



**REBLOOMING**

**IRIS**

**RECORDER**

# THE REBLOOMING IRIS RECORDER

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The Reblooming Iris RECORDER is the new name for the Reblooming Iris Society's Bulletin which is now published tri-annually. It is free to all members of the Reblooming Iris Society.



Readers will have to pardon us for dwelling on the personal angle this issue. The all-absorbing thought here in Radford is the up-coming AIS National Convention in Virginia. Headquarters will be the Hotel Roanoke, with tours to gardens of members of the Blue Ridge Chapter of AIS, coming to Radford and Blacksburg on the final day. The expectation is that our gardens in Radford will be in the peak of the Intermediate bearded season, with some SDB's still showing, and some early tall. This year there was also a very good showing on the seedlings from remontant breeding, which tend to be a full week earlier than the average TB variety.

We have, therefore, set up display beds for the newer named varieties of remontants, and the best new seedlings, both here in town and in the Nesselrodt-on-the-New garden, rented from Mrs. Minor Wine Thomas. In the latter the display beds are in a formal garden surrounded with a high hemlock hedge, with the beds lined with small boxwoods. This should give a maximum of winter shelter. In the field garden are two rows of seedlings from SDB rebloomer X tall rebloomer, and these ought to give a lot of color and interest. A few of these gave spring bloom this year, and one was of very high quality, a broad white with lemon influence, from BABY SNOWFLAKE X VIOLET SUPREME. There are three rows of tall bearded named varieties and five of selected seedlings from outcrosses from rebloomer to non-rebloomer. Some of these are remontant themselves. There are 16 rows of unbloomed seedlings and these are mostly from outcrossed seedlings back to remontant. If the season is average, as it was this year, there will be lots of bloom on these.

Here at the house the medians have already had a year in their display beds. There were many exciting new colors to see this spring, and some exciting new "curves". A second planting of these is at Radford College, under the guidance



of David Merrill, an RIS member. The reason for the medians display is that we are at a much higher elevation than Roanoke and our season is thus a week or two later than theirs, usually about ten days. Late-blooming tallts have been sent to the southern-most gardens in Blairs and Chatham, the early and mid-season tallts will be in the Roanoke and nearby gardens, with the medians and very early tallts here. The one display bed of tallts is at the Nesselrodt-on-the-New garden.

It is our earnest desire to show that remontants can compete with non-remontants successfully. In our breeding we have leaned more toward quality and size in the flower than toward earliness and dependability of rebloom. The result has been a wealth of beautiful seedlings, some of them remontant, but all valuable for future breeding. Here at the house the old redbud tree had to come down, along with the Green Gage plum, to give more sunlight to the beds and access around them. One new bed has been built to accomodate some new guests, and with each task we think, -- "This will make it better for the Conventioneers".

After two tragically wet years, in which rebloom was curtailed or entirely missing, the sun is again shining, (literally) and the irises look very good. Most of those in the field garden at Buddy and Helen Trigg's will be newly planted, but most of the iris in the other two gardens will be established plants for your enjoyment. We heartily recommend that some of you plan to spend an extra day or two here in Radford. The Trigg's DOGWOOD LODGE or the GOVERNOR TYLER MOTOR HOTEL would be convenient and comfortable, and the seedlings will be opening thick and fast.

May you have great enjoyment of your iris this coming fall or winter season, according to climate. If you have things of interest, write an article for the Recorder. All best wishes!

RIS 1973 MEETING AT PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION  
Charles Applegate

The Reblooming Iris Society meeting for 1973 was held Tuesday morning, May 29, in the Chicago Room of the Marriott Motel. This was my first convention and it was great to meet members I have known for a long time in round robins. One of the great obstacles to attendance was that a number of sectional meetings were going on simultaneously. Committees of future conventions are going to stagger sectional meetings so anyone can attend as many as he likes.

After a few preliminary remarks and introductions a large portion of the meeting was taken up with slides. Our slide librarian, Carol Jensen, had a nice selection of the more recent introductions and Margaret Zurbrigg had slides taken just the week previous in her home garden. Also a few slides taken in Raymond Smith's garden the week before the convention were loaned to us. So members got to see a lot of what is new and is yet to be introduced. After slides, questions and comments were taken from members.

Karl and Carol Jensen used Cygon for spraying iris and after some extended use found the plants seemed stunted. Everyone attested to the great vigor and reblooming performance of many of the G. Percy Brown varieties. This type of vigor is needed in many recent introductions. The discussion touched briefly on awards for rebloomers and the difficulty of national awards since so few rebloomers are top performers everywhere.

Outside the meeting room Margaret Zurbrigg had a large display of color prints of old and very new rebloomers showing the progress being made. There were copies of back issues of The Recorder and membership application blanks available for non-members. There was quite a bit of interest from members of other sectional societies meeting nearby.

## 1973 REBLOOMING IRIS REPORT OF REBLOOM AND SYMPOSIUM

Let's make this years effort our best yet. The last few years have seen few reports sent in by the members. Those of you who are only mildly interested or have only a few varieties may feel that your ballot isn't important if you can't send in a report based on knowledge of all the latest rebloom introductions. It would be ideal if all of us could see and grow all the latest, but this just isn't possible. We need your ballot,too.

To those of you having a good knowledge of rebloomers and having grown or seen many rebloomers, please take the few minutes necessary to prepare your ballots. Once you start thinking about it and making your selections, it turns out to be a delightful way to spend some time rather than the chore it may seem to be.

A ballot will be included in the October REBLOOMING IRIS RECORDER, so keep track of those that rebloom for you, visit rebloomer gardens in your neighborhood if you can and then send in your ballots when your fall season is over.

### IRIS BREAKS RULES

(copied from a December newspaper in  
McPherson, Kansas)

Mrs. Harry Spence of 207 Loomis St, McPherson,Kansas had an iris in her yard that didn't know winter in Kansas was no time to bloom. Mrs. Spence, an iris grower, discovered the bloom stalk with five buds on it shortly after a recent snow-fall here. She dug it up and potted it and now it is blooming in her living room. The iris named PREAMBLE, is an intermediate bearded type which was hybridized by Keith Repple of Stockton, Calif., winner of this year's Dykes Medal for the best tall bearded iris. PREAMBLE, a rebloomer, blooms in the spring and often again in late summer but never in mid-winter and also, by all the rules was not supposed to bloom in the fall until two years after planting, which was last July. The 18-inch stalk now has two white blossoms with 4 1/2 inch falls edged with violet.

(Our thanks to Robert Jeffries of Ellsworth,Kansas for sending this article to us for reprint.)

BREEDING FOR BLUE REMONTANTS  
Dr. Billy G. Skillman

In the blue color class, the highest quality cultivars that dependably rebloom in Calabasas, as well as widely over the nation, are SKY QUEEN (F.Craig'62) and BLUE SURPRISE (Austin'62). They have consistently rated highly in popularity polls for rebloomers. One of the problems in using them as parents in breeding is their fertility. They will both set seeds but neither of them is known to produce pollen. It seems that no matter how many blossoms are pollinated, SKY QUEEN will set no more than two pods per stalk and sometimes only one. The number of pods per stalk that BLUE SURPRISE will set is also limited but sometimes the number of seed per pod is as large as fifty or sixty. Another problem with SKY QUEEN is that it tends to bloom so heavily in the fall that the amount of spring bloom is reduced, thus reducing the number of seeds that can be obtained. Seed pods can be set as easily in the fall as in the spring but freezes come before the fall seed pods are mature and they will not germinate.

SKY QUEEN has better growth habits in inland California than BLUE SURPRISE. Both are vigorous and make fast growth but the rhizomes of BLUE SURPRISE tend to get very large and watery and when exposed to the intense heat of the summer sun, will get rot and the whole plant dies. It is therefore necessary to keep its rhizomes well covered with soil to insulate it from the heat. SKY QUEEN doesn't have to be watched and cared for in this way. Both are of fairly good quality with large size blossoms, good substance, good branching and purity of color. The width of SKY QUEEN is greater. The fragrance of BLUE SURPRISE is outstanding and it passes the trait on to its offspring.

One of the breeding problems, which is the same as in all blue breeding, is the tendency of the resulting offspring to go toward violet in coloring instead of true spectrum blue. Crossing blues with whites seems to be one technique that breeders have used in "diluting" the violet to obtain a truer blue color. An example would be the classic cross of SNOW FLURRY with CHIVALRY to obtain some of the most notable blues in irisdom. In searching for a reblooming pollen producing white to cross with BLUE SURPRISE and SKY QUEEN, the most available candidate with a nationally proven record of remontancy and fertility is SUMMER WHITEWINGS, (G.P.Brown'60). Its

quality is not high but it has the capacity to produce offspring that are infinitely better than itself. A row of seedlings from BLUE SURPRISE X SUMMER WHITEWINGS will rebloom almost one hundred percent. From this cross seeds planted in January came up and produced a bloomstalk in about seven months, a most remarkable record in iris breeding. Its quality was poor and it was discarded but one sibling was saved. It has good quality and its large blossoms are spread out over a long period in the fall, but its color has too much violet in it.

A lot of seeds have been obtained from SKY QUEEN X SUMMER WHITEWINGS. Few have been planted because a white seedling has been obtained from SYMPHONY X SUMMER WHITEWINGS that is much better than its pollen parent. It also appears to be able to match the remontancy characteristics of its pollen parent, which remains almost in constant bloom except for a brief period after regular spring bloom and after hard freezes in midwinter. This seedling's production of pollen is erratic. Occasional anthers are loaded heavily but many have just a few grains. Efforts are being made to use its pollen on a number of blues which remount under ideal conditions. These include HELEN KELLER (Winkle'62) and BRINEY (Craig'64). These two are outstanding for their stiff substance and flaring ruffled falls. The color of BRINEY is smoother but lighter. HELEN KELLER has darker striations running through the petals. These have never rebloomed in Calabasas but have in other nearby areas. BRINEY only sets seed but HELEN KELLER is fertile both ways. TYROLEAN BLUE (Schreiner'63) rates raves as a breeder of remontants from Lloyd Zurbrigg of Radford, Virginia. It has been seen in the fall show in San Diego and has rebloomed once in Malibu Lake. It has not yet been tried for remontancy in Calabasas.

SYMPHONY is an older blue with remontant tendencies, which has a fine record for producing good offspring and a proven record of passing the reblooming trait on to its offspring. Both HELEN KELLER and BABBLING BROOK are its children. Other quality blues that have a tendency to rebloom under some conditions are EPIC and its child, SHIPSHAPE, SEASIDE, DENVER DAWN, CLOUD BARON, VALHALLA and BIG SUR. These should be tried in breeding remontants, either by crossing them or outcrossing these to whites.

Although it has no blue in its immediate ancestry, the new quality white, CASCADE PASS (Cooper'72) may be worked into a program of breeding for blue. Reports of its being tested for



remontancy outside the San Diego area, where it originated, are not as yet available but its record of successive flowering periods there is phenomenal. There is at least one report of it being able to set seed pods. Older whites that might be tried for yielding blue reblooming descendants are SNOW GODDESS, PATRICIA CRAIG, PIETY, WHITE RUFFLES and LUGANO. Pollen from these should be put on BLUE SURPRISE and SKY QUEEN.

When the next blooming season comes around, get out your pollenating equipment and go to work. You may produce something that will cause the world to beat a path to your garden gate.

(The above article was taken from IRIS NOTES, bulletin of the Southern California Iris Society.)



#### EDITORIAL NOTE

We are now printing three issues of the *Reblooming Iris Recorder* per year. Each issue is longer than the *Reporter* used to be, and therefore more expensive. If you enjoy reading the *Recorder*, tell a friend and interest him in the *Reblooming Iris Society*. This will offset the rising costs of printing and mailing. We no longer can get the printing done at the former source, and this means an immediate rise in the cost of printing. So, do pass along your interest and gain new members.

## PROVE AND DISPROVE

Ann Dasch

When our Editor asked me to contribute an article as well as the usual drawings for this issue, I was perplexed. What could I have to say that would be worth printing for the RIS membership?

Supposedly, I have an eye for irises, and, as a judge I've labored to learn about and see as much of the iris world as possible, but, generally speaking, I am a neophyte. Asking me to write for a magazine whose contributions are usually scientists and hybridizers with decades of experience behind them is comparable to pitting a yearling filly against Secretariat!

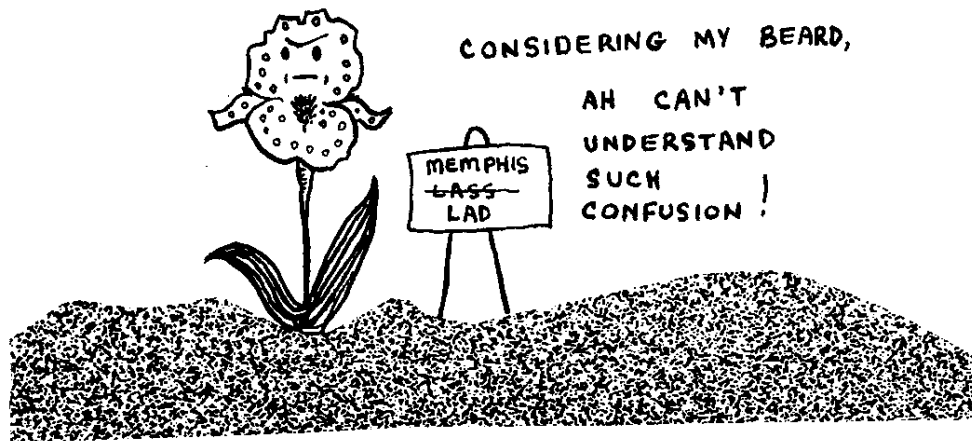
The one thing that I do have to offer is faith. Faith that the reblooming iris is the ultimate star of the garden. Faith that the hybridizers who are reading this will produce .... and are producing .... the proof that sceptical irisarians are waiting for .... that a really superb iris can also be dependably and enthusiastically remontant.

Or, perhaps, faith that the RIS can disprove something. In 1970 I attended my first AIS national convention, the Golden Jubilee in New York. I was thrilled at the opportunity to meet several distinguished hybridizers. One of them, however, absolutely infuriated me. He stated flatly that everything possible had been done in the iris world and he was switching to daylilies. When I timorously suggested that I had never seen a really brilliant orange, he mentioned one of his introductions as the epitome of oranges (to me, it had always looked anemic). As the conversation (monologue) continued, he listed all of his "triumphs". When I mentioned rebloomers, he snorted and changed the subject.

Although I hadn't the confidence to argue at this point, I was aware that this man was certainly not typical of the delightfully congenial iris celebrities I'd already met. His comments literally waved the red flag before this stubborn Taurean. Since then, I have become even more deeply convinced that he was wrong. The modern reblooming iris is nothing to snort at, by golly, and the professionals who are involved with them are the most outstanding and foresighted of all.

The joy of reblooming irises had been brought home to me before I even joined the AIS by dear strappy old JULY BEAUTY, that extraordinary violet bitone. One year it presented me with ten distinct mini-bloom-seasons between May and November. For this vigor, it will always have a home with me.

Then a neighbor gave me an unknown MDB that I think of as "Determination" because it reblooms when nothing else will ... in snowstorms ... once as late as Christmas Day. One expert claims that it is LIEUTENANT de CHAVAGNAC, several others say that it is not, but his name doesn't matter. The point is that the ungainly little rascal virtually insists upon blooming several times per year, ignoring the caprices of our Maryland climate.



Enthusiastically, I have installed assorted modern varieties. I have refused to accord special treatment to them, giving them the same haphazard reverence due any iris in the yard of a busy suburban homemaker and mama. I'm not a pro, with no reason to insist on bloom by a certain date; I just wait and watch. On a good year, I have had a nice assortment stalking on our loamy hill in October. On a bad year, I have had JULY BEAUTY and "Determination".

Recently, things have changed. I have begun to see quantity and quality of rebloom on varieties that the most discriminating irisarian can treasure. Steve Varner's ILLINI REPEATER, for instance, means business. Its sassy, starchy blooms are not the widest, but the form is good, and it is well held on an elegant stalk. The coloration is a mellow plicated marvel: it is an improvement over its appealing dad - (maybe I should say pollen parent -- this sounds odd!) MEMPHIS LASS. I love it.

And then came Mr. Gibson's Avonbank introduction RACY RED.... wow! Guesting this has been a real treat. The breadth and delectable form of the flower should delight the most finicky judge. The rich red tones provide come hither that is trebled on close inspection with its wealth of intriguing details. It has been dependable in the autumn with no special TLC. A ruffled red! If it will just stalk a little taller, I'll have to call it the best thus far.

Perhaps there are other modern remontants that are equally dependable and lovely that I have not grown. Perhaps some that I can't count on are superb in other climates and with better gardeners. At any rate, ILLINI REPEATER and RACY RED have proven themselves to me. They are among the best TBs in the spring beside the "oncens" and I have faith that they will give me another lovely autumn.

Yes, faith ...that such irises are portents of the future, in which any gardener, offered two equally good varieties, will select, of course, the one that will bloom several times a year without any extra effort on his part. Why not? And if the RIS ever wants a cheerleader, I will be the first to apply.

(Note: RACY RED (J.Gibson'73) introduced by Avonbank Iris Gardens, Radford, Virginia)

HYPOCRITIC OATH  
Donald Saxton

I'm going to stop being a hypocrite. For several years I have been acting like an expert on reblooming irises and all the while I haven't been able to grow them well enough to get good rebloom in my own garden. I've given several talks on reblooming irises telling others all about how to grow them, but I can't do it myself. I have about 35 "reblooming" varieties and many seedlings, but in the best year only ten plants have bloomed in the fall and not all of those had bloomed earlier in the Spring. Several of my newer varieties won't increase, let alone bloom.

I know what most of my problems are, but I suspect not all of them. Weather is the number one problem. Here in northern Alabama we have long hot summers .... sometimes four months of 90 degree days. This makes it tough for the reblooming plant to continue growth thru the summer months. Exposed rhizomes sometimes cook a little I think. We get an average yearly rainfall of about 49 inches, but it is never evenly distributed throughout the year. There is almost always a very wet spell in the spring and a very dry spell in the summer. The soil several inches down, under the reblooming beds, stays damp well past the Spring bloom season and promotes rot. The number two problem is our heavy clay soil which holds moisture when wet and bakes hard as concrete when dry. The number three problem is insects: aphids, red spiders, borers, and this year a new one, plant lice.

I am learning to live with these problems thru mulching, improving drainage, watering, cultivating, remaking the soil, spraying etc. I am beginning to experiment with fertilizing and I am thinking about ways to provide partial shade in the Summer (without creating an unsightly garden). I'm not sure whether I have identified all my problems and whether my attempts to solve those I have identified are adequate. The solutions are beginning to run me ragged, leaving insufficient time for other things. I'm not giving up rebloomers: I'll keep trying to find the right way to grow them under the conditions in my garden. I am, however, going to quit preaching until I can practice (growing rebloomers as they should be grown), and put an end to this hypocrisy.

BREEDING FOR REBLOOMERS IN OHIO  
Horace Wright

In making crosses for rebloomers in this climate, I find I am much more limited in Iris that can be used for parents than what can be used in warmer climates. This means we cannot use many of the quality Iris that rebloom elsewhere. I estimate that here we have a growing season of about 163 days. We do have a group of introductions by Dr. Percy Brown introduced in the sixties that are hardy, well branched and some with strong clear colors. I have quite a few seedlings from these that I still use in crossing.

Gibson Girl is another Iris that has done much to help, as it seems to carry strong reblooming tendencies.

Three of my first four reblooming introductions were LADY MOON X GIBSON GIRL. GUIDING STAR, SNOW GODDESS and HAPPY BIRTHDAY all have produced rebloomers here and seem to carry good quality also.

Out of a row of seedlings (GUIDING STAR X FRILLY FRINGES) I had six rebloomers of which I still have three of the better ones. They all carry lace edges.

Of my own introductions, FINAL FLING has proven to be the best as a parent. It has size, branching and broad falls. I have many seedlings from it. It also seems to carry many of the better qualities to its seedlings. It produces seed freely and the pollen, although sometimes scarce, seems to be fertile.

While some Iris hybridizers from all parts of the country are striving for better rebloomers for their regions, we find the farther north they are, the fewer the iris that can be used in their crosses, especially quality iris.



A LETTER FROM AN ENTHUSIASTIC GROWER OF REBLOOMING IRIS  
TO MR. DUDLEY CARSON

15250 Friends St.  
Pacific Palisades, Calif.  
May 2, 1973

Mr. Dudley W. Carson,  
4995 Center Way,  
Eugene, Oregon, 97405

Dear Mr. Carson:

Thanks for your informative letter about the Reblooming Iris Society. I am a member of the Southern California Iris Society and regret that this does not qualify me for membership. The editor of their bulletin is a near neighbor of mine and their bulletin is full of reblooming information directly applicable to the mild climate California coastal strip from Santa Cruz southward to San Diego. My garden is in a practically frost free area and here some varieties such as RUTH'S LOVE or CASCADE PASS will bloom 12 months of the year. Many varieties will bloom 3 or 4 times a year. The old CRIMSON KING or IRIS KOCHII will bloom 12 months here. We have a fine January iris show at the arboretum in Arcadia and I can assure that except for a very few cold country medians the iris quality matches that of the spring show. Iris such as BABBLING BROOK, SHIPSHAPE and many others top notchers are reliable rebloomers in this area. The San Diego people boast that they could put on a bearded iris show any day of the year.

The Schreiner, Cooley and Wild iris catalogs irritate me. They virtually ignore rebloom. I think that rebloomers are the coming thing even in cold areas. Thirty years ago I grew about every rebloomer available in the catalogs, dwarfs and intermediates only in my two gardens outside of Washington, D.C. in Maryland. I bloomed every variety every year and never had any cut down by frost. One year there was a light snow in October or early November and it did not hurt the irises at all, an unusual sight. People are funny however. I was once in Prof. Parker's iris breeding patch in his backyard in Washington, D.C. I was with the Kellogg family, a commercial New England iris family of the Nesmith period. I told of my fine results with the rebloomers. It was a faux pas. Prof. Parker got red in the

face and trembled with indignation. He said that irises belong in the spring and that whenever his seedlings bloomed in the fall he always ran for a hoe and immediately chopped out the offender!

In my very small space devoted to iris with about two dozen rebloomers I have 12 months of iris bloom, one, two or even four varieties per month. Nearly all stalks are cut for the house or office since even in retirement I am at the University six days a week. I am putting some good reblooming iris in the Botanic Garden of the University. (I was assistant director the 27 years I was here.) I am also putting in some good modern *hemerocallis*.

I am shortly giving a talk before the University Women's Garden Club on reblooming iris and reblooming daylilies. In our zone we can bloom many of the former and some of the latter through the winter. I will gladly give the same talk without fee all over the greater west Los Angeles area in the hope of creating interest in these two subjects. So very few people know the real story and the daylily story has never been in print. I recently joined the Pacific Palisades Garden Club solely in the hope of creating some local interest in daylilies and iris. I plan to pass out my surplus of good things in the hope that some will get hooked and join the appropriate societies. My motives are selfish: I want many good local gardens to visit. I am not a great traveler to see novelties.

The AIS Bulletin is in the University Library and I have read it in recent years and have even gone through some of the back files after retirement. I see no reason to join the society. I grow only a few non-reblooming varieties because I do not know of a comparable color in the rebloomers. For instance, a fine brown without a name which I got from a neighbor.

I am not surprised that the iris society is languishing. With rising land taxes most of us are living on smaller and smaller lots. Every square foot must pay off. Azaleas are definitely pushing out iris and other flowers in Pacific Palisades. Planted with peat they invariably succeed and some varieties, in particular one white, are almost everblooming. You rarely see an iris in a front yard in this town, but if you do it is often a fine one. I suppose it is from the old Milliken, Lyon or Coombs commercial gardens of 25 years ago.

There really should not be a Reblooming Iris Society of the AIS. The same material should be well edited and made the central part of each and every issue. There should be more emphasis on the early medians. Also on the very late varieties. The convention system and presidents cup tends to bunch varieties at a peak which is a mistake. The Texans could either grow the lates in shade or omit them entirely.

There should be more emphasis on the beardless, the spurias, the Japanese, the siberians, tectorum, stylosa or unquicularis varieties, etc. I grew many of these back east. I even wrote and published an article on the Louisiana iris after I came to California. The late Ira Nelson was once a student of mine.

I agree with you about the great pleasure of breeding. In Maryland I grew seedlings of both iris and daylilies and I can testify that each early morning inspection of first blooming seedlings beats Las Vegas or the racetracks. It is the ultimate dimension in gardening and I really feel sorry those gardeners who have not experienced it. There are two vacant lots back of me and two unused backyards on either side of me. I am sure I could rent or even use without payment some or all of this land for breeding. The obstacle is watering. Ecologically I am in a desert altho I am on a two hundred foot cliff over the ocean and my humidity is high. There is a constant sea wind from the west which blows away smog, but you really can't believe the amount of watering I have to do for daylilies. Iris take less, but I never intend to tackle the breeding of remontant iris. I am 68 years old. Actually I doubt if we need to do any breeding of rebloomers for our peculiar limited coastal climate zone. I think that all we need to do is to grow in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, or San Diego test gardens under optimal watering and fertilization the introductions of those breeders who line-breed for great vigor, Hinkle, Ghio, Keppel, Babson, to name a few. A few of their introductions from certain parents seem to produce fine rebloomers for this climate. In time we will get about all the color combinations and types we will want.

Even some of the varieties listed as reliable for California do not make it in my oceanside garden. COMMENTARY is an example and this one reblooms and is a wonderful iris. It has bloomed itself out in my garden and I may not have stock of it. It was also very short and weak in Dodo Denny's garden last year. She intends to get new stock and try again. I shall probably throw

in the sponge. There are just too many others I would like to grow. In my experience, all iris listed as rebloomers in the cold country will rebloom here but some of these stay dormant eight or nine months of the year and tend to get rot during this period. I grow all my iris in raised beds as my soil is very tight and impermeable. If I keep my iris growing all year, I use nitrogen with caution, and water by inspection with a trowel. I never have trouble with rot and I use no fungicide. We are very cool all year near the ocean but never get enough real cold for some commercial iris varieties which never can hope to make it.

Some of my iris friends doubtless belong to the reblooming section and I shall have a look-see at Dr. Zurbrigg's sheet. If I want it shall be willing to join the AIS to get it for my file. In the meantime the Los Angeles and San Diego people are producing more information than I can ever hope to use in my present garden.

You mentioned Lloyd Zurbrigg in your letter. I think that Zurbrigg's CHIMERA is a most unusual and fine iris. I also have his GRAND BAROQUE but it has not yet rebloomed for me. I am convinced that he and some others now have good proven parents for breeding rebloomers. I am hoping that the remarkably fine new reblooming whites such as EARLY SNOWBIRD and CASCADE PASS will be recessives and good breeders and will repeat the iris history in breeding of SNOW FLURRY.

Thanks so much for your very good and informative letter, Mr. Carson. You are doing a very good job as membership chairman for the Reblooming Section. I might even join a round robin some day if the right people in the California coastal zone were in it. Some time ago I told Sid DuBose of Melrose Gardens that a reblooming iris would win the Dykes. BABBLING BROOK is considered a reliable rebloomer in this area. SUMMER PINK is a Kansas iris. The color, and form are fine. The size and substance are fine on winter bloom. The branching is unfortunately very crowded which I solve by cutting out a bud or flower here or there. I can conceive of a Kansas or Nebraska rebloomer getting the Dykes also, but I think we shall have to wait and be patient and interest some more potential Zurbriggs or Prof. Smiths. Yes the bearded iris people do mystify me.

Sincerely,

V.T. Stoutemyer

# 1972 REBLOOMER REPORT

Dr. E. Currier McEwen

(Copied from THE REVIEW of the Society of Japanese Irises)

During each of recent summers I have been pleased to see rebloom in 1% to 2% of our seedling Japanese irises. During the 1972 season, rebloom was striking. We had discarded most of the seedlings in the fall of 1971, leaving 56 good-sized 4 to 7 year old plants and of these 23, or 41% rebloomed. Unfortunately, I did not think of recording the plants and the amount of bloom and rebloom in time to get this information for all but do have it for six of the plants as follows:

<u>CULTIVAR</u>	<u>FIRST BLOOM</u>		<u>REBLOOM</u>	
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Scapes</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Scapes</u>
62/R13 (2)	7-5-72	12	8-10-72	12
63/6 (2)	"	18	"	9
66/3 (4)	"	4	"	1
66/3 (8)	"	14	"	6
68/25 (1)	"	5	"	2
68/26 (5)	"	3	"	4

Dates are approximate peaks of bloom.

Most of the plants were from seeds received from Dr. Shuichi Hirao and Mr. W.A. Payne. Unfortunately my knowledge of their pedigrees is very incomplete but for what it may be worth I give below such information as I have for these six cultivars:

62/R13(2) is a very double, flaring, deep blue-purple with yellow signals from mixed seeds given me by Mr. Payne.

63/6(2) is a large lavender-pink, single with wide, pendant falls, from mixed seed sent by Dr. Hirao.

63/3(4) and (8) are siblings from seeds sent by Dr. Hirao from a cross of World's Delight x "White Higo of good form" (Dr. Hirao's words). (4) is a double, flaring, reddish with white veining. (8) is a large, flaring double white with yellow signals.

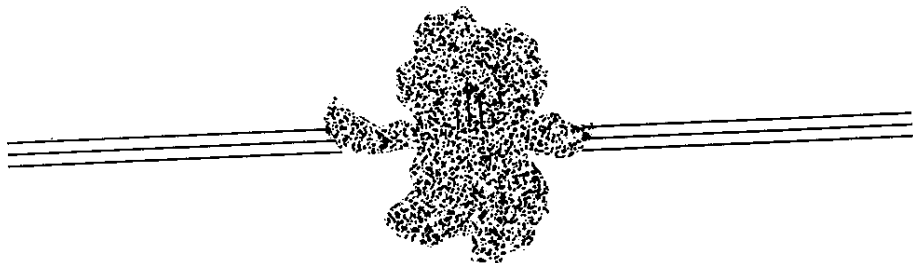
68/25 (1) is a flaring double, dark blue with white streaking from two marbled blue seedlings from seed sent by Dr. Hirao.

68/26(5) is a single white of moderate size and distinguished by its pure color with no apparent yellow signals. Its parents were 66/6, a seedling from a cross of an Edo variety - ("White Higo with red edges, 6 falls") x marbled blue parent of 68/26(1).

Four of these plants had two distinctly separated periods of bloom. The other two, 62/R13(2) and 68/26(1), also had two bloom periods but these were less sharply separated because they both sent up scapes successively so that they could almost be called continuous bloomers.

Why there was so much rebloom in 1972 I cannot imagine. Certainly the gene pool from which these seedlings came must be similar to that of many standard cultivars in commerce. So far as environmental factors are concerned there was relatively little snow during the previous winter by Maine standards and the temperature had often been below 0 degrees F. The spring had been cold and so foggy and wet that peas and corn rotted in the ground and many Siberian irises buds became so mildewed they could not open. Since the Japanese irises were not yet in bud, they were not affected that way and perhaps the unusual amount of moisture was to their liking. I must add, however, that the second half of the summer was unusually dry. One other possible factor was the greater space the plants had. All were in seedling rows and had been rather crowded until I dug up and discarded a great many in the fall of 1971.

I will make careful note during the 1973 season to see if these plants will rebloom again or if the 1972 experience was a one-time phenomenon.





# REBLOOMING IRIS NOTES

V.T. Stoutemyer

May 1, 1973

- AUTUMN SNOWDRIFT - color not pure, I discarded.
- AUTUMN ROSYCHEEKS - a fine performer, I don't quite like the haft pattern but it is a good iris.
- BIG SUR - I cannot get enthusiastic about the color of any blue bearded iris but I shall always grow a few. This is really fine and a most dependable rebloomer.
- CAYENNE CAPERS - a real beauty. Although I am not exactly a plicata fan, I would not be without this. The very best in all ways.
- CHIMERA - this rebloomed on a summer planted rhizome and is a real beauty with much individuality. On April bloom the stalk was so short that the flowers were down in the foliage and were ruined. Will move to a sunnier spot and carefully prepare the soil. Odd color.
- COMMENTARY - a lovely, lovely iris and a fine rebloomer, too good in fact. I think that it has bloomed out and that I will lose stock. It is definitely poor in Dodo Denny's garden and her culture is superb. If she makes it I shall try again sometime.
- GIBSON GIRL - attractive and fully equal to Cayenne Capers in performance. Will keep. A wine and yellow plicata.
- GREEN DRAGON - so ugly it is interesting. I often use it for arrangements. It was dormant for about 8 months last year but did not rot. Some of the cold country medians do this for me. Fertilizer and water do not wake it up. When it does grow increase is good. I still have some stock but shall not keep it.
- JULY BEAUTY - this was such a good grower and multiple repeater both summer and in the cold months that I thought it might be a valuable breeder. My hunch was right as it did produce ULTRA ECHO. It was so lacking in substance that it looked like an iris only once, in a cool period of the year as I remember. I still have a plant in the Botanic Garden in case I meet some one who wants to breed remontant iris.
- SKY QUEEN - really fine in every way and is much like BIG SUR.

- SUMMER PINK - a wonderful remontant of finest habits and blooms also at other times of the year. I really would like to see what it would do with ample stock. The color is a lovely apricot pink. The flowers are twice as large on winter bloom. The only fault is crowded branching. I always cut out a few buds or flowers.
- WHOLE CLOTH - this has never rebloomed here and has not done too well in the spring. A total flop. I like the blue amoena color pattern very much.



The Iris LITTLE STRANGER  
Lloyd Zurbrigg

Last autumn your editor received correspondence from the midwest indicating that LITTLE STRANGER was identical with LORELEI. This spring similar correspondence has come from the east indicating that LITTLE STRANGER is identical with AUTUMN ELF. It is important that if either of these allegations is true, that it be brought to light.

However, one feature would still remain unaccounted for. LITTLE STRANGER reblooms almost constantly in several locations; neither of the varieties named does so. Therefor even if an identification is made, LITTLE STRANGER would still be a distinct clone, because of its reblooming habits. It might be a mutation expressing itself in growth habit, rather than a change in the color of the blossom.

Pending any positive identification, and even following it, if the growth patterns remain disparate, LITTLE STRANGER should not be called by any other name. Neither LORELEI nor AUTUMN ELF has ever given summer bloom in any quantity as far as we know. Any help or information in this matter will be deemed helpful. Someone might also check to see if LORELEI is identical with AUTUMN ELF.



# Robin Feathers

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Editorial Note: Norman Noe, our Robin Chairman plucks the most interesting comments from the many reblooming robins for our reader's enjoyment.

## CLIMATE EFFECTS & HEREDITY

Edwin Rundlett, Staten Island, N.Y. I've pondered a great deal about the causes of flowering, and read in several Plant Physiology books on the subject. But even leading scientists find conflicting evidence requiring still more study. According to my own thinking, every plant feature is brought about through heredity. To simplify language we write of genes representing the initiative factors, even though nobody has seen a gene. Since the bearded iris is derived from a number of species of iris, and since these have differing length-of-day (or night) requirements; also differing temperature and moisture needs, it would seem to me that tracing all flowering initiative to a single gene would be a bit difficult. I would rather conclude that, since genes within a chromosome influence each other, flowering is due to the interaction of a number of genes. One could be dominant, however.

Richard E. Gibson, Sacramento, Calif. Discussion on plant growth and temperature always brings me back to the way some will grow through the summer while others go dormant. Some will also bloom in the heat of summer while others wait until the cooler weather of fall. As I have said before, we must know which will grow through the summer and establish this trait in our breeding stock so that we will get rebloom in climates with a limited bloom season and will get perhaps everbloom in ideal climates from the very same variety.

Mildred G. Mygrant, Richmond, Calif. In this so-called ideal climate for rebloomers, fall bloomstalks come up as the weather gets cooler, with sharper night air and October coolness.

### CULTURE

Lloyd Zurbrigg, Radford, Va. When an iris grows way out with only one fan at the end of the rhizome, I have known success in getting more side increase, by severing it from the matrix rhizome. I have also heard of nicking a Lost Chord seedling. Both methods seem to be trying to shake the plant out of a self-complacent state!

### VARIETAL COMMENTS & BREEDING FOR REBLOOMERS

Horace Wright, Xenia, Ohio. Our iris are thru for the year (1972). I didn't have too many to bloom but a great many had stalks coming. We had a dry summer with a very wet fall. In early September, I had a seedling in the field to bloom. It was a nice pink from a cross POINT LACE X R8-01 (MID-WEST GEM x CHANTILY) x HERITAGE. EMMA LOUISA sent up a stalk but the frost got it.

Raymond G. Smith, Bloomington, Ind. Despite rain, cold, and lack of sunshine, we had a pretty fair summer (1972). I had a beautiful new orange-tangerine bearded white that is by far the best rebloomer in that class that I have ever seen. Also I have a number of pink-orange blends that really glow. They are out of rebloomers, so it shouldn't be long until one of them makes the registerable class.

Charles V. Applegate, Perrysville, Ohio. I guess I can say our fall bloom season ended just yesterday (October 25, 1972) with the most beautiful iris of the fall season. We had a couple very heavy frosts which killed all rebloom (but one). I had a stalk coming on SUMMER SUNSHINE which I was eager to see so when the first frost hit we put a tall waste basket over it with much newspaper on top and some old coats. It seemed to get through the frost but the weather stayed so cold and rainy that it didn't make any

progress I could detect. Then when the second frost came I cut the stalk to try to open it indoors. It was in water nearly a week and finally opened last Sunday with two brilliant blooms. When cut only a tiny tip of color was showing. The blooms were slightly smaller than the dimensions given in the description but color I hope was near normal. The form was gorgeous and it had the most beautiful and consistent ruffling I've seen. I just got this in late July from the originator. There are about 5 increases, a couple large enough to maybe bloom in spring, I certainly want to try crosses in spring. This is definitely one of the most beautiful rebloomers I've ever seen. The color is a coppery gold-smooth in standards. Falls are white in center blending to lemon yellow, then the copper gold color with heavy stippling of cinnamon around the edge where the ruffling is. There is a narrow stripe clear down through the center of the falls. The base of the standards have a bit of cinnamon and the vivid gold beard is touched on the tips of the hairs with a bit of cinnamon. The falls are wide and flared. Altogether it is a very beautiful iris and of better and brighter colors than many plicatas. If it proves to rebloom here we've got a new top beauty. The blooms lasted three days on the stalk that was cut a week!

As to other new things among my own seedlings - in late August I had a quite nice white with a very bright tangerine beard from LACED DUET. If this proves a good rebloomer it will be introduced. Also had a nice orchid amoena with very clear, clean color and wide branches. It had 5 blooms open at once. The standards are purest white, the falls orchid and the beard lemon. Quite late I had a stalk coming on a seedling from CHARMED CIRCLE so I potted it and got it to bloom inside. The other parent was SUMMER WHITEWINGS. It had a sturdy stalk rather close branched with white flowers showing a hint of plicata mostly around the haft. Form was that of CHARMED CIRCLE with flare except that the edges of the falls drooped. I hope this is due to being disturbed and does not show up in the garden.

EXCERPTS FROM REBLOOMING ROBIN # 5  
Dorothy Cunningham

Dovie Brady, Dumont, Texas - Usually I have seedlings over an inch high around Christmas when we usually have our first real hard freeze and they will stand our winters just fine, with a bit of protection from the winds. I planted my seeds as usual this fall, but as we began having hard freezes in early November I have not had any germination as yet. . . . . CHABACANO and RED POLISH are dependable here for us. We have some luck with Siberians here, good luck with Spurias but very poor luck with either Japs, or Louisianas. I brought back some little native mountain irises from the Rockies year before last, and they just died of homesickness last summer, without giving me one bloom.

Felix Straw, Dauphin, Pa. - Warm rain, followed by freezing nights, caused even the established iris clumps to heave completely out of the ground. I'm finding a lot of rot, too, just where the bloom stem should be. I fear there will be a shortage of blooms for our show.

Ardeth Bailey, Omaha, Neb. - I mixed up several scoops of 20% phosphate, at least 1 scoop of 60% potash, about 1 1/2 to 2 scoops of bonemeal, just a sprinkling of blood meal (to discourage rabbits) and added it to the kitty's pan which was about half full of litter. Then I mixed in a full gallon can of Cal-Aska and put between clumps. When it rains it will gradually seep down thru pine needle mulch and reach root area. Imagine the closest I got to the rhizomes was 4 inches. . . . . I made some little bags of double thickness of net with a drawstring at top and put over my crosses once the flower had closed sufficiently, then my cross was protected.

Felix Straw, Dauphin, Pa. - Concerning sprinkler irrigation versus surface irrigation, I believe that surface irrigation is best for iris. One year I used a hose to water a newly planted bed, trying to simulate rainfall. Never again! The water seemed to stay at the base of the fan and caused rot. The plants grew no better or faster than the ones which received no watering.



Dovie Brady, Dumont, Texas - As I shell my seeds I place them in tiny paper cups, write name of cross on bottom and place open in a tray and set on top shelf of freezer, adding as they ripen. Then in late August, I thaw them out, place in small baby food jars and cover with water with a strong dash of clorox added, then when completely swelled I plant in September in good soil (sterilized) in old milk cartons with bottom out and sink in soil in a frame in yard.

CONTRARY TO EARLIER REPORTS, SOUTHERN SPY  
WAS NOT INVOLVED AT WATERGATE. HE ADMITS,  
HOWEVER, TO HAVING A DOUBLE MISSION \*

FEATHERS FROM ROBIN "CLIMATE U.S.A"  
Lloyd Zurbrigg

Frank Sterbak, Buffalo, N.Y. - Will have more seedlings to plant this year and can truthfully say by putting them out in the cold frame for three or four weeks, then under the lights indoors, has been better for me than ordinary outdoor germination for the last three years. One other thing I've found is not to space the seeds but put them in altogether, (each cross). Germination is better, or at least it has been for me.

The best way I've found to send pollen is to pick pollen around 9.30 in the morning. Pick the stamens the second day after the bloom opens, as it is fully ripe by then. Place the stamens on a sheet of paper, evenly spaced, and leave to dry for 24 hours. Then fold the paper, forming a small envelope, tape it shut, and ship.

Back in 1959 I had a bed made in a circle with a tree in the middle. There were 150 iris planted in the circle; half got morning sun, the other half afternoon sun. They did just as well as those that were planted where they got full sun all day. Those getting the morning sun, if dark-colored, were never scorched or burnt by the sun.

Clare Roberts, Ontario, Calif. - There are a number of once-breds that have a tendency to rebloom here. My old PERSIAN PATTERN is one, as is WITCH DOCTOR, MOHRNING HAZE. Several blocks from here LADY MOHR blooms nearly all winter long. I don't know what the people do to it to keep it going, but it is tall, strong and lovely during November and December.

I think that the dividing line between spring bloom and rebloom should be more local. For instance, I will have "winter bloom" on iris that for you would bloom in the fall. Consequently, I can't call that iris a rebloomer if it blooms in January instead of November. Another instance is TWICE BLESSED. It has bloomed as many as three times in the first six months of the year for me, yet by present definition cannot be called RE. I know there must be a dividing line, but I do think that location must be figured into that dividing line, too. NORMALLY we have approximately 320 frost-free days per year. Winter lows over a ten-year period have ranged from 27 to 23 degrees. These are considerably higher than in neighboring zone 18 and that fact is what makes the big difference.

I find that slugs and snails are AWFUL pests around the TB's. A plant of WHITE DRAPES was almost completely consumed by slugs before I could get some bait around it. Now, why that plant and not any of those near it?

Carol Jensen, Belvidere, Ill. - I like LEORA KATE as a parent tho' I haven't gotten any improvement over itself in any of its seedlings as yet. One from LEORA KATE X GRAND BAROQUE had stalks again this fall but too late to bloom. It is a lacy one in yellow-green. LEORA KATE doesn't even try to rebloom here. I think it should be tested in other places than the originator's garden before being introduced but on the other side of the coin we cannot lay on so many

restrictions that we discourage our hybridizers in their endeavors. It takes both hybridizers and buyers to keep our Reblooming Iris Society moving forward.

Kathleen McKinney, Vallejo, Calif. - So far I have 10 seedlings from HAPPY BIRTHDAY X SIGNATURE, and one or two each from LEORA KATE X CREAM CREST, 1A X WINTER OLYMPICS, WINTER OLYMPICS X AUTUMN ROSYCHEEKS, BLACK FOREST X SUMMER PINK, and CHERUB CHOIR X AUTUMN ROSYCHEEKS. These were all spring '72 crosses. (written Nov.11,1972.) These seeds were allowed to ripen to their full color, but still plump and then put in moist peat moss in baggies, with the cross tag and number stapled on. They were then lined up in shoe boxes and stored in the bottom of the refrigerator for two months. They were then put in our sunroom in 70 plus degree temperatures; (sometimes slightly cooler). They began to sprout almost immediately. I'm greatly pleased by this method, not only because of the rapid germination, but because it takes very little space and requires no care which are always plus points.

It seems to me as though before rebloomers are introduced they should be sent to gardens in other climates and tested for rebloom. I intend to do this myself before I introduce anything, when I'm lucky enough to get that far. My best fall blooming varieties that rebloomed this year were LEORA KATE, PREAMBLE, FALL MAJESTY and TECATE.

Johnny Skinner, Yorktown, Texas (Southern Director RIS) - (Jan.1973)

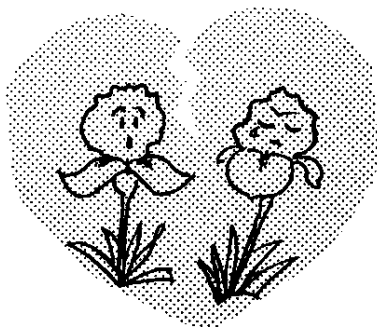
We are very optimistic about spring bloom because for the first time in years we can honestly say we've had an old fashioned winter. It began early, and at this point we've enjoyed a good snow - the last was in 1960.

In this area a half day of hot Texas sun is almost too ample for iris. It is not disease that causes our iris loss. Mostly it is humidity and heat. I will not give up! If I saw one iris in bloom a year I'd keep on. There has to be some way they will bloom more here, and I intend to find it if it is possible.

Raymond Scheele, Long Island, N.Y. - I cannot agree with Frank about shade, that there is little difference between full sun field grown, and same variety with three or four hours of shade a day. I've tested about 15-20 varieties and with one exception had very noticeable difference -- less in the shade.

I would propose something on this order. An "Re" cannot be placed in official registration of AIS unless the variety had successfully repeated in two test gardens, one a warm-winter climate, the other a cold-winter climate. If a person wants to introduce a variety prior to the testing he may do so. When the testing is successfully completed, it will be placed in a special section of the annual registration list, and this would be incorporated in the 10-year summary. In the test situation, I would prescribe some designated shade to test the "Re" factor.

*Sounds of Silence - ruffled white*



"I'M SORRY, DEAR, BUT YOU DON'T  
REBLOOM. IN THE AUTUMN, I'M  
OKAY AND YOU'RE NOT OKAY!"

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