

From:
B. Charles Jenkins, Editor
Spuria Iris Society
418-A Cayuga Street
Salinas, CA 93901



SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

FIRST
CLASS

FALL 1989

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SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
 Fall 1989, Volume 30
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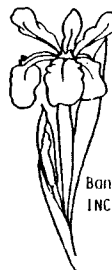
The SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY is a Section of the AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY and membership in the S.I.S. is contingent on membership in the A.I.S. All A.I.S. members are encouraged to join whether or not they are spuria growers. Dues are as follows:

SINGLE ANNUAL	\$3.00
SINGLE TRIENNIAL	7.00
SUPPORTING ANNUAL	4.00
FAMILY ANNUAL	3.50
FAMILY TRIENNIAL	8.00
LIFE MEMBERSHIP	40.00

1989 AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY AWARDS
SPURIAS

ERIC NIES AWARD

VOTES	VARIETY	HYBRIDIZER
28	Destination	B. Hager
RUNNERS-UP		
23	Cinnamon Stick	D. Niswonger
17	Barbara's Kiss	E. McCown
17	Highline Halo	E. McCown
HONORABLE MENTION		
57	Missouri Blue	D. Niswonger
45	Countess Zeppelin	B. Hager
36	Kitt Peak	F. Wickenkamp
32	Pieces of Eight	E. McCown
27	Terra Nova	Walker/Abrego
26	Small Package	B. Hager
16	Diminuendo	B. Hager
15	Capital Idea	J. Ghio
10	Northern Muse	Walker/Abrego



SPURIA IRIS SOCIETY

SPURIA SECTION OF THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

FINANCIAL REPORT
 as of
 31 August 1989

Bank Balance, 25 August 1988	\$3,606.52
INCOME:	
Membership Dues	602.50
Checklist Sales	80.00
Miscellaneous (rental of slides, sale of back issues of Newsletters)	38.00
Interest on Bank Deposits	192.30
TOTAL INCOME:	\$917.80
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing and Postage for Newsletters	\$687.66
Pre-printed Postal Cards for dues reminders	25.12
Miscellaneous Printing (mailing labels, "LIFE" membership cards, membership lists, etc.)	33.17
Nies Award Plaque	18.45
Shipment of back-issues of Newsletters from Gordon Green to Secretary	16.92
Miscellaneous Postage (mailing checklists, back issues, correspondence, etc.)	44.06
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$825.38
Bank Balance, 31 August 1989	\$3,698.94

Floyd W. Wickenkamp
 Floyd W. Wickenkamp
 Treasurer

SOME THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT SPURIAS (Cont.)

taller than what was listed. On checking records for my own seedlings, I discovered they were shorter the first year than in succeeding years. Then on a recent visit with Joe, I became aware of the fact that he replants all of his irises, including spurias every year. Voila! Mystery solved!

SIXTH: It has become increasingly evident to me that given good growing conditions, many spuria seedlings will bloom the first year after being lined out; that is, the second year after planting. I have some under poor conditions that have not even bloomed after four years. This year, seedlings lined out at a new location have made as much growth in two months as some at the other location in two years where there was insufficient water.

SEVENTH: It is recommended that spurias need good drainage and that a drying off period during July and August is beneficial. Here, where we have no rainfall during those months, conditions are ideal. However, I can certainly confirm what Ben Hager said in the spring issue of the Spuria Newsletter concerning summer rot. Part of my garden was inadvertently sprinkled in August and when I dug the rhizomes in early September I not only had summer rot, but there was a differential response between cultivars so affected. The most clear-cut evidence was with my new introduction, FINALLY FREE. The water had reached only one half of the planting, resulting in 80% of the terminal buds on the rhizomes being rotted, while the other half that remained dry showed no rot.

EIGHTH: Now, for my most recent lesson! Knowing that spurias should not be allowed to dry out after digging and before they are replanted, the move of more than 1,000 selected seedlings and forty cultivars from one location to another presented a formidable challenge. Digging was accomplished in two days and fortunately the rhizomes were dry with new root development not yet started. Dividing the clumps took several days, but each selection was placed in a plastic bag and stored in a cool place. Special ones, and a sample of each cultivar is being stored in the refrigerator. It remains to be seen what effect this will have on future performance. For now, the ones held in plastic bags for more than three weeks have suffered no ill effect other than losing that much growing time.

I conclude where I began by emphasizing what is already

Continued on page 14

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FROM THE EDITOR:

To all who responded to my request for information to acquaint us with what others are doing with spurias, I offer my great appreciation and thanks. For me, one of the purposes of the Newsletter is to get better acquainted with each other, despite the fact we may never see each other face to face. I sense this in our President's message and I hope many of you will send in material for publication without having to be prodded. The membership list in this issue can be removed and kept handy for corresponding with others.

I am extremely grateful to Glenn Corlew for pointing out the consolidation of RESPECTABLE and RESPONSE in the 1988 Registrations and Introductions that appeared in the 1989 Spring Newsletter. In checking the copy I did not refer to the original manuscript but you can be sure that will not happen again. I hope you will make the necessary correction from his letter without it causing too much inconvenience.

There are many reasons why Newsletters are delayed in publication but I doubt whether this one has ever been delayed by an earthquake (7.1) before. We were going to press the next day and I was actually weeding the display garden. I couldn't stand up, even with a hoe in my hands. Being without utilities for twenty-four hours or less is not nearly as bad as some readers had it. Here, one week later, everything is somewhat back to normal.

Happy irising!

Charles

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all of you faithful spuria growers. Hope this finds you in good form and excited about the coming year of spuria bloom.

The fall of the year is really "our" time. While our other irisian friends are finished with the manual labor and are already working on new planting charts, record books, and want lists for next year we are still digging, dividing, sharing (I hope), and planting those new spurias.

Now, that says something about us as a group. Surely people with that kind of stamina, faith in the future, and love of beauty can come up with some great ideas for promoting interest in the spuria iris.

We all need to become involved with our society, share ideas, and use new ideas to introduce the spuria to as many gardens as possible. Let's look forward to great progress and growth for us in the months to come.

I'm looking forward to meeting more of you and hearing from you by letter or through the newsletter. Send anything you do that works and let our editor put it in a newsletter. That's one way to get to know each other and if it works for you it may work for lots of us.

For those of you who do not know me, I have spent all of my life in New Mexico. After college I worked as a County Extension Agent until I married the County Agent. Since then T.C. and I have raised 5 children and now have 5 grandchildren. When our youngest child was in the 5th., grade I started teaching 5th., grade and this is my 19th., year as an elementary teacher.

I grew up in a yard full of flowers and T.C. and I have moved iris everywhere we have lived right along with children, cats and a dog. It's only in the last 15 years that I've grown spurias. At one time I had 72 cultivars, but now my count is somewhere around 60. I grow them both here in Las Cruces and at Tucumcari, so my count is not accurate for Tucumcari.

Looking forward to seeing you in Omaha next spring and hearing about your successes.

Maxine

average germination of 17.4%. The range was much wider, actually fluctuating between 4.2% and 63.4%. Only one cross, namely CLARKE COSGROVE x CROW WING, from 2-year-old seed was planted in September with the fresh seeds. From 32 seeds planted, 23 plants were obtained, representing 72% germination. With this one example it would appear that it is better to store the seed for as much as two years. However, from 80 crosses made in 1983 and of 2,490 seeds planted on November 25, with the above mentioned 1985 crosses, a total of 921 plants were obtained, giving an average germination of 37.1% with a range all the way from 0 to 100%. Of the 80 crosses, 160 seeds involving 8 crosses failed to germinate, but from one cross with STRUTTIN' as the pod parent, 35 seeds planted gave 35 plants.

I have continued to make direct comparisons and find that Ben's method is a good one, but because of the large number of crosses I make, it is impossible for me to plant all seeds direct from the pod to take advantage of the higher average germination.

THIRD: An interesting observation on spuria seed germination comes out of my method of handling. It is my practice to plant 25 seeds in a square 4" pot which is sunk in the ground in groups of 12, until it is time to line out the seedlings in the field. Where there are several seedlings in a pot, they are separated and planted while the soil is retained for future potting. When only one has germinated, I simply plant the entire contents of the pot. Next year I had spuria seedlings coming up where I had used the potting soil and also around the single plants I had lined out. Not only that, but there was still more germination taking place into the third year!

FOURTH: In order to have a place to grow my seedlings, I allowed the flowers to be cut from more than 30 cultivars occupying over half an acre. It was soon apparent that these cultivars multiplied more rapidly than where comparable ones were used in crosses or the flowers left to mature.

FIFTH: When I was preparing to register my first seedlings for introduction I had them growing beside some of Joe Ghio's cultivars in two-year-old clumps. Out of curiosity, I checked the height recorded in the registry and to my surprise, the ones in my garden were 12 or more inches

SOME THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT SPURIAS

B. Charles Jenkins

Through a mutual friend in the Imperial Valley of California, I met Eleanor McCown in the mid-60's. She gave me two cultivars in pots which I planted in the backyard of our first home, purchased in December 1966, in Salinas. They were DAWN CANDLE (Ferguson '65) and YELLOW WINGS (Ferguson '66). For the next several years they simply multiplied without being moved from their original spot in the garden. By the mid-70's I divided the clumps and planted them in the field where my research on the new grain, triticale was being conducted. It was obvious that distinct personalities were emerging, because the row of DAWN CANDLE was twice as long as YELLOW WINGS.

Late in the 70's I acquired several more cultivars and again divided the two original ones. By this time, I had over fifty feet of row for DAWN CANDLE and less than twenty-five feet for YELLOW WINGS. At this same time I rejoined the American Iris Society, after an absence of some twenty years, and also became a member of the Monterey Bay Iris Society. This was the beginning of my avid interest in hybridizing spurias.

FIRST; I soon discovered that even if the anthers are removed from the pod parent and the flower not protected, bees can bring unwanted pollen. The solution to this is to cut off the falls, thereby removing the landing pad so the bees can no longer deposit pollen on the stigmatic lip. I have left hundreds of flowers not pollinated with the falls clipped before bee activity begins, and not once has any seed set even without removing the anthers.

SECOND: On one of my visits to Melrose Gardens outside of Stockton, California, Ben Hager told me that he plants spuria seeds direct from the pod as soon as they are mature and before they become dry. This prompted me to set up a direct comparison for eleven different crosses made in 1985. Seeds from these eleven crosses were more or less equally divided and 557 fresh from the pod planted September 5, while 568 left to dry were planted November 21. From the fresh seeds, 241 plants were obtained, giving an average germination for the eleven crosses of 40.4% with a range of 20.0% to 57.3%. Seeds from the same crosses and allowed to dry until planted in November gave only 99 plants, or an

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Charles,

First off, Congratulations and Thanks for taking over the Editorship of *The Spuria Iris Newsletter!* If your first edition is an indication, we have some good times ahead.

However, there is one minor correction that I would like to call to your attention. In the 1988 Registration and Introductions, Joe Ghio's Respectable and my Response somehow got consolidated. It should be two separate entries and read as follows:

RESPECTABLE (J. Ghio, R. 1987). Sdlg. SP82-266B, SPU, 36" (91 cm), EM, Spectrum violet self; small yellow signal. Vintage Year X Border Town. Bay View 1988

RESPONSE (G. Corlew, R. 1988). Sdlg. AP-16C. SPU, 44" (112 cm), M. S. white outside, inside white flushed and veined yellow; F. golden yellow, narrowly edged white. (Dawn Candle x Archie Owen) X Social Circle.

I also want to say thanks for sending me a copy of your list. I am looking forward to seeing and growing your new ones.

Glenn F. Corlew

Dear Charles,

Thank you for your kind enquiry regarding my experiences with spurias. I live in the North-East of England and on the beach nearby there is a sign pointing out into the North Sea saying "Germany". It is a cold and windy spot, but can be quite sunny. My spurias are coming into flower now (early June).

I had the good fortune to receive many years ago a packet of Walker Ferguson seeds and planted the seedlings beneath a conservatory wall facing south. A wide range of brown & blue shades with of course golden shades were much admired locally over the years.

Unfortunately in some ways, my wife and I moved house suddenly early in the year and I am hoping some of the better forms will survive although the situation for them is not as favorable. As the garden has more moisture however I ordered some of the new siberians from the USA which are a consolation somewhat.

Regards to all iris enthusiasts.

Dana Dixon

PRESERVATION OF THE OLDER SPURIAS

F.W. Wickenkamp

At the Memphis Convention the Historical Iris Preservation Society urged the various sections of A.I.S. to participate in locating and preserving as many as possible of the earlier cultivars of the various classes. It was also suggested that it would be appropriate to establish display gardens to feature or include some of the older irises.

As a first step it is suggested that S.I.S. members who have some of the older cultivars and collected species advise the Secretary so that a list may be compiled and published in a future issue of the Newsletter. Such lists might also include information as to whether sufficient stock is available to permit distribution to others.

To start things off here is a list of a few older ones in the Wickenkamp Garden:

I. ochroleuca WHITE HERON BELISE

I also have a considerable stock of *I. unguicularis* (winter iris, not a spuria).

I also have enough of each of the above to fill a limited number of requests. It is suggested that those interested advise me and I will meet as many requests as possible. It is suggested that such exchanges be made on the basis of refunding shipping costs only.

Our Editor, B. Charles Jenkins*, has suggested that, since he has considerable space for additional plantings, he would be willing to establish a display garden including the older irises. Those desiring to provide rhizomes for such a garden should contact him.

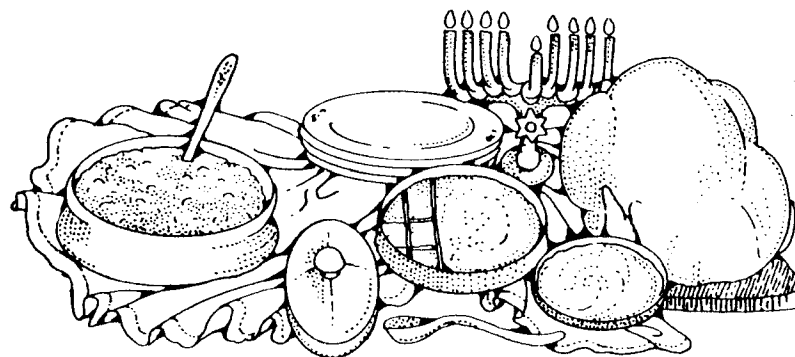
* By courtesy of Brock Farms near Aromas, California, I am establishing an expandable display garden. There are already 120 cultivars thanks to the generosity of Bay View Gardens, Melrose Gardens, Shepard Iris Gardens and Floyd Wickenkamp for contributing additions to my own collection. This garden will be available for judges training and may be viewed at any time by calling me at (408)422-2486
Charles

miles from Young, but 900 feet lower and 2-1/2 hours drive from here. He has hot dry summers and winter rains, so I plan to move some spurias there after our next season.

My 1988 season was not good. September and October were very dry, and I did not get a chance to water them well, as I had been called back to help out with work at that stage. Most of the plants were much undersized with poor blooms and short stems; but since Christmas we have had rain, rain and more rain with some mist and now the plants have grown to their normal heights.

Now June 4th., we have had 24 consecutive wet week ends. I have not checked all the rainfalls, but during April we had 47-1/2 inches.

So may I have a better season later this year.



Continued from page 17

known about spurias and that is that they all have individual characteristics (personalities). Some do not bloom the first year after planting. I have even seen some that skip every other year while others are very consistent and bloom every year. Some like DAWN CANDLE and PING, together a few of my seedlings, even produce rhizomes (called proliferations by Walker Ferguson in 1972) high on the stems on rare occasions. I probably have much more to learn about spurias!

Warrimoo he had a lot of people calling in looking for my nursery.

I have probably introduced about a dozen spurias. Melrose Gardens listed one or two, but I consider the best was one I called Chocolate Bar, good broad blooms, 5 to 7 buds, dark chocolate color with honeycomb colored veins. I gave a rhizome to a friend before we moved to Leura, and lost my clump in the move. Unfortunately my friend died also and so I lost all of my stock.

So in 1977 we moved to Leura. This is Rhodendron country, acid soil, elevation over 3,00 feet, cool to cold winters and snow, mainly summer rainfall and mist. If the summer temperatures reach 75F it is almost a heat wave. We do get occasional days in the 90's then a few days of mist and maximum temperatures of 45F. So there is really not enough summer heat to ripen the rhizomes. As a result arils are very hard to keep. TB's are not really tall and do not bloom too well, nor do the spurias, although I do have better success with the smaller types such as *I. sintenisii*, *I. graminea*, *I. kerneriana*, *I. halophila* and I raised from seed a species from Russia that is dark blue self about 6" high.

The garden here is about 3 or 4 acres in size and was started about 45 years ago and is filled with well established rhodendrons and deciduous azeleas, kalmias, cherries and dogwoods, tree and herbaceous paeonies and most bulbs. Old fashioned and species roses seem to do well, plus most of the iris I have planted especially sibiricas and Japanese.

So to cover my season. The unguicularis begin in March. Late August to mid October display the evansias cristata, gracilipes. japonica, watii etc; early October the SDB's, PCN's in late October then the TB's and Dutch iris. In November I have the TB's, spurias, sibiricas, foetidissima, laevigatas. Then in December and January the English and Japanese iris.

My season is too late here to show most iris in the NSW or Victorian iris shows, so I enter mostly in the local Rhodendron Society Shows in mid to late November.

I am still hybridizing spurias, but the paucity of bloom does restrict me, and I have not considered any of the seedlings to be much advanced on other spurias.

However, one of our sons has moved to Cowra, about 45

BACK ISSUES OF NEWSLETTER

A limited number of copies of certain of the back issues of the Newsletter are available as follows:

Fall 1979	Fall 1982	Fall 1986
Spring 1980	Spring 1983	Spring 1987
Fall 1980	Fall 1983	Fall 1987
Spring 1981	Spring 1984	Fall 1988
Fall 1981	Fall 1985	Spring 1989
Spring 1982	Spring 1986	

There are a limited number of Fall 1984 and Spring 1985 available. There was no Spring 1988 issue.

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SPURIAS IN ALBERTA

Chris Lacroix

I acquired my first spuria irises more by accident than by design. A nursery in Beaverlodge was offering three types of Siberian Iris; a white, a light blue and a dark blue. Eventually, I discovered that the dark "blue" was indeed a Siberian, probably Caesar's Brother, but the other two were quite dissimilar, with pencil wide, stiff flower segments. Later, after I acquired "The World of Iris" and the Spuria handbook I figured out what was what more or less. It's a mildly annoying fact that around here irises are sometimes tagged Siberian if they are hardy, or pumila if they are small regardless of what they are.

For seven years my work took me to the rural areas and in four widely divergent places I came across some big clumps of very old, neglected, but still showy and vigorous spurias. At this time I believe all of the above are seedlings of *I. halophila*. The fact that the Canadian prairie received many waves of immigrants from central and eastern Europe who may have brought seeds with them would make an interesting story and perhaps account for their scarce but wide distribution. However, the people that had them in their yards were more apt to ask me what they were. Most liked them, one lady complained they grew too vigorously and were hard to get out, and a few offered some clumps for me.

Our local botanical garden, a fifteen minute drive from West Edmonton Mall, has many spuria species, including *graminea*, *musulmanica*, *halophila*, *sodgiana*, etc. I understand that mature plants there receive little attention save for weeding and the spurias certainly are very robust and hardy. One clump of *I. musulmanica* is at least five feet high and a yard in diameter, a very impressive explosion of yellow after most other iris are done, about 1st. week of July here. Another very beautiful purple specimen is also labelled *I. musulmanica* but I'm sure that's a mistake and we are looking at a hybrid cultivar or seedling of one.

Fresh seed from my *I. halophila* certainly has germinated easily and I now have a row of them and should see bloom this year. As for old seed (either from SIGNA or stored) it has been reluctant. I've also ordered in cultivars; Sunny Day, Pink Candles, Driftwood, Protege, etc., but only two have taken and they don't look too happy. I'm sure

Paeonies also did well there, and before I left there I had 3 large paeony beds with spurias growing up between them all.

Next Bill Gunther asked me would I send some spuria and other iris blooms to the San Diego Fall Show, which I did as this coincided with my peak bloom. The spurias carried and lasted well, and even were still on display at a hospital there 8 days after the show.

Then Walker Ferguson sent me a quantity of his seed and I raised seedlings and used these and my plants in my breeding program and raised some very nice plants, mainly in browns, blues and whites.

I suppose you can say that about this time I would have had a good excuse to lose interest in spurias.

I think it was in may 1967, that I went to the USA, mainly to see arils and aril breeds, but also to attend the San Diego show. On landing at San Diego airport Bill Gunther met me and said we had to go out to Walker Fergusons to collect some spurias for the show; so he had brought along another van and I could drive this and follow him!!!!

At that stage I had not driven in the USA, on what to me was the wrong side of the road, but somehow I followed him along the freeway and we got there. I met Walker Ferguson and saw his beautiful spurias. Then Bill Gunther said to me that he had to stay for a while, but "here's a map that will direct you to the hall and you can deliver the blooms".

I got lost on the way back, so at one stage turned a corner and stopped to ask the way, only to find all the traffic heading at me.

I eventually found the hall, unloaded the blooms, then found I was to be one of the judges the next day.

Early in 1968 we moved to Sydney. The spurias still did well, but the season was about 3 weeks earlier, but I still sent blooms for the next few years.

I think it was at the 1969 Fall show at San Diego that a seedling of mine was given an exhibition certificate and Walker Ferguson thought it should be introduced so I registered it that year, but what to call it? We were living on Warrimoo Avenue, so I named it Warrimoo and I started a small iris nursery and called it "Warrimoo Iris Nursery". As it happened there is a town called Warrimoo about 20 miles from Leura, and later I learnt from a nurseryman at

SPURIAS IN AUSTRALIA (1948 - 1989)

Gordon Loveridge

It could be said that my interest in iris and later in spurias was caused by an alleged miracle.

After WWII I went back to the hospital for a 3 month refresher course before starting a medical practice at Nyn-gan, about 400 miles N.W. of Sydney. The country was very flat, red dust, hot summers and really no winters - rarely a frost, and shrubs and trees for harsh climates.

Then in 1968 I received a message, "could I come to Melbourne, Victoria, about 1,000 miles away. *Alleged Miracle; In 1946 a person had suffered a heart attack in a plane, was taken to the hospital and the records stated that I had treated her and she had recovered.* So my wife and I flew to Melbourne but stopped at the hospital on the way to check the records. As it happened I had not seen the patient, but to do a favour I had signed the discharge papers. Anyhow, having explained this to the church we went to do some shopping. It was a public holiday with most of the shops closed, so we went for a walk in some gardens and found a marquee full of iris. I had never seen such flowers and instantly became an addict.

Our seasons in the Southern hemisphere are not quite 6 months different to yours, but for you to appreciate the difference in the seasons I should say that the main TB season in Sydney at sea level is mid October or a bit later. Here at Leura where I now live at 3,200 feet elevation the peak TB season is late November.

In 1955 we moved to Young, 250 miles S.W. of Sydney, elevation 1,450 feet, hot dry summers, no rain late October to mid March or April. Summer temperatures 95-105F, winter and spring rain, snow rarely but heavy frosts and temperature down occasionally to 18F, and alkaline soil.

At this stage I was mainly interested in arils and aril breds, which did exceptionally well there, and I did a lot of hybridizing with these and also did some importing and exporting.

TB's also did well there, but not the dwarfs, reticulatas, Junos and PCN's also did well. Then I obtained some spuria seeds. They germinated readily, grew and increased well and I liked them so I began importing some and hybridizing them and joined the SIS.

other Spuria growers might agree that mature plants; a) resent being disturbed, b) when disturbed will sulk or go dormant, c) will refuse to break dormancy unless conditions are right, and d) need special care tailored to particular conditions to get off to a good start.

I've noticed that one large Canadian iris nursery has stopped listing spurias and I wonder if it's because they have had too many customers complaining about crop failure. I have moved my halophilas around under various conditions at times. The little seedlings, 6" to 12" high, are most gratifying, bolting like weeds when rowed out. The mature pieces or clumps have died or sulked for a long time and I consider myself lucky for the various takes I have had. If I ever buy any more named cultivars, I will pot them up and grow them in a greenhouse until November. Just before freeze up I will trench them pot and all deep in the ground and plant them in the spring.

Once the transplanting tricks are figured out the cultivars should make a very welcome addition here to our limited list of super hardy low maintenance perennials. Although we only have 90 frost free days, our growing season is more like up to 6 months. The spurias seem to become active as soon as the snow melts. Our rains are not always a good fit for the described pattern of spuria growth and dormancy but prairie conditions are often semi-arid which is a plus. Although we don't always have very cold (to -40F) arctic highs with little snowcover for 2 weeks or more every winter, this overall pattern means we seem to get less virulent insect problems than elsewhere. To date the dreaded iris borer has been thankfully absent. I don't like nuking the garden with chemicals.

I would really appreciate it if any kind souls out there had any fresh spuria seed from cultivars, (o.p. or whatever) to spare. If you like I could send you some seed of worthwhile local perennials in exchange. My address is #58 Sundance Coop, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 4B4. Happy Gardening

THE ADAPTATION OF SPURIA IRISES TO THE NEW ENGLAND ENVIRONMENT

Richard Kiyomoto

The named varieties of spurias are among the most beautiful of irises, however, they thrive mainly in the western U.S. where summers tend to be dry. Indeed, although I make my home in Connecticut, I maintain most of my spuria variety collection at the home of my parents near Fresno, California. I grow approximately one acre of irises in Connecticut focusing on hybridizing Japanese irises which thrive in the acid soils and moist areas commonly found here. I also grow bearded and siberian irises as well as numerous species of iris.

I am attempting to select germplasm of Pacific Coast Native and Spuria irises which can thrive in our environment with a minimum of care. Such germplasm can be used to breed commercial varieties adapted to our environment. With the spurias, I have been planting seedlings into well-drained sites. The seedlings were grown from seed obtained from SIGNA. I add lime to raise the soil pH, but the plants get no further care other than weeding. The table in this article summarizes the performance of some of the lines grown from SIGNA seed. My general experience is that all the spurias I have grown tolerate our winters, but most show little vigor or increase beyond surviving. Flowers also tend to be small in my location; however, I have seen much better bloom stalks in gardens in Maine. The good news is that some of my accessions grow and increase with ease, forming clumps similar to that of the Japanese iris. After seeing the blossoms, I am not certain that I have correctly identified spuria species from the SIGNA seeds; however, the key is having a source of hardy germplasm which is hopefully fertile with the commercial varieties. In 1990 I will screen as described above, hybrids grown from seed of crosses by B. Charles Jenkins in the hope that the genes for hardiness in New England already exist in the background of named varieties.

The table summarizes both verbal reports and actual observations I have made of spurias in Connecticut, Maine, and Massachusetts. I have not included *I. graminea* which is easily grown in New England.

TABLE #1

Table 1. Observations on spuria iris in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine (1988-1989)

Garden/ Location	Variety	Bloom	Increase

Schneider/ MA	Clark Cosgrove	+	
	Marlyn Holloway	+	
	Proverb	+	
	Antigua	+	
	Premier Blue 1979	+	
Kiyomoto/ CT	SIGNA 86M155 (<i>I. cartholiniae</i>)	++	++
	SIGNA 86M174 (Adobe Sunset)	+	+
	SIGNA 86M175 (Archie Owen)	-	-
	SIGNA 86M176 (Betty Cooper)	-	-
	SIGNA 86M177 (Forever Young)	+	+
	SIGNA 86M178 (June Lemon)	+	+
	SIGNA 86M179 (Just Reward)	-	-
	SIGNA 86M181 (Redwood Supreme)	-	-
	Snow Hawk	+	-
	Lucky Devil	+	-
	Respectable	-	-
	Tiger Blues	+	-
	Premier Blue 1979	+	+
White/ ME	Ila Crawford	+	
	Archie Owen	+	
McLaughlin/ ME	Archie Owen	+	
	Clark Cosgrove	+	
	Arts Alive	+	
	Betty Cooper	+	
	In Depth	+	

+ Indicates a plant flowered or increased.

++ Indicates profuse flowering and increase.

- Indicates I observed no flowering or increase was small.

These observations support the idea that spurias can survive in New England; however, other than SIGNA 86M155, the vegetative clumps would represent only a few divisions in a typical mature clump I have seen in California. The fact that there appear to be genetic sources for vigor in our environment is encouraging for future hybridizing.