing the spurias that White Heron is only two generations from *ochroleuca*.

Mrs. Stayton Nunn reported briefly on the Test Garden in Houston, which is soon to be moved to the grounds of the Prudential Insurance Company, across from a display area for new *hemerocallis* sponsored by the *Hemerocallis* Society.

Mr. Clarke Cosgrove, Editor of the Spuria Iris Society Newsletter and Division Director of the spuria robins in AIS, spoke on the new trends in spurias. He views with alarm the sudden excitement over branching in spurias. He described the ideal bloom stalk as

having at least four blossoms blooming at once in a spiral effect around the stalk. He mentioned seeing a stalk with five in bloom at once in the garden of Mr. Walker Ferguson at Escondido.

New spurias seen in the Ferguson garden this season included one called Blue Secrets with a pocketlike formation on the falls; Thrush Song, a very handsome deep blue, similar to Blue Nightshade with perhaps more brown on the falls; Good Nature, a very deep yellow.

Mr. Marion Walker, President of the AIS, talked briefly of the challenge of spuria hybridizing, the possibility of a pink, the implications of the plicate types, the bicolors showing blue standards and yellow falls. He cited the need to develop and maintain vigor and further study of virus in spurias. He stated that some of the newer spurias from Nies breeding are eight to ten generations from the species.

Dr. Lee Lenz, Chairman of the AIS Scientific Committee, announced some of his plans for the program of spuria research: a study of all breeding done in the past, a cytological study of chromosomes in named varieties and species, and wide crosses using the dwarfs. A form will be sent out asking availability of the species in order to increase the collection for study. Dr. Lenz thanked the Spuria Society for the \$600 made available for the research program, with credit to the Houston group who made this possible.

Among the suggestions and comments from members present were the following:
Read the chapter on diseases in Garden Irises. Practice regular cleaning up and preventive measures.
Mr. Walker suggested that spurias be given a rest period from July 1 to September 1.
Mr. Bennett Jones is testing a row planting letting them go dry in the later summer months.

It was announced that Mrs. Robert E. Grey will conduct the Membership Drive.

The first annual meeting of the Spuria Iris Society held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Iris Society was adjourned.

Ila Nunn

REPORT OF THE LOS ANGELES ARBORETUM DISPLAY GARDEN
by Polly Anderson

This was the first season that the spuria planting in the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum could be expected to bloom typically and each of the fifty-two varieties in this display garden sponsored by the Spuria Iris Society bloomed as if determined that it would not be outdone by any other. The display of bloom was spectacular whether viewed as a complete planting or as individual clumps. The effect brought so many favorable comments that another plot the same size is being made available for spurias.

A huge U-shaped bed eight feet wide and divided into three 100 feet beds have been planted with iris: award winning tall bearded, a complete Dykes medal collection, and the spurias. The top of the U is at the highest point of a gentle slope and the spurias have been planted in the last forty feet of the west arm of the U. The new bed is to be the same size at the tip of the other arm. The beds enclosed by the U are mass planted with annuals and perennials and the whole planting can be viewed as a magnificent splash of color from the path at the bottom of the slope.

The three year clumps of spurias sent up over two dozen bloom stalks for each clump and as they are planted between three and four feet apart each appeared as a huge bouquet when in bloom. It would be extremely difficult to select the most outstanding ones as each in its own way was very pleasing.

Each clump is clearly labelled with the name of the variety, originator and year of introduction. This

gives the public as well as our own members a chance to see a good selection of spurias and to see how they grow and thrive in our climate. Included in the spuria collection are: Lumera, Cambridge Blue, Russet Flame, Peaches and Cream, Michigan State, White Heron, Fairy Wand, Hazy Hills, Lilaceana, Golden Lady, Perky Maid, Mt. Whitney, Ruffled Gold, Mt. Wilson, Zephyroso, Aurea, Cherokee Chief, Sweet Butter, Saugatuck, Blue Zephyr, Sunny Day, Canary Island, Lark Song, Two Opals, Golden Agate, Dutch Defiance, Premier, Fairy Light, Golden Sceptre, Secrets, Wakerobin, Blue Display, Azure Dawn, Bronze Butterfly, A.J. Balfour, Black Point, Notha, Yellow Swallowtail, Ochraleuca, Fairy Lantern, Lord Wolsely, Bathsheba, Alice Eastwood, Pastoral and Golden Standard.

KEEPING THE RECORD COMPLETE

One hundred seventy Accredited Garden Judges of the American Iris Society included spuria iris awards on their official ballots in 1959. Although this is only about one-third of the judges who cast ballots, there was a greater number than who voted for spurias in 1958. This, perhaps, indicates a slow but steady growth in acquaintance with the spurias.

The Eric Nies Award went to Driftwood, originated by Marion R. Walker. Larksong, Dutch Defiance, and Two Opals were runners-up. These are all origins of the late Eric Nies.

Four spurias garnered sufficient votes to receive the award of Honorable Mention. They were Investment. (Tom Craig), Thrush Song (Walker Ferguson), Autumn Glow (Marion Walker), and Wakerobin (Walker Ferguson).

Registrations - 1958

Fifteen new spuria varieties were registered in 1958 and reported by the registrar of the American Iris Society, Mrs. Walter Colquitt, in April of 1959. These