

# THE MEDIANITE

*Quarterly Publication of the Median Iris Society*

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All announcements, reports, articles, etc. should be in our office the first of the month prior to the month of issue in order to be sure of publication at the desired time.

## WANTED!

Good, clean, contrasty black-and-white photos of irises, people, shows, or gardens of interest to median iris lovers.

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	Triennial membership	Single: 5.00	Family: 6.00
Life membership (open only to life members of AIS)	Single: 40.00	Family: 50.00	
	Supporting membership	Single: 3.00	Family: 5.00
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----- A Section of the American Iris Society

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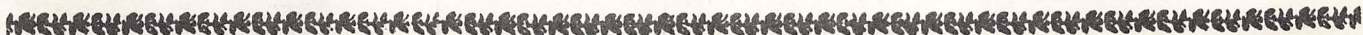
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## The President's Patch



It is a real pleasure to report that the winners of the American Iris Society Distinguished Service Medals and Hybridizers Medals this past year are all members of the Median Iris Society. To Hugo Wall, Bill Peck, and Betty and Ira Wood, whose distinguished service brings new honors to the Median Iris Society, and to Bennett Jones, twice awarded the Cook-Douglas Medal (for Cherry Garden and Gingerbread Man) and also winner of the Knowlton Medal twice (for Frenchi and Crystal Bay), hybridizer of Cotton Blossom, Blue Pools, Spring Bells, Light Cavalry, Carnival Glass, and Botany Bay; and to Keith Keppel, whose Fine Print, Footnote, Early Edition, Clique, Preamble, Pale Cloud, Mexicali, and Embroidery have been beautiful additions to our gardens, our sincere congratulations.

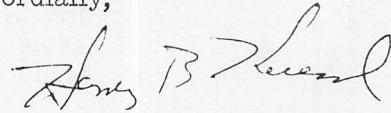
Speaking of membership, we are holding our own as the largest Section of the American Iris Society, but we must do even better to keep ahead of the ever-increasing inflationary costs of running our society. If you know an AIS member who has not yet discovered how to extend his bloom season with median irises, just invite him to join MIS, both for his sake and ours. (See Connie Russell's article in this issue.)

Several changes have been made in the American Iris Society awards procedure for the 1975 season that concern median irises. Now all median Award of Merit winners will go on the Dykes Medal eligibility list, just as do the tall-bearded AM winners and the AM equivalents in the other iris classes. AIS Judges Chairman and Director, Carol Ramsey, points out that this enhances the value of the three median medals (Cook-Douglas for standard dwarfs, Hans and Jacob Sass for intermediates, and Knowlton for border bearded), as they now become an end in themselves rather than merely a steppingstone to a higher award.

Another big change in awards is in the standard dwarf class. In recent years judges have been limited to naming only three standard dwarf irises for an Honorable Mention on the annual ballot. Starting in 1975 they will be able to nominate four irises for Honorable Mention. It is hoped that this will lead to more Honorable Mentions for standard dwarfs, and eventually more Awards of Merit and more irises eligible for the Cook-Douglas Medal.

Now is the time to plan your crosses and set new goals for better median irises in your seedling patch. We hope to see many of you on route to and from San Diego, at the national convention there, or at our regional tours and meetings throughout the country.

Cordially,

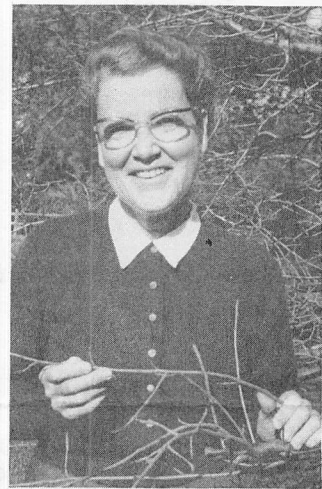


Harry B Kuesel, President

Profile—BETTY WOOD First Vice President

**B**ETTY WOOD was born in New York City, across the street from Grant's Tomb, and she probably didn't know an iris from a daylily until she married Ira and moved to New Jersey. There they discovered irises growing in their apartment house garden in 1948, bought Sydney Mitchell's "Iris for Every Garden" for advice on caring for them—and got hooked on hybridizing. Because of the irises, they had to buy land, build a house, get a car, and purchase a better camera. They haven't missed an AIS convention since their first in 1954.

Trained as a geologist, Betty got her Ph.D. in geology from Bryn Mawr in 1939. Her study of quartz crystals resulted in her being asked to join the research staff of Bell Telephone Laboratories in 1943 to help with work on quartz crystal oscillators for war-time communications. In addition to technical papers and two books on crystals, she has written, just for fun, a book entitled "Science for the Airplane Passenger" and has published a handbook for school teachers about growing crystals of easily obtainable substances like salt, sugar, and moth flakes. She and Ira together wrote "The Handbook for the American Iris Society Members and Officers" in 1971, and they edited the April, 1974, issue of the Bulletin of the American Iris Society.



Betty has served the Median Iris Society for the past year as its Display Garden Director and has done a superb job. Thanks to her efforts, more members will have access to a display garden where they can see the newest median introductions, and hybridizers have more display gardens in which to guest irises in different parts of the country.

Also, Betty has become an iris photographer of such high caliber that she has been asked to write the chapter on iris photography for the upcoming revision of the American Iris Society publication, "Garden Irises."

Coffee-with-cream-in-it color is Betty's favorite, and for years she tried for a tall-bearded iris with an enamel finish in that color, preferably with a blue beard. Her hundreds of failures were composted. Then she saw Zing at a convention iris show and got excited about it. At first, it was the only median iris in her part of the garden. Then she saw a haft-marked muddy brown standard dwarf seedling in Joe Gatty's garden. Joe had grown it from some seed that Bee Warburton had given to him. Betty wanted it because it was brown. Joe told her she was crazy, but he gave it to her—all of it. She crossed it with Zing because they were the only standard dwarfs she had in the garden. When the first seedling bloomed, it was coffee-with-cream-in-it color, with a blue beard! That did it. Under the heady influence of her delight in this offspring, she registered the name Lion Cub for it, later naming a better sibling Taupkin. She has given up the tall entirely - well, almost - and concentrates on standard dwarfs, species, intermediates, borders, and miniature tall, in that order. Her article on "Medians 'Down Under'" appears in this issue of THE MEDIANITE.

We are indeed fortunate to have such an industrious, intelligent, and charming person as our First Vice President.

by Betty Wood



DURING October and November it is iris time in Australia and New Zealand. Seven years ago, Ira and I celebrated our retirement from Bell Telephone Laboratories by visiting these two wonderful countries and attending their iris conventions. We made many new friends, some of whom have since visited us in New Jersey. This year we went back again and enjoyed the warm hospitality that our South Pacific friends so generously accord their visitors from the north.

The region around Sydney in New South Wales enjoys a semitropical climate. Orchids and fuchsias grow out of doors the year round. Vegetation is lush everywhere. One is reminded of Louisiana, and indeed, the Louisiana and spuria irises grow magnificently there.

The Australian convention began in Sydney. A combination of cool weather, torrential rain, and a flu-like epidemic plagued this part of the convention. However, a hard-working and well-organized local group managed to put on a fine show at a local church. There were not many medians, but the display of Californicae was really fine, and I plan to try to grow some of these gay little irises in pots indoors, to be sunk in the garden in late spring.

In the tea room beside the Sydney show room (there must always be provision for afternoon tea!), I met a lady who told me that her favorite iris was Blue Denim. She had a border of it beside her driveway, and whenever she dug and divided a clump she increased the length of the border. Now it so happened that Bee Warburton was in the same tea room. You can imagine the delight experienced by the admirer of Blue Denim when she found herself being introduced to the hybridizer who had produced it.

The second part of the Australian convention took place in Melbourne, Victoria, three hundred miles farther south, where the climate is cooler since the region is farther from the Equator. As in our country, the bearded irises grow better in the more temperate climate. Gingerbread Man grew nearly 40 centimeters tall in Miss Resch's garden. (Australia and New Zealand have converted completely to the metric system. Distances on road signs are in kilometers and you buy the petrol for your car by the liter.) All right... it grew about fifteen inches tall. Miss Resch also had cages of multicolored birds and a charming family of quails.



For me, the special attraction in Miss Resch's garden was Barry Blyth's intermediate iris, Shadow Mist (Moon Blaze X Shadow Vale), a broad pale mauve iris with a buff edging and a lilac beard. It reminded me of June Prom, and I consider that high praise. It has the same fine form and air of distinction.

I liked Shadow Mist again when I saw it exhibited in a commercial exhibit that Barry put on at the Box Hill iris show, one of two shows that were part of the Victoria region's share of the convention. At this show it was in a bowl with Cleo Palmer's intermediate, Sea Patrol (Symphony X Blue Denim), which is blue with a white edge and nearly white beard. Other attractive medians in this exhibit were Glenn Corlew's border bearded iris, Tecate (Taholah X Memphis Lass), a deep rose plic with an especially clean white field in the falls, and Keith Keppel's border, Mexicali (involving Taholah, Progenitor, Royal Band, and My Honeycomb), with chrome yellow standards and rosy-maroon plic-marked falls.

We saw a number of familiar medians in the Melbourne gardens, but I was especially interested to see, in Barry Blyth's garden, his new medians that were unfamiliar to me. There was Seductress (Moon Blaze X Sable Robe), an intermediate with rose falls, paler standards, and a "burnt tangerine" beard; Moonbar, an intermediate with white standards and chrome yellow falls, slightly rosy at the hafts (it has Lilli-Yellow, Melodrama, Sultan's Robe, and Rocket in its parentage!); Kista (Shagreen X Regards), a standard dwarf with blue standards and rose falls; Biscador (Moon Blaze X Flamingo Dawn), a rosy-buff intermediate; and Moon Sundae, a magenta-rose bitone standard dwarf. All of these had good form and were growing well. I ordered all of them "for delivery after the first of April" when it will be autumn in Barry's garden and when we hope our soil will have thawed. (Barry's prices are very low, even when you take into account the exchange rate.) Note that he is getting good intermediates by using Moon Blaze with the tall.

From Australia we flew across the 2000 kilometer width of the Tasman Sea to New Zealand. (All right, it's about 1250 miles wide.) We saw fewer medians in New Zealand because the season was further advanced. Their convention in Alexandra (about 45 degrees south latitude) was timed just right for peak bloom of the tall-bearded irises, whereas the Victoria convention, moved ahead a week for the benefit of the American tour, was about a week too early.

Both in Australia and in New Zealand we were surprised by the great variety of irises growing in the same garden. In Madge Snow's garden, a green and colorful gem in the midst of the treeless rocky hills of their 36,000-acre New Zealand sheep station, I saw some vigorous Pacific Coast hybrids about a meter away from the regelia iris, Theseus, in full bloom, and between them was a fine clump of Zing!

We recommend a visit to our iris-growing friends in the South Pacific. There are good reasons for this. They grow irises beautifully and their season comes at a time when we can safely leave our lawns and gardens unattended. They speak our language, even though they do call a trolley-car a tram (we rode in a chartered one through the streets of Melbourne!) and a baby carriage a pram, and they are most wonderfully hospitable.

**A Review** - "THE GENUS IRIS" by W. R. Dykes. Unabridged republication of the original (1913) edition. 48 full-color plates. 30 other illustrations. Classificatory keys. Bibliography. Index. viii + 245 pp. of text. 8 1/2 x 12 1/4. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974.



THE text and photos are reduced 20 percent for this new Dover publication, from the original of 11 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches. It is nicely hardbound in a good iris purple, about the color of Blazing Violet or Annikins, with gold imprint on the spine. The text, complete down to the last "zelantea, Vigo" of its index, photographically reduced, is actually more readable than in the original. F. H. Round's 47 colored drawings and the additional seed plate are grouped as a section rather than being distributed through the text, but new captions with page references have been added. The color reproduction is close to perfect; only a small fraction of the depth of color and the definition have been lost. The pictures are printed skillfully, on good quality glossy stock, on both sides of the pages, which is of some advantage in comparing similar and related species such as wilsoni and forresti, or clarkei and chrysographes, side by side.

It is impossible to do justice in a review of this sort to the life and work of the first great "classificatory botanist," as Dover characterizes Dykes in their circular. He is revered, studied, and quoted by all irisarians. The Dykes system of twelve Sections of the genus *Iris* has been the basis for all subsequent systems, and remains in use to this day, for upon it is based the 1974 edition of the British Iris Society's publication, An Alphabetical Table and Cultivation Guide to the Species of the Genus Iris. Even though we feel ourselves that Dykes would have approved a little more updating, we respect this position, for we realize that without his study of iris relationships we would be nowhere.

This is not a review of what Dykes himself did in producing the original book (though it remains one of the great plant monographs), it is a review of the great service that Dover Publications has done for the world of irisarians, and for the whole horticultural and botanical world. The publishers have produced many handsome paperback reproductions, including one of Molly Price's The Iris Book, but this is the first we have seen of their clothbound books. Considering the necessarily small first printing of such a specialized volume, this handsome reprint, reproducing in full every feature of the original, is a bargain at \$20.00, a usable addition to any irisarian's reference collection or to any horticultural or botanical library, and even for those who own a copy of the original.

by Bee Warburton

Editor's Note: The Genus Iris may be purchased by mail from Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014. Please include 35¢ for postage and handling. The review copy which they were kind enough to send to us has been added to the Median Iris Society Library.

YOUR MIS Slides Chairman, Gene Tremmel, announces that he now has slides programs available. Make your local Program Committee aware of this and suggest that they contact Gene for more information. In this way, perhaps we can convince non-medianites to become medianites. Once you have seen our recent medians, you will certainly want to have some of them in your own garden. You will find Gene's address on page 2.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Connie Russell

HERE is the way our membership is distributed as of November 15, 1974. We point out that in order to be a member of the Median Iris Society, a person must also belong to the American Iris Society.

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of Members</u>	<u>Rank in Top 10</u>	<u>Percentage of AIS Members</u>	<u>Median Iris Society Batting Average</u>
1	40	3	22.1	1
2	19	8	8.2	
3	11		6.7	
4	18	9	6.8	
5	0		0	
6	44	1	11.4	7
7	6		2.0	
8	21	7	15.4	4
9	17	10	9.3	
10	0		0	
11	11		13.9	5
12	10		12.8	6
13	29	4 (tie)	16.8	3
14	29	4 (tie)	8.2	
15	25	6	6.7	
16	7		18.9	2
17	8		2.5	
18	41	2	8.6	
19	13		9.7	9
20	10		9.6	10
21	13		7.4	
22	15		4.7	
23	13		10.9	8
24	7		4.1	

If Region 1 can have more than twenty percent of its potential members in the Median Iris Society, the other regions can, too. Let's all help our Regional Representatives and Regional Vice Presidents carry the median message to those AIS members who haven't yet discovered the advantages and benefits of MIS membership.

### THE FERTILITY OF INTERSPECIES CROSSES

by E. Freeman Yendall



THE Earl Roberts Chromosome Countdown Charts which were republished in the October, 1974, issue of THE MEDIANITE make a preliminary estimate of the fertility of interspecies crosses. The editor then asks what can be done to bring these charts up to date. One might review past issues of this publication for the intervening sixteen years and summarize what has been written about interspecies crosses. It is probably insufficient to warrant redoing the charts. One might, therefore, encourage the publication of numerical data on interspecies fertility so that at some time in the future there will be enough available to make the revision worthwhile.

From the utility standpoint, interspecies fertility articles should contain any of the following data:

1. The probability of getting a plant from an interspecies pollination,
2. The probability of getting a plant from a sibcross F1 pollination, and
3. The probability of getting a plant from a sibcross F2 pollination.

A preliminary consideration is verifying that a species plant is either self-fertile or fertile with others of its kind. What is the expected plants-per-pollination ratio of the species representative being used? There is a tendency to maintain exceptional plants in gardens. It will be difficult enough to correlate the fertility of crosses between typical species plants without being confused by a few exceptional garden plants.

Fertility data should be correlated by species and not by chromosome number only. Numerical data will undoubtedly show that the I. variegata x I. pallida cross is less likely and less fertile than the I. cengialti x I. pallida cross. The fact that all three species are  $2n=24$  is not sufficient for estimating their interfertility.

Although tetraploid species crosses should, in theory, be fertile, and the pumila-talls and the reichenbachii-talls are good examples of this fertility, the aphylla-talls and the stolonifera-talls are not fertile. Although all data available should be published, anyone planning a new project should give preference to diploid crosses. They should be easier to understand.

It is believed that species which evolved in the same pattern are relatively interfertile. Conversely, species which evolved along dissimilar lines will be intersterile. This subject may give us clues about the evolution of irises. I look forward to seeing more about it in future issues of THE MEDIANTE.

The numerical evaluation of interspecies crosses has appealed to me as a means of finding out which species belong in the same tribe. Thus, in my arilmed article (MEDIANTE 12:5-7), I divide the dwarfs with  $n=12$  into three groups: one-flowered, two-flowered, and many-flowered. I believe that many of the rare species are very close relatives of the standard species and will develop nearly the same crossing numbers as their better-known relatives. I hope that your editor's request and this little article will result in a paragraph or so on this subject in four or five sequential issues. After that time the response should tell just how many are interested. Only by gathering and pooling bits of information from those who have tried interspecies crosses can we know what to expect from them. It would be quite impossible for any one person to do a complete study of the breeding potential of all species of irises, and so we welcome even the shortest tidbits of information on both successes and failures with interspecies crosses.



## Editorially Speaking...



IN the October 1974 issue we printed the results of the questionnaire which accompanied the July issue. Statistics, while they may be interesting to your editor and some readers, make dull reading for the majority. The comments which some readers wrote on their questionnaires should be of more interest than the numerical ratings. Many worthwhile ideas were presented, and there were criticisms and compliments as well. These are what we want to share with you this month.

Because of one reader's suggestion, we have begun a new series called "Profiles," beginning on page 4 of this issue with an introduction to our new First Vice President, Betty Wood. For this idea we are indebted to Carol Ramsey.

A reader from Ohio asks for a listing of all medians that have won HMs and AMs, as well as the medal awards. Such a list is in preparation now and will be published in forthcoming issues, as space permits. You'd be surprised just how many irises have received awards in the last fifteen years! Along these lines another reader, from Pennsylvania, requests a list of older varieties, "especially those used for landscape effects." She points out that not everyone is able or willing to buy the newest, most expensive varieties. The list of award winners will be footnoted to point out varieties which are especially worthwhile as landscape plants or which we feel are worthy of honors higher than those they have received. An Ohio reader has also asked for a list of "oldies but goodies." She asks if we could prepare a Symposium of varieties more than four or five years old, pointing out that "then the new colors, patterns, and forms are seen in the perspective of annual performance, and by then, familiar faults." Nominations, anyone?

Two readers, one from the state of Washington and the other from Texas, ask for information on the more fragrant of our median irises and regret that this information is no longer part of the registration data. Have any of you kept information on fragrance that you could share with these readers and others who have the same interest? If so, why not write an article about it for THE MEDIANTE?

A Washingtonian asks if there are not articles on median irises published in overseas journals which we might reprint. There are, and we will find room for them whenever possible. Another reader,



from Montana, requests more photographs—but haven't we been asking for nice sharp black-and-white pictures on our Contents page for almost two years? Not too successfully, however. But then, most people prefer to take color slides or pictures nowadays, and it is rare to see a flower picture that is not in full color. We have an article on photography scheduled for the April issue, and we hope many of you will read it then load at least one roll of black and white film during the season and submit your better results to us for use in this publication. Try photographing a light iris against a plain dark background (or a dark iris against a light one) and see what happens.

A Colorado reader would like an article on the color classification of the newer varieties of medians, to help the classification committees of median iris shows. As interest in early shows increases, there is a definite need for the small and early irises to be given as careful color classification as the tall now receive. But we believe this is the province of the AIS committee in charge of color classification.

Speaking of shows, we received an interesting variety of comments on our handling of show reports and announcements of shows. A California man says, "I would NOT like to see show schedules as mentioned in your editorial on page 68 (1974). Show reports are fine, as they mention specific varieties and people. Show schedules are of strictly local interest and should not appear in a national publication. . . . There should be sufficient notice of shows and show schedules in local regional publications. Perhaps a brief listing of dates and locations of shows would be OK, but never schedules. Who even reads his own schedule until he gets to a show and wonders what class to put on the entry tag? I hope you didn't really mean that you intended to print the schedules as such." To put his mind at ease, we do not intend to print show schedules, but when show chairmen do remember to send us a copy, we can get the information we need for the show listing and can later send out follow-up requests for data on the results of the show. Another Californian voices another opinion: "I think the show reports are space wasters. They are either locally clubby, thinly disguised varietal comments, or both. It's good to know which ones are winning exhibition awards, but how about putting it in a modified chart form, a la AIS, where you have the show location, class winners, and their exhibitors. In that presentation it is much simpler to see almost at a glance which irises are gathering the ribbons." On the other hand, an Oklahoman says he "very much enjoyed the show reports. Certainly is a lot nicer than reading the one-liners in the AIS Bulletin's show report." Since our total allotment of space in 1974 to printing show reports amounted to only four out of eighty-eight pages, we feel that we want to continue giving the fuller type of report, with human interest notes as well as the dry statistics. Our problem here is the very human one of getting the show chairman (or secretary or reporter) to let US know the results in time for the July issue (in the case of spring shows) or for the January issue (in the case of fall shows). You will note that nobody remembered to let us know the results of any of the 1974 fall shows in time for this issue!

Some readers, in commenting on the admission of advertising to THE MEDIANTEE, expressed the hope that we will confine advertising to one section "so one doesn't have to plow through it to find articles one wants to read," as a Washington reader put it. A Kansan hopes it might be possible to publish the ads as a supplement. We, too, feel that any advertising we receive should be presented tastefully and should not detract from the meat of THE MEDIANTEE, and we will endeavor to do justice both to the advertisers and to the readers.

As might be expected, with articles of scientific content rating so highly on the poll, there were quite a few comments and requests for specific subjects, particularly from beginning hybridizers who want information they cannot find, such as chromosome counts of recent varieties as well as of species (a reader from Pennsylvania puts in a specific request for MTB and BB counts), and information on dominant and recessive traits, breeding potential of different varieties, etc. One reader (again from Pennsylvania) asks help in making the original tall x pumila cross—she tried, but got no takes, and she has frozen TB pollen to use on her pumilas this spring. She'd like to know more about storing pollen for future use, to be certain she is doing it correctly. We think even a nonbeginner might be interested in this kind of information, especially if it could be gathered together in one place and summarized for easy understanding and use. Therefore, we are working to produce a special issue for the benefit of would-be, beginning, and advanced breeders which will contain this type of information. We hope to be able to print this either in October or next January, giving everyone a chance to spend next winter working with their iris lists, planning all kinds of exotic crosses—probably with plants which won't send up a bloomstalk the following spring!

There were also requests for more information on the care of median irises after bloom, during the heat and humidity of summer, and protection for them during the winter. How does weather affect your

median irises? We hope to put together another special on iris culture, perhaps in time for the next issue, to help you with your problems this season.

Probably the largest number of readers made reference to varietal comments, display garden reports, and printed descriptions of irises. There was a general criticism that not enough information about a variety is given. A Colorado man writes: "In too many cases reporters use the names of varieties with no mention of the color. There are many of us who do not get to see a lot of the new introductions, so a name without color really doesn't mean too much." A Texas woman says she'd like to see "better descriptions (more detailed) of irises in display gardens and in varietal comments." A New Yorker would like to see approximate bloom dates specified with varietal comments in the area named. A lady from Illinois appreciates "varietal descriptions that mention haft marks, narrow hafts, number of buds, and substance." An outspoken Kansan says, "I like Symposium Ballot Comments and Varietal Comments only when written objectively and not full of adjectives with no reference to what the variety looks like or how it behaves. Specific information is needed from all parts of the country, not sales talk!" Remember this next bloom season when you are jotting down notes on those varieties which impress you the most... let us know precisely WHY you were impressed—or otherwise.

Another reader would like to have gardens described, as well as the flowers in them. Since many readers live long distances from other iris nuts and have little chance to visit and see how others lay out and arrange their gardens, what they plant with their irises, etc., this idea appeals to us, and we hope to be able to develop a series of illustrated garden "tours" in the future.

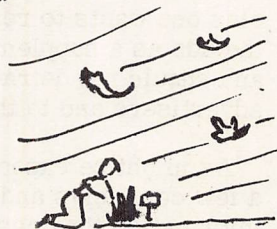
It is with a great deal of pride that I want to quote from one of the returned questionnaires: "I really belong (to MIS) to get some news about what is going on because I can't get around to gardens or to meetings any more. I haven't seen any of the newer varieties and would not, in any case, be able to keep up with them. I'm glad to hear they are getting better and better, but like all irises (and many other plants) the great numbers of insufficiently tested novelties is confusing and prevents concentration on the real advances." It is signed "John C Wister" and he adds a postscript: "I think you are doing a grand job." That is high praise indeed, coming from the first president of the American Iris Society. Thank you, Dr. Wister.

Again, thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out and return the questionnaires, and especially to those of you who came up with all the helpful suggestions and constructive criticisms mentioned above. Your efforts on behalf of THE MEDIANITE are greatly appreciated.



### I F . . (with apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

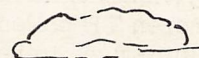
If, when summer comes and weeks go by  
Without a drop of rain, forever hot,  
And dig, divide, and transplant is your lot,  
You can still smile and say, "They like it dry";



If, despite high winds and pelting rains,  
You spend the autumn hours pulling weeds,  
Cleaning, trimming, mulching, planting seeds,  
Till friends think something's happened to your brains;



If, when winter comes, you yearn for snow,  
A deep, long-lasting blanket of white fluff  
(When those around you cry, "Enough's enough!")  
To shield the sleeping plants which rest below;



If, in spring you pray for frost-free nights  
And windless sunny days to speed the hour  
When from each clump of green will burst a flower—  
That eagerly awaited sight of sights;



If all these things be true from start to end,  
You are an irisarian, my friend!



'VE just been gifted with a book of cliches, and "I'm here to state" that "proudly as any others may wave," our iris varietal comment cliches have them "beaten all hollow" and "leave them standing at the gate."

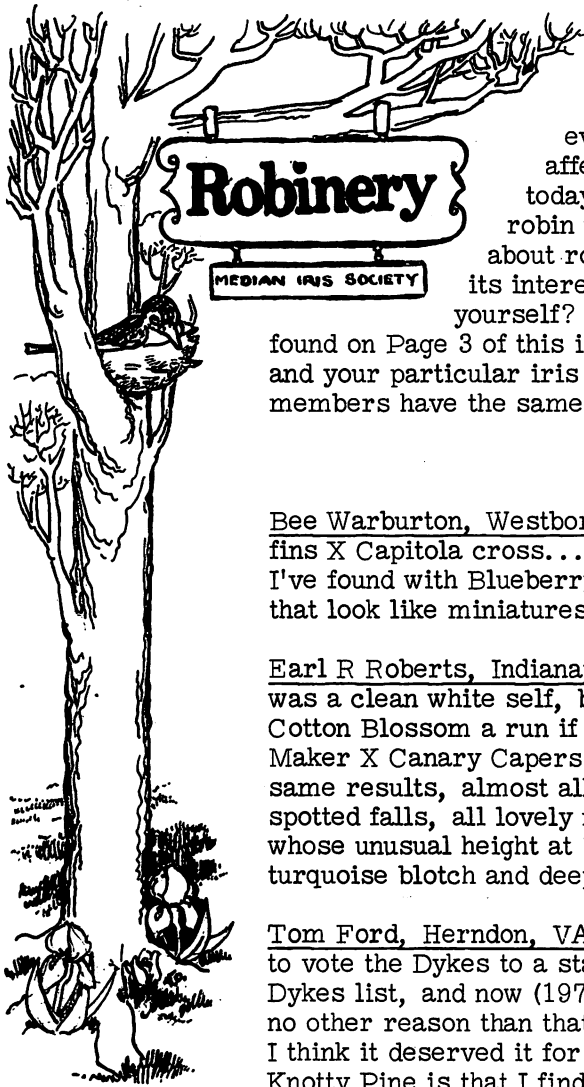
Now, our own "dear familiar" cliches amount to a sort of shorthand for noting special faults or virtues, and we will "file no brief" against them unless they "stand in" for the word pictures of the irises that "bring them to mind" in a descriptive sense. Cliches have their uses, but the sad thing about them is that they become meaningless fillers...when "familiarity breeds contempt." Consider this short list "with my compliments," to which I'm sure you could all add "off the top of your heads."

A surefire winner	Is tops for form (color, proportion)
A must for all gardens	Is a knockout
A real eye-catcher	Is a real comer
A real standout	Is equally good everywhere
A favorite of visitors	Is a fine color addition
A highlight of the tour (garden, season, show)	Is still one of my favorites
A fine color break	Is on everybody's want list
A real (genuine) doll	May have to take second place to...
A worthy addition to the garden (class)	Makes an impressive clump
Another that called for attention	Makes a fine color show
Adds to the overall garden picture	Made an impressive greeting
Adds variety to the planting	Never fails to attract attention
Blooms up a storm	One that draws every eye (the oh's and ah's)
Brought a second glance	Performed like a medal winner
Beckoned from across the garden	Performed to its usual perfection
Can be seen from across the garden	Put on a proper show
Can be seen for a country mile	Retained its high scoring
Caught my eye	Rang a clear bell
Clump in full bloom stops traffic	Reaches out and grabs you
Draws a person back for a second look	Stole the show
Drew me across the garden	Takes the weather
Entered the competition in its color class	This is a must!
Had new competition from	This is one to watch!
Has a lot of personality	Was singled out by visitors
Is tops in its color class	Was demanding attention
Is sure to beckon	Was the star attraction

We realize it is quite impossible (or nearly so) to write varietal comment without inserting one or more of these cliches, and we don't want you to stop writing them for fear we'll be too critical of your phrasing! "Far from it!" We do, however, want to point out to you that using too many cliches fails to tell the reader very much about the iris you are commenting upon (see comments of readers on page 10). Try picking one or two varieties and describing them fully, bad points as well as good ones, so that the comments will have "true meaning" and the writer's "time and trouble" will not "be taken in vain."



Amazon Princess, Nichols '73, HM '74.



It has been some time since we printed any robin excerpts in THE MEDIANTE. For this reason, some of the comments printed herein may be chosen from "birds" which flew from member to member some time ago. However, we have tried to select letters whose contents are not affected by time, so the information contained is as pertinent today as it was when it was originally written in the particular robin from which it was extracted. That is one of the best things about robins—the letters are full of material which is timeless in its interest. Why not join a MIS Round Robin and discover this for yourself? Drop a note to Albert Ellis today. His address can be found on Page 3 of this issue of THE MEDIANTE. Tell him a little about yourself and your particular iris interest so that he can place you in a robin whose other members have the same interest. You'll enjoy it!

#### On Standard Dwarfs...

Bee Warburton, Westborough, MA... One seedling of (Fred Gadd's) Blueberry Muffins X Capitola cross... was exactly a miniature Capitola, and this is something I've found with Blueberry Muffins. It is quite neutral with tall, giving progeny that look like miniatures of the tall bearded iris it's crossed with.

Earl R Roberts, Indianapolis, IN... Seedling 73R11 (Arctic Fury X Atomic Blue) was a clean white self, beautiful flared form and balance, 14" tall—one that can give Cotton Blossom a run if I find the right name... Two good crosses were Music Maker X Canary Capers and Blue Petticoats X Canary Capers. Both produced the same results, almost all seedlings were green amoenas, in varying tones of green spotted falls, all lovely form... 73R17 (Mulberry Wine X USSR pumila R13J), whose unusual height at 18" has me puzzled, is an odd steel blue-gray color with turquoise blotch and deeper veins on the falls, fine form.

Tom Ford, Herndon, VA... Each year when I do my Judges' Ballot I swear I'm going to vote the Dykes to a standard dwarf. For years it was Green Spot that was on the Dykes list, and now (1973) it's Knotty Pine. Green Spot should have gotten it if for no other reason than that so many good little things have come from it. Of course, I think it deserved it for itself, too. The only reservation I'd have in voting for Knotty Pine is that I find it seems to have too many blooms. When a good-sized clump is in full bloom, it often looks untidily overbloomed. The shape of the individual bloom is so nice, too bad individuality is lost in a mass of petals helter-skelter. Still, it's nice at the beginning and end of the season when the individual bloom can be seen well.

MayBelle Wright, Bloomington, MN... I was very disappointed with my first bloom on Amber Shadow. It has nice size and fair width, but not much else. However, Earl (Roberts) says it is a good breeder, so I have used it with some of my Pink Cushion X Lenna M seedlings. The latter were, again, very interesting, ranging from quite nice to perfectly horrible, and from a tiny-flowered six inches to a large-flowered twenty inches. The colors included various shades of apricot, three true pinks (none of them good) and one violet with deeper violet spot and tangerine beard. The latter was one of the narrower ones, of course. A couple from this cross had surprisingly good form, with clean color. The six-inch one had a tiny light apricot flower, very clean, with pumila form, featuring long narrow falls, but flared. The foliage was very fine and grassy and the perianth tube was exceptionally long for an SDB. When I bloomed Pink Cushion and Lenna M again this year, I wondered how I ever had the courage to cross them. They are both pretty bad, being the first pink standard dwarfs released... In my Meadow Moss X Gingerbread Man cross there were four that I thought were worth working with. This cross produced good width in several seedlings and very interesting color variations... A similar cross involved two totally unrelated lines and gave some very different color combinations. The best of these was one with pale blue standards, old gold falls, and beards the exact color of the standards. Three others were different enough to warrant the effort to give them better width. One was an intense metallic gold with bright violet beards, and another had burnished bronze falls also with bright violet beards. A third is a strange blend of tan, brown, and violet, with bright violet beards... Again this year the most exciting standard dwarf seedling in my garden, at least in my opinion, was L-8, the little blue from Miss Ruffles X Wee Blue. I consider this a "breakthrough" of sorts, since it brings a totally new look to the standard

dwarfs and oddly comes from a first generation border bearded by pumila cross. It is almost sky blue, with fine texture veining and fuzzy white beards. Form-wise, Miss Ruffles totally dominated the pumila, and it produced a miniature Miss Ruffles type with very ruffled standards, and falls with a tiny edge of ruffles. The flower measured 2 1/4 x 2" and would have been 12" tall if my Springer Spaniel hadn't broken off the tops of all stalks just as they were ready to open. (He is lucky to be alive!) Its sister seedling is not as good, but still resembles Miss Ruffles much more than it does Wee Blue. This one seems to get its color from grandma, Lula Marguerite. . . . A third seedling bloomed (Miss Ruffles X Sun Sparkle). Sun Sparkle is also pure pumila. This was a nice, clean, slightly greyed yellow with a deeper yellow well-defined spot. The form was not as good as in L-8, but still good for a first-generation hybrid.

#### On Intermediates...

Earl Roberts, Indianapolis, IN. . . . This was the year for the red-bearded blues in the intermediates. Quite a number to choose from. One of the best was Martinique X Dove Wings. 73R28 was medium blue with falls lighter blue with darker blue half spot, tangerine red beard, 22". The other cross was Bennett Jones' 736-1 red-bearded blue X 70R11 pink lines. All of these were same color with exception of two purples with red beards. It was a matter of selecting the ones with best color and proportion. Most of them were too tall, over 20" and no branches. Otherwise they were finished flowers. Number 73R29 was the best, with two branches, low, 19" tall, light blue standards cupped, flat falls pale blue with a deeper half spot, tangerine beard. This was crossed into the darker blues for better balanced flowers. In the purples, R33 was bright red-purple with wide falls and light coral beard, 26", while R33A was lilac with palest lilac falls with half spot of red-purple, red beard, 24".

#### On Border Bearded...

Carol Lankow, Bellevue, WA. . . . I've been thinking about the problem of bud count, and it seems to me that since the tall bearded have apparently been genetically disbudded in the race for great size, the same process should be possible, in reverse, when breeding for small flowers in the border class. Some of Bennett Jones' things have very good bud counts, and Miss Ruffles often has nine. Miss Petite has seven to nine. I don't think I have counted the buds on Lace Valentine, but there are several. We should not have to settle for borders with only three or four buds. The potential is there, if we breed toward it. I realize that selection for size and proportion are difficult enough with the small number of smalls we have to select from in most crosses, but I've noticed, in my garden, that as I produce more and more of the proper size from each advanced cross (using BB x BB), it naturally becomes easier to select for some of the other things we would like our borders to have. This class has a long way to go, but it IS getting there. . . . One thing we can all do to help the class is to vote only for borders that stay under 28", have small flowers, and have good proportion, as we have seen them growing. As long as those with huge flowers, overly lush foliage, short bud count, etc. get national awards, we will never be able to keep that kind out of the class. If they didn't get awards, hybridizers wouldn't be so quick to register them as borders. Again this year a real border, Lace Valentine, got the Knowlton. Last year Crystal Bay got it and deserved it, too. I can't say as much for the winners in some previous years.

Earl Roberts, Indianapolis, IN. . . . The second break this year were the balanced border bearded lines out of my old Stylmark X Flaming Heart small pink seedling. Stylmark goes back to Thisbe for branching. Seedling number was 69R43. Number 73R34 is Lemon Tart X 69R43, a pale apricot pink self, petals short and wide, 19", three branches with one starting at three inches from the ground. R34A sib was champagne toned with rounded petals, 23", four branches, eight buds. Coral Eyes X 69R43 also gave these nicely balanced short borders, two in pink, one a red-orchid with shrimp beard, three branches and beautiful finished flowers; another with greyed-mulberry standards, falls lavender and a coral beard. All are around 20" tall with three branches and 3 to 3 1/2" flowers, usually three open at a time.

Helen Stevens, Wellsboro, PA. . . . I agree that the border bearded group is the worst offender as far as bloom size and general proportions are concerned. And, as a group, they are the most trying to work with in attempting to overcome these faults. You can get beautiful colors and seemingly right size and proportions on first-year bloom; but then with this particular group the seemingly right qualities sometimes hold for two or three years. A few years back I had a beautiful blue seedling which I carried over for three years then sent to the gardens at a national convention. There it shot up to tall bearded size as you will remember most of the others doing also. I might have thought that it was entirely because

of the different soil and climate conditions except that it also behaved the same way in my own garden. I don't know why they take so long to stabilize.

Z G Benson, Wichita Falls, TX... (In answer to the above) I believe that you have had some of my experiences with border bearded. I have done a lot of work with them, and for the most part they act just as you say. I have bought some that just were not borders to start with. I think it would be a good idea that they be required to be grown in several sections of the United States before they are introduced. If they don't make the grade, throw them out. You pay \$10 to \$15 for a border that the introducer claims to be 20" to 24" and you set it in and wait for it to bloom the next spring. And when it does, it is around 28" to 30", or if it doesn't get that tall, it will have a 6" flower and maybe two or three more buds to bloom. It makes one want to cuss the hybridizer and the judges who voted it a blue ribbon in the local show. Things like that are what is going to ruin the border class. Amen.

Bee Warburton, Westborough, MA... Next year I think I'll cross pumila onto the entire row of borders and see what happens. Paul Cook once told me not to pay any attention to the pumila colors in crossing, just select them for other qualities, small compact flowers, narrow neat foliage, not too long perianth tubes (this makes weak necks in standard dwarfs).

MayBelle Wright, Bloomington, MN... Concerning proportion in border bearded, if somebody doesn't "rail extensively against effluvia" we will never have the dainty plants in the class that can hold their own, while blooming with the tall, because they are so different. As long as borders look like stunted tall they will never gain full acceptance. Somebody has to alienate a few people now and then or there would be no progress.

#### On Miniature Tall...

Jean Witt, Seattle, WA... Esther Terrill of Kansas has selfed Joseph's Coat and got a couple of cute blends with some plic markings, or maybe it is variegata markings. Daystar X Honorabile produced two seedlings, one very yellow self and the other another Daystar type. Dorothy Guild remarked that she has had Daystar-like blooms from numerous crosses—seems to be a common miniature tall type.

Teresa Martin, Medina, OH... From I. aphylla B-66-2 crossed with a wide-petaled cream seedling (from Wilma Greenlee) I got one seedling—a strange one—which may not be the same another year. The falls were horizontal, the standards flat and a bit pointed, giving the bloom a star-like appearance. The substance was stiff and crisp, color lavender.

Phyllis Holtz, Kellogg, ID... Ballet Girl X Kinglet seedlings are nearly all a nice clear yellow, and one seedling is a not-too-bad white. Where did the orchid go?

#### On This and That...

Bee Warburton, Westborough, MA... Mulch—we put a light mulch of pine needles over all the irises. My irises are weedless (which I think makes them prone to heaving) and are in rows, so I'm not much of a judge of ordinary ways of growing them. I use Simazine on them. How to manage this is a long story, as nothing is ever planted in treated soil from which irises have been removed until it has been fallowed with two crops of rye grass and new rows formed. We have chips from the power company between our rows, but the space they are in is a deep hollow and the chips do not come up to the top of the rows. I don't have borers under control, but am about to try Cygon 2E this year, which I hear really works. After losing DDT a lot of us got into trouble. Fertilization—once a year I take 5-10-10 in a large funnel and just run a line of it along the rows about 5-6" from the plants. However, as our soil is well treated during fallowing, it lasts pretty well until it's ready to be plowed up again. If I were using the same place, I'd dig a hole for each new iris and fill it with new soil. That's what I do when I have to use a Simazine-treated part of the row. I never plant irises into soil unless it is sprouting a real good crop of weeds. . . . Some of the diploid species contain inhibitors. Imbricata inhibits TB color in triploids, but of course it had doubled by the time it made Wide World. Mellita has the Whole Cloth type inhibitor, as a diploid, of course, as does reichenbachii. Pseudopumila and attica, which are supposed to be the ancestors of I. pumila, both seem to have the pumila type inhibitor, though sudo once gave some reverse amoena types on diploid tall. Reginae, I am certain, is a white mutant variegata, as Milan Blazek has found it growing in natural stands of I. variegata. Sambucina is a blend, presumably of the pallida-variegata wild crosses (squalens, etc.). . . . I note that "scent is not developed

till the rhizomes have been dried for several months," and am reminded of somebody's once telling of the strong fragrance that clung to her pants after she had kneeled in a rotted rhizome of Germaine Perthuis, and I have noted in some mushy rhizomes that the orris scent is strong so they don't smell rotten! As for that odor of grape, it is revolting to me... but I know some like it... like artificial grape Koolaid. I've had some standard dwarfs with fragrance so strong it floated over a wide area, and it was almost impossible to find the guilty plant. Evidently it is emitted in puffs of gas, could that be? It has to be emitted as gas, and the number of atoms in each emission must be both genetic and determined by weather factors, no? Every once in a while somebody tries to breed for it, but nobody seems to get very far. It is the most elusive quality of irises, and perhaps should be done with an odorimeter (is there such a thing?) rather than with the weak and easily confused human nose. However, it's fairly easy to put terms to the scents of Iris pumila, as they are often like vanilla or other easily recognized sweet fragrances... It has been said before that mildew helps to germinate seeds. In nature as they fall nobody is going to keep them pure and always dry until planted.

#### PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

YOUR editor for special publications is editing a SPECIAL PUBLICATION EXTRAORDINARY this year, a revision of the American Iris Society's fabulous book, Garden Irises, long out of print. To simplify mailing back issues of THE MEDIANITE which are in the Warburton cellar (MIS Press), we won't list what is missing, but offer all of the available issues up to 1971, in one group, and the four years from 1971 through 1974 in another. Thus we offer:

Remaining issues (about 25) between 1962 and 1970, with 1958 Yearbook, as long as any remain, . . . . .	\$9.00
Volumes 1971 through 1974 . . . . .	\$7.00

And, as the packages get skinnier, we will compensate by putting you down for this one year up to planting season, for a plant of our new pink-pink, Betsey Boo. A plant of strange behavior, and not a perfect flower, it is truly pink, and fertile.

There are still copies remaining of our special publications:

Prodan, Julius, "The Eupogon Iris Species of Romania," trans. Undritz-Heinig and Warburton. Hudson Printers-MIS Press . .	\$2.50
-----, "The Genus Iris," trans. Warburton. Mimeo, softbound. . . . .	1.00
"The Eupogon Iris Species in Cultivation," Warburton-Gantz. List of clones of these species grown in USA. . . . .	2.00
"The Median Bearded Irises," MEDIANITE staff. Introduction and Varietal Listing, through 1972 . . . . .	2.00
"Index of the Serial Publications of the Median Iris Society," five topical indexes in one: Subject, People, Species, Varieties, and Affairs and Personnel of MIS. Mimeo, softbound . . . . .	1.00

We will send a copy of the Index FREE with all orders of \$10.00 or more.

Send orders to: Mrs F W Warburton, 2 Warburton Lane, Westborough, MA 01581. Make checks payable to The Median Iris Society.



#### COMMERCIAL DIRECTORY

ON the following page is a list of iris gardens which either specialize in median irises or which carry a comprehensive listing of medians in addition to other classes of irises. We know some gardens have not found their way onto this list, and we hope that the owners of these gardens will notify us in time so that we can be sure they are listed in this commercial directory in 1976. We are particularly anxious to list nurseries outside of the United States which can supply median irises to medianites in other countries. We also call your attention to the fact that a great many hybridizers choose to introduce their own varieties, and we suggest you write to them for their latest lists, especially if you are interested mainly in obtaining the very latest introductions.

# COMMERCIAL DIRECTORY

Bay View Gardens	1201 Bay Street Santa Cruz, CA 95060	Free	Introductions of Joe Ghio
Cordon Bleu Farms	418 Buena Creek Road San Marcos, CA 92069	Free	
Ingleside Gardens	5608 Merriman Road, SW Roanoke, VA 24018	Free	Introductions of Fred Stephenson
J and J Iris Garden	Route 1, Box 320 Cashmere, WA 98815	Free	Introductions of Alta Brown, Jack Boushay
Keith Keppel	P O Box 8173 Stockton, CA 95208	Free	Introductions of Joe Gatty, Keith Keppel
Maple Tree Gardens	Larry L Harder Ponca, NE 68770	Free	
Melrose Gardens	309 Best Road South Stockton, CA 95206	25¢	Introductions of Ben Hager, Sydney DuBose, Jonnye Rich and others
Mission Bell Gardens	2778 West 5600 South Roy, UT 84067	Free	Introductions of Melba Hamblen, Z G Benson, and others
Nichols Iris Gardens	Box 702 Woodward, OK 73801	Free	Introductions of Hooker Nichols
Northwest Hybridizers	16516 25th NE Seattle, WA 98155	Free	MTB specialists. Introductions of Jean Witt, Alta Brown, Bill and Roberta Snell; bearded, beardless species; antique diploids; Cal-Sibe hybrids
Old Brook Gardens	10 South Franklin Circle Littleton, CO 80121	Free	Introductions of Bee Warburton, Betty Wood, Bill Peck, Ruth Stephenson, and others
Orpington Nurseries Co., Ltd.	Rocky Lane, Gatton Park Reigate, Surrey, England		Introductions of John Taylor, Laurence Neel, H. Senior Fothergill, and other English breeders
Palette Gardens	26 West Zion Hill Road Quakertown, PA 18951	Free	Introductions of William Krasting, William Newhard
Richland Hills Iris Garden	7108 Briley Drive Fort Worth, TX 76118	Free	
Riverdale Iris Gardens	7124 Riverdale Road Minneapolis, MN 55430	Free	Median specialists. Introductions of Alta Brown, Bonnie Carol Lankow, David Sindt, Walter Welch, and others
Schreiner's	3625 Quinaby Road, NE Salem, OR 97303	50¢	Introductions of Bob Schreiner
Species Specialties	5809 Rahke Road Indianapolis, IN 46217	SSAE	Introductions of Earl Roberts. Species specialists.
Tell's Garden	P O Box 331 Orem, UT 84057	Free	Introductions of Tell Muhlstein and others
Tempo Two	P O Box 444, Frankston Victoria, Australia 3199	Free	Introductions of Barry and Lesley Blyth and other Australian breeders
Top o' the Ridge	100 NE 81st Street Kansas City, MO 64118	Free	
Uranium Country Gardens	Rt. 1, Box 224 Delta, CO 81416	Free	