

THE MEDIANITE

Quarterly Publication of the Median Iris Society

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SUMMER 1990

CONTENTS



President's Patch	Carl Boswell	38
Median Iris Society Treasurer's Report	James Foreman	39
Median Iris Society Board Meeting Minutes (Omaha)	Ethel Baukus	40
Median Iris Society Annual Meeting Minutes (Omaha)	Ethel Baukus	41
IB Robinery	Lucy Burton	42
SDBs in Southern Missouri	David Niswonger	43
Take Notice	Clarence Mahan	46
Border Bearded Irises	Carol Lankow	47
Commentary	Sterling Innerst	48
Median Bloom in New Zealand	Hilmary Catton	49
Median Irises in Willowdale	Verna Laurin	51
Hybridizing for Intermediate Bearded Irises	Allan Ensminger	52

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(Editor's Note: The above is a new mailing address for Ramona Howard)

Please advise Ramona of a change of address. **REMINDER:** Your expiration date is printed after your name on your MEDIANITE mailing label. PLEASE CHECK THIS DATE and renew your membership when necessary. Prompt renewals mean less paper work for our busy membership secretary.

Special Note AIS Membership Secretary now requests that dues to sections now be paid directly to Section Membership Secretary rather than through the AIS Membership Secretary.

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. Is yours an annual membership? Why not consider a triennial membership next time you renew? It will mean a savings in time and money for you!

MIS SLIDES CHAIRMAN: Terry Aitken, 608 NW 119th St., Vancouver, WA 98686
(For slide ordering information, see AIS Bulletin No., 272, January 1989)

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(There are a number of median robins now in flight, and there is always room for new members. Robins are a great way to meet and stay in touch with other median iris growers and hybridizers. JOIN TODAY!)

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(Get on the bandwagon! Send Jim a note telling him you'd like to be listed as a Display Garden!)

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The MEDIANITE gladly accepts reports, articles and photos. Closing dates:

SPRING	March 1	FALL	September 1
SUMMER	June 1	WINTER	December 1

THE PRESIDENT'S PATCH

Carl Boswell

Another bloom season has come and gone, and for us it was a very good year. LaRue and I had the good fortune to see Median Iris bloom in Region 15, Southern California, Region 18, Missouri, the AIS Convention, Nebraska, and Region 4, Maryland and Virginia. Region 4 will host the AIS Convention in 1991 and the gardens are beautiful! We were tired, but it was so nice to see old friends and make new ones.

Good News! Perry Dyer has announced that Oklahoma City (Sooner State Iris Society) is planning a Median Iris Convention in 1993 (Sooner Spree in 1993), just prior to the AIS Convention in Fort Worth, Texas. We will all be looking forward to this event.

We have visited and heard of more areas that are growing medians. where it had been said that people could not grow medians. We would like to hear from you, if you are in one of these areas. Please tell us how your medians are growing. A small or long article for the Medianite is always welcome.

The Median Section Meeting at the AIS Convention was outstanding. Bennett Jones's program on the "Development of Orange Median Irises" was great! I hope Bennett will use his notes for an article. There were 36 hybridizers attending the meeting to hear Bennett's program, as well as many others.

Median Iris Society - Treasurers Report

10 April 1989 - 9 April 1990

For Presentation at the annual Meeting

Net Worth

Life Membership	\$2881.53	
Certificate of Deposit	\$6536.70	
Total Savings		\$9418.23
Checking	\$1333.31	
Total Checking		\$1333.31
Total Worth		\$10751.54

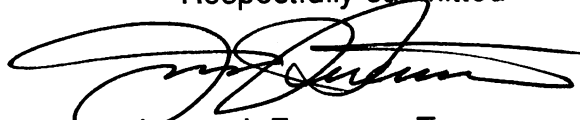
Income by Source

Dues via AIS	\$1147.50	
Dues via MIS	\$950.50	
Life Membership	75.00	
MIS Press Sales	-	
Medianite Ads	\$150.00	
Auction	-	
Library	-	
Interest		
Certificate of Deposit	\$500.96	
Life Membership	\$136.93	
Checking	\$81.91	
Total Interest	\$719.80	
Donations	\$525.00	
Slide Committee	\$50.00	
Total Income		\$3617.80

Expenditure by Purpose

Membership Services	\$50.00	
Medianite Printing	\$2183.10	
Medianite Postage	\$511.39	
Officer Expenses	-	
Misc.	\$8.50	
Slide Committee	\$22.33	
Total Expenditure		\$2850.32

Respectfully submitted



James J. Foreman, Treasurer

MEDIAN IRIS SOCIETY
BOARD MEETING

SUNDAY, MAY 20, 1990

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

The board of directors annual meeting was called to order by President Carl Boswell with a welcome to all.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The treasurers report was read by President Boswell due to the absence of the treasurer, James Foreman. Our total worth on April 9, 1990 was \$10,751.54. Our various sources of income were \$3,617.80 and our expenditures, \$2,850.32. Jim reported the Medianite as our principal expense. The Median Muster donated \$500.00.

The Nominating Committee presented the slate of officers for 1990-91. Tony Willott was named to the nominating committee and Barbara Schmeider will be the chairman for 1991. Mike Lowe from Virginia will serve as the third member of of the nominating committee.

Hooker Nichols, editor, sent a report saying a lack of copy continues. The same people regularly contribute interesting articles. Members would like Registration and introduction information published. When he receives the R & I information, he will print the information. The Winter and Spring issues must be printed close together to include this information for our readers. Hybridizers are advertising again because we do have four issues per year. Members are asked to send our editor all pertinent information they obtain regarding medians on local, regional and international meetings. He would also like to know about Median Judging Schools that are planned far enough ahead to publish this information in the Medianite. Editor Nichols would also like to publish Median iris show results. Pictures of award winning irises and those who exhibited them, would be most welcome. Good black and white glossy pictures of current median releases can be used over and over in the publications.

The next Medianite will have an MTB theme if copy can be obtained. Members are to send information regarding MTBs they liked this year. The summer issue deadline is June 20. The editor would like copy ready material. A discussion followed and it was suggested he publish guidelines. The city and state of commentors should be included with comments taken from the Symposium ballots. A comment was made on the amount of easted space in the Spring Medianite.

Ramona Howard, Membership secretary, reported we gained 46 new members, making our current membership 353. This includes 35 Honorary and no cost members, and 26 life members. Please send your dues to Ramona. The AIS membership secretary has requested your section dues now be paid directly to your section membership secretary.

The editor would like copies of the Medianite issues for the Summer 1988 and and Summer 1989.

Gene Tremmel, Symposium chairman, distributed copies of the current symposium ballot. Please mail it to him in an envelope as many are returned in very bad condition. Of the 353 ballots sent out, 126 were returned. This is the greatest number ever received.

Terry Aitken, slide chairman, reported receiving slides from Bennett Jones. These were donated by Bennett. Clump photos of iris for judging schools are needed. Terry will make a list of the slides available. A total of \$35.00 was collected for the slide program.

Display Garden Chairman, James Morris, reported only 6 gardens did not respond to the display garden reports. Visitors to the gardens liked the following:

SDB	Sun Doll
IB	Rare Edition
MTB	Chickee
AB/Med	Loud Mouth

Barbara Gibson, Robin Chairman, was not present. There has been a request for a beginning hybridizers Robin.

A discussion on having a judges training chairman - Do we need one? You can lead a judge to water, but you can't make them drink. Judges training must be done in the garden where you judge the plant. The flowers are judged on the show bench. Judges need to visit the gardens.

Copies of the By-laws were given to the board members. The proposed changes were listed on the pages following the By-laws. The changes and additions have already been voted on but had not been posted to the By-laws before.

As to incorporating, the Median Iris Society, where would it be done? Who would chair the committee? It would cost between \$20.00 to \$50.00 for a lawyer to draw up the papers.

It was moved by Gus Sindt and seconded to have the Median Iris Society directors present a statement to the American Iris Society to resolve the situation of the Median Iris and the Dykes Medal.

We must also work out the Aril-median problem. The Median Section meeting will be at 3:45 p.m. on Monday, May 21 in the same room as this board meeting.

Bennett Jones will speak on Orange iris and tangerine beards.

Meeting adjourned

MEDIAN IRIS SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

May 21, 1990

Omaha, Nebraska

President Carl Boswell called the meeting to order and introduced the new officers and committee chairman. Each stood as his name was called. He then had the hybridizers attending stand and introduce themselves or rise as he called their name. There were 33 hybridizers at the meeting.

All business was deferred to allow time for our speaker, Bennett Jones to discuss orange iris and tangerine beards.

After the speaker, President Boswell thanked him for an informative talk and thanked the Massachusetts Iris Society for the donation of \$500.00 from the Median Muster. He then announced that in 1993 the Sooner State (Oklahoma) Iris Society would host the next Median Muster.

IB ROBIN

By Lucy Burton (Massachusetts)

Larry Harder: NE --Each year I go through the current R & I books and make up lists of all the introduced irises. Did you know that 31 IBs were introduced last year? 23 in this country and 8 overseas. Barry Blyth puts out a lot of them. Nine of them are in my garden in the guest beds so will have established clumps to look at.

Frank Foster: CA --One thing I want to do is make a few crosses with a good fertile MDB, using the same pollen parent, TB or BB, on that and then the same TB or BB pollen parent on a SDB. I would try to select similar colors and background for both types of dwarf parents and then compare the progeny for size. Has anyone thought along these lines for breeding?

Carl Boswell: CA --IBs--HISSY FIT-Innerst '89--three plants, all three bloomed in Nov., have not bloomed this spring, but there is time. HOT SPICE-Aitken '89-one plant, four bloomstalks. Terry, it is very good and the color stands out. ASK ALMA-Lankow- started blooming in Feb. and is still blooming.(April ed.) BABY BLUE MARINE-Denny '87- is a good medium blue. BLUE EYED BLONDE-Ensminger'89-bright yellow with a blue beard; it will catch your eye. . . . OBLIGATO-Stahly '88- nice orange is holding up well in hot weather.

There are some older IBs I like and keep for hybridizing too. BUTTERFLY BOY, Blyth, '73, S-white F-pale blue; HELEN PROCTOR, Briscoe '78 as a model of what a good black IB should look like. KERI, Lankow '79, good orange tones for hybridizing. I am blooming some seedlings from TWIST OF FATE on it, let you know what I get. POLISH, Craig '66, purple with bright yellow beards. Its children are round with bright yellow or orange beards. SPRING WINE, Peck '78, I like the size of the flowers and leaves, so many of the new IBs are short tall bearded in flower and leaf size. SNOW FESTIVAL, Palmer '74, white that is good for hybridizing with BBs and TBs.

Dennis Stoneburner: VA--Of all the medians the IBs and BBs were the best. RARE EDITION and SILENT STRINGS along with HOT FUDGE and RED ZINGER were the best of '90. AZ AP had one bloom stalk as did HELLCAT and RASBERRY ROSE. ASK ALMA and MAUI MOONLIGHT did nicely. MOSS BAY was late blooming, but otherwise quite showy. New to the garden, LOGO caused the most discussion. Either you love it or hate it. Most people loved it. We found this year that the more unusual the better. After our June rhizome sale all of the "different" iris were gone, only the plain white, yellow and blue selfs were left.

SDBs IN SOUTHERN MISSOURI

By Dave Niswonger

The editor asked us to comment on some of our favorite SDB's and also on any of our experiences in growing them.

The 1990 spring was the poorest season I have had in growing irises. A very hard freeze in December (down to 0 F.) caught many irises that were still in active growth and had not had a chance to harden off for the winter. Many of them turned to mush and that finished their growth for the end of 1989. In January the weather warmed up very nicely and continued to warm up in February and early March. Those that had survived the hard freeze started greening up, getting ready to bloom. Then the latter part of March, we had two hard freezes about a week apart which really finished off most of the tall bearded bloom stalks that were just coming out of the rhizome. So I ended up with probably only 10 percent bloom for the year. However, many of the SDB's and Intermediates were able to sustain this very harsh climate and bloomed anyway.

AMAZON BLUE (Hickerson '87) is a very nice lighter blue blend with a dark blue beard that is very hardy and attractive. In the pinks, BALLET SLIPPERS (Willott '86) is probably one of the best pinks that has the widest hafts and heaviest substance. Sometimes it does not always grow tall enough to get the blooms above the foliage, but for a pink SDB it isn't bad.

Speaking of pink SDB's, I learned in 1989 from Barry Blyth of Australia, that he had noted some tangerine beards appearing from his SDB crosses that did not appear to have any tangerine factor in the background of the parents. He saved some of these seedlings, selfed them, crossed with other pinks and was able to develop a line of pinks with considerable improvement in substance, color and width at the halves. Barry came home from the Memphis convention with me and some of the SDB's were still in bloom and the IB's were just starting. I had over 1,000 seedlings that had bloomed or were in the process of blooming. In surveying these seedlings, it appeared that I had about three seedlings that had tangerine

beards, but had no pink in the background. These were from SPLASH OF RED, RUBY LOCKET, and TWO RUBIES; the latter two are sibs. Joan Cooper had actually discovered the first seedling and had noticed that the center of crests were pink. So this seedling had already been marked prior to the Memphis convention. The other two were marked after the convention.

I had seen Barry's pink SDB's in bloom on my visit to Australia in 1988 and was quite impressed with the gains that he had made. Some of the varieties that had been utilized in developing these beauties were KANDI MOON, ELECTRIC DREAMS, OLADI and PEACH EYES. In 1990, he is introducing CHANTED which is from OLADI x (PEACH EYES x KANDI MOON). It is a mid-pink with a lavender-blue beard and will knock off your socks. It was already sold out before the catalog came out. There were probably others that I don't recall at this time. These seedlings range from apricot to deep pink with all shades in between. Many of them have blue beards of various colors. Keeping this in mind, I attempted to make some of these types of crosses in 1990, but since it rained constantly I am not sure if any of these particular crosses took or not. I do believe that I may have gotten one or two seed pods with this type of cross in mind.

Other pinks that I felt have been impressive are HYPER (Boushay '83), DOROTHY HOWARD (C.Palmer '88), DELICATE PINK (C.Palmer '84), SHEER CLASS (L.Miller '88), and LIVE JAZZ (Lankow '86).

As one talks about the pinks, you cannot help but think about the oranges and ORANGE TIGER (B.Jones '88) comes to mind. Also, one cannot fail to mention TILLIE George Shoop's introduction for 1986. As I said, even though we had such a harsh year, this little one came through just fine. PUMPKIN CENTER (B.Jones '89) also bloomed nicely and was a very interesting color combination of orange. Since I have mentioned a couple of varieties developed by Bennett Jones, I should go ahead and say that Bennett's BLUE LINE '87 is a near white with a blue beard that is

quite outstanding. In a similar color grouping, I like LAVENDER PUFF (Black '86) very much.

With the mention of Paul Black, I must hasten to state that his CHUBBY CHEEKS '85 is one of my top favorites. It is a light blue picata of exquisite form and is proven to be a very outstanding parent. I have many picata SDB's coming from it as well as chartreuse, picata IB's and even a yellow with a blue beard. Speaking of blue beards, I must say that COOL MELODRAMA (Nichols '86) is another favorite of mine that is blue with a blue beard. Also for a blue with a blue beard, I like RAIN MAKER (Nichols '86) very much.

For a very showy novelty, DO SI DO (Ensminger '83) is one that will really add a lot zip to a median garden. Another interesting novelty color of my favorites is VIM from Schreiner's a 1973 introduction. Another unusual color that I like very well is HOOLIGIAN (Boushay '78); it is a light blue with orange spots in the falls. Perhaps another more vivid colored one of similar color is HOOD WINK (Boushay '84). Another interesting color that continues to keep my attention is INDIAN JEWEL (A. Brown '74). This is an interesting turquoise blue color that is really different from almost any others that I have seen.

For a real shocker with yellow standards and red falls is JAZZMATAZZ by Heidi Blyth introduced in 1986. She is the daughter of Barry and has really produced a very showy variegata for the median garden. This one has produced ZING ME, an Intermediate that graces the cover of Barry's 1991 catalog. It was crossed with EMBASSADORA x EVENING ECHO seedlings and has stands of creamy lemon and falls of the same color with a large brown circular area around a bushy brown beard!

Another variety that caught my attention in the very poor spring that we had was that of SERENITY PRAYER a 1989 introduction by Perry Dyer. In all the rain we had, this little beauty of light yellow with a nice blue beard, showed up like a jewel in the garden. Not only was it taking the rain very well, but it has a certain personality to it that I thought was quite intriguing.

For a blue with a red beard, STAR DATE (Black '87) comes to mind quite vividly. There may be others in this color class, but at the moment this one seems to stand out above all the others.

I shouldn't fail to mention SYLLABLE, a 1986 yellow amoena introduction of Sterling Innerst. It has beautiful form and nice growth habits and to me is tops in this color class.

It is really fantastic the new color variations that are appearing in the SDB's. They are a wonderful precursor to the glorious iris season that just ahead. And, when you have a year like 1990, they may turn out to be the most enjoyable part of the iris season for that particular year. Everyone should grow some of these little beauties.

TAKE NOTICE

By Clarence Mahan (Virginia)

The 1988 Median Iris Society Symposium showed "Peacock's Eye (A. Katkamier '39)" ranking 16th in the Miniature Tall Bearded Iris class. In 1989, this iris had risen to 9th place. According to our "bible", the 1939 AIS Alphabetical Iris Check List, the correct identification of this iris is PFAUENAUGE (Goos & Koenemann, 1906). The Check List acknowledges that A. R. Katkamier, Nurseryman and Fruitgrower of Macedon, New York "introduced" this iris as "Peacock's Eye" in 1939, but identifies the iris introduced as the old Goos and Koenemann variety.

I would appreciate it if you would publish this note in the next Medianite so that everyone who is growing PFAUENAUGE under the wrong name will know that they have an even older treasure than they thought they had. I grow this iris and I consider it charming.

BORDER BEARDED - 1990

By Carol Lankow

Hew gang, I was misquoted. We were talking with Terry Aitken about BBs this past winter, and I did say that it would be logical for IBs and BBs to be the same class since they are the only median classes divided by season. They share the same size requirements and the other classes are defined by inches only. An SDB blooming in TB season is still an SDB.

Bit I did NOT say that they SHOULD be! In fact, they MUST NOT be, or the IBs will suffer in the awards, and therefore, in sales and distribution, which would be grossly unfair. At this time, the better irises by far are in the IB class. They have proven themselves reliable growers and bloomers, and the newer ones are so pretty now they rival the later blooming irises, and they are getting better all the time. But, unfortunately, even today, many of our judges do not get into gardens at all until TB time. They are not interested in smaller and earlier irises, and when it comes time to vote their ballots, they look at their notes and say, "Oh yes, I saw that in so and so's garden. It was kind of pretty. Guess I can vote for that." The particular iris is far more likely to be BB than IB.

But we did see some nice BBs this year, and I am beginning to believe that we may make a viable class out of them yet. I sure hope so since I feel the smaller irises have some important garden places to fill, and I find the good ones so satisfying.

Terry has some promising seedlings in his BB rows. I especially like 85M48, a nice dark blue with compact form and ruffles to spare. Proportion looked good too. Forgot to note the number of another with peach standards and rosy violet falls that was harmonious for a change. There were some luscious pinks and corals in the bunch too. His Maid of Orange bloomed here on a decent stalk showing good width and color. His 1990 introductions were good here too. Kona Blush is mostly for color, which is impossible to describe and unique, and it looks as though it will stay in class. We just loved Maui Surf in our yard. The height is sneaking up to the upper limits, bit it is a gorgeous light blue flower with billowing ruffles. There is a dark violet sib that is just as pretty in the wings.....

It is very risky writing about first year plants, but Jimmy Burch's Big Victory looked very nice. I'm told it got big in Omaha, but BBs usually do at conventions, so I will withhold judgement. It is a nice fully formed white on what appears to be a sturdy and steady growing plant. Another first year plant for us that we are rooting for is Paul Black's Nautical Flag, a mighty good looking dark blue that lightens around the beard. If the size and proportion hold up, it will be a very welcome addition.

I hesitate to put this in print, but Flashdance is easily the best of the newer BBs. But it always blooms, garden visitors love it and order it, and we have the devil's own time building up stock. But the truth must be told, and it is a dandy. Bright dark violet with a red beard; it grows, it blooms reliably, and it is stunning.

John Weiler's Blackbeard got a bit tall, but it is something else to see for its color. The cleanest, smoothest light blue imaginable. The black beard wasn't black here, but a pretty solid dark blue that was a nice contrast. Made my tweezers itch. His Frizzy Lizzy was about as I remembered from seeing it in California last year. Getting a bit large, and a tad rough, but a bright, ruffly and apparently good natured orange that carries a mile.

We were pleased with Sterling Innerst's Chapter. It's smaller and similar to its TB parent Sand and Sea; a soft gold with light blue centers on the falls. All very tidy and nice. Ensminger's Batik and Color Brite may not be to everyone's taste since they have his famous variegated splashy coloring, but they are showy and visitors really enjoyed them. We especially like Berry Rich and Zinc Pink, both of which seem willing to grow, stay reasonably within bounds and look very pretty to boot.

Waiting to hear how Calico Cat is behaving now that it is introduced. They have a way of turning on you once you are committed, but so far, so good. It continues to do well for us. Miss Nellie is still the overall champ for performance around here, and Bochamp is not far behind. Wish we had a couple dozen more that did as well.

COMMENTARY

By Sterling Innerst

The subject I am about to comment on seems to be tabu in some social circles. At the risk of being banned from AIS I will approach it with fear and trepidation.

Year after year, I redo my rows and beds and cull many cultivars. Approximately 150 named varieties are discarded annually to make room and cut down-which by the way never seems to happen. Along about August comes the awards report. I glance at it and "file" it for later. When in November or December I unearth the report in one of the many piles that have a habit of accumulating each summer, I review the awards thoroughly. To my concern each year, I've discarded many irises that are receiving awards. What is my problem? Don't I know when I have a good iris? Aren't the judges doing their job? Or, isn't the judging system working? I've done some contemplating and the following is what I've thought about.

Checking the plants that are left after discarding, I find that I do have many awarded plants. I keep the good growers that bloom a lot. In most cases, I keep the more modern ones, but still grow Stockholm, Soft Air, Dash Away, and Little Episode among other older ones. Haven't these been surpassed? I think not. But what about the awarded ones I shredded?

In checking the awards over the years, it seems that perhaps-just perhaps-judges aren't as committed as we promised to be. Do we search out and evaluate as many new irises as we should? Do we vote for irises from our local hybridizers mostly? Do we vote for irises because they come from famous-well known-hybridizers? Awards basically go to hybridizers who live in a region that is large or to well known hybridizers. Are the best irises being awarded? Sometimes no! Each year I attempt to secure some varieties from new or unknown hybridizers. Some good irises are going unnoticed.

I believe that the judging system is right and proper. Maybe those of us who are judges should re-evaluate the job we are doing. The awarded irises should not have to come from your best friend, local hybridizer, a famous breeder, your favorite committee chairperson, or an AIS official. Awards SHOULD go to the best irises, do they?

MEDIAN BLOOM SEASON IN NEW ZEALAND - 1989

By Hilmary Catton

1989 was without doubt, one of the best bloom seasons that I have ever had. This applied to not only the bearded iris, but to most other species as well, and from what I hear, it was like that in many parts of New Zealand. We had experienced a very dry cold winter which may have helped, but the continued drought and prolific bloom certainly affected the rhizomes. Our increase was very poor.

My bearded iris season starts about mid-September with two of my favorite golden oldies being the first to bloom, Grandma's Hat and Navy Flirt. The next is always Surprise Orange, (New Zealand bred) and although perhaps not perfect in form, it is such a lovely bright gold and such a prolific, often thrice bloomer that I wouldn't be without it. Then after that in quick succession Glistening Glen, Hineblue, and Tichie—all from New Zealand, plus my own Honey Pot, which keeps blooming well into the SDB season. The following would easily be my favorites and are growing extremely well in a sunny rock garden; Mimi Minx, Early Baby, Burgundy Blue and Funny Face. An MDB seedling that I have registered earlier this year bloomed for an exceptionally long time. It is a very neat little yellow amoena from a cross of Chalk Mark and a cream seedling of unknown parentage. I don't grow a lot of MDBs because anything which has pumila blood does not do too well here because our winters are too warm. I do have a lovely clump of *I. suaveolens* in a pocket of my rock garden that keeps sending up its cute little greeny yellow flowers all through spring and summer and sometimes in autumn as well.

The SDBs were a real delight, just a solid mass of color. As you will see from the following list which is a combination of both old and new, I like to keep old favorites if they bloom and grow well. I didn't take notes but from memory these were outstanding; Silkie Dip, Sun Doll, Chubby Cheeks, Pale Star, Shanty Town, Westar, Be Magic, Orange Tiger, Court Magician, Wishful Thoughts, Open Sky, Making Eyes, Sapphire Jewel, Azure Gem, Bibury, Rain Maker, Mr. Roberts, Eye Bright, Michael Paul, Golly Molly and Cherry Pop plus a few of my own such as Amber Tips, Sea Holly, Magic Ray and Lilac Cushion.

At this stage and before the IBs started blooming, I had to tear myself away from my garden and precious seedlings to fly down to St. Canterbury in the South Island to attend a Mini-convention, a weekend gathering which is held each year in a different part of the country and is known as the Dwarf and Median Safari. There again, what a wonderful display of bloom in every garden we visited. The one commercial garden we visited looked just like a huge patchwork quilt. We saw some really beautiful gardens from small town sections to large rambling plantings on farms with extensive areas of trees and shrubs. What impressed me most in all these gardens was that not one of them had beds of just irises, but had used them as garden plants in all kinds of ways in the overall planning of the garden. They were in mixed borders, rock gardens, edging paths, among low growing shrubs and as a color accent in small groups of other plants. They were all so well grown and appeared to be really healthy and enjoying the company of their companion plants, which of course is just the reverse of what we read and are told that they need to be grown apart from other plants.

I have been experimenting along these lines for sometime and so far have been happy with the results. I have found that as long as you don't allow the rhizomes to be densely covered the dwarfs and medians do very well. The foliage seems to stay free of disease and the clumps of grey green leaves are a real asset to the landscaper. I doubt if this would work so well with the TBs except perhaps some of the older more vigorous varieties. We had two days of visiting through possibly some of the best gardening country in New Zealand and as well as irises saw alpines, roses and masses of perennials. The evening was spent as a learning session, speakers, question and answer sessions and some judging training. In the gardens, all the New Zealand bred irises are plainly marked and senior judges assess them and the Lucy Delany Memorial Plaque is awarded to the one with the most points. This plaque is beautifully hand painted with a very good likeness of *I. pumila* Nana. This year it was won by the MDB Hineblue and was well deserved as it was putting on a great show in the breeder's (Heather Collins) garden where it had formed an azure blue drift almost two feet across.

When I came home the IBs were out and blooming well. Lucy's Blue Silk from New Zealand was a welcome blaze of color as I walked in the gate. The best of the few I grow this year were Rare Edition, Az Ap, Hot Fudge, Raspberry Fudge, Theda Clark, Snow Gnome, Florizel from New Zealand, Oklahoma Bandit, Butter Cookie and Butter Pecan. I think I would give my vote to intermediates if asked which class have best value as garden plants. You get an enormous amount of bloom in relation to the small space they take up. You also get the advantage of being able to look down on them and they can also be seen clear across the garden. I just wish I could grow more, but when I moved to my smaller garden, I just had to be very ruthless in deciding which ones out of the hundreds that I grew, I would be able to take with me.

The only BBs I have are Pink Bubbles, Am I Blue and Chickasaw Sue along with several of my own seedlings.

I find the MTBs do not really do well here. They are shy bloomers and often slow to increase. Of the ones I have, Dotted Doll is by far the best in both flower and growth. Runners-up would be Blue Bisque, Bettina, Joette, Caroline Rose, and Abridged Version. Bumblebee Deelite is growing strongly so hope it is as generous with its bloom.

Perhaps if someone in New Zealand would start breeding MTBs, we would get better results as it is very noticeable that locally bred plants are more vigorous on the whole than imported ones that have had to adjust to a different hemisphere. Some take five years to really thrive and some never do, which is sad as I have seen these same iris in their homeland doing very well.

We are now into autumn and it seems a long way until the little ones appear again. But I expect the time will pass all too quickly and already my winter blooming unguicularia are flowering and will continue to make a bright spot until July when *I. reticulata* and other bulbous iris will start to bloom and fill the gap until the cycle starts all over again.

Median Iris in Willowdale (Metro Toronto) Ontario, Canada

By Miss Verna Laurin, Secretary
Canadian Iris Society

Another weird winter in 1988-89 tested the irises. Many TBs fell by the wayside, but once again the SDBs, IBs, and MTBs not only survived, but saved the day. The BBs like their close relatives, the TBs, do not do as well with a few exceptions.

As always, my old faithfuls, Amigo, Blue Denim, Green Spot, Betsy Boo, Regards, Fancy Capar and Indian Doll made a good showing. While many Medians that I wrote about just over a year ago are still very pleasing, I will comment mostly on different varieties this time.

SDBs Ashanti (Blyth '84) is a well formed rich gold with an olive ray pattern forming a spot on the falls. Hocus Pocus (Hager '76) is old but new to me. The bright lavender standards and beard top rich tan falls. Sankt Pauli (Denkewitz '85) is a royal purple self with darker beards. Dark Vader (Miller '87) was a dark blue violet with bushy blue beards. Dew Kiss (Blyth '83) had white standards with citrus green falls and nice flaring form. Lemon Rings (Aitken '83) has beautiful lemon yellow flowers with a deeper spot and white beards. Hi Sailor (Gatty '82) delighted us with pure white standards and bright royal blue spotted white falls with white beards. Making Eyes (Blyth '82) has creamy lemon standards atop velvety red violet falls with narrow cream edges. Intimate (Sindt '85) had dainty, delicate flesh pink flowers. Candle Flash (Sindt '85) was interesting with wax white flowers with creamy rims on the falls. It seems to sparkle. Tantara (Ensminger '82) with its tan standards and garnet brown falls with violet beards was super. It is certainly an updated Gingerbread Man. I have always liked blue beards. Stockholm (Warburton '71) is an older SDB with good form in mid yellow with violet blue beards. Easter Dream (Roberts '81) was pinkish white with creamy white areas at the heart with a pale blue beard. Semi Precious (Sindt '86) is a dainty peach pink with coral beards.

IBs Kolksee (Denkewitz '82) with its rich medium blue violet flowers with deeper violet beards had lovely form. Hell Cat (Aitken '83) had pale blue ruffled standards with deep purple velvet falls. A child of Mystique but a better grower for me. Lacy (Gatty '86) had delicately laced primrose yellow flowers. Logo (Keppel '86) was a nicely flared, different plicata with rosy purple markings on a blended apricot ground. Butter Cookie (Gatty '80) was a clear yellow self. Raspberry Blush (Hamblen '76) is such a pretty raspberry pink with raspberry hearts and beards. Helen Proctor (Briscoe '78) had standards violet black with even darker falls. Hero (Miller '87) had flaring dark violet self flowers with blue violet beards. Joe Gatty's white on purple plicatas Bold Print ('2) and Rare Edition (80) are still garden favorites.

MTBs Rosemary's Dream (Dunderman '82) was tops with creamy rose standards, white falls bordered rose. Very pretty. Doll Ribbons (Dunderman '78) had white flowers edged with a narrow ribbon of violet. Chickee (Dunderman '79) is a good medium yellow self. Panda (Dunderman '75) had lovely flowers being dark blue violet in color with white beards topping a small white spot. Spanish Coins (Witt '76) had vivid yellow flowers with orange beards. New Wave (Hager '86) was a ruffled white beauty. Aachen Elf (Kennedy '84) had dainty yellow flowers edged in lavender. The MTBs ignore the crazy weather and keep me happy when the TBs take another year off.

BBs With very few exceptions, the border bearded irises have never done well for me. Kirsch (Burch '84) was a very deep red and is always good. Shenanigan (Keppel '83) certainly a beautiful plicata with pinkish standards and falls heavily speckled carmen. Hal Stahly's Fiddler ('84) another dark red flower and Drem Solo ('80) near black in color are by far my best performing BBs.

About forty years ago my mother answered a small item requesting letters from anyone interested in irises. That letter led to my interest in all types of irises. For that, I am forever grateful. The small Canadian Gardening Magazine it appeared in did not last long, but the love of Iris is still strong.

Hybridizing for IB Irises

By Allan Ensminger (Nebraska)

As you know, hybridizing for IBs involves a cross between SDBs and either BBs or TBs so it requires a little forethought and planning because the SDBs normally bloom earlier than the BBs and the TBs.

It helps if you have a goal. What kind of IB would you like to create? Something different, or perhaps something better? Let's assume that you would like to achieve a pretty pink IB with a violet beard. So, what parents will you use?

The first thing that you must be concerned about is that your new creation will have good proportion. It would be best if both parents had flowers that are small for their classification. You should be working towards a flower that is 4" or less in width. Large flowered IBs don't look so good.

You must also keep in mind that your IB seedlings should have a stalk with five buds or more. Since the IB seedlings will be a composite of their SDB parent and their BB/TB parent it is important that the SDB parent have three or more blossoms per stalk and that the BB/TB parent have seven or more blossoms per stalk ($3 + 7 \div 2 = 5$).

So now, after some study you have decided that your blue bearded, pink IB will have as its SDB parent Blyth's Camarilla which is pink with a vibrant blue beard and Ensminger's TB iris Karen Christine which is from pink breeding with a violet tipped beard. Since these two irises don't bloom at the same time, you will need to plan for a way to have dry pollen from the one parent available when the other parent has fresh blossoms.

Some hybridizers accomplish this by storing the SDB pollen in the refrigerator along with a desiccant. This has never been quite satisfactory for us. The anther gets too dry and brittle-and we don't get many takes. We have reasoned that we get more takes using BB/TB pollen on the SDB because the BB/TB pollen grains are programmed to grow a longer distance. They have no difficulty in growing from the SDBs stigmatic lip to its ovary. But when the pollen from the smaller flowered SDB is used on the TB blossom, it runs out of program and energy before it grows the two or more inches to the ovules.

This may or may not be true but since we believe it, we try to have the TB pollen available for the SDB pod parent.

We have a stone house that absorbs and reflects heat. Roses and selected irises are grown in a bed along the south side of the house. The irises grown in this bed are seven to ten days earlier than those grown away from the house. Here is where we plant our BB/TB pollen parents.

In an endeavor to make the SDB pod parents bloom late, we do three things: The plants are allowed to grow to maturity in full sun so that the buds for the bloom stalks are well developed. Then in late August they are transplanted into a bed that is partially shaded with only afternoon sun. These plants are then winter mulched and the removal of the mulch in spring is delayed until the first week in April. The combination of the late transplanting, the growth in partial shade, and the retarding of growth under the mulch in early spring results in delaying the blossoming for a week or more.

So now, we have the SDB pod parent in blossom and receptive when the BB/TB parent is blossoming with fresh pollen.

But don't expect to get a "take" every time you make a cross. SDBs and BB/TBs aren't that compatible. Both parents are tetraploids, but the SDB has 40 chromosomes, four sets of 10, while the BBs or TBs have 48 chromosomes (4 sets of 12). We make many crosses and would consider it very fortunate if we averaged one seed pod out of five crosses.

But this is what makes IB hybridizing just right for the back yard gardener. If you can make enough crosses to produce 200 to 300 seedlings each year, you'll be successfully competing with even the largest growers.

So here's how--go to it!