

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

REGION

4

NEWS
CAST



VOLUME 18

JANUARY, 1976

No. 1

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NEWSCAST IS PUBLISHED TRI-ANNUALLY IN JANUARY, APRIL AND SEPTEMBER.

NEWSCAST IS FREE TO ALL MEMBERS OF REGION 4, A. I. S.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE TO NON-MEMBERS OF REGION 4—\$3.00 per year

Permission is granted to reprint any article appearing in Newscast unless otherwise specified, provided proper credit is given.

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Full page	\$25.00
One-half page	15.00
One quarter page	8.00
Commercial Directory	2.75

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EDITOR'S PAGE

It is gratifying to find that the NEWSCAST is read by Region 4 members. John Moffitt, a new member, read my plea for contributions and submitted an article concerning his hybridizing activities. Why don't you write something for the next issue?

As a new year begins, it is sad to report that Helen McCaughey, dedicated Historian of the A.I.S. has found it necessary to resign from that post. Larry Harder, Ponca, Nebraska, 68770, is the new chairman of the Historical Committee. In a letter to Anne Lee, Helen wrote "My deepest thanks to you and the members of Region 4 for your past courtesies and kindnesses to me—in making this office whatever success it has become. It has been an interesting and challenging work—And a work I shall continue to be interested in."

As 1976 burst upon us as a year-long celebration of the bicentennial of the founding of our country Joe Ghio's preview sheet for 1976 indicates the introduction of BICENTENNIAL. No, it is not red-white-blue! OLD GLORY was Blocher's approach to that in 1974. Joe's contribution has gold standards and white falls edged gold.

In reading a novel by Norah Lofts recently the following caught my eye: ". . . and the lupines were losing their towering blue. Grey-podded and stark, they revealed now the utilitarian purpose that had lurked behind the petalled loveliness." What do you see when you look at an iris bloom? Do you see only the beauty of that instant, the promise of more beauty to come from the buds, or the utilitarian purpose of producing seeds for continuation of the plant?

Roy

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSCAST IS
MARCH 6, 1976 !!!

R. V. P.'s MESSAGE

The summer is past and it is time to take inventory. How has the Region 4 fared? Poorly, I have to say. We lost seventy members, a record that I wish we would have not achieved, but there it was in Cliff Benson's record. I have to add that less than half of the judges voted in the ballot for Judges Choice. All this is very disheartening. We were in the avantgard once, I am not sure who is at fault. I like to blame myself, but a chief is only as good as his Indians, and my Indians have let me down.

I hope this year will bring new impetus. It is difficult to recruit new members, but try. Our next Regional meeting in Baltimore will have an illustrious guest as speaker and teacher of the Judges Training in Ben Hager. So plan in advance.

I am always open to suggestions and complaints or whatever. So call on me and help to put Region 4 again on a forward trend.

Anne Lee, RVP

MINUTES -- EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

November 8, 1975

These are condensed minutes. The complete minutes have been distributed to all members of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board of Region 4, A.I.S., met at 3 p.m. at the Quality Inn-Fort Magruder, Williamsburg, Virginia, Dr. Anne L. Lee, RVP presiding, Mrs. Frank H. J. Figge, Secretary. Fifteen (15) members of the Board were present.

Discussions were held on the following topics:

Judges Training and Records

Increasing the number of Region 4 Judges (Currently:
24 Garden and 4 Apprentice Judges)

Membership in Region 4

Youth Members and Activities

Revision and Publication of By-Laws

The following actions were taken:

The Secretary is to distribute the minutes to each Board member and the Editor will condense them for the NEWSCAST.

Appointment of a committee to formulate guidelines for organizing and presenting regional conventions:
Chairman, Epperson; Nenon; Crumpler.

Appointment of a committee to study suggested By-Law modifications: Chairman, Johnston; Rucker;
Crumpler.

Appointment of the Nominating Committee: Chairman,
Eloise Nenon (Va.) ; Glenn Grigg, Jr., (N.C.) ; Sam
Owens (W. Va.) ; Henry Purdy (Md.)

TREASURER'S REPORT
REGION 4 — AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY
May 10, 1975 to November 6, 1975

Balance from last treasurer's report May 10, 1975	\$2,693.31
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Received:

5/23/75	NEWSCAST	2.00
5/23/75	Iris auction at meeting in Roanoke	346.00
7/ 1/75	Western N. C. Chapter contribution	75.00
7/26/75	Blue Ridge Chapter contribution	250.00
8/ 4/75	Norfolk Chapter contribution	100.00
Total Received		<hr/> \$ 773.00

Disbursed:

5/23/75	Mrs. Jack Bowersox, Postage NEWSCAST	\$ 93.53
5/23/75	Walters Printing Co.	341.12
8/29/75	Mrs. Rena Crumpler, Mailing Expense	20.57
9/15/75	Mrs. J. E. Rucker, Membership Expense	7.23
9/15/75	A.I.S. Tapes for NEWSCAST	<hr/> 3.08
Total Disbursed		<hr/> \$ 465.53
Net Balance		<hr/> \$3,000.78
Designated for Judges Training		\$ 114.54

NOTES FROM A VETERAN AMATEUR

John Moffitt

In response to the Editor's request for material for NEWS-CAST, I am sending these few lines in the hope they may be of interest.

Having retired from my work as an editor on the staff of a magazine, when I came to live in Virginia in 1971 I took up once more an interest that I had had as a teenager in the 1920's, namely hybridizing irises. I was fortunate enough to get in touch with J. Arthur Nelson, to whom I wrote about it. On May 10, 1973, he wrote me: "Thank you for your kind letter. It was a very interesting letter to me, and I am making a comment on it in the July Bulletin." Since I was not then a member of the A.I.S., I do not know if that comment ever appeared. I received much useful information from him in a few notes he wrote me, and I was extremely sorry to learn that he passed away the following winter.

In 1972 I had made a cross between a not very recent blue self and a sturdy yellow of about the same vintage which in 1974 gave me 28 blooming seedlings of highly varied height and growth habits (and the next year 13 more; one is yet to bloom). They ranged in color from clear yellows and deep yellows through cafe-au-lait, olive yellow (with paler falls), pure white, white tinged faint blue, gray blue, cobalt blue, royal blue, brown purple, plum, mauve, lavender, and pale pink-lavender. The heights varied from 30 to 48 inches on first blooming; the second year of bloom improved some of the flowers, while some of the heights were not so extreme. Many of the flowers were well formed and sturdy, and several reminded me of such fine early varieties as LENT A. WILLIAMSON, which has made me wonder if the parents are actually diploids. But since they have easily crossed with up-to-date varieties (and produced pods with as many as 55 seeds), I presume they are tetraploids.

Feeling it might be interesting to use these as pod or pollen parents with more recent varieties, in 1974 I crossed several of the best with STEPPING OUT, SPANISH GIFT, HIGH SIERRA, MARY RANDALL, MILESTONE, and ORANGE PARADE. And in 1975, with WEST COAST, BROOK FLOWER, WINTER OLYMPICS, CRYSTAL BLUE, and RIPPLING WATERS. I also crossed a defective but extraordinarily tough-petaled blue seedling with one of its siblings, in the hope

of obtaining at least a few normal blooms with the same texture. It is my belief that most of the plants from my original cross are very healthy ones, for this summer after all the irises were subjected to weeks of rain (sometimes standing under an inch or so of water till I could drain them) the original 42 seedlings showed little or no signs of rot, while some of my crosses with (especially) MARY RANDALL, STEPPING OUT, and HIGH SIERRA, were almost lost through it. I have had to raise all my plants several inches above the level of the field to guard against a similar happening next year.

What I am most interested in finding out is whether one experiment I started this year has already been made by others. After harvesting the pods, I have removed the seeds one by one (and by sections) and have planted them in the same order. In this way I hope to find out if nature arranges the colors in an orderly fashion in the pod. Since my original seedlings had such a wide range of colors, I am hoping that the offspring will, too, and I can discover if, for instance, all the whites, all the blues, etc. are grouped together or occur haphazardly. If anyone else has made the same experiment I should be glad to know about it.

I know that many people do not prefer very tall irises, but since on first blooming some of this batch were as tall as 48 inches, I thought it might be interesting to find out if I could produce more of this height.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: AIS BULLETIN,
July 1973 . . .

"Received an interesting letter from John Moffitt of Gordonsville, Va. Some fifty years ago, he hybridized irises as a boy between ten and sixteen years of age, and one of his irises, ARJEMAND, was rated 78 under the old rating scales. Now after a half century, he is returning to hybridizing irises, and finding joy in the experience."

COMPANION PLANTS — YES OR NO?

Anne L. Lee

I wish to go with the "yes" group. Somehow you have to be very careful in selecting companion plants to iris. Their delicate colors should not be overshadowed, and too close planting near evergreens even though the green makes a good foil will rob the bed of nutrients. In case your beds are bordered with rocks, sedums can be tucked in here and there. As with other plants great improvements have been made. There are some dark red ones, some bright green with darker margins, some with white fuzz that makes them extra attractive. In early spring a few snowdrops nodding at the border of your iris bed will make you think of spring. The tiny winter crocus like VERSICOLOR, tiny white with purple markings or ZWANENBURG bronze, yellow or brown or GAY LADY, dainty mauve planted in small clumps on the edge of your iris bed will look like little premature Easter eggs. The sedums never interfere with your iris and the winter crocus are long gone by iris time.

The anemone BLANDA, Grecian Windflower in shades of blue, red and white with feathery foliage are pretty on the edge of the bed. Sparaxis, the harlequin flower, is a bright addition planted at the edge of the bed. Its flaming red with yellow and black pencilling attracts attention by every visitor. They are inexpensive and hardy and about 6-8 inches tall. I would not be without them. At tall bearded iris time I like to have some Digitalis in the background of the beds. Their tall stately spikes and their subtle color in shades of mauve and white blend nicely with the iris bed. They usually bloom a little longer than the tall bearded and lend some color. I also like Shirley poppies, but I am sure that many may object to have them grow in the iris bed. If not allowed to become too prolific their bright colors are very attractive, red and pink, white and lavender. They bloom in Tidewater Virginia at the end of the tall bearded season. Since they are annuals they are taken out of the beds as soon as their seeds have ripened and leave all summer for the sun to penetrate to the roots of the iris. During the summer months I have not been able to find suitable plants to combine with the iris. Most annuals when planted on the edge will soon spread too far. So the sedums have to suffice.

I have tried many other plants with varying success. Johnny jump-ups, they seed so prolifically that they are like a weed:

Pansies, too invasive; dwarf yarrow, too invasive; creeping phlox, too invasive; Portulaca, too invasive.

Many of you may have tried other plant material. Why not let us hear about your experience?

CONVENTION NEWS

Pat Johnson

Francis Scott Key Chapter, with the help and cooperation of Marydel Chapter, has planned the next Region 4 Convention for May 28 and May 29, 1976. Headquarters will be the recently expanded Quality Inn—Towson. Guest speaker Ben R. Hager of Melrose Gardens, and tour gardens that range from elegant city gardens to 69 acres on a hilltop, should provide an exciting weekend for conventioneers.

In combat with inflationary prices, the hosts have made every effort to provide the ultimate in pleasure while holding expenditures to a minimum. The registration tearsheet elsewhere in this issue illustrates the results.

Scheduled activities begin on Thursday evening, May 27th when early arrivals will be carpooled to the home of Bill and Claire Barr for a reception and slide program by Bill Barr and Maynard Harp. Refreshments will be provided by FSK members.

Friday will begin with a Judges Training class at the motel from 9:00 to 1:00 p.m. The Regional Board will meet in the afternoon; nonboard irisarians will be offered an optional tour of the internationally famed Ladew Gardens or a tour of metropolitan Baltimore.

The regional auction will be held Friday evening at the home of Alice Miller; again, FSK Chapter offers a car pool and refreshments at no charge.

Both Thursday and Friday evening events will be held in members' homes, rather than a motel meeting room, so that registration charges will not be inflated by additional charges, and to offer guests informal and personalized hospitality. In

every instance, car pool transportation can be arranged in the hospitality room at convention headquarters.

On Saturday morning, a complete breakfast; orange juice, country scrambled eggs, bacon or sausage, biscuits and honey, coffee or tea, will be available at the motel. Conventioneers are encouraged to register for this breakfast to facilitate a convenient and relaxing meal before bus time. A restaurant will be open nearby, but the motel itself serves only preordered group meals and is not open for public dining.

Guests will board buses on Saturday morning for a full day of iris-ing. Five gardens will be toured, with a family-style lunch served at Leister's Church in Westminster.

Region 4 members will remember Alice Miller's "city garden" in Towson, where superbly grown irises bloom in gracefully flowing beds around the house. Rosalie Figge's Towson garden is a luscious potpourri of blooms. Her interests extend to various iris forms, including arils and rebloomers; companion plants dance joyously to iris melodies here.

Nestled in elegant Green Spring Valley, the garden of Claire and Bill Barr features well grown and meticulously groomed irises. A greenhouse extends their floral interests. Doris and Owings Rebert enjoy a backyard filled with irises at their Westminster home. This rolling country area provides a lovely background for their delightful landscaping and well-displayed irises.

Maywood, the glorious 69-acre summer home of the Harps, will delight with a hilltop of irises, accompanied by daylilies, trees, shrubs, rock garden and wildflowers, as Retta and Maynard are both gracious hosts and knowledgeable horticulturists.

Saturday evening's banquet offers a choice of main courses—sliced roast sirloin of beef or a Maryland specialty, Crab Imperial—in a meal that starts with homemade vegetable soup and concludes with Baked Alaska. The meal will be followed, as usual, by the Regional Meeting and the guest speaker. Ben Hager, co-owner of Melrose Gardens in Stockton, California and multitudinous award-winning hybridizer, should delight conventioneers with both his knowledge and personality.

FSK and Marydel Chapters are looking forward to hosting the 1976 Region 4 Meeting and hope that plans will result in an enjoyable weekend for guests.

SPECIAL INVITATION

From Ann Dasch, 1976 Region 4 Convention Chairman

Francis Scott Key Chapter enthusiastically invites all regional irisarians to attend the 1976 Regional Meetings. We feel that our guests will have a good iris-y weekend because.....

1. Marydel Chapter is helping us with the convention; the efforts of both groups should provide super-complete hosting!

2. We have done our best to keep costs at a minimum while providing the maximum; refreshments will be provided both Thursday and Friday, free of charge, as meetings are held in the homes of nearby irisarians. The \$5.00 Judges Training fee is the same charged when we hosted the 1969 Convention. Car pools are planned to provide transportation for guests who fly and are auto-less.

3. A wide variety of activities on the schedule, plus optional tours, meals, etc. should fit the needs of every guest. In addition to the usual registration desk, a hospitality room will be manned to help with carpools, shopping and dining advice, emergencies, etc.

4. The headquarters are planned at Quality Inn, Towson, where modest rates (compared to others suitable), improved facilities (since our 1969 Convention there, they have added more rooms, meeting rooms, bar, indoor pool, etc.), limousine service to the airport, and a location that is easy to find and convenient, should be assets.

5. IRISES! — The real stars of the show! Hundreds of guests have been received and planted in tour gardens, including some of the finest recent and future introductions of a galaxy of prominent hybridizers.

6. Ben Hager, as our Banquet and Judges Training speaker, offers us a sparkling wit, colorful personality, and knowledge in virtually every area of irisng. Who else has hybridized recent winners in each of these; Morgan Award (Siberians), Cook-Douglas Award (SDB), Nies Award (Spuria), Debaillon Award (Louisianas) and more?!

7. Irisarians in FSK and Marydel have been hard at work planning this convention. We joyously anticipate being your hosts—your pleasure is our goal. We cannot guarantee sunny

weather, but we do promise that we'll be happy to see you arrive!
'Nuff said! Y'all come!!

METRICS FOR IRISARIANS

Roy Epperson

As the United States enters its bicentennial year, it also comes closer to the universal utilization of the Metric System of Weights and Measures. The United States is the sole country of economic importance that has not adopted the metric system for commerce. The complete metric system can become complicated. However, the layman needs only to understand the metre, litre, and gram for measuring distance, capacity, and weight respectively.

For us as irisarians we will need to learn to "Think Metric" as we classify the bearded irises. The metric unit to be used is the centimetre, symbol cm, and we need to remember that there are 2.5 cm per inch (2.54 to be exact.) The height classifications then will be:

MDB	13-25 cm	(5-10 in)
SDB	25-38 cm	(10-15 in)
IB	38-71 cm	(15-28 in)
MTB	38-64 cm	(15-25 in)
BB	38-71 cm	(15-28 in)
TB	over 71 cm	(over 28 in)

If we are indeed a society dedicated to the science of growing, hybridizing, and evaluating the genus iris, then let each of us "Think Metric" and stamp out four-letter words like inch, foot, yard, pint ! ! !

C YOUTH R

N There are currently 14 youth members in Region 4; the Richmond, C&P, and ENC Chapters each have one member; the Blue E Ridge Chapter has 3 members; the FSK Chapter has 8 members. R Where there is strong and continuing interest in working with youth members, there is a successful youth program.

Youth members have been active in a number of ways in Region 4. In an article for NEWSCAST one youth wrote charmingly of the iris tours to Australia, New Zealand, and Tahiti. An edited version of that article appeared in the April 1975 AIS BULLETIN. Another youth member reported in the NEWS-CAST on her favorite iris from the Regional Convention in Roanoke last May.

We are writing to youth members to help each feel welcome and to encourage youth participation in this Region, but efforts to stir interest over long distances have not been successful.

In order to do the utmost to encourage and recruit youth members throughout Region 4, it is necessary to have a Youth Committee member in each active Chapter. Therefore, will each Chapter Chairman please secure a representative for the Youth Committee and inform us as soon as possible?

In closing, seek out youth groups (junior garden clubs, scout troops, church and school groups) to share iris information with. No Youth Achievement Award was presented this year.

REGISTRATION TEAR SHEET

1976 Region 4 Convention

Towson, Maryland

MAIL TO: Claire Barr
1910 Green Spring Valley Road
Stevenson, Maryland 21153

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Francis Scott Key
Chapter, A.I.S.

Registration Includes Tour Bus Fare, Luncheon and Banquet
on Saturday, May 29, Program Booklet, Badge, Etc. Partial
registration is available for any of these events.

NUMBER	AMOUNT
(1.) _____ A.I.S. Member(s) Registering on or before May 1 at \$27.50	\$_____
(2.) _____ A.I.S. Member(s) Registering after May 1 at \$29.50	\$_____
(3.) _____ A.I.S. Youth Member(s) Registering on or before May 1 at \$15.00	\$_____
(4.) _____ A.I.S. Youth Member(s) Registering after May 1 at \$17.00	\$_____
(5.) _____ Non-A.I.S. Guests at appropriate figure above, plus \$2.00	\$_____
(6.) _____ Optional Buffet Breakfast on Saturday, May 28, at \$3.00 each	\$_____

* * *

Banquet Menu Selections for above Registrants:

_____ Roast Beef _____ Crab Imperial

JUDGES TRAINING CLASS

REGISTRATION

NUMBER	AMOUNT
(1.) _____ A.I.S. Adult Member(s) at \$5.00	\$_____
(2.) _____ A.I.S. Youth Member(s) at \$3.00	\$_____
(3.) _____ Non — A.I.S. Member(s) at \$10.00 ...\$	_____

The above Judges Training Registration is to arrange physical facilities. The Region 4 Judges' Training Chairman, Mrs. Hunt Nenon, is in charge of content and program, and will be notified of Judges' Training registrants.

Names and addresses of Registrant(s), and numbers of categories above applicable:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CATEGORIES _____

(Use additional page if necessary)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$_____

COMPOSTING IS EASY AND PRACTICAL

Charles O. Bell

Supt. of Grounds, UNC-G

(Reprinted from the Greensboro DAILY NEWS, Oct. 18, 1975)

What are you going to do with that pile of leaves you rake off the lawn?

Take my advice, and the advice given in the title of a book I've just read, and **LET IT ROT!** This is the best thing you could do with it.

And that's what composting is all about—the rotting, decay, decomposition of organic matter into material which can be used to improve your soil. The residue is a spongy mass capable of holding several times its own weight in water and has a great absorptive surface for holding nutrient elements for utilization by plant roots.

There are several ways in which composting can be done. You can build elaborate bins or other structures to contain it. You could build simple pens out of hardware cloth or fencing. Or you could do as I do and just pile it up in an out-of-the-way place and let it rot. You could stack the pile in the classic manner of putting down a layer of leaves or other organic matter, a layer of manure and a layer of soil and repeat these layers to 4 feet high. Or simply pile up all the organic matter (leaves, weeds, etc.) and let it rot. This last method is the slowest way of composting but is a lot less trouble.

A compromise in methods is quite permissible. Start with a pile of leaves four to five feet wide, as long as is necessary, and a few inches high. Wet them down and sprinkle on a fertilizer high in nitrogen (such as ammonium nitrate if you have it; if not, use what you have). Add more leaves on top of this layer, then more fertilizer and more water. Walk across the stack of leaves to pack them slightly. Four feet high is about the optimum height.

If you are pulling weeds out of the garden, add them. Soil on the weed roots will act as an inoculant providing the necessary fungi and bacteria to start the decomposition. Add coffee grounds, tea leaves, chopped grapefruit and orange peel, apple cores, cabbage leaves—any vegetable matter. Add animal products at your

own risk; stray dogs might visit you if you add meat scraps. And the odor from decaying meat and bones might be offensive.

Cat litter may be added as well as manure from any other animals. Odors from these are not great; dried manure is less odorous than fresh manure.

Finely chopped or shredded material decomposes more rapidly than coarse material. Corn stalks rot very slowly and should be chopped or shredded and added to the compost. They could be buried in the garden to rot underground.

Sawdust and small woodchips from the home workshop may be added to the compost pile but it would be best to mix them with the other material. Coarse clippings from pruning shrubs and trees should not be added unless chopped into bits. The rate of decay of larger limbs is too slow for them to be composted whole.

Lime is not needed; in fact, it may be harmful to the decay organisms. Lime may change the acidity of the final compost so it is not suitable for use with azaleas and rhododendrons. Super-phosphate is not needed or useful in compost.

All you really need are: organic matter to be rotted, air, water, nitrogen, inoculant of fungi and bacteria. You have the organic matter; don't pile it too high or wide and don't pack it too tightly and you'll have the air. Rake leaves while they are still wet with dew and they'll stay wet for some time. Add green stuff such as grass clippings and add fertilizer to provide nitrogen. The inoculants are in all probability on the material you pile up so you don't have to worry about them. Just provide them with the proper environment and they'll go to work rotting everything you put out for them. The addition of some soil or an occasional shovelful of compost from an existing pile will ensure the inoculant is there.

If you have a lot of trees with lots and lots of leaves on the ground don't go over them with a leaf mulcher and leave them laying. Even the chopped up leaves can cause lawn problems. Rake off the mulched leaves and compost them. They will rot more quickly than leaves not mulched. The mulcher may be used on lawns with a light scattering of leaves with this scattering left on the lawn.

Compost worked into the soil can make everything from azaleas to zucchini grow better. To make compost out of fallen leaves is better than to let them be hauled off to a landfill where they do you and your plants no good.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Helen Rucker

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Mrs. Brenda Fischer, Rt. 1, Box 131, "Huntingtown Farms", Huntingtown, Md. 20639..

Mrs. Fernanda Hogroian, P.O. Box 34454, Bethesda, Md. 20034.

Mrs. Mary G. Miller, Rt. 3, Box 324, Annapolis, Md. 21403.

IRIS CRISTATA

IRIS CRISTATA is a rhizomatous, beardless species native to the Atlantic seaboard. Adaptable and undemanding, it is at its best in a lightly shaded, woodsy, and well drained soil where it spreads over large areas, carpeting the ground with rather broad six-inch leaves. In May the matted growth is nearly hidden beneath flat lavender flowers patterned in deep blue and white with a yellow toothed crest on the falls. White, lavender, and almost pink variants have been reported. The long thin rhizomes creep about over the soil surface and may be planted so, only the roots being covered. Each spring, a top-dressing of an inch of fresh humusy soil serves well; otherwise IRIS CRISTATA takes care of itself.

(Excerpted from THE IRIS BOOK by Molly Price.)

FUN AND GAMES?

(Reprinted from REGION 22 NEWS, Spring 1974)

See if YOU can name the irises whose names match the statements below.

1. We want our stories to have one (Keppel)
2. It will get you anywhere (Gatty)
3. Many plan their day by it (Ron Beattie)
4. You need one to go abroad (Ghio)
5. A fencing term (Hamblen)
6. Lines 1, 2, & 5 rhyme as do 3 and 4 (Keppel)
7. A photograph or picture (Corlew)
8. Many jump on this (Tompkins)
9. A male singing voice (Hager)
10. A standing one is nice (Tompkins)
11. The first paper in the afternoon (Keppel)
12. A street where we would like to live (Tompkins)
13. Weather forecast (Plough)
14. Secretariat has been there (Plough)
15. From 4 till midnight (Sexton)
16. A green and white soap; a season in Erin (Bernice Roe)
17. Formerly East Pakistan (Peterson)
18. A National Park in Utah (Hamblen)
19. Hoss and Little Joe's home (Ghio)
20. Done in square dancing (Schreiner)
21. The key part of a joke (Plough)
22. Open Sesame is an example; TV show (Tompkins)
23. It's golden (Tompkins)
24. A Mitch Miller show (Plough)

25. An African language (Plough)
26. The sign of the twins (M. Knopf)
27. A Rolls Royce perhaps (Babson)
28. Bought at a theatre (D. Palmer)
29. A breakfast cereal (Schreiner)
30. A cookie with a sharp taste (Schreiner)
31. Caressed the trees tenderly (Opal Brown)
32. A rubbery type candy (Schreiner)
33. A cartoon strip; a crop (Hager)
34. A city in southwest Oklahoma (Dottie Dennis)
35. A very large, juicy fruit (oldie)
36. Very popular at Christmas time (Z. G. Benson)
37. Hawaiian farewell (Ghio)
38. A word used with vigor (Schreiner)
39. Catch a 'falling star' (Keppel)
40. Southern custom says to eat black-eyed peas on January 1 for this (Keppel)

No peeking until you have finished! The answers are on page 32

TOOLS OF AN IRIS GARDENER

by Fred E. Spahn

Dubuque, Iowa 52001

One seldom sees an article dealing with the tools one uses in growing iris so I thought it might be the basis for one. When I realize what I myself had accumulated that could come under the broad heading of tools, and include gardening accessories and supplies, it came to quite an imposing list. Of course some of these have special purposes, for instance, hybridizing, and might

not be used by everyone. But see how many of them appear on a list of your own.

While I haven't as yet indulged in a special tool house, I thought it might be interesting to enumerate the tools and gear I will store in the one I eventually intend to have. And also how I make use of some of those I do have.

Have you ever stopped to think which gardening tool you would miss the most if deprived of it? Or the top three? The choice would be easy for me. Mine would be what is commonly known as a dandelion digger and I always keep two on hand to avoid having to look for one. Wooden handle with about an 18-inch shank and a flattened end with a sharpened V-shaped notch in the end. Look for one with a husky shank that won't bend easily as it has a lot of uses. Second most useful for me is a four-tined cultivator less than six inches wide with tines about four inches long and a five-foot handle. Third on the most useful list would be knives of various types, including a heavy bladed hunting knife.

Before continuing with the list I might explain my usages of the above. Although there are close to 400 named varieties of iris, plus seedlings in the garden, it is compact enough to require that everything be hand weeded. The dandelion digger is used to undercut the weeds which are then lifted out with the other hand. When dividing iris, especially when taking off an individual rhizome or two this tool can be used to loosen the soil in back of the rhizome so it can be lifted out. As most of you know the bulk of the roots extend out the back. It can also be used with a slicing motion to shallowly cultivate individual small beds.

The four-tined cultivator is used for what the name implies, cultivating. I prefer it to a hoe because it will do the job without cutting roots, as a hoe will normally do. A hunting knife is used to separate individual rhizomes in a clump and act as a deterrent to the spread of scorch which will not jump a root gap (must be done prior to plant contacting it). Use it to cut off individual rhizomes and old rhizomes out of clumps. I have a half dozen other cheap knives that cost less than 50¢ each. The ones that aren't hollow ground can be sharpened easier though the edge won't last as long. These are kept almost razor sharp and are used to cut back foliage when transplanting and trim the foliage to 5 or 6 inches prior to mulching in the Fall. Plus a lot of other uses. Keeping knives sharp, as well as hoes and other tools that should be sharp, makes them a pleasure to work with.

A local gardener for years has used a putty knife for hand weeding beds of annuals and I keep one on hand for this purpose. Also in small hand tools would be a teaspoon or two with a strong enough handle to withstand pressure when scraping out soft rot. Sharpening the edge will help here too. A Windex bottle or similar atomizer with a Lysol solution is kept on hand for treating soft rot after scraping and the sharp knives come in handy here too. Then I have two different wooden handled trowels and pruning shears.

Doorbell wire for me has a host of uses. It comes in various colors in 60 and 100 ft. rolls and is copper wire rubber-covered. I use it instead of twist-ems, cut in about 6-inch pieces with the pruning shears. It is easier to use the first and succeeding times than twist-ems. I also use it to color code seedlings for evaluation in the seedling patch. Yellow denotes those I intend to hold over, green are those that wouldn't embarrass me if given to friends and the dogs have red wires wrapped on the stems.

Other small hand tools would include marking pencils. I prefer Scripto, an eversharp-type with replaceable leads. Then a tape measure and a couple of yardsticks and about 150 ft. of heavy cord (mine is yellow) for layout of any new or rebuilt beds. Now let's add a clipboard, paper and pens, or notebooks, for record taking in the garden. And a pair of soft leather gloves for use when transplanting. (These will make your fingernails more presentable at the dinner table I have found out.) Most of the hand tools can be carried at times in a carpenter's apron, one of the plastic buckets I keep handy, or one could make a special kit for carrying them.

In long handled tools a spade, spading fork, a cast iron rake and a leaf rake, as well as several hoes would be included. Next summer I intend to purchase a "Hula" or scuffle hoe and give it a try-out. The hoes I have I keep sharp with the aid of the file which is easily done. They are used primarily to shave weeds rather than to cultivate with. One of these is a triangular-shaped one with sides about 2 inches long or a bit more, that is handy for getting between individual plants and the other has about a 6-inch wide blade. Then I have a child's set of a spade, rake and hoe from when I tried to make a helper of my daughter when she was a youngster. Also a flat-edged spade for edging and a roll-type edger. This is used only once or twice a Summer as the lawns are edged with flower beds and are surrounded on the edges with a single row of bricks with the tops sunk flush with ground level. One wheel of the mower can then be run along the

bricks. One still has enough use for grass shears to include it on a list.

When transplanting clumps of flowers a heavy enamel pan of 12-quart or larger size is useful. Especially if you don't have room to store a small wheelbarrow. Dig the hole in your new location putting the first shovel or two of soil in the pan. Then use the fork to loosen the clump to be moved and transport it to the new hole. Then to fill the hole where the plant came out use the soil placed in the pan. Binder twine is relatively cheap and a bundle will last several years and be a good investment. It is soft enough to reduce chafing of the plants that require tying up and the color isn't noticeable. I use it for bundling the cut out flower stalks for the garbage pick-up and other uses.

A rain gauge is a handy gadget and for those times when it fails to rain a good garden hose with a sprinkler and nozzles will be needed. All of my spraying uses the garden hose also as I have the type of sprayer that meters out a given amount from a bottle that you attach to the hose. Don't forget a couple of sprinkling cans.

I am using two types of labels. The one has a single 18" length of No. 9 galvanized wire with a pigtail twisted on the one end and then a 3-inch long by $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch wide plastic label is attached. The other type has two lighter gauge wires pre-formed to accept about the same sized zinc nameplate at the top. These have 24" wires but shorter are available. I have a label gun that makes labels from the plastic tapes that I use on both types of labels. I have found that the black tapes will last for three seasons and be legible if brought indoors for the Winter when a plat is made of each bed.

Everyone has their own favorite insecticides and fungicides, and lately weed killers, and I have a small shelf full of different types that would require a separate article.

Those windy days during bloom season, or heavy rains, bring out the stakes. I use mostly the 3-foot green, bamboo-type with some a foot shorter. I also have several dozen 3-foot steel stakes from old peony supports that are about a half-inch in diameter that I use for laying out rows with the use of the heavy cord. Locations of individual plants are laid out using the 18" label wires.

For hybridizing an eyebrow tweezer with a scissors-type handle with loops for the fingers is the easiest to use and can be

purchased for about \$1 at any chain drug store. Attach a cord that can be slung around the neck to keep from misplacing it. You will also need some type of hybridizer's tag to attach to the flower to keep track of the cross. I use one that is about 2 inches square and has a slot for attaching it. Save those little plastic tubs that most margarine comes in. They make ideal containers for drying and storing seeds and can be nested to conserve space when not in use.

My seeds are all sown in a coldframe which requires a mixture of peat moss and vermiculite which has to be stored, and sash for covering the frame in Spring. I have a notched stick (notches 1 inch apart) that is the 30" width of the coldframe used for spacing the seeds about a half inch in diameter. A piece of adhesive tape denotes a 1" depth for planting the seeds. Individual holes are punched and the seeds dropped in and covered.

I have made myself a small-wheeled table that is useful at digging time. It has a drawer for small tools and a top suitable for trimming foliage and cutting off dead rhizomes. So what does that leave? A bag of fertilizer. Almost 200 flower pots in 5 to 7 inch size for potting rhizomes that are ordered early and held for about a month until the beds are remade. And if one sells or exchanges a few iris out of town some packing material such as excelsior will have to be stored with cartons and some type of tape will have to be accumulated.

Although really not classed as tools the four spotlights I have in the yard enable me to use the others long after the neighbors think a sane person should have called it quits. I do a lot of my planning then which is a lot more fun than using all those tools.

All-told it makes quite a list when set down on paper. Good tools are worth the little extra that separates them from the cheapest. Those that should be sharp should be kept that way to do the best job. The others should be kept clean and lightly oiled before storing for the Winter. Painting the handles on some of the hand tools will help locate them easily.

To make room for the above list and a lawnmower too I think I best increase the size of that toolshed I have in mind.

REBLOOMING IRIS REPORT

Lloyd Zurbrigg

Enthusiasm for the reblooming iris continues to mount. Last year WHITE LIGHTNING, a California rebloomer, won the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup at Convention, while AVALON BAY, SONG OF ERIN, and SUMMER SUNSHINE were all runners-up for the President's Cup, and all are California re-bloomers. Truly times have changed dramatically. It remains to see if any of these will be remontant in Virginia and North Carolina. SUMMER SUNSHINE does at least occasionally.

The last weekend of September, Region 6 held its Annual Fall Meeting and Iris Show in Dayton, Ohio. Your chairman was the guest speaker for the event. The Show had 49 entries in a year when rebloom had been difficult in most areas. SUMMER FANTASY won Queen of Show. Individual blossoms are smallish, but the plant is such a producer and easily opens five at once, so that it is a strong contender at Fall Shows. First place in the seedling class was won by Carl and Carol Jensen of Belvidere, Illinois, with a dark violet-blue out of TYROLEAN BLUE and AUTUMN NIGHT. Your chairman won second with a light yellow SDB from BABY SNOWFLAKE X TWICE BLESSED. It was the only dwarf in the show. GOLDEN ENCORE of Frank Jones seemed still the most-to-be-coveted entry, with its rich golden-yellow and good form. A seedling from the Avonbank Gardens also spoke well for Region 4, even though it had a partially deformed bloom, but its size, width and ruffling were noted by many. This was the H 22 Amoena which graced our September 1973 planning meeting for the '74 Convention.

Would you please send any report on rebloom to me so that reports will be more inclusive in '76?

NEWS OF THE CHAPTERS

BLUE RIDGE

Clytie McCoy

The Blue Ridge Chapter has had two meetings since the 1975 Regional Meeting. The luncheon and auction was held on July 19th at the home of Clytie McCoy with 9 members and several guests present. Total receipts from the auction was \$267.50 and most of the Iris were donated by Rena Crumpler.

The October Meeting was held at the Garden Center. Sixteen members were present and two new youth members were added to the roll. Slides of the 1974 National convention in Roanoke and some slides from the California Convention were shown.

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Glenn Grigg, Jr.

The Chapter held its spring meeting on March 8, 1975 in Hillsborough, N.C., at which the following were elected officers for 1976:

Mr. Glenn Grigg—Chapter Chairman
Mrs. Barbara Trogden—Vice Chairman
Mrs. Theo Wall—Treasurer
Mrs. Susan Grigg—Secretary

Plans were finalized at this meeting for a standard iris show (the first for the Chapter) to be held on May 3rd. in High Point.

On May 3rd, 1975 the Chapter held an Iris Show at the Holt McPherson Campus Center on the High Point College Campus in High Point, N.C. A complete 50 class show was held with both horticultural and educational exhibits. The show, while limited in both participants and visitors, was a success for the Chapter. Plans for a show in 1976 are incomplete but several

members are wanting to repeat the show. The following were chairmen of the various show committees:

Mr. Glenn Grigg—General Chairman
Mrs. Barbara Trogden—Registrations
Mrs. R. L. Wall—Placements
Mrs. D. W. Parham—Hospitality
Mr. and Mrs. John Dughi—Judges
Dr. Roy Epperson—Staging & Properties
Dr. Roy Epperson—Sec. Awards
Mrs. Susan Grigg—Publicity

On June 28, 1975 The Chapter held the annual iris auction at the home of Dr. Roy Epperson in High Point. Eight members were in attendance and \$111.00 was raised during the auction. During the business meeting which followed, the Chapter voted to retain the entire proceeds of the auction within the Chapter.

The next Chapter meeting was held on November 16, 1975 at the home of Mrs. Alice Bouldin near Elon College, N.C. Plans of an iris show in 1976 were discussed, and the members were brought up to date on the plans for the 1977 Regional Meeting to be held within our Chapter. Current plans are to hold the meeting at the Hilton Inn at Elon College with a garden tour to be held on Saturday. The tour will include the gardens of the following people: Mrs. S. E. Somers, Mrs. Alice Bouldin, Mrs. Polly Price, Mrs. Marge Parham, Dr. Roy Epperson, and Mrs. Nannie Paquet. Lunch is planned in the Price garden. Plans for a concurrent iris show are incomplete at this time.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

Claire Barr

FSK members and guests met October 11 at the home of Alice Miller for a delicious covered dish supper and annual meeting.

Ann Dasch, Chairman for the 1976 Regional Meeting, announced the dates as May 28-29 and outlined the schedule. The

meeting will be held at Quality Inn-Towson with Ben Hager as Judges' Training Instructor and banquet speaker.

The following officers were elected to serve again for the coming year:

Chairman—Claire Barr

Vice-Chairman—Ann Dasch

Secretary—Mrs. Frank H. J. Figge

Treasurer—Owings Rebert

Parliamentarian—Maynard Harp

Following the business meeting, Maynard Harp showed a set of slides from the AIS collection: "Beardless Species and Hybrids, a Collection of Louisianas, Spurias, and Japanese Spanning the Last Twenty Years."

MARYDEL

Richard Kleen

The Marydel Chapter held the first meeting of the 1975-76 season on October 4 at the home of Bob and Frances Price. After a business meeting the membership was entertained and impressed by a series of slides showing Japanese Iris. The program was part of an attempt by the chapter to interest its members in growing other than tall bearded iris. Last year we introduced our members to Louisiana iris and this year a number of them are growing these beautiful flowers that grow so well on the Eastern Shore. We hope the Japanese iris show will produce similar results.

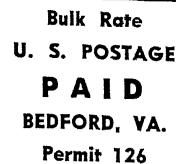
A report was received concerning the great success of our annual iris auction. We had a greater attendance than ever before, and a selection of those typically giant Melrose Garden rhizomes brought excellent prices from members and non-members alike.

Future meetings will feature median iris and slides of some of the latest introductions. We will again present to the community both a median display and an iris show in May.

This year should be both informative and eventful.

ANSWERS FOR FUN AND GAMES

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. HAPPY ENDING | 21. PUNCHLINE |
| 2. FLATTERY | 22. PASSWORD |
| 3. HOROSCOPE | 23. SILENCE |
| 4. PASSPART | 24. SING ALONG |
| 5. TOUCHE | 25. SWAHILI |
| 6. LIMERICK | 26. GEMINI |
| 7. PORTRAIT | 27. STATUS SYMBOL |
| 8. BANDWAGON | 28. BUTTERED POPCORN |
| 9. BARITONE | 29. KIX |
| 10. OVATION | 30. GINGERSNAP |
| 11. EARLY EDITION | 31. EVENING BREEZE |
| 12. EASY STREET | 32. LICORICE STICK |
| 13. FAIR AND WARM | 33. PEANUTS |
| 14. WINNER'S CIRCLE | 34. ALTUS |
| 15. SWING SHIFT | 35. WATERMELON |
| 16. IRISH SPRING | 36. CANDY CANE |
| 17. BANGLADESH | 37. ALOHA |
| 18. CANYONLANDS | 38. VIM |
| 19. PONDEROSA | 39. METEOR |
| 20. PROMENADE | 40. PROSPERITY |



INDEX

	PAGE
Editorial Staff	1
AIS Region 4 Board	2
Editor's Page	<i>Roy Epperson</i>
RVP's Message	4
Minutes—Executive Board Meeting	<i>Editor</i>
Treasurer's Report	<i>S. M. Owens, Jr.</i>
Notes from a Veteran Amateur	<i>John Moffitt</i>
Companion Plants — Yes or No?	<i>Anne L. Lee</i>
Convention News	<i>Pat Johnson</i>
Special Invitation	<i>Ann Dasch</i>
Metrics for Irisarians	<i>Roy Epperson</i>
Youth Corner	13
Registration Form — 1976 Regional Meeting	15
Judges Training Class Registration Form	16
Composting is Easy and Practical	<i>Charles O. Bell</i>
Membership Report	<i>Helen Rucker</i>
Iris Cristata	17
Fun and Games?	18
Tools of an Iris Gardener	<i>Fred E. Spahn</i>
Reblooming Iris Report	<i>Lloyd Zurbrigg</i>
News of the Chapters	20
Blue Ridge	<i>Clytie McCoy</i>
Eastern North Carolina	<i>Glenn Grigg, Jr.</i>
Francis Scott Key	<i>Claire Barr</i>
Marydel	<i>Richard Kleen</i>