

REBLOOMING IRIS RECORDER



THE REBLOOMING IRIS RECORDER

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

EDITORIAL



Your editor called the 1970's "The Decade of the Reblooming Iris". This year has strongly confirmed him in this belief, and many statements in this issue will bear out this truth. The gap between the reblooming and the once-blooming irises has nearly disappeared, and many serious iris judges are turning to the reblooming irises with enthusiasm and deep respect.

The 1974 Convention in Roanoke has been planned so as to feature our spread in climates of the Blue Ridge Chapter. Radford and Blacksburg, a full week later than Roanoke, have all the median guests and early tails. If the season is "normal" our gardens will be at the peak of intermediate season with early tails open. If the season is very late, it will be the peak of the SDE's. If the season is very early, it will hit the peak of the tails.

Your Editor and his hard-working wife have set out to feature the reblooming irises along with the guests. Since most of these bloom rather early, we count on our gardens to be the first Convention gardens to feature reblooming irises in their own right. There are several hundreds of reblooming-bred seedlings, including medians. On May 18 of this year, nearly half of these were already in bloom, so we count on an interesting display of these. Only a few of the Convention guests are rebloomers, so we bought a good many new remontants this year, and have placed these in two new display beds. It has been our observation over several years that the remontants "catch on" quickly, and give good spring bloom the first year, unless they have already bloomed a few weeks after planting. Only MAGIC MEMORIES did this, and what a tremendous display it gave in late October! The rest seemed to know we wanted them to save up for next May.

We are pleased to welcome back Bob Hubley in our midst. He and Ellie have returned to their home in La Mirada, California and are busy trying to get their garden like it used to be.

Your secretary-treasurer, Richard Gibson, has kindly consented to edit the next issue of the Recorder, in order to allow us more gardening time in the spring, although Margaret will type and lay it out for the printers. You will remember the excellent job Richard did on the joint issue with the Medianite. Our thanks also to all who contributed to this issue and urge other members to contribute articles on subjects of interest to the growers and hybridizers of remontant irises.

REGION 19 FALL IRIS SHOW
Betty Wood

A show of fall-blooming irises, sponsored by the Garden State Iris Society of Region 19 was held in the Community Room of the Trenton Times Building on Sunday afternoon, October 7th. There were fifty-five stalks entered and the show was attended by about the same number of people as iris stalks.

The Queen-of-Show silver trophy was won by Frank Jones for his beautifully branched bright yellow seedling J-69-65. The Runner-Up was J-68-E, also a Jones seedling, a border with clear yellow standards and pale brown falls.

Although most of the other ribbons were also taken by Frank, who grows most of his irises now in a test garden at Mercer College, three first-place awards went to Ole and Bertha Meldgaard of Quaker Bridge Iris garden. These awards were for September Buttercup, Summer Whitewings, and Summer Fantasy, that had eight flowers blooming on the stalk.

Twelve of the visitors to the show were the lucky winners of bags of fall-blooming irises, donated as door prizes by Quaker Bridge Iris Garden. These included the Meldgaard prizewinners.

Mr. Louis Farley gave an illustrated talk on irises at 2.30p.m. emphasizing especially the fall-blooming varieties. All of the visitors to the show attended the talk and there was lively discussion following its presentation.

REBLOOM IN JAPANESE AND SIBERIAN IRISES

Currier McEwen
South Harpswell, Maine

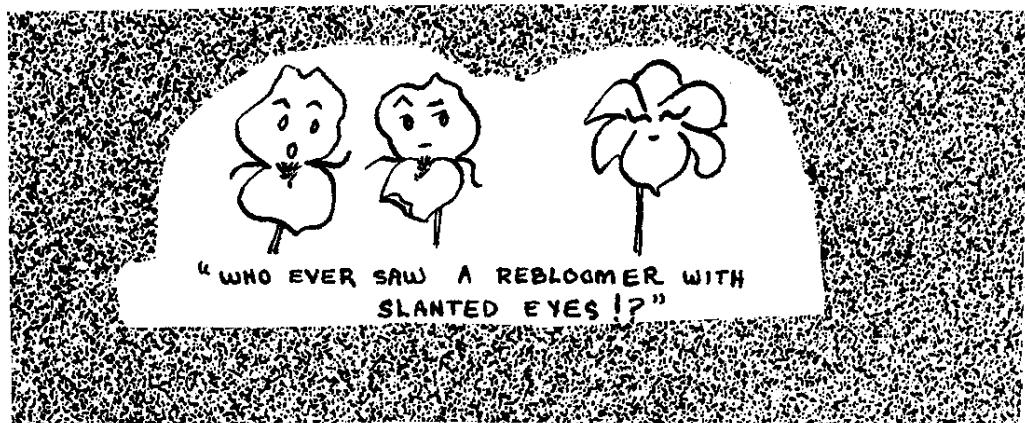
In the July 1973 issue of the Reblooming Iris Recorder there was reprinted a note I had previously written for The Review of the Society for Japanese Irises regarding an extraordinary occurrence in the 1972 season when 23 of our 56 clumps of Japanese irises, or 41%, rebloomed - some with as many scapes and buds as at the first period of bloom. This was most unexpected because previously rebloom had occurred from year to year on only 6 to 7% of the plants. Because of that experience all plants in that garden were left unmoved in the fall of 1972 and in 1973 to permit another season's observation.

The 1973 experience was in sharp contrast to that of 1972 for although first bloom was normally abundant only one plant, less than 1%, rebloomed. Since this is less than the usual experience it suggests that the extraordinary rebloom the year before may have resulted in exhaustion.

The 1972 season was marked also by unusual rebloom in our Siberian irises. Two of my diploid seedlings rebloomed even more freely than the old reliable MY LOVE and 5 others had enough rebloom to make a worthwhile show. Again, 1973 was disappointing for although MY LOVE did well as usual, my two seedlings which had seemed so promising in 1972 showed not a single rebloom scape in 1973.

As stated in the earlier article, the reasons for the unusual rebloom of 1972 and lack of it in 1973 are obscure. "Exhaustion" after the abundant show of 1972 may have contributed to the poor experience of 1973. Climatic conditions may also have played a role. Both preceding winters had temperatures ranging from 10 degrees below to 10 degrees above zero Fahrenheit and less than the usual amount of snow cover. Both springs were extremely foggy extending into August but fog was accompanied by much rain in 1972 whereas it was not in 1973. Both seasons were excessively dry after mid-July. The difference in the amount of rainfall may have been a factor in the rebloom experience since both Japanese

and Siberian irises are water loving plants.



Having discussed the experience of the past two seasons let me make some general comments about rebloom in these irises. First, I think there has been far too little attention paid by Japanese and Siberian iris hybridizers to the development of rebloomers. My experience with Japanese irises is too meagre to permit comment on efforts being made in that direction or on reliable rebloomers, if any, which may already be available. In the case of Siberians, MY LOVE, as noted above, can be relied on to give rebloom year after year; and although I have had VIOLET REPEAT only one season it has rebloomed heavily and I gather can be counted on to do so yearly. Others, such as the two seedlings I mentioned above, rebloom occasionally in abundance; and others, such as WHITE MAGNIFICENCE and several other Kitton cultivars, and our own DREAMING YELLOW plus some seedlings, rebloom occasionally and sparsely. All these are hybrids of the 28 chromosome group of Siberians but I believe there are one or two 40 chromosome rebloomers also which I have not yet seen.

It should be noted that rebloom in both Japanese and Siberian irises differs from that in bearded irises in that it

occurs after only 2 or 3 weeks' rest. Thus it tends to prolong the blooming season instead of creating a "second season".

During the past two years I have been working toward the development of more Siberian rebloomers with the hope also of starting a line of reblooming tetraploids; and will attempt the same with Japanese irises as soon as I can identify some with strong reblooming tendencies.

If any reader of the Recorder knows of others working toward rebloom in beardless irises or is aware of Japanese or Siberian irises which rebloom, I will greatly appreciate having that information.

REBLOOMING IRIS ROBIN REPORT
October 19, 1973

Since the last report on February 22, 1973, we have lost four members, two in each of two robins. The other directors have not reported any changes in the route lists.

New members are Mrs. Robert Jensen of Bellevue, Nebraska; Mrs. Lucile E. Larson of Wayne, Nebraska; and Mrs. August Yoerg of Ulster Park, N.Y.

This gives us a total of 60 people in 23 states participating in the program, with 6 people belonging to 2 robins.

Respectfully submitted,
Norman H. Noe
Division Chairman of
Reblooming Iris Robins

Editor's Note: Norman's address until April 1, 1974 will be
2090 Montreat Circle, Birmingham, Ala. 35216.

A REPORT ON THE TESTING OF SOIL AND AIR TEMPERATURE
AND IT'S EFFECTS ON THE REBLOOMING IRIS

Bob Schoof

This report is based on soil and air temperature testing conducted in the Salt Lake Valley during a four year period. Although I am only starting to scratch the surface with so many different problems that affect the growth and blooming of the reblooming iris in this area, I sure hope that I will be able to show that there can be rebloom, even if only for a short time.

With the help of the personnel at the Nation Weather Service, Salt Lake office, this study was completed, and I thank them for their wonderful help, especially Mr. Fern Reid. A very special thanks to Mr. Edwin Rundlett, who had the idea of this testing, and helped me all along the way.

Eleven different areas in my garden were selected for testing single clones of AUTUMN TWILIGHT and FALL PRIMROSE. These two were selected because they are the most reliable for rebloom without any special attention other than watering during the summer. Although some consider these inferior rebloomers as to quality, they give the best showing in the fall for me.

During a four-year period I have found that I can get just about the same percentage of bloom in an area that has morning shade and filtered afternoon sunlight as I can in any area with almost full sunlight. This applies to both spring bloom and rebloom. In the semi-shaded area mentioned above, the blooms last longer, are brighter in color, and set pods more easily than those in full sunlight. However, the seed pods obtained ripened better in the area in full sunlight.

In 1973 I let nature take her course with watering. At the time of writing, no increases have been formed on any of the iris, and I am watching carefully now that the mean temperature has dropped below 50 degrees.

Dr. Caprie of Montana State University has written a fine report on his findings on mean temperature and solar radiation effects on lilacs. He mentions other plants that also time their growth and bloom by these two factors. I have found that the iris also starts its growth when the mean temperature goes above 31 degrees. In the fall the bloomstalk does not freeze until the mean temperature drops below 28 degrees. However, one rebloomer, located close to the cement walk in the front yard will freeze before the mean temperature drops below 28 degrees. The cause is that the bloomstalk can not take the rapid change in temperature caused by the cement walk. The cement retains the heat of the day which is reflexed to the bloomstalk. As the cement cools at night the bloomstalk is plunged into a rapid change of temperature. Another rebloomer some three feet from the cement walk remains unaffected.

A rebloomer mailed in from an area different from one's own is usually slow in blooming, still adjusting to the new area in which it is planted. I have found this to be true even when a plant came from as close as 30 miles away. Rebloomers sent from a warmer area will bloom during the early part of fall, but there are no spring blooms, even when the increases are as large as the main rhizome. I shall quickly add that some of the rebloomers act this way even when they remain in the same climate.

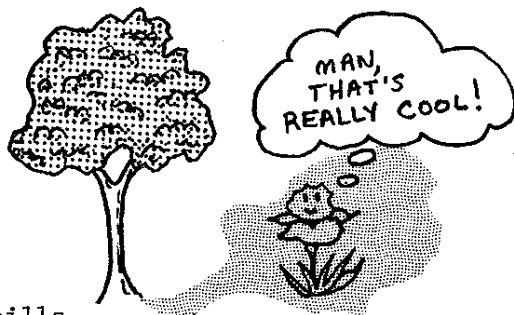
This brings up the question as to when the bloomstalk in an iris is formed. Prof. Metcalf of Montana State University, in a letter to me, stated that he thought the reblooming iris might resemble the everbearing strawberry, forming the buds for fall bloom the previous spring, and for spring bloom the previous fall. In 1972 I dissected sections of different sizes of rhizomes of Gibson Girl, and found no discernible differences in the structure. The question remains an interesting and vital one. A friend of mine wrote: "The bloomstalk, I believe, is formed a year ahead of actual blooming. I gave away some starts, maintaining enough of the plant so that I wouldn't hurt myself, only to find that there were no blooms on mine the following spring, while the pieces given away bloomed!" I have verified this experience myself. I removed some starts from one of my rebloomers, and found that these single divisions bloomed in the fall, while the main plant failed to do so. This seems to me to confirm the hypothesis that the bloomstalk

is set at the time the new increases are set, a year ahead of blooming.

In the eleven different areas in my garden are mini-climates, just as there are micro-climates here in the valley, depending on soil condition, soil covering and elevation. Changes in temperature can be detected within a few hundred yards. The garden can have temperature changes as close as a few feet. Test iris show that earlier bloom can be achieved in one area, "normal" bloom in another, and no bloom at all in still another. A drop of two feet at the extreme end of the back yard affects the bed just above it. Wooden fences, shade trees, cement walks and driveways also affect the iris which are planted close to them.

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is water,
found that
ion-type
gives the best
I live on the foothills
east side of our valley. The
is very good, even too good
summer. Use of the sprinkler-type watering often leaves the
large leaves of the fan bent or broken. A soaker-type device
is much more effective here.



Soil temperature does not present any problems to the iris here. Even when cool weather arrives followed by snow, the soil is still warm enough to cause the snow to melt enough so that a layer of ice is formed between the soil and the snow. The soil at 4" and 8" during the winter is protected by this seal. The soil temperature very seldom goes below 29 degrees at 4" and 30 degrees at 8", and then only for a day or two. Once this seal is broken, then problems occur as the soil becomes exposed to the cold temperature at night. During the four years of testing it has been interesting to note that nature has its own way of protecting shrubs, bushes, and flowers, even if it's not a complete protection. Nature brings snow into the area just before a sharp drop in temperature, thereby protecting the roots.

Now I sit waiting for fall bloom, and wondering how many others are waiting for theirs. The mean temperature has dropped below 50 degrees, and that ought to trigger the fall bloom. Then if warmer weather returns, the stalks will grow faster. If the cooler weather stays, the stalks will grow more slowly. If the temperature drops low enough to stop development, the buds will be held over until spring. If the bloomstalk shoots up at all, even if it is inside the fan when snow arrives, and remains, then it will freeze and eventually rot with the arrival of warm weather.

Another important factor in rebloom is fertilization. There is still much to learn here. I make a circle around the rhizome about a half-inch deep, staying far enough away to allow for new growth. I use a tablespoon of powdered or pellet-type fertilizer in early spring. With every watering or rainfall the fertilizer dissolves a little more, feeding the plant. I hope I have enough time left to find more of the answers about bloom and rebloom in iris.

There should be a way of helping a gardener to know which irises are likely to rebloom in his particular area. We growers should pass along our reports for our own areas. Commercial growers should tell which rebloom for them. Our reports should include the factors of mini-climates caused by buildings, trees, shrubs and walks. Then when gardeners become interested in reblooming iris, we shall see the fruits of our labors.

* * * * MEMBERSHIP BALLOTS * * * *

Your Editors are sorry that the fall issue of the Recorder is reaching you late but there were crucial decisions relating to this issue that had to be made in addition to the busy season for the printer's. For this reason we have extended the date of returning the Symposium Ballot as well as the 1973 Report of Rebloom to January 15, 1974. We recommend to all our readers that they fill these two forms enclosed in the Recorder at once and mail to Richard Gibson. We need everyone's ballot if we want to get a good Symposium Report in the next issue.

FILL YOUR REPORTS OUT NOW NOT LATER

THE IRIS SEASON PAST
Raymond G. Smith

It is the third of November and about sixteen vases of cut irises garnish the limestone ledge around the fireplace. Autumn arrived somewhat tardily this year with four or five nighttime frosts taking the open blossoms of the fields of rebloomers, but there were no freezes that collapsed the new stalks or ruined unopened buds. So Jack Frost has delayed his usual time of visit by about two full weeks.

Today we were visited by Richard Taylor and his mother from Indianapolis. Richard added about a thousand dollars of new irises to his plantings this season so that gives some estimate of his liking for irises. First we viewed some colored pictures that Richard had taken in the garden here last spring, then some slides taken over the past four weeks. Then to the garden to see what was new.

Each new season brings its own surprises and the season past was no exception. Some issues ago the present editor of the Recorder wrote a special article in which he described some successes in the first generation crosses between rebloomers and non-rebloomers. Now a few additional names can be added, for in the seedling beds, (and these are seedlings germinating in April 1973), were stalks from such crosses. Most notable were three stalks directly from *Winter Olympics*. Also there was a cross between *Moonlight Duet* and a non-reblooming seedling, nearly every plant of which showed a bud. One of the stalks that bloomed had three increases which also sent up stalks. This is indeed a "first" for that much precociousness.

Another non-reblooming parent from last year that produced not one but four reblooming seedlings was *Captain Gallant*. Another red with at least two children sending up stalks was *Gypsy Jewels*. *Pacific Panorama*, the blue Dykes Medalist of yesteryear produced a rebloomer by Sea Double. Also the deep black Sable Robe shows one reblooming child. So all together, the evidence indicates that we need not fear outcrosses nearly so much as we had once thought. There is a caveat, however, crosses to some non-rebloomers seem to eliminate any semblance of the trait.

All but one of my fields was transplanted this summer. (I call them fields because they are laid out like corn fields; actually they are only 32' x 120' in size.) This gave a great opportunity to see which liked to be transplanted and which sat and sulked as a result. *Winter Olympics* flourished greatly while *Stepping Out* appeared to be struggling to stay alive. *Cup Race* grew like a weed while *Laurie* may not even survive. Many of the rebloomers like to be transplanted, but *Fall Fulfillment* didn't like it a bit. I was concerned about my '74 introduction *Returning Peace*, but it grew like a weed and put up tall, heavy stalks with multiple buds that stayed in color for several weeks. *Returning Glory* sent up large multiple-branched stalks with flowers that seemed to be even improved by the transplanting.

Anything new colorwise this year? Really not much to date. There were some very dark, clean, ruffled purples much improved over other rebloomers that I have seen in that class, including *Autumn Night*, but of course one bloom does not a rebloomer make. I did learn that it is possible to get plicatas directly from a cross between a variegata and a plicata.

A cross between *Crinoline* and a large rose plicata of mine gave a whole row of tall, vigorous, high quality seedlings in the same color pattern as *Crinoline*. It also produced some muddy spotted horrors that should take the spotted dog contest without half trying.

All in all it was a moderately successful season, but only because the weatherman saw fit to extend it past the usual dates. The first part of the year, from late winter to September was far too wet. Then we had six weeks of no rain whatever, so I guess the fact that the irises rebloomed at all is much to their credit.

And the quality is undoubtedly improving. The rebloomers are steadily approaching the best of the current regular introductions in quality. We still don't have the range of colors, but originally that was the least of our problems. We can now begin to turn our attention to the problem of color, and though we expect never to find the pot of gold, we will find the full spectrum of the rainbow, one end anchored in the spring, the other arching over the summer months and anchored in the fall.

IRIS REBLOOM REPORT
Frank P. Jones, Trenton, New Jersey

The year 1973 has been good for me, as far as reblooming iris go. I was quite surprised to see so many blooming in April. Sixteen varieties bloomed before April was out, some of them in the TB class.

Rebloom began July 2, with a *Deep Dawn* seedling, and bloom has been continuous since. There were eight days between the last of the spring bloom and the beginning of rebloom. It was remarkable how well they stood the summer heat. During the last days of August and the beginning of September there had been no rain to speak of for six weeks and ten straight days of 90 to 98 degree heat.

By the 15th of September there had been 16 named varieties to rebloom and 76 seedlings. After the 15th of September it has been almost like spring. On October 16 a beautiful little, deep purple dwarf began blooming, - eight months from seed. It was from *Twice Blessed* X *Gingerbread Man*.

Two more crosses have furnished first-year bloom. *Summer Pink* X *Dark Vintage* gave a 30" pink; *Summer Fantasy* X *Tan Sun* gave a brown bitone. Many other stalks are in various stages of development in the new seedling bed. How many will make it remains to be seen. There is one pink showing color from a *Helen Trigg* cross. If the fine branching is to be a regular thing in an *Ahead of Times* seedling I have here, I will be very well pleased, -- if only the bloom had a little more substance.

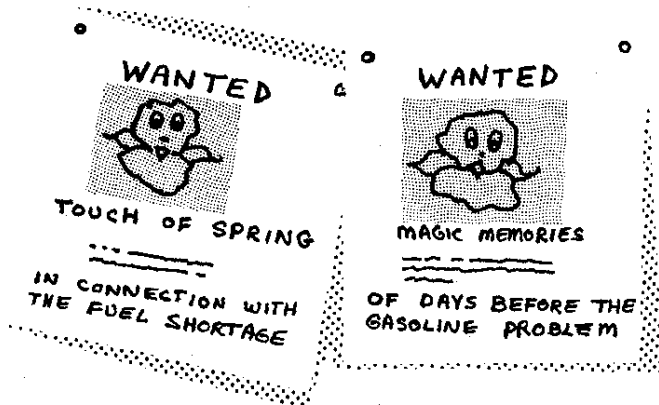
I have made several crosses with Rundlett's fine seedling R-64-23-48R, but the one with *Campus Flirt* appears to be the best. It has given me six rebloomers so far of excellent quality. Most are pink, but a strange, reddish pink.

Horace Wright's median *Bella Rose* was nice to see, as were Charles Applegate's *Touch of Spring* and *Sweet Summer*. Lloyd Zurbrigg's *Perfume Counter* was late, but well worth waiting for. Others that pleased me this fall were: *Bonus*, *Renaissance*, *Second Look*, *Cayenne Capers*, *Preamble*, *Leora Kate* and *Ultra*.

Ahead of Times, a nice orange by Henkelman, was especially pleasing to me. Raymond Smith's *Returning Glory*, (on a loan, in a pot, from a friend) is putting many plain blooms to shame around here with its heavily ruffled, deep pink blooms. Not far behind it is a "not quite so deep a pink seedling", Reynolds 37-H. It was shipped and planted this summer, and it's amazing that it put up such a massive, well-branched stalk under those circumstances. I am anxious to see a large clump of it.

Speaking of large clumps, I have a bed of my *Golden Encore*, with several large clumps in close proximity. It has bloomed continuously since August 3. Many stalks were still blooming when they were cut down by the November 11 freeze. Add to that 98 days of fall bloom about 20 days of spring season, and I can't help but feel we have something that "talks back" to that oft-repeated statement that "iris are something that bloom for a few days in spring and then are gone".

wall——flowers...!



REBLOOM IN THE 1974 CONVENTION BEDS
Lloyd Zurbrigg

Fall bloom has been quite delightful here at Radford. In the display beds at our home, excellent stalks have come on *Autumn Aspen*, (Frank Foster), Jones), *Touch of Spring*, *Artistic Gold*, (Clarence SDB's *Little Blackfoot*, and *Twice Blessed*, (Dorothy on October 21, the first *Memories*, (Hooker Nichols), pronounced ruffling is very plants there is a fine stem had the terminal full of were planted the third week also a pink seedling, J68-44D that has excellent color and

LITTLE
BLACKFOOT



HAS NO
RESERVATION!

Golden Encore, (Frank (Charles Applegate), Denman), and the (Mattie Reinhardt), Dennis). As I write blossom of *Magic* has opened, and its attractive. On three on each, and each color today. These of August. There is (Robert Jeffries) smoothness.

In the Convention plant-College the star performer Dorothy Dennis), an almost constant bloomer from midsummer on. Another median rebloomer is the new *Antique Loveliness*, (Paul R. Smith), a yellow bicolor. *Tea for Two* gave three stems in August, one of the few reblooming table (MTB) iris. *Emma Louisa*, (Eugene Buckles) and *Southern Spy*, (Lloyd Zurbrigg) put in a welcome appearance in October, along with the smooth pink, J68-44-D, from Robert Jeffries. David Merrill, a fellow professor at Radford College is in charge of this planting.

ing at Radford
has been *Bonus*,

The field garden at the home of Buddy and Helen Trigg has been completely reset, with a long period of enforced dormancy, so there is no rebloom except on four rows of new seedlings. A yellow with white in the falls has four stalks open now, (mid October), but does not quite show its two grandparents, *Winter Olympics* and *Music Maker*. There are two novelties from the controversial *O My Goodness*. In these the blending of violet and gold is very subtle and intriguing. Their other parent is a reblooming novelty from *Commentary X Purple Duet*.

The Nesselrodt-on-the-New garden at the home of Mrs. Minor Wine Thomas has over forty varieties in bloom. Apart from

Halloween Party these are all new seedlings. Blue Ridge Chapter Judges agree that a violet with blue beards from *Violet Supreme X Jolly Goliath* is an outstanding new one. Rena Crumpler compares it to *Neptune's Pool* in form. A sibling in redder tones opened today, having its blue beards atop white crests. Both are unusually large, 7 1/2" across, with hafts over 3" wide. An amoena and a neglecta in this same cross have been attractive.

The earliest fall blooms came on two crosses from a very wide chartreuse amoena out of *Grand Baroque*, the other parent being a seedling from Schreiners' *Crinkled Ivory* by a remontant. This chartreuse amoena is coarse, and its stems tend to crook, but it is an outstanding performer of huge size and great substance. Crossed with *Cross Stitch*, its seedlings gave 75% maiden bloom this summer and fall, the cross being transplanted out in the summer (not spring) of 1972. Colors were very varied, as might be expected, ranging from white through many blends, to pale plicatas. From the same seedling crossed with pollen of *Goliath's Mate* came a similar wide range of color, but more bitones and bicolors and one good amoena. Today a bicolor with six open, uncrowded blooms was making an impressive show. The best, and almost the earliest was a blended yellow near-amoena of excellent form and substance.

The pinks are well represented by four maiden blooms on the cross of *Mary Maria X Now and Later*. These are not as opulent as many of the above, but are medium large, of clean color and excellent texture. There are a great number of plicata seedlings, the three best all coming from the cross of *Halloween Party X (House of Lords x Da Capo)*, all taller than the pod parent, but inheriting its lace.

Frances and Allen Brown of Roanoke have paid us two visits this fall. Frances, a senior judge, and discerning hybridizer, was captivated by G 76 *Glory*, a new "unblended" blend out of *O My Goodness*, the other parent being a reblooming color novelty from *(Commentary X Purple Duet)*.

Fred Stephenson, our Convention Chairman, picked as his favorite, H 65, a huge, ruffled orchid amoena, in which the tinted orchid standards are matched by a border on the falls.

The tangerine beards are tipped orchid, and all the orange is hidden in the heart of the flower. For one who has been tinkering with amoenas for decades, it is a come-down to have to admit that this remarkable arrival is from two selfs! (*Prissy* x *Deep Dawn*) X *Niswonger 1-70* is its parentage, Dave's seedling being a sib to *Lilac Treat* sent here because of its reblooming propensity.

Since the rebloomer-bred seedlings average a week earlier than peak of tall bloom, it is expected that many of them will be in bloom by May 18, just as they were this year. The median enthusiasts would do well to visit the gardens here and in Blacksburg before the Convention, while the remontant lovers would do well to spend an extra day or two at the end. Jeanne and Nelson Price have a planting of Convention guests, both median and tall in their lovely garden. They delight in growing our Avonbank introductions better than we do, and succeeded with such a coup this fall, producing two exhibition stalks on *Java Sunbird*. Our pleasure was unbounded when Jeanne presented us with a watercolor of one of the stalks, which will certainly be on display in the crafts center at Convention.

TWICE BLESSED HAS A  "HOLIER THAN THOU" ATTITUDE!

AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND TOUR IN 1974

Despite the energy crises, plans are being finalized for an AIS member tour to Australia and New Zealand for October 1974. Members will attend the fourth Australian Iris Convention held in Sydney and Melbourne as well as touring Canberra and Adelaide. Iris gardens, flower shows and many other highlights will take place while there. Flying to New Zealand, we will tour the country as well as tour iris gardens in peak bloom. Detailed article will appear in the January issue of AIS Bulletin. After reading it, decide at once to send your reservation request to Margaret Zurbrigg, 903 Tyler Ave., Radford, Va. 24141, for she has worked out the details with both Iris Societies there and will be your Tour Director. Final costs will be reached in January. Making reservations then will assure you of a seat on the plane on October 13, 1974. You won't want to miss this three week tour!



Robin Feathers

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

Richard E. Gibson, Sacramento, Calif. In the maiden seedlings, *Early Snowbird X Hi Value* gave some (spring 1973) that seemed to have promise but they were not very large and the one that maiden-bloomed last fall didn't bloom this spring. For one thing, I didn't fertilize heavily enough, so I have started a program that should correct this. My lawn and the seedlings of this year react very well to Milorganite, so I am going to use it every month this summer and water heavily. If this doesn't do it, then I will try something else. Several of the *Early Snowbird X Hi Value* seedlings were of good form and branching, substance, etc.. and I do want to see what they look like when grown well.

Several crosses with *Signature* gave good looking seedlings on maiden spring bloom but they were under the handicap explained above. They are getting the same treatment. *Lovely Again X Apropos* same thing. I kept them all (of those mentioned above) and did not move them so they ought to prove their reblooming qualities this fall.

Lloyd Zurbrigg, Radford, Va. *Ineffable* and some of the older chosen seedlings look pretty good at this point (April 1973) and I hope for good news next time around on them. The new ones, almost without exception, seem to have wintered perfectly. 68-92-Wide, which I used so heavily last year, is outstanding for its growth. *Jolly Goliath* is doing very well this year, though still not as lusty a grower as its siblings *Goliath's Mate* and *Perfume Counter*.

Louis J. Farley, Jamestown, R.I. I have an iris that I intend to register as *Little Rhodie* this spring and to introduce next year. When I measured a dozen bloomstalks last year, they all were within half an inch of the fifteen inch height limit, and the season and branching are SDB. It reblooms for me, and for three years has ended up the season. In fact we have had bouquets of it on the table for Thanksgiving for the last three years. Perhaps it would rebloom earlier if it were in a garden where it received more summer heat and was kept watered properly. At West Springfield it put up stalks in October, but they were caught by early frosts. It is a black iris with a silken finish with white beards that are lightly tipped blue.

Mary Vesley, Richmond, Va. I find *September Chereau*, *Fall Cheerfulness*, and *Summer Red* to be great parents for rebloomers. The offspring have much larger flowers than the parents. Dr. Percy Brown has indeed created a good foundation for future rebloomers.

Bob Schoof, Salt Lake City, Utah I have found that *Gold and Ermine* has a fall bloom stalk which was way down in the sheath but still high enough to be frozen during the winter. I had no spring bloom on it or on the others which bloomed last fall. Two *Fall Primrose* and one *Autumn Twilight* were badly frozen on some of the plants which didn't bloom last fall.

Goldie B. Coleman, Willits, Calif. I used 15 pick up loads of manure in each bed - 20 x 100 ft. The beds are raised 18 inches.

Johnny Skinner, Yorktown, Texas (Southern Representative of RIS Board) At present, (August 10), *Ahead of Times* (Henkelman '71) is blooming for the second time, and *Gold Doublet* opened the first time this week. A seedling 68-6-1 (*Autumn Bronze* x *self*) is blooming right now also. It bloomed in 1970 as practically a miniature of *Autumn Bronze* at 14". Now it has 9 buds on the stalk and is very fragrant.

Our countdown on iris lost so far this year has been 8 Rebloomers, 29 TB's and 6 seedlings. (Ed: Mrs.

Skinner lives near the southern limit of where iris can grow.) Amazing - the first one to go was Farewell!

[Ed: In the continuing discussion about whether iris should have shade, Mrs. Skinner's comments from a very hot climate are very pertinent.]

I look out the window and see a long iris bed. One half is in full sun all day - the other half is shaded from shortly after noon from the hot sun. The full sun area has burned, rust-covered fans; the half-day shaded section has taller and all green fans. That in itself is my evidence.

Carol Jensen, Belvidere, Illinois. (Slide Librarian for RIS) I guess few irises grow well everywhere in the U.S. ... We can only cross with the "oncercs" that grow well for us and hope they do well over a wide range. If we had a list of "oncercs" that do well almost everywhere it might help us to make wiser choices for outcrossing. I stratify my seeds when I dehusc them about August 8-16 in "rag dolls" -- small rag dampened, seeds wrapped in wet rag, rolled in foil, with the tag hanging out. These are placed in closed plastic bags in the crispilator drawer of the refrigerator for 2 months or more. Then I germinate them in plastic trays containing vermiculite and rag wicks, to prevent over- or under-watering.

When the seedlings are 1/2" high I pluck them out. (Sometimes I've broken the attached seed off, and they still grow.) With a 1/2" dowel I make a hold in a medium of 1/3 sand, 1/3 soil and 1/3 sphagnum moss. Put in the seedling and fill with clean sand or with the mix. My trays are about 5 x 8 x 2 1/2 and I put 8 plants to a tray. These are put under lights and watered about every other day.

The first week in April I plant the seedlings out, usually some of them will have increase, and some will be 16" to 18" high. By this time (because the soil is so loose) the tray is usually mostly roots. With good remontant crosses I get up to 10% bloom the first summer. I have soaked the seeds in bleach and couldn't tell any difference from those not treated, so I don't bother with bleach anymore.

Frank Sterbak, Buffalo, N.Y. I put pollen from *Caliente* and from *Lorna Lee* under ultra-violet light for 12 seconds and this proved fertile in the following crosses: *Frontier Marshall* X *Caliente*, 1 pod; R-60 (*Supered* x *Escondido*) X *Lorna Lee*, 2 pods. I tried the pollen on other reds without getting takes.

I will send one pod to be irradiated this fall, and will ask that the seeds be treated with 10,000 Roentgens. The ones I had treated never germinated. They are still in the flats, and I will put them in the cold frame, to see if they will germinate next year.

Clare Roberts, Ontario, Calif. I feel about *Skywatch* the way you do about *Debby Rairdon* ... it just won't do well here. *Stepping Out* is another that just won't perform for me - or for others in this area. I got rid of *Rippling Waters* for the same reason. And with the crazy California climate I can grow, get increase and bloom like mad on *Winter Olympics* which won't even grow for my friend at Mo. Baldy. I have hot, dry weather and so does she, but she gets snow and freezing winters at 4800 ft., while we are much milder at 980 ft.

I had faster and more germination of seeds this year by planting them in plastic bags full of damp vermiculite and peat moss. Dampen the vermiculite, but do not have it wet so that it is dripping water. Put all the seeds in at once and cover with a bit more damp vermiculite. Close the bag, (plastic baggie), with a twist-tie and place the bags together in a cool place. After a couple of weeks check to see if any seeds have sprouted. If so, place that bag of seeds in a light, but not too sunny area. When the seedlings show grass-like growth, give them a light drink of well-watered-down liquid manure.

Kathleen McKinney, Vallejo, Calif. I have fat pods springing up all over the yard. This year I set loads of pods hoping that in that way I'll end up with more than a dozen seedlings. I think the baggie idea is a good one but I'll take Lloyd's suggestion and hold them until December or so. I did a lot of different things to my seeds this past winter and found that dried or

dried-and-then-soaked seeds germinated better for me than just ripe seeds; ... and that the majority of those that germinated in the late fall and early winter did not survive, while those that germinated in February survived almost 100%. Late spring and summer don't seem to bring any germination at all. Can anybody tell me why? We have very little hot weather, so I don't see how it could be temperature? Day length, perhaps?

As for what did I like --- *SWISS MAJESTY*, *EMMA LOUISA*, *GRAND BAROQUE*, *PREAMBLE* -these I used a lot. *Grand Baroque* is so heavily laden with pods that it's beginning to fall over. I also used *Moonlight* and *Roses* (which I loved), and *Hayride* (which is out of *Spanish Gift*). Both were floriferous and lovely flowers. *Ravenwood* was gorgeous and I can't forget it, but will have to wait until next year to use it.

Jerry Singer, Chicago, Ill. Germination occurred 4 to 5 months after the crosses were placed in baggies with a 50-50 mixture of potting soil and vermiculite. These were kept moist, labeled and sealed with a wire tie. The baggies were stacked in the refrigerator at the noted temperature of 55 degrees. The first notice of germination came the day before Christmas. All real problems that I had occurred when I transplanted the germinated seeds out of the baggies to trays and cups that were either over-or under-watered. Fertilizing the small seedlings killed many. I started with 1500 seeds. About 800 germinated, and 500 to 550 died from improper growing conditions. 250 to 300 choice seedlings remain. They are doing very well in the garden.



FROM THE EDITOR'S LETTERBOX

Hooker Nichols, Okla. Today, November 20, 1973, I have the following iris in bloom: *Twice Blessed*, *Preamble*, *Little Susie*, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, *Bronze Babe*. This is the second year in a row that *Bronze Babe* has rebloomed. It bloomed last year at THANKSGIVING. There is a seedling from (*Lenna M X Dennis reblooming seedling*) which has gray-yellow S., and blue and yellow F. It has one branch, 3 or 4 buds. Another from (*Bright Baby X Gleaming Gold*) has blue-grey S. and darker F. with blue beard, and flaring form. It has a strong fragrance.

"Ernie" Hanscom, East Kingston, N.H. Thought you might be interested to know of my experience with rebloomers this season. As I wrote you earlier, the first to rebloom was *Lovely Again*, on August 19. I had a boy working for me who mistakenly transplanted several rebloomers that had already sent up bloomstalks. *Lovely Again* was one of them. *Napannee* was another, but it bloomed about September 1. *September Cream* was another, but it sent up one bloomstalk with 3 buds, now in bloom, (Nov. 3/73).

Summer Whitewings sent up 5 well-branched stalks, and bloomed from August 21 to September 29!! *Summer Inspiration* also sent up 5 bloomstalks and has been in bloom for over a month with 8 buds left. (Both *Summer Whitewings* and *Summer Inspiration* are 2-year clumps.) *Summer Pink* bloomed for 2 weeks in mid-October, but I would say its only claim to fame is its reblooming ability. *Summer Fantasy*, transplanted late, bloomed for a week in mid-October.

Next fall should prove a better test for rebloom because the plants won't be moved next year. The biggest surprise here were 120 spurias in bloom. I had been advised they wouldn't grow here.

V.T. Stoutemeyer, Calif. Your *Chimera* bloomed well last fall from an August planting. The clump has bloomed three times already this season. This clump is in full shade half the day. I am putting a rhizome in full sun in the UCLA botanic garden. It is a very aristocratic iris with a strong visual impact, like many of the old Cayeux iris. The form is fine. The color varies on different blooming periods. Lately it has been a quite green chartreuse.

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THE REBLOOMING IRIS RECORDER

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