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THE MEDIANITE

A PUBLICATION OF THE MEDIAN IRIS SOCIETY

VOLUME 26 SPRING 1985

Number 1



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Edited by Bee Warburton

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The Median Iris Society is a Section of the American Iris Society.
MIS Membership Secretary: CAROL LANKOW

725 20th Avenue West
Kirkland, WA 98033

Please advise Carol of a change of address. She will also accept dues:
Single Annual: \$5.50; Single triennial: \$15.00; Family Annual: \$8.00;
Family-Triennial: \$22.50. MIS and AIS memberships need not have the
same expiration date.

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President's Message

It is a beautiful January day with bright sunshine on the glistening snow. We are thankful for the snow cover because it will keep our iris plants warm and safe until spring. I'm certain the people in the Indianapolis area really hope that snow is keeping their irises safe because they soon will be hosting the AIS Convention. We should see a lot of medians there.

The Median Iris Society will have two meetings. The Board Meeting (to which anyone may come) is on Sunday, May 19, at 9:00 PM. The Section Meeting, open to all, will be on Monday, May 20, at 3:00 PM. Be sure to re-check these times when you arrive at Indianapolis because they may be changed.

On November 25, 1984, the Median Iris Society lost one of its long-time members and supporters. Anne Johnson of Denver, Colorado, passed away on that day. For many years she had been Membership Chairman for the MIS. She kept records and correspondence up to date until three weeks before her death. The end of the year means membership renewal and MIS is most fortunate in obtaining the services of Carol Lankow of Kirkland, Washington, who is taking over as Membership Chairman. It will take a little time to get everything changed over, so please bear with us.

A new set of officers will be elected at the Monday meeting. The report of the Nominating Committee appears elsewhere in this Medianite.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in Indianapolis. While you are there, why not take notes on a few varieties and send your comments to the Medianite Editor? She will be happy to receive them.


Gus Sindt

Report of the Nominating Committee

NOMINATIVE SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, MEDIAN IRIS SOCIETY, 1985-86.

President: Mrs. Jayne Ritchie - 1713 Camas Ave. NW, Renton, WA 98053

First Vice President: Mr. Carl Boswell - 1821 Gross Lane, Concord, CA 94519

Second Vice President: Mr. James W. Morris - 1 Lake James Court, Florissant, MO 63034

Secretary: Mrs. Ethel J. Baukus - 10415 W. Montana Pl., West Allis WI 53227

Treasurer: Mr. James J. Foreman, 1360 W. Michaels, Tipp City, OH 45371

DIRECTORS:

Term Expires	Mrs. Emma Hobbs - 3303 Westfield Rd, Nobleville, IN 46060
Oct. 1, 1986	Mr. Larry Harder - Maple Tree Gardens, Ponca, NB 68770

Term Expires	Mr. Gene Tremmel - 5613 Wallings Rd., North Royalton, OH 44133
Oct. 1, 1987	Mrs. Barbara Schmieder - 566 Old Rd. to N.A.C., Concord, MA 01742

Term Expires	Mrs. Evelyn Minnick - 324 N.E. Park Circle, Kansas City, MO 64116
Oct 1, 1988	Mr. Dick Sparling - 18016 La Fayette Drive, Olney, MD 20832

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

1986: Mr. Robert Sobek, 37 River St., Westford, MA 01886

1987: Mrs. Teresa Martin, 4520 Sharon Copley Rd., Medina OH 44256

1988 Mr. Hooker Nichols, 402 7th St., Woodward, OK 73801

Submitted by the Nominating Committee: Mary Louise Dunderman, Teresa Martin,
Bob Sobek

INDIANAPOLIS 1985

While checking the guest iris plantings for the 1985 Convention, we tried to make a rough breakdown of the various types of irises that were sent to the gardens here for viewing. Obviously, as has been true for many years and many conventions, the tall bearded irises were in a great majority. As a matter of fact, we did not mark down the totals on them as a group. Breaking down the medians by their different classifications, we found that there were:

Border Bearded:	162 plants of 57 different cultivars
Intermediates:	187 plants of 77 different cultivars
Miniature TBs:	37 plants of 10 different cultivars
SDBs:	381 plants of 153 different cultivars
Aril-medians:	30 plants of 14 different cultivars

This gives us a rough total of almost eight hundred Median irises planted in ten gardens, that represent slightly over three hundred different cultivars, many named and introduced, but a preponderance of them are seedlings hoping to be seen and evaluated for recognition.

Another interesting facet of the count is that of 160 hybridizers who sent guest plants to Indianapolis, 52 of them are hybridizers of median irises to a greater or lesser degree.

Considering the geographical spread of the gardens, and the weather variation among them, the median irises were placed for the most part in the more northern gardens. This was done with the hope that should we have the good fortune of being favored with a "normal" bloom season in Indianapolis, there will be good median bloom. There can be anywhere from one to two weeks difference in the bloom time from the northernmost to the southernmost garden on the tour.

Since there are many of the guest medians that undoubtedly have never been seen outside of their home gardens and are certainly worthy of their place in the sun, it is our hope that they will have their opportunity to show their best during this tour.

---Emma Hobbs,
Noblesville, IN

The Annual Convention of the
AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY
May 19 - May 23, 1985

Convention Headquarters
Atkinson Hotel
Georgia at Illinois Street
Phone: (317) 639-5611

HOTEL RATES

Single	\$50.00
Double	60.00
Suites	\$120.00-180.00

Please make reservations directly with the hotel. *State that you are attending the AIS Convention.* All rooms blocked for the convention which are not reserved by April 28, 1985, will be released to the general public on that date. We cannot stress early reservation too strongly! Out of state can call Toll Free 800/428-4676.

REGISTRATION FEE

Received before April 15	\$90.00
Received from April 15 to May 10	100.00
Received after May 10	115.00
Youth Members	75.00
Make check payable to "1985 AIS Convention"	

Mail registrations to: Mrs. Douglas Padrick, RR #1, Box 411Z,
Fairland, Indiana 46126, Phone (317) 835-7860.

Partial registration rates will be given upon inquiry to the Convention Registrar and will be honored upon advance registration only. If it is necessary to cancel a registration, full refund is assured if notice is received no later than May 10, 1985.

en

MIS Section Meeting

The MIS Section Meeting will be held on Monday, May 20, at 3:00 PM. After a short business meeting and election of officers, Bee Warburton will be our speaker. She is without a doubt the most knowledgeable person in the Median Iris Society. She has probably forgotten much more than most of us will ever know!

Be sure to attend this meeting.

---Gus Sindt

Reblooming Iris Symposium - MEDIANS

Earl Hall, a member of the Reblooming Iris Society as well as MIS, has sent us the results of the Median Reblooming Iris Symposia for 1983 and 1984. Earl notes that there were 25 ballots returned in 1983 and only 18 in 1984, a disappointing showing from the 250 members of the reblooming section. Seven new medians showed up on the 1984 list, including JEWEL BABY (Hall 1984) which captured third place. BABY BLESSED took first place three years running, and was the only median with five votes in 1984, with each of these ballots giving it a perfect score of 12 points. Comments on this Zurbrigg SDB included, "Best continuous performance..." and "BABY BLESSED is in a class by itself."

Earl is mainly interested in breeding Rebloomers, but has many non-reblooming medians in his garden. He planted over 1000 seedlings last summer (SDBs) and then planted over 100 seed pods of SDBs this past fall. Ninety percent of his crosses are Rebloomers X Rebloomers, with some out-crosses on non-rebloomers.

We thank Earl for sharing this very interesting Symposium with us, and wish him well in his campaign to have more Reblooming Symposium ballots returned next year.

1983

VARIETY	POINTS	No. BALLOTS	AVERAGE # PTS.	1983 RANK	1982 RANK
BABY BLESSED	69	7	9.86	1	1
LITTLE SUZIE	51	6	8.5	2	2
TAWNY	38	6	6.33	3	3
BELLECK PASTEL	35	5	7.0	4	6
BLESSED AGAIN	31	4	7.75	5	4
TWICE BLESSED	21	3	7.0	6	5
THIRD CHARM	19	3	6.33	7	15
WHOOPEE	18	2	9.0	8	20
BRIGHT EYES	15	3	5.0	9	18
BONUS	13	2	6.5	10	10

1984

VARIETY	POINTS	No. BALLOTS	AVERAGE # PTS.	1984 RANK	1983 RANK
BABY BLESSED	60	5	12.0	1	1
BLESSED AGAIN	25	3	8.33	2	5
JEWEL BABY	22	2	11.0	3	-
AMBER RAYS	18	2	9.0	4	28
BELLECK PASTEL	17	2	8.5	5	4
PETKIN	14	2	7.0	6	-
EBONY EMBERS	12	1	12.0	7	-
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT	12	1	12.0	7	-
ON DEMAND	12	1	12.0	7	-
THIRD WORLD	12	1	12.0	7	16

An Memoriam : Molly Price

Molly Price, editor of Medianite 1960-61, and author of the valued book, THE IRIS BOOK, died on November 2, 1984, at the age of 81. Molly was a horticulturist of note who grew many plants in her lovely garden, and wrote a number of horticultural articles for the New York Times.

She grew from seed all sorts of plants, and in the early 60's introduced six standard dwarf bearded irises: BLUE IVORY, BROWN-EYED KATIE, LITTLE SAPPHIRE, LITTLE WITCH, MOON-SPINNER and WHISPERYLLA, of which MOONSPINNER was awarded an HM by the A.I.S.

Molly was also a political activist with a burning passion for human rights. She was loved and much admired by all her many friends. The world is a little less because she is gone.



- Bee Warburton

Growing Medians in New Zealand

- Hilmary Catton

When I first started growing medians about 18 years ago, there were very few people growing them in any great number. But as each year passes more and more people are finding how rewarding they are to grow and discovering their many advantages: they are not so susceptible to wind damage, and are versatile in the ways they can be used in garden landscaping. Our three years of drought--only half our normal rainfall--has played havoc with all my irises, large and small. The worst feature has been excessive bloom-out, in some cases 50 % of the rhizomes. I will not be able to comment on a lot of the new varieties as I feel their poor performance is not the fault of the plant, but the result of dry conditions.

Some of the SDBs that I liked best were: SAPPHIRE GEM, WISHFUL THOUGHT (Nichols 1980), MR. ROBERTS, EYEBRIGHT (Taylor 1979) and GENTLE SKY. I love COTTON BLOSSOM and SPRING BELLS (B. Jones 1972) but would like to see them a little more generous with their blooms. For sheer mass of bloom, held well above the foliage, Barry Blyth's MAKING EYES really stood out, with its distinctive creamy standards and violet red falls with a definite cream border. Two that I grow together and never tire of are JAN REAGAN and OPEN SKY, the light and dark blue blend so well.

Some of the New Zealand-bred ones that always perform well are ANA (Frances Love 1978), cream with a green infusion, and ELECTRIC GIRL (Lucy Delany 1977), a clear sky blue with a white beard. Possibly the two best of mine this year were AMBER TIPS and SEA HOLLY.

There were a lot of good Intermediates, and the ones that appealed to me most were FROSTED CRYSTAL, RASPBERRY ROSE, RARE EDITION, COTSGOLD, THREE DOLLARS, and OKLAHOMA BANDIT. The prize for the best performance for a one year clump would surely go to Hooker Nichols' 8293A, a clear ruffled lavender IB that I brought back with me last year. It not only increased well but also bloomed for weeks. A lot of the older IBs remain firm favourites and never fail to bloom, such as JUNE PROM, VOILA, BLACK WATCH, MOUNTAIN RED, ARABI TREASURE, and BRASSIE LASS.

Most of my BBs are too new to comment on but PICAYUNE, AM I BLUE, and BROWN LASSO did well; the latter is not a colour that appeals to me and fades rather badly in the Hawkes Bay sun. My very first BB, TULARE, to my mind takes a lot of beating, but then I like clear colours. I find that both dwarfs and medians in this part of the world need more water and fertilizer and can take more shade than their tall sisters. I think that for sheer flower power in a small space they are without equal.

AUSTRIAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

International Dwarf Iris Competition 1984 18th SESSION

STATE PRIZE

KYRIE. Scopes, England. Light blue, floriferous median.

SPECIAL PRIZE of the STAUDENFREUNDE SOCIETY

MARSH MAGIC. L. Donnel, Australia. Over-all variegated, multi-colored border iris in violet, yellow ochre, and wine red, with yellow beard in a red field.

GROUP I: DWARF IRISES (=Miniature Dwarf Bearded, MDB)

1. PRIWALL. Denkewitz, BRD. Gray-blue, mixed colors.
2. DAISY. Palmer, USA. White self, cream beard. Perhaps a standard dwarf.
3. FAR AND WEE. Sindt, USA. Lavender/brownish red. Pumila type.
4. FLAKES. Sindt, USA. Cream-colored tiny dwarf iris.

GROUP II: SMALL IRISES (=Standard Dwarf Bearded, SDB)

1. ROYAL EYES. Shoup, USA. Purple with spot, blue beard.
2. CAPRICORNA. Barry Blyth, Australia. Yellow, blue beard.
3. GIMLET. Hagsburg, USA. Pale grayish yellow. Very nice form.
4. IMAGETTE. Barry Blyth, Australia. Plicata, violet on white.
5. DO-SI-DO. Ensminger, USA. White/dull violet.
6. LAUE BRISE. Denkewitz, BRD. Purple violet.
7. MISS OKLAHOMA. Palmer, USA. White/greenish yellow.

GROUP III: MEDIANS (=Intermediate Bearded, IB)

1. SUNDOWN RED. Paul Blyth, Australia. Purple; falls somewhat darker.
2. EMERALD CITY. Nichols, USA. Standards almost white; falls greenish yellow. Center olive. Over-all impression green.
3. FLORENZIA. Ensminger, USA. Fancy plicata; that is, a plicata with dark blue lines over the whole flower. White background.
4. SENTIMENTAL LADY. Nichols, USA. Pale yellow; delicate markings in the throat.

GROUP IV. ARILBREDS.

No prize.

Vienna, September, 1984.

For the Austrian Horticultural Society,

Franz Kurzmann

Translated from the German by Betty Wood.

Commentary : Vienna Competition, 1984

by Franz Kurzmann , translated
by Betty Wood

When this competition was established twenty years ago, I thought that this would stimulate especially the European hybridizers to send their hybrids, and I even thought that this could entice several iris collectors into beginning the hybridization of the smaller irises. This expectation has only been fulfilled in small measure. Above all, I cannot understand why nobody does this in northern or southern France with its ideal climate for irises. Ever since Jean Cayeux, who hybridized tall bearded irises, that has been the established tradition. Thus it has come about that the hybridizing activity of the Americans has exceeded the others. I can't say exactly how many, but I would guess that nine tenths of the 1,000 clones that have been sent to me, little by little in Vienna, have originated in the U.S.A.

Now it is beginning to be evident that there is an increasing number of successful hybridizers in Australia who, from their first entry in Vienna, won medals. In 1983 Barry Blyth from Australia won our highest prize, the State Prize. This year L. Donnel won the "Special Prize of the Staudenfreunde Society" and Paul Blyth, evidently Barry's son, won the first place for the Medians (IB).

Now I come to the discussion of the 1984 results. The "Special Prize" just mentioned was given to an extraordinary variegated and beautiful border iris (perhaps IB). It had very strong color. Not like, formerly, SUNRISING by Taylor of England which displays its variegation in delicate colors. So, just as SUNRISING has appeared in English and American catalogues, so apparently will MARSH MAGIC become available commercially.

For the Median (IB) iris KYRIE the emphasis is on floriferousness. The color is indeed not new in any way. It is mostly not clear which group the clones belong to and I can only classify them by their habit.

With respect to the MDBs, I might direct attention to the fourth place iris, FLAKES, because we had never yet seen so tiny an iris, smaller than Iris mellita or I. attica. It is only 6 to 8 centimeters high. It is thus a gem for the Alpine garden and also for the "stone trough"* which is known in southwest Germany as "Trogel" (little trough). So FLAKES is a heretofore unknown form, like SPITZBUBE of Mrs. Heimann from Berlin.

The little irises, the SDB's, were beautiful and very varied, as every year. The color patterns vary again, sometimes stronger, sometimes more delicate, while the form of the flowers becomes more beautiful. The health and power of growth is very distinguished, and we in Vienna are able to judge these last two properties for the first time in the third year of growth and with further observation.

Concerning the Medians (IB), there were few varieties to evaluate so we did two of the 19th session irises beforehand (first year, though it is usual to judge first in the second year), which was especially wise since the 19th session (1985), with ninety entries, is so voluminous that we will have a hard time next year to distribute the medals properly.

* Steintrog = Box of sandstone or granite, well-liked in southwest Germany, but rare and expensive.

1985 INTRODUCTIONS

- APRIL DUET (H. Nichols) SDB #8210E 12" M-L. Near yellow amoena with a few inconspicuous haft markings. Orange & shite beards. (Sib to Captured Spirit X Fortune Seeker). Fertile...\$10.00
- BEDOUIIN BUTTERCUP (H. Nichols) Aril-median #8014B 16" M-L. Yellow self with gold beards. (Stockholm X Smooth As Silk).....\$15.00
- COURT MAGICIAN (H. Nichols) SDB #82120 11" M-L. If you liked WINNER'S CIRCLE, here is an SDB version. Fertile. (Sib to Royal Magician).....\$15.00
- DAYDREAM BELIEVER (H. Nichols) IB #8283D 27" E-L. Ruffled ice lavender standards, ruffled falls with orange and white beards. (Fluted Haven X Mrs. Nate Rudolph) Fertile....\$15.00
- DREAM CHASER (H. Nichols) IB #8293A 18" M-L. Ruffled white flowers with chartreuse hafts and orange beards. (April Anthem X Billy Harris) Fertile.....\$12.50
- EVENING IN BAGDAD (H. Nichols) Aril-median #8112D 16" M-L. Purple standards, chestnut purple falls with chestnut hafts, $\frac{1}{4}$ " black line extending down from bronze beards. (Chestnut Lullaby X Fertile Crescent) An exotic addition to the garden.....\$15.00
- HEAVENLY BROTHERHOOD (H. Nichols) IB #8124A 18" M-L. Tailored white self with yellow hafts and orange and white beards. (Cotton Blossom X Winter Olympics).....\$12.50
- HIGHBORN KINSMAN (H. Nichols) SDB #8206H 14" M-L. Ruffled deep lemon with gold halos. Orange-gold beards. (Captured Spirit Sib X 7911A: (Oliver x Marinka). Sib to Great Expectations. Fertile.....\$10.00
- LEISURE LADY (H. Nichols) SDB #8248A 14" M-L. Ruffled pale creamy yellow with deeper edge on falls. Chartreuse-gold lines on each side of orange and white beards (Sib to Captured Spirit X Fine Taste).....\$ 5.00
- ODE TO JERICHO (H. Nichols) Aril-median 16" M-L. Grey standards are suffused yellow, falls are chartreuse with green-bronze beards. (Involved Brizendine seedlings from Zing x (Gingerbread Man) x Fertile Crescent. A worthy addition to the garden and a rapid grower and heavy bloomer.....\$ 7.50
- PONY EXPRESS (H. Nichols) SDB #8207A 14" E-L. Antique tan standards, chestnut brown falls are edged tan with red-violet areas below the orange and yellow beards. Fertile. (Mystic Horizons X Invoking).....\$10.00

Special Offer:

One each of all eleven 1985 introductions for \$75.00 (postage included).

If you do not wish to purchase all 1985 introductions as a group, please include \$5.00 for postage. All shipments in July.

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Woodward, Oklahoma 73801

RIALTO GARDENS

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FRESNO, CA. 93705

FEATURING

FOR 1985



OUR OWN RACE OF REBLOOMING SDB

Blooming performance of this race of SDB is based on the climate in Fresno, California. Two separate bloom seasons in the spring, the first with MDB and SDB, a two week rest, and then, the second bloom toward the end of TB season is well documented for the West Coast and in Texas. Fall bloom has been recorded in Maryland, Ohio, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas plus the West coast. Dependability of fall bloom is known only for the West coast until the plants have been grown in other parts of the country for longer periods of time.

* * * * *

Baby Tears (Weiler 80) White standards and light yellow falls. Blooms
once in spring and again in fall. HM. \$2.00

Khaki Print (Weiler 83) Lavender blue with khaki thumb prints at the
beards. Blooms three times each year. 5.00

Little Bishop (Weiler 84) Broad-petalled bishop's violet with bright blue
beards. Blooms once in spring and again in fall. 5.00

Third Charm (Weiler 82) Blue violet with darker violet spots at the
beards. Blooms three times each year. 3.50

Third World (Weiler 82) Dark red violet bitone with blue beards. Blooms
three times each year. 3.50

Thrice Blessed (Weiler 82) Brilliant, full yellow self with blue-white
beards. Blooms three times each year. HM 3.50

TriPLICATE (Weiler 83) Tan and brown bitone with sparkling blue beards.
Blooms three times each year. 3.50

Willow Mist (Weiler 83) Smooth cream tinted light green with bright
blue beards. Thrice bloomer each year. 5.00

* * * * *

We also list for sale reblooming SDB from other breeders plus SDB that occasionally bloom both spring and fall which are useful in breeding SDB rebloomers. In addition, we list a full line of TB rebloomers. Complete list on request.

* * * * *

Include \$2.50 postage

California Residents Add 6% Tax

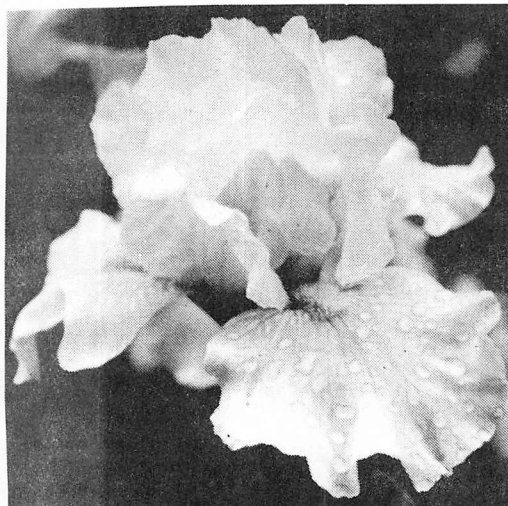
Generous Extras

The Picture Gallery

Photographs by Terry Aitken



LANKOW IB #4C38
Wright L75 (SDB) X
Wright TB H28



JAYNE RITCHIE IB #82-64
MARASCHINO X LOVESHINE



WRIGHT #L-75, SDB,
BLUE TRINKET X COTTON BLOSSOM

Coming Attractions!

Median Seedlings in the Pacific Northwest



MABEL WRIGHT #H-4

Terry Aitken reports that the Wright family will allow the distribution of Mabel Wright seedlings, which is great news for the iris world. (See Carol Lankow's report in Summer 1984 Medianite.)

TERRY AITKEN IB -
LEMON RINGS X DREAM AFFAIR



We are grateful to Terry for sending us his excellent color prints, which are so easily converted to halftones for publication. We'd like to remind all other photographers that we'd be happy to receive and publish your photos as well.

REPLIES to Border Bearded QUESTIONARY

Terry Aitken, Vancouver, Washington, kindly filled out another questionnaire - he answered that yes, he did make crosses specifically for BBs, and that what he used were short segregates from TB breeding. He also uses his own IBs with the TBs. He has no results yet but seedlings are on the way. Not satisfied with the questions I asked, undaunted Terry proceeded with a most generous account of his Border Iris activity:

"We run the full gamut of Iris seasons with hybridizing. Our best "find" amongst the TBs is (LACED COTTON X MYSTIQUE). About 50% of the seedlings were ideal BB size, although some of the stems stretched out to tall. Looks like we might end up with a gorgeous miniature LACED COTTON about 26" tall. Since we have never seen small flowers on short stems amongst the thousands of MYSTIQUE progeny that we have raised, I think it is reasonable to assume that LACED COTTON is the cause of the "miniaturizing." This is the only LACED COTTON seedling block that we have seen so far but 500 to 1000 LACED COTTON seeds went into pots this fall.

"Amongst the borders, the most interesting results have come from SOMETHING SPECIAL X BROWN LASSO. Flower colors were tan blended with violet, with yellow beards. The most gorgeous flower had the most miserable-looking rhizomes I have ever seen, while another sibling formed an instant clump of at least 25 sturdy rhizomes - but its top flower reached 30 inches. (We made a sibcross!)

"Using IB X TB crosses, we have discovered that QUEEN IN CALICO is extremely fertile and sets pods under weather conditions that stops most other efforts; it also sets pods on IBs and this has been a real problem for me.

"Our current dreams hang on a block of seedlings ((PEPPERMILL x FLAMENCO) X QUEEN IN CALICO). The pod parent seedling is a miniature SHOWCASE with great color intensity and we expect a great array of fancy plics to appear from this commingling! Our future dreams, Spring '85, lie with several interesting seedlings from IB and TB block crosses - (PET SET x MYSTIQUE) X (BROWN LASSO x MYSTIQUE). Both blocks are showing light violet stands/mid-violet falls with darker violet rims. Fine flower form and stem proportion suggests that an introduction may be forthcoming from these.

"I have not 'discovered' any 'small tall' among some 5-10,000 seedlings, but perhaps that is a skill that I need to fine tune. I am convinced that a hybridizer's greatest talent has to be the ability to detect potential. It is an acquired skill that comes with time and experience - and it is a delightful trip, with no end."

Joseph Ghio, Santa Cruz, California - Joe is foremost in the use of I. balkana in crosses with the tall bearded, and his work sparked the question about use of I. balkana for BBs. I. balkana is a very small - about ten inches - species closely related to the famous producer of PROGENITOR, Iris reichenbachii, also small; both have natural tetraploid forms, as does I. aphylla, the third small species in our questionnaire. Joe has also used derivatives of PROGENITOR - his MAHALO is from MELODRAMA.

Joe could write a book, but he says rather briefly:

"MARMALADE SKIES has consistently produced BBs of excellent proportion and size in a wide range of colors. MARMALADE SKIES X TB almost exclusively gives BBs.

"Since it is so difficult to totally select BBs on initial bloom, selection is based on TB criteria, expecting that they may "grow up" when grown out. Those that don't "grow up" are the BBs.

"The oft-mentioned lack of vigor is not a problem since vigor is one of the considerations in the ultimate selection process.

"The 80-291 cross has already produced two introductions, BORDERLINE and NURSERY SCHOOL. Three others are still under consideration. Some selections maintained the appropriate flower size, but unfortunately grew out of class in height.

"Several hailing from the 73-17 series (LIGHT YEARS, SOAP OPERA line) are the right height, but the flowers are too large. My 1985 PEARLS OF WISDOM is from this line of breeding - it is really a big BB, or short TB."

Allan Ensminger, Lincoln, Nebraska, reports that he has produced shorties from RIPPLING WATERS and STEPPING OUT, and that he uses short segregations from his TB breeding to set up crosses for BBs. He specifically uses RIPPLING WATERS for starters. He has several BBs from crossing AZ AP pollen onto TBs in an attempt to get violet bearded whites. He has six or eight BBs lined out, and says that some year he'll register them and sell them together as a BB special. Sounds like a good idea!

In addition to his questionnaire answers, Allan enclosed an interesting pedigree chart of a cross to produce a BB with both variegation and the feathering of FEATHERED FRIEND. In case you hadn't heard, Allan is the hybridizer famous for breeding variegated irises... his garden is NAMED Varigay. His BB, FEATHERED FRIEND, is more than just feathered, it is RAGGED, and mighty appealing! His first attempts to realize these crosses didn't succeed, but he is sure to do it in the end.

He pointed out how many times RIPPLING WATERS appears in the family tree - 12 times and several times further back. Early in his hybridizing, he found that RIPPLING WATERS had an occasional diminutive seedling. These have been inbred enough so that they now breed true, well-proportioned BBs.

But he added, "As you suggest, many lack vigor and must be discarded."

Harley Briscoe, Whitehall, Illinois - Harley's answer concerns our discussion about classification. He says:

"I have worked very little in TB, nothing with BB as my objective. I have had seedlings that looked and performed like what I thought a BB might be. I have only registered one that I later thought should have been registered BB - RAMONA BLODGETT: (CROSS COUNTRY x ((NEW LOOK x CLIFFS OF DOVER)) x ELFIN QUEEN.

"I have bred irises over fifty years and I am still confused with IB, BB and MTB. The genetics of Median irises are so completely mixed up that size, time of bloom, and even heights (which run right into each other) are completely confusing.

"I believe the English handle this far better than we do."

Steve Varner, Monticello, Illinois, noted that VANITY and JEWEL TONE had factors for dwarfness, and that he has used in his BB breeding short segregates from the TB, NIGHT TRAIN, and seedlings of JEWEL TONE. He has used WHOLE CLOTH, a PROGENITOR derivative, and recommends an old BB, CHELSEA, which he says is probably the best parent he knows for BB, but he knows of no source for it. He has no problem in his own garden with BBs overgrowing, but adds that guests have been too tall. Under comments:

"PINK BUBBLES is a beautiful TB here. Most BBs grown here have not met BB specifications for height, and size of flower, size of stalk, and proportion. Other BB seedlings have not shown personality or uniqueness sufficient for introduction. I have BB seedlings I keep for my own enjoyment, that do not meet BB breeding goals."

Stephen Stevens of Crystal City, Missouri, writes about his work: "Your first question was, 'Have you noted any TBs with factors for dwarfness?' My answer is, yes, especially the parent of my last year's introduction, BUBBLING BALLET (77-5-13 x RUFFLED BALLET). BUBBLING BALLET is a true BB in that I don't think it can be grown out of its class, as many of them can when growing conditions are too positive. 77-5-13, which was a short TB, was intensely inbred. There were three varieties predominating: CASHMERE, RIPPLING WATERS, and AFTER ALL, which was short for me and predominately threw short offspring. The above cross was the only time I used 77-5-13 as it bloomed out when it was carrying the seedpod. The other parent, RUFFLED BALLET, has PROGENITOR in its background, which was one of your other enquiries.

"I occasionally make crosses specifically with BB x BB, but primarily it's all TBs. To your question about problems of overgrow, this has prevailed with others that I have introduced, especially when sent as guests to National Conventions where all guests are planted a special way to get the best growth."

Teresa Martin, Medina, Ohio - Teresa reported at some length, but as most of her crosses involved seedling numbers, we have condensed it. She says that all her little things come from pure TB breeding; she works mostly with red TBs (which often carry genes for smallness). Her crosses have involved TECHNICOLOR, HEART'S DESIRE, BANG, TOMECO, ORELIO, CALDRON, MARY RANDALL, RED TANGO, ESTHER FAY, JEWEL TONE, and her own BB introductions, DANCING EMBERS and RUBY RUFFLES.

Waiting in the wings are her CHERRY BOMB, and a new seedling that she is certain will remain in class because it almost fits the MTB class. Its pedigree involves BEAUX ARTS, and its sibs were all much larger. She has had good small ones from AMY VERONICA X BOTANY BAY; (QUEEN'S LACE x CHAR-MAIZE) X CURL'D CLOUD; MARY RANDALL X CHANTEILLY; and from involvement of I. balkana in a cross of RUBY RUFFLES with Wilma Greenlee's "pink/blue" from (Pink TB X (SHARKSKIN x I. balkana)).

Horace Wright, Xenia, Ohio - "The only BB I have registered in the 80's is LATE MAGIC - (GIBSON GIRL X LATE RETURNS). LATE RETURNS has produced a few BB irises. Of my irises, I think the best bet to get smaller ones would be through BELLA ROSE, a pinkish plicata on a cream ground color. Crossed with Ray Smith's REPLICATA, I have several very nice standard dwarfs. I haven't registered any as I hope to find out first if they are rebloomers. (BELLA ROSE is Horace's own introduction, registered as IB, from (AUTUMN TWILIGHT x JULIET) X (LOUVOIS x GOLDEN EAGLE), which doesn't much sound like an IB parentage!) It is registered as a rebloomer.

Tom Magee, Littleton, Colorado - "MAROON BELLS ((BANG x MARTEL) X SWAHILI), was the sole pretty little thing in a strand of ugly TB seedlings. Of over a thousand seedlings from using it all have had large flowers on short stalks, and none as pretty as the parent!

"My one other BB introduction, SKYBIRD (BROADMEADOW X ((WINTER OLYMPICS X (ELF x BRIGADOON))) is explained in correspondence with Kay upon registration..." - a most amusing tale about how he happened to HAVE the little old red dwarf, ELF (it was given him when he started by an experienced hybridizer, who told him everybody was using it), he thinks it was a practical joke upon a newcomer! ELF came from Frances Norton who sold dwarf irises at that time - it was never introduced. Tom says it was the ugliest little thing he ever saw.

He adds, "I've used FRENCHI extensively to no avail. I wonder if the best BB will come like PINK BUBBLES and HILLBILLY HEAVEN as dropouts from the TBs."

Hooker Nichols, of Woodward, Oklahoma, who has already responded so generously to previous questionnaires, added a few notes to this one, including a list of TBs he has noted as having factors for small size: BANG, CAPTAIN GALLANT, ULTRAPOISE, CHERUB CHOIR, VANITY, RIPPLING WATERS, MARY RANDALL, ROCOCO, LUCY LEE, and AEGEAN STAR. However, he adds, most of his small ones tend to grow out of class.

Bernice Miller, Killen, Alabama - Bernice says that the rebloomer, PURPLE DUET, seems to produce small seedlings. She doesn't breed for BBs, but relies on (or merely accepts?) BBs when they occur. She says, "My HEAVEN'S BOUNTY is a short segregate from TB breeding, but it comes from a line of red seedlings with PURPLE DUET, so it may have been from that, as I have a BB from my MARTHA OF BETHANY with PURPLE DUET." She adds that she practically always has trouble with having the BBs either overgrow or lack vigor.

Carl Jorgensen, Fort Collins, Colorado - Carl has noted a good list of TBs with factors for small size - TREASURE ROOM, PROSPERITY, HOT SPELL, Brizendine 68-64, PINK SLEIGH, JAVA DOVE, MERRY MISS, SYMPHONETTE. MERRY MISS is Carl's own, and he used it extensively in early years in BB crosses. He has tried Bob Schreiners' aphyllas with a dwarfing effect; no seedlings have been selected from this work. He has no problem of vigor in his own seedlings, as they are rigidly selected for vigor as seedlings. His final note: "I have been deliberately selecting shorter seedlings, even in TBs. Our high winds and wet rains, and hail at or about bloom time are hard on the taller cultivars. Any that are much taller than 30-32" have problems here. I also select for super substance for the same reason."

Audrey Machulak, Hales Corners, Wisconsin - For starters on BBs, Audrey has used DOLL BABY, WHOOP 'EM UP, PEACH FESTIVAL and BROWN LASSO. Some of the BBs have failed to show vigor. She adds that she hasn't done much along this line; has used her own MAYA MAIZE in her breeding but hasn't gotten any "terrific" results thus far.

Floyd M. Dyer, Wichita, Kansas - "I have worked with the BB iris only a few years, not long enough to know much about crossing, yet I have some ideas I am going to work on. I have used aphylla in hopes to get SDB, with TB^{ap} plicatas and have got some good SDB and MDB by crossing good SDB and MDB to the aphylla cross. The aphylla first crosses were all IB, some pretty nice. I hope now to work some of these SDB crosses to some of Gordon Plough's short (29-30-31 inch) TBs; have not seen the results yet.

"I have some crosses using IB with the short TBs, but so far not much luck. I hope in a couple of years I can make some interesting comments!"

Peggy Williams, Ft. Worth, Texas - Peggy reported that JUNE'S SISTER, LATIN LOVER and CHERISHED gave her small seedlings; she says that her HEY CHARLIE got a little tall in one area of the garden only. It had never gotten that way before. In crosses specifically for BBs, she used HOB NOB, and JUNGLE SHADOWS for starters.

Melba Hamblen, Salt Lake City, Utah - In spite of current physical problems, Melba wrote us a note about her BBs. "Re the BB's, SIENNA STAR is a TB runt, and shows it in the amount of increase; I think FAIRY JEWELS was also a runt, again poor increase...I have crossed BB to BB; one of TULARE'S parents may have been an IB that Tell gave me...I'd have to check to be sure." Melba's memory is all right. The seedling in TULARE's parentage is from Tell's cross of YELLOW DRESDEN and GOLDEN FLASH, only both are small TBs. The other parent of TULARE was a seedling of RUFFLED ORGANDY X ROSEDALE, probably also good breeders for small TBs.

And a salute to Tell Muhlestein's BB work: Once referred to universally as "Uncle Tell," he will be long remembered as a man to whom all hybridizers, past and present, owe much. His introductions were basic, and his catalog a manual of hybridizing information; he himself was always ready and willing with advice for beginners. It was Tell who suggested that I should make the GOLDEN FLASH X YELLOW DRESDEN cross, which gave me a large family of uniformly excellent BBs. If I'd known what I know now, I would have kept at least a dozen of them. As it was I introduced only LACE VALENTINE, a Knowlton Medal winner that still finds favor in my eyes. I then SHUT my eyes, and threw out all the others. All plants in the cross were consistently small, and from his, Tell introduced three BBs: LACY LU, SAUCY PEACH and SAUCY PINK. In addition, he introduced 17 other BBs during his hybridizing career.

For me, even this cross was not made primarily for BBs. Previously to that, I had made a list of TBs with factors for smallness. They included mainly those that are supposed to have a predominance of traits from *I. variegata*, chiefly the pinks, the amoenas (the old-fashioned sort), the reds and the blacks. The most successful were PINK CAMEO X SPINDRIFT (a shortie), the reds, especially EBONY ECHO, (another shortie), and BLACK FOREST, which is actually a BB itself and a marvelous breeder. I had no idea at all of breeding for BBs. I just wanted small TBs to make daintier SDBs, but it didn't work. Some out of the reds and blacks at least had daintier foliage, but they were not essentially smaller than; for instance, those from GREAT LAKES.

---(Bee Warburton)

Allen Harper, Moran, Kansas - Allen lists on the questionnaire a number of crosses he has made for BBs, that haven't bloomed yet. They sound fascinating, and we will be delighted to hear of the results. He lists as crosses with short segregates from TB breeding, DACHE MODEL (a standard dwarf bearded) X MARMALADE SKIES, MARMALADE SKIES X FLIRTATION WALK, PICAYUNE X BUTTER GIRL, MARMALADE SKIES X OF COURSE, PONY X BROWN LASSO, ERIN CHARM X CHABLIS; from PROGENITOR derivatives, VISA X BROADWAY; from I. balkana, MAGICIAN X BROWN LASSO; and from IBs, AZ AP X INNER CIRCLE, CARVED PINK X HAPPY SONG, and HAPPY SONG X CORAL STRAND.

Allen is one of the members who expresses dissatisfaction with the classification-- as is Bill Maryott, of San Jose, California, our next respondent. Bill says he is quite upset with the category "Border Bearded" and gives his reasons:

"Ben Hager assured me it was created to categorize misfits, that is, TBs that wouldn't fit the TB height requirements. In our business, we do not distinguish between IBs and BBs, - BBs are just shorter TB varieties. Many customers, especially with smaller gardens, are looking for smaller varieties and the intermediates are usually over blooming by the time they arrive at our display gardens, so we do a good business in so-called "Borders." About his own hybridizing efforts, Bill says:

"First is PREMONITION, which has really lovely flower form and wonderful fragrance, but is too short and the flowers bunch. I made the identical cross (COPYCAT X MYSTIQUE) and crossed that with PREMONITION the year before that was introduced. The result was poorer PREMONITIONS: all too short and poorly branched without even small flowers. Carrying this breeding on another generation, I ran into dead ends, no advancement. Now for MAROON BELLS of Tom Magee's. This red with a slight purple tinge has lovely smooth coloring and some ruffling. It crosses easily and now with second generation seedlings I am getting quite nice, smooth, TALL, well-branched reds with ruffling...no evidence of a tendency to shorter border height seedlings, although I also was trying to move away from border height.

"Many years ago I bloomed a lovely little seedling from AMIGO'S GUITAR X GALA MADRID, with tiny flowers, excellent branching, thin stem and everything going for it. Unfortunately it was probably small that first year due to genetic deficiencies and ultimately died instead of proliferating.

"As to my introduction ECLECTIC put out last year, it is a cross of PICAYUNE X CARAMBA. In the row of seedlings were two very interesting cultivars. One looked exactly like CARAMBA and the other a brighter PICAYUNE, but both were smaller with tremendous branching and excellent balance. The tiny CARAMBA never seemed different enough, but I kept entering the PICAYUNE lookalike in shows and kept getting blue ribbons, so decided to introduce it. As to its popularity, we had a row of all our '84 introductions and offered a choice to local customers with a larger order as a bonus. Of all the several hundred people who made a choice, not one chose ECLECTIC. The iris is probably technically better than all our other introductions, but it has perceived disadvantages in being SMALL. Customers think that small iris should be priced with small prices, and given the choice, would rather have big ones. At least, this is true in the San Francisco Bay area."

Median Bearded Irises - Introduction & Varietal Listing

A complete compilation of median irises registered through 1983, plus invaluable information on the history of the MIS, classification of bearded irises and descriptions of the four median classes, median awards, etc. Available at \$7.00 including postage, payable to the Median Iris Society, from:

Jim Foreman
1360 W. Michaels Rd.
Tipp City, OH 45371-2028

Remarks From Hybridizers

-- Carol Lankow, Kirkland, WA

Almost as soon as I discovered irises, I became intrigued with MTBs and fell hopelessly in love with BBs. The nearest thing I have to a hybridizing goal is to produce smaller sized irises that are pretty and can be grown by gardeners, as opposed to iris specialists. A line of BBs that fit those specifications, that do not outgrow the class, and which possess all the other qualities we want in a bearded iris would probably give me more satisfaction than anything else I can think of.

I still make some BB X BB crosses, but not as often as I used to. The results are depressing: lots of lovely flowers, but too many are either too large or are rot prone.

I'm always on the lookout for likely BB breeders. The most encouraging BB parents so far have been MINUTE WALTZ, SOUNDER, MISS PETITE, and MISS NELLIE. I'm looking forward to offspring from MARMALADE SKIES and PICAYUNE, since they are both good doers for us. I have had some exciting color from RASPBERRY SUNDAE, although they tend to be rough and large.

I prefer TB parents to be on the small side, but since I cover them with pollen with a lot of dwarf in the background, I am more concerned with proportion. Thick stalks and huge flowers don't make it, even if they are gorgeous. I've had nice BBs from SAND AND SEA, SALUTATION, RUFFLED CHERUB, PINK PIROUETTE, GALA MADRID, BETTY SIMON, and VANITY. I think ROSE CARESS, MYSTIQUE, and GYPSY CARAVAN could be good. I'm fascinated with Opal Brown's GREENSLEEVES, a tall TB with ridiculously small flowers in a pretty pink. I'd like to shrink it to BB size. The seedlings I had from ROYAL RUFFLES were consistently good looking, dainty and vigorous. They were also all dark violet, but you can't have everything. Unfortunately I lost all of them moving the garden from place to place, and now I can't find ROYAL RUFFLES anywhere. I'd like to have it again.

PROGENITOR hybrids, I. aphylla, and I. balkana are obvious choices for BB work because 48-chromosome forms are available. We have an old seedling of Earl Roberts', 61R33, that is (SKY ABOVE x I. balkana) X PROGENITOR. It looks like a taller PROGENITOR. I have used it with aphyllas and SDBs in MTB work, but some of the results have been used with BBs in mind. I like amoenas; ALLEGIANCE, WHOLE CLOTH and MELODRAMA have all produced BBs. MINUTE WALTZ was the first iris I ever bought sight unseen because it was BB and combined WHOLE CLOTH with pinks. Keith Keppel's amoena plicata line keeps turning out BBs, probably because of PROGENITOR. That is why I think MYSTIQUE would be good. Come to think of it, MISS NELLIE is from two Keppel amoena plics.

My only use of I. balkana, aside from 61R33, was with Joe Ghio's SEER. I liked SEER; it was big for BB, but was showy and vigorous. I don't think I used it very wisely however, crossing it with a small pink of rather poor quality. The resulting seedlings were large and very coarse, but their proportion was good and the branching and bud count were down-right excessive! I should go back and try them again, but I can't find SEER and have no luck growing CHILD STAR or INNER CIRCLE. I hesitate to use TB-balkana things because those seedlings were so big.

Most of my work is with aphylla derivatives and 44-chromosome IBs. That will continue, partly because that is what we have the most of out in the patch. I. aphylla does give nice proportion, branching, bud count and vigor. The vigor can disappear in the next generation if the 48-chromosome parent is a weakling. The first generation seedlings can be quite decent and the second can be really pretty. I think the IB route is promising - and they have the advantage of being nice looking to start with, unlike most of the material from other species. They tend to bloom smack dab between seasons. You flip a coin to decide if they are IB or BB.

It is a bit discouraging that we have introduced only one BB so far, when that has been the primary goal. I look back wistfully to those early days when we thought it would be easy to breed improved BBs. We thought that all we had to do was cross good BBs to good BBs. That may still be true one day, but we have a long way to go.

-Ben Hager, Stockton, Calif.

As we are all aware, the Border Iris class has not come about through planned breeding or intention. In other words, all border iris are selections of size variants (mutations?) from intended Tall Bearded crosses. OK, then, why don't we develop a breeding line for BBs?

I have played around with that idea through the years but no concentrated breeding programs came out of it because I never could obtain enough progeny to give any analyzable results. BB X BB produced the least seed and those obtained were poor germinators. Then followed the real blow: most of the seedlings proved to be Tall Bearded in stature. One cross I can recall as an example was PINK BUBBLES X SOMETHING SPECIAL. With 9 plants from the cross, eight were definitely TBs and only one was in the Border Iris range. Unfortunately that one was lost in transplanting but it was not superior to either of its parents.

Another approach that has been suggested is IB X BB and this I won't touch. It is possible that the cross might produce a BB type iris but fertility (future possibilities) is nil. Also many such hybrids have "hybrid vigor" which means they WON'T be in a BB class.

I have used the small iris species in BB attempts, primarily Iris aphylla (48 chromosomes, like the TBs and BBs) but my goals there were mostly in the MTB and MDB range. At one time I had a couple hundred seedlings from TB X Iris balkana. Many of the first generation clones were in the BB area but with flowers that were a little too large. Two circumstances interfered with carrying these lines forward (or backward as it turned out): the determinedly persistent ugliness of the flower form inherited from I. balkana and the determinedness of Destiny that I should not have time to properly work with the seedlings during this period. Joe Ghio's I. balkana lines produced BBs but more in the fortuitous fashion we encounter in waiting for the TBs to produce BBs. It is still possible that I. balkana (48 chromosomes) could be useful in establishing a breeding line of BBs (or the tetraploid reichenbachii if they exist) but in spite of my lack of application I am convinced that I. aphylla will be the basis for any BB breeding line.

I have introduced only five Border Irises. Three of them, SOMETHING SPECIAL, PINK BUBBLES, and LACY LASSO, are the usual selections from TB breeding. FOLDEROL was a cross of two border irises but never had any worthy children. AUDACIOUS does go back to I. aphylla and is probably beholden to that species for its size but the parentage goes back four generations to THISBE and the pod parent was a Border iris, LITTLE LYNN.

I introduced LOOKIN'GOOD as an Intermediate Bearded because that is when it bloomed here, but in Austria it was judged as a Border Iris since it bloomed in the time span there. I. aphylla does advance the season of bloom in its seedlings. LOOKIN' GOOD goes back three generations to I. aphylla but I. aphylla appears several times in its parentage and it, like AUDACIOUS, has 48 chromosomes and is perfectly fertile with the majority of BBs and TBs.

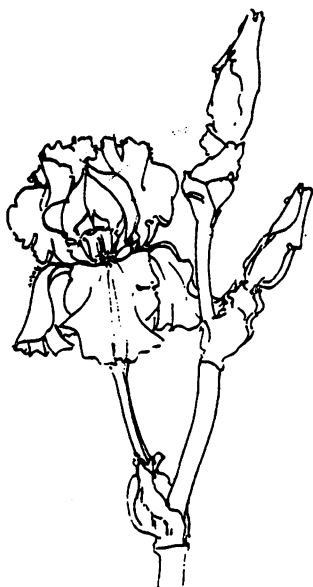
For the first time, I have to bloom this spring (1985) seedlings involving the 48 chromosome MTBs with small TBs. It's taken me a long time to get around to that, but it may be the way to go. I am hoping so. I. aphylla seems to have an effect on size of its progeny further along the line than does I. balkana but there is also quite a range of variation--mostly upward--and selecting for size is an on-going task.

The overwhelming argument for using I. balkana and I. aphylla is the 48 chromosome tetraploid nature of these dwarf species since complete fertility is much more likely in the progeny when these are crossed to 48 chromosome TBs and Border Irises, and FERTILITY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME in developing hybrid breeding lines--and don't forget it.

Another time saver is to seek out color variants (I've not heard of any I. balkana although the I. reichenbachii used in PROGENITOR is registered as a yellow form). Iris aphyllas are mostly a dominant violet which color is hard to get rid of. I used THISBE which is a nondescript color, although in advanced generations my seedlings keep producing cream color no matter the color of the parent. Another advantage of this parent appears within a couple of generations--it is easier to get away from the "aphylla flower form" with THISBE. THISBE may just be an hybrid of some nature, but as Walter Welch once said of Cook 1546, "it breeds like a pumila." So THISBE breeds like an I. aphylla. Also I have heard of a recently introduced white form of the species and that should be very useful. We introduced a white "aphylla" for Helen Stevens many years ago by the name of TOMORROW, but in our garden it didn't even last that long, so I can't say much about it. We recently got more stock of it and it lasted just about that much longer. Of course THISBE won't grow for us either. Wilma Greenlee (bless her) sent me all the pollen I used in the original crosses.

DIPLOID BORDER BEARDED ?

JEAN WITT, SEATTLE, WA.



Recently I've been asked a number of times whether I think it would be worth while to try to breed diploid BBs. My answer to this is, "Yes, definitely!" At diploid level the problem of proportion is minimal, and floriferous plants with good garden characteristics are not at all difficult to produce--witness the popularity of the almost-too-large MTB AACHEN ELF in the display gardens at the 1984 Seattle convention.

In my MTB breeding program I regularly bloom attractive seedlings in the BB size range--in fact, it is almost impossible to avoid them. The best of these have been plicatas of one type or another; the most recent example is a ruffled clear yellow with cinnamon dusted hafts. There are also good possibilities for richly velvet-falled amoenas and bicolors--a trait I miss in the current tetraploid types.

Crossing the most recent MTB introductions--to take advantage of their now very considerable improvements in color and form--with "antiques" of diploid constitution should give the right results. I recommend using the ancient variegata HONORABILE and its yellow counterpart SHERWIN-WRIGHT for their excellent branching and high bud count, and especially for their ability to produce color breaks. The yellow MTB,

CHICKEE, should be useful for ruffling, as will the diploid BB plicata KING KARL. MONARDA and other "pink pallidas" may still have a contribution to make in the red-violet to rose pink color class.

Those who fear too much loss of modern form in returning to "antiques" could try crossing diploid MTB with tetraploid TB to test whether proportion might improve in stem and flower size without loss of ruffling.

Dipping back to species or near-species level and bringing new traits forward is a time-honored method in plant breeding, and it has paid off handsomely in bearded iris breeding each time an outside species has been added to our gene pool. Perhaps now is the time for BB breeders to take another look at that rather considerable reservoir of antique diploid varieties which gave us the image of garden irises as "old indestructibles."

Keith Keppel, Stockton, Calif.

I do make crosses specifically for BBs, and they are based almost exclusively on short segregates from TB breeding. Most of these are from lines derived from (TB plic X PROGENITOR) several generations ago, and of course I expect that the PROGENITOR influence is what did it.

This past year I did make some crosses of IB (from SDB x small TB from plic-PROGENITOR lines) X BB, having found an IB seedling of apparent high fertility, but the seeds have not even germinated yet, so I can hardly comment much on THAT line of endeavor, either.

Being more interested in odd colors, patterns, than in huge size, over the years I have never hesitated to save small-but-interesting segregates from the TB crosses. (In fact, at times I have to fight to regain the necessary size to appeal to the TB fanatics!) There have been occasional times when first-bloom seedlings were saved simply because they were tiny--approaches to MTBs, even--and from time to time I do make crosses between the smaller segregates. I feel that tetraploid MTBs are fully possible from this type of breeding, given enough generations.

To date I have introduced eight border irises: MEXICALI ('70), EMBROIDERY ('71), PICAYUNE ('77), DESPERADO ('79), HOPSCOTCH ('82), PREDICTION ('82), PECCADILLO ('83) and SHENANIGAN ('85). A ninth registration was made--GREMLIN (R. '78)--but never introduced due to growth problems.

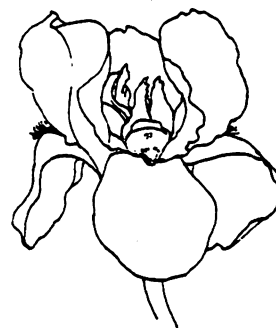
It is interesting to note that of the nine, only EMBROIDERY does not involve PROGENITOR. MEXICALI is a third-generation PROGENITOR derivative; PICAYUNE, fifth-generation; GREMLIN, sixth-generation; DESPERADO, sixth-generation (and through its WHOLE CLOTH blood, ninth-generation); HOPSCOTCH, PREDICTION, and PECCADILLO, seventh-generation; and SHENANIGAN, eighth-generation.

Of the more promising crosses being evaluated as possible BB introductions (78-56, 78-62, 79-84, 79-89 and 79-95), all can be traced back to PROGENITOR in the seventh- to eighth-generation, with some also carrying PROGENITOR in even longer "branches" in the family tree: ninth- to eleventh-generation from PROGENITOR.

Although there have been some growth problems with the border seedlings at times, I find no more problems in this line than with the tall bearded from similar breeding. The one problem is "over bloom", the euphemism for too much bloom and/or not enough increase. However, in our relatively mild-winter area, this is a trait found in many PROGENITOR derivatives that are neither border irises nor contain plicata blood.

Selecting plants that will consistently be within class limits is always a problem, but if the selections are grown and evaluated a sufficient number of years prior to final decision, embarrassment should not be too acute. Of the eight introductions, DESPERADO is the only one which has proven to be a "border-line border" and at times a small tall.

It has seemed to me that small-flowered tall-stalked TBs are more useful in producing BBs than are large-flowered short-stalked TBs. In charting out my border registrations and best border seedlings, certain crosses keep cropping up as parents. ROUNDUP and its sibs (the 68-17 series) figure prominently. ROUNDUP is tall, but relatively thin-stalked and small flowered for its height. There were many fairly smallish flowers in the PICAYUNE cross (68-19), due in part to the Quadros seedling used, which was of average height but relatively small-flowered. It was from SURRENDER X NEW ADVENTURE. Tell's NEW ADVENTURE was a small-flowered quite tall thing as it grew here; Gibson's APRIL MELODY and Nearpass' JEALOUS LOVER, both derivatives of NEW ADVENTURE, also tended to have smallish flowers. JEALOUS LOVER is behind PREDICTION, and APRIL MELODY is behind GREMLIN, DESPERADO, HOPSCOTCH, PREDICTION, PECCADILLO, and SHENANIGAN. Of numbered seedlings, 75-113B, a bright yellow ground plic with red peppering on the falls, consistently throws smallish-flowered seedlings; it is from (GREMLIN sib X (ROUNDUP sib x APRIL MELODY)).



Dave Niswonger,
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

My experiences with border bearded have occurred mostly through accident. In past years I haven't intentionally made a cross with the thought of BBs in mind. In that regard, I suppose that I am one of the luckiest hybridizers around. My introductions have all come from tall bearded crosses.

The TBs that have contributed to these introductions have been RASPBERRY RIPPLES (probably originating from RIPPLING WATERS), SUNSET SNOWS, and it's hard to say what was responsible for BROWN LASSO, perhaps PUNCHLINE, although none of the sibs in the cross were borders. BROWN LASSO has given several nice borders to Truman Gladdish, but I was never able to get many seed from BROWN LASSO. Gordon Plough indicates that he was never able to grow a large number of seedlings from PUNCHLINE and does not recall whether this had a tendency to produce border irises or not.

I have gotten several border bearded out of my SUNSET SNOWS seedlings. MARMALADE SKIES produces seeds easily and will give many borders of all kinds of colors; I even have a couple of maroon red border bearded out of it, and Joe Ghio introduced BORDERLINE, a yellow amoena, out of it last year.

Logically, I suppose, one would think of crossing the intermediates with TBs to get nice sized border bearded, but of course, the sterility factor tends to mess up this approach. Hooker Nichols got quite a few seed from PEACHY FACE X MARMALADE SKIES and I lined out over a hundred of them in 1983 but the winter was so severe and I was so late in getting them established that year, that I lost most of them. There will be a few to bloom this spring, and if they are good you will know that they can stand a chill factor of 52 below zero. It will be interesting to see what these look like.

CLASSIFICATION AS VIEWED IN ENGLAND

Cy Bartlett, who just stepped down from Editorship of the British Iris Society's Year Book, wrote us some interesting thoughts about the Border and Intermediate irises. What he says sounds somewhat familiar; we have heard it before from our more southerly growers, and it sounds as if the English climate is far more moderate than our own, at least in its southern parts. Cy's remarks:

"We're having some problems over here regarding classification of BB's and IB's. Generally, there is no real problem due to the general fact that IBs from SDB X TB or vice versa tend to flower earlier. However, the flowering season criterion is becoming less and less tenable. Numerous TB's, especially remontants, are among the first to flower. MARMALADE SKIES, a BB, is the first median out in U.K. gardens, commonly well before the majority of SDBs. Several IBs are very late, running well into TB time. Because of the flowering-time criterion, which the R.H.S. will not accept, they only recognize three classes, i.e., MDB, median (or intermediate), and TB irises. B.I.S. follows the American system as far as possible, but we are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the differentiation between IB and BB. For example, J.D. Taylor's new median, JUST JENNIFER, is from BIBURY (SDB) X WEDDING VOWS (TB). Thus it is an IB by parentage but is very late, and flowers with the early TB, and is therefore a BB.

"Have the Median Society come up with a new classification recently which might resolve this controversy? I am inclined to think IBs should have some SDB blood regardless of flowering time. Please comment!"

I'm sure that Cy Bartlett would be happy to hear opinions from interested members!
His address: Court House, Cannington, Bridgewater, Som., U.K. TA5 2 HA. *

---Bee Warburton,
Classification Chairman, MIS

John D. Taylor, of Gloucestershire, England, also had remarks to make about the classification, and John is "THE" hybridizer of small irises in England, but of course he has to cope with the Royal Horticultural Society, which is the arbiter for ALL plants in England. What John wrote:

"I have consistently contended that there is no legitimate reason for the establishment of Border Bearded as a class. One should assume that to be so entitled, current progeny should derive from like cultivars, which to date has not been evident. I have been engaged in making a consolidation of the Check List entries of 1939-79 and while the project is only about two-thirds completed, I have found only one registered example of a BB X BB cross. So, unless your questionnaire produces some tangible and lasting results from such crosses, I shall continue in my catalog and comments to lump together the IBs and BBs within the 18-28" limits.

"Actually, I wish the AIS would reconsider the genetic origin of the IBs and perhaps modify it according to bloom date in some sort of reasonable compromise. Then the "BBs" could be reclassified as R (reduced) TB's."

*Of course, the Medianite would also be happy to hear your opinions too!

INTERMEDIATES

by Joe Gatty, Stockton, California

There is one truth every serious hybridizer of Intermediate Bearded irises finds difficult to accept; that truth being that the end result of all TB by SDB, or the reverse, is either paydirt or compost additive. It's unfortunate that at the thirty-six chromosome level this is the way it is---and frustrating for the very good that do appear cannot become a breeding tool that might lead to something of greater value. If this truth is accepted then one must also accept that the edge in this form of iris hybridizing is the use of iris parents whose modern floral form cannot be faulted. One goal I insist upon in Intermediate Bearded breeding is good floral form, floral form as nearly akin to the best of the modern Tall Bearded even though it must be in miniature. It hasn't bothered me that the TB parent used is a large-flowered variety. And many have been--as witness MARTEL, one of the parents of VAMP; CRINOLINE, one of the parents of VOILA, and WHITE LIGHTNING, one of the parents of BUTTER COOKIE and VISA. Here the use of such material has resulted in lightly ruffled, wide-petaled, Intermediate Bearded which for the most part have the quality of overall proportion since those lacking it are discarded at the maiden-bloom stage.

I cannot say that this or that named TB has proven to be a fine parent for Intermediate Bearded. I have not stressed the use of any one TB parent. If it's in bloom, is a color match for the Standard Dwarf Bearded pollen to be used, has good form, then it's a candidate.

There are not many named SDBs behind the series of Intermediate Bearded I've introduced. The violet and/or red-purples and plicatas all harbor DAINTY ROYAL, GOLDEN FAIR, ZIP, and the line-bred derivatives thereof in their background. The whites, blues and yellows involve the near-white SDB DAINTY DELIGHT, and its linebred white/blue-spot derivatives (notably WINK) and the greenish-yellow OMEN, a product of DAINTY DELIGHT and GOLDEN FAIR. Why these particular Standard Dwarf Bearded? Form, color and pattern. Of the sixteen IBs I've introduced to date, fourteen involve the above SDBs. Only SCOUT'S HONOR (GINGERBREAD MAN X POST TIME) and SUBTLETY ((MOONBLAZE X Keppel 68-53A ((LILTING MELODY x SIGNATURE) X LORNA LEE) do not. I couldn't resist the GINGERBREAD MAN breeding craze--and possibly should have--and I had to prove out the Blyth report that MOONBLAZE threw progeny with tangerine beards. It does, for a sib to SUBTLETY was a tangerine-bearded orchid.

I know that herein I have stressed playing it safe by using only that iris material which is highly perfected. However, there are iris goals when this isn't possible. Two examples come to mind and both examples require the use of SDB material which is less than finished. There is a need today to vary the Intermediate Bearded by adding the tangerine beard to other than the pinks. The Australian-bred SDB, NAZETTE, is a tangerine-bearded tool that shouldn't be ignored despite its so-so color and form. The use of it by Keith Keppel has resulted in some exciting and good intermediates. There is no reason why the Intermediate Bearded should not have laced representatives. A cross of WINGS OF DREAMS and TAN LACE showed that this is possible. And one wonders what will be possible when more finished tangerine-bearded and laced SDBs are available to use. It all seems to boil down to better tools, better irises.

Is there a favorite among my introductions? I don't know. Each pleased me in a different way. VAMP was finished; VOILA was a screaming Harlot; in fact, that was its garden name prior to introduction. And the form and color pattern of RARE EDITION seemed just right.

We also have a brief IB report from Ben Hager, Stockton, California. Ben was one of the founders and early workers in the Median Society, and he continues work with the various Medians along with innumerable other projects. He says, "I haven't done enough IB breeding to have any fixed ideas on the subject, having made only occasional crosses. This year I had some tangerine bearded yellow SDBs, so put them into my tangerine bearded lines."

Ben's best SDB for IB breeding has been PEPPER MILL, and he has used in the BB PICAYUNE, and TB PHOENIX. He adds that his aphylla lines have produced at least one IB: LOOKIN' GOOD. He has introduced about eight IBs, and his latest are HOT FUDGE and BUTTER PECAN. He has tried to use IBs for further breeding, but "no luck."

SDB Notes

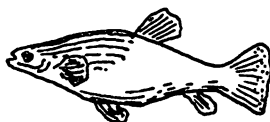
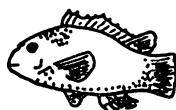
John D. Taylor, England

I first got interested in SDB's when I had some pollen sent by Dorothy Dennis many years ago. It seemed to me then that what was needed in dwarfs was improvement in shape, substance and growing powers, so I decided that colour would be secondary to me and I would concentrate on these other qualities, and in due course, the colours would come. Thus all my earlier ones would be good growers, and to this end I made a decision that I would never name an iris until it had received an R.H.S. award such as A.M. or H.C. In recent years I have occasionally felt that I had enough experience to name an iris which had not got such an award, but only if the iris had unusual features which should not be discarded; but in general I have successfully kept my standards high and many good irises have been discarded which might well have been named.

In SDB's I prefer those which are near the top of the height range, though in my Cotswold climate I find that several which are otherwise high enough do not exceed 11 inches here, whereas in milder climates they grow taller. Branching is another thing; I do not like too many branches on a short SDB, and again one has to watch out on the taller ones for thin necks to the flowers. I am careful not to overfeed my dwarfs, though I do think they need something in the early spring.

In recent years I have worked toward a blue-bearded white, but have not yet been successful. The nearest is SARAH TAYLOR, a pale primrose self with bright blue beards and lovely form, which in 1984 won the Souvenir de M. Lemon, our top award for a small iris; but its foliage is a bit pale.

I have leaned in recent years more to IBs, and I have a blue-bearded white in these, but I'm not sure whether it is a good enough grower. Its shape and colour are fine. It is a seedling of SARAH TAYLOR. One of my miniature dwarf plicatas, SCRIBE, with lines all over the falls, last year won an HM in the American lists, one of the few British irises ever to do so, but I now have a better one, MINISCRIBE, with better shape and substance, and stronger lines on the falls, which looks promising. The thing is, keep up the pressure for improvements. In one who hates throwing anything away, it is sometimes hard to throw away a winner on the grounds of slow growth, bad branching and few flowers, but the heart must be hardened, and my motto is: "There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it."



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PRESENT and FUTURE

BREEDING PROJECTS

CLEO PALMER

The attempt to create a pure pink pumila is progressing slowly because of the dry summers that seem to delight in cooking the few pumilas that are suspected of carrying the tangerine factor (t), and because of not having found a source of NANA, the only one that supposedly carries two tangerine factors, and will give pinks if crossed to one. CARPATHIA and BARIUM GOLD may carry one t factor, and BROWNETT may carry one, but so far I have been unable to determine from registration records whether it does or not. Any derivative of CARPATHIA or BARIUM GOLD may carry one t, but it would take too much time and effort to determine which these might be. All these varieties were lost last summer, so I will have to start over again next summer.

My other effort in this direction is to cross pink SDBs to pumilas known to carry t and intercross the 36-chromosome hybrids that result for pinks, and then cross these back to the same pumilas, and hope that those that carry three t factors can be identified by signs of tangerine-orange individual hairs, which are often present in plants with three t factors. SDB pinks have resulted when 36-chromosome plants were crossed to DOVE WINGS, and the seedlings sib crossed. These will be crossed back to pumilas and the resulting seedlings intercrossed in hopes of recovering pinks. Most hybridizers believe that pink pumilas are not possible, though I can't think of any definite reason why not.⁽¹⁾

Projects for pink standards with blue falls in both standard dwarf and intermediate classes have not progressed very well, mostly due to the poor podding ability of GUNG HO and other blue SDB amoenas derived from PROGENITOR lines by bringing this factor down through the IB to the SDB lines. Recently I have tried another approach to getting blue amoenas and other PROGENITOR derivatives by making original crosses of pumilas onto talls from PROGENITOR breeding. New and different patterns should result from such lines since the bicolors might have spots from pumila, of the same color as the falls in different shades, or in entirely different colors. If the EMMA COOK pattern is involved with self colors, rimmed variations should be possible as well. The first pink/blue IB was achieved this year, but the SDB type is some years away.

A good chalk white with full red beard has been in the works for some time, and many have resulted, but none are chalk white or have the full red beards. They would have been here sooner if the full red beard factors had been used earlier in the line. I obviously failed to take the usual white-tipped beards into account when starting the line; they have no yellow to convert to tangerine so you wind up with the same white-tipped red beards. Also, the pumila spot may show up. It may or may not be pretty, but is not the pure white I envisioned.

Several years ago, MIDNIGHT INTRUDER, a BB, bloomed on a runty stalk in perfect proportion for an SDB. It made so striking an SDB that I began an effort to create this pattern in the SDB class.⁽²⁾ The first to bloom from this was a dirty chartreuse-yellow amoena. It seems that there might be difficulties in achieving this line, at least from PROGENITOR derivatives. However, it seems possible that other amoenas not related to the PROGENITOR lines, crossed to black SDBs such as DEMON and MICHAEL PAUL, might give the black amoena envisioned. Other interesting things may come from such breeding, and maybe even the good brown amoena I've searched for for years. BLOOD DANCE seems a likely candidate for advancing the color in this effort. except that its very noisy hafts might be difficult to eradicate.

(1) Ed. note: This process with its mixture of chromosomes could never yield a pure pumila of 32 chromosomes; that is what the majority of breeders deem impossible, as they doubt that the t gene is able to produce lycopin in the chromosomes environment of the true species. The reason is that their yellow is just about all flavones, and it takes carotene to make lycopene, the pink coloring. However, a pink dwarf of the size of the species, if it proved fertile with TBs, would be a boon beyond compare. Good luck, Cleo!

An additional consideration is that it is almost impossible to intercross the 36-chromosome pumila hybrids. It is much easier to cross the 40-chromosome SDBs onto them, as in the second type of work described by Cleo.

(2) Ed. note: MIDNIGHT INTRUDER, a neglecta type from SOUTH PACIFIC, WHOLE CLOTH and JET BLACK. Palmer 1981.

Cleo Palmer, cont.

A white with large, deep red spot and grape purple has been in mind for years, but progress in this is slow, though some has been made, and perhaps before long the desired pattern will show up.

Better pinks are the desire of all. Early on it became apparent that crossing the Roberts pinks together had become futile, so I made all efforts to outcross to other things, hoping to get some of the desired qualities into the pinks. DELICATE PINK, a pink tinted white, does incorporate much of the upgrading desired as to form and substance, but it lacks the very pink color that is most desired. It may lead to a pinker pink in time.

Another effort was begun specifically for red-bearded blues, but they may also show up in the pink/blue breeding as well. As in the red-bearded whites, they may well have white beard tips, until the full red beard can be incorporated in the lines.

I envision combinations of brown, black and purple beards on self-colored irises of yellow, brown and white, as well as other colors. All should be possible without too much difficulty if you have a source for the various beard colors. In some cases there may be genetic hurdles to get over, but mostly it should be a matter of mathematics in raising enough seedlings from the right crosses to achieve the end results desired.

Of course, more ruffles and lacy things are much desired and are achievable in both SDB and IB classes. If the tall parent is very ruffled or lacy then a portion of the IB seedlings derived from their use will have considerable ruffling or lace. The trick is to get these in better colors and forms; they are just as likely to be in doggy seedlings as in introduce-able ones. As always, it becomes a matter of raising enough seedlings to get everything combined.

Crosses of modern TBs with forms of I. pumila offer a chance of introducing concentrations of genes or perhaps new genes not available when the original crosses were made. Modern tall, with width of falls especially in the hafts, and heavier substance, may give some new SDBs in the F₁ generation as good as the best of the newly created SDBs from modern SDB parents; but this will depend on the quality of the pumila parent, which the seedlings seem to favor a bit more than they do the tall parent. Few pumilas have obviously wide hafts and rounding falls; but if they have obviously long, narrow falls, and narrower hafts, the seedlings will not be any better than those of the original crosses.

However, certain tall parents when used with certain pumila parents will give a much higher than average percentage of quality seedlings. So if the pumila-talls are once more to be produced in quantity, it will take time to sort out which TBs and which pumilas will produce the best results in combination.

There seems to be no end to the potential of creating new and interesting things by using a little imagination to dream up what you want, and then finding the right parents to cross to get the desired results.

THANK YOU

A gift of \$150.00 has been received by the Median Iris Society, from the Iris Society of Massachusetts, from the proceeds of their sales of median irises. "ISM" noted that its gift was partly in recognition of the fact that almost all of their members grow median irises, and partly in honor of Medianite editors from Massachusetts: Bobbie Whitehouse, Bee Warburton and Marian Schmuhl. (They might also have mentioned Massachusetts hybridizers of medians, Massachusetts MIS members who have served on the Board of Directors, Nominating Committee, etc., but they are a modest group.) Thank you, Massachusetts.

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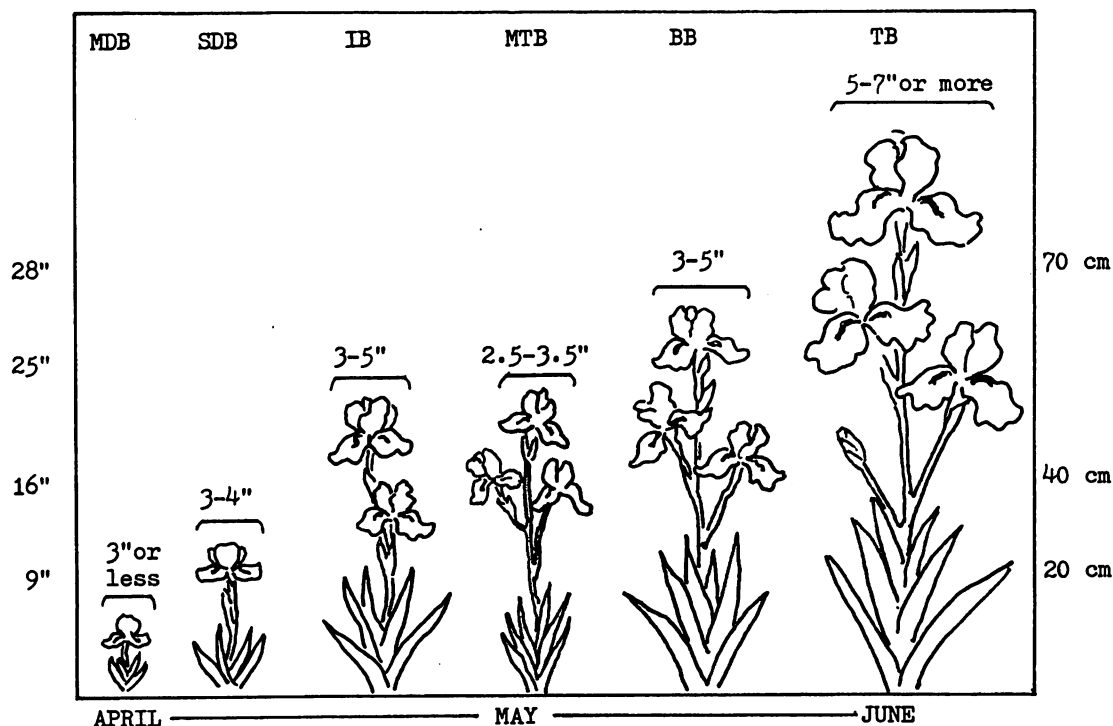
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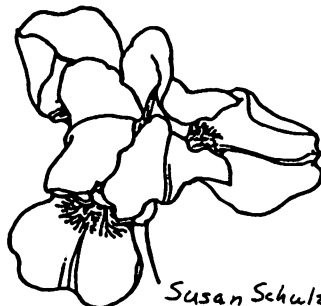
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