

THE JUDGES' CHOICE

Of Very New Varieties, 1957

This balloting invariably arouses criticism, and it is indeed open to criticism. The intent of the ballot is to point out those very new varieties, not yet having wide distribution, which the Garden Judges select as their own particular favorites. In order to have a standard source of names for the ballot, the Honorable Mention list of the current year and the previous year are used. This means that each iris which receives H.M. will appear on the ballot two years. These are the new things which the Judges have selected as the best, by awarding them the Honorable Mention. During these two years they are not eligible for any other honors, so this balloting in no way interferes with any official voting.

The ballot has its faults. Last year the Awards Committee asked for suggestions for improving the quality of the results. One of the most persistent complaints is that the results are largely a measure of distribution, and not a measure of enthusiasm. Several excellent suggestions were received, including one very good one all the way from New Zealand. However, improvement seems to hinge upon the assignment of rank to each chosen variety, or upon the assignment of weight to a number of varieties seen and not seen. Several variations of these things were suggested and undoubtedly they would give more accurate results. However, the tabulating would then become so tedious that the work might outweigh the value of the results.

It is important that the results of this balloting be available as early in the season as possible, so that the fanciers of the new things may consider purchases in the current season. The Awards Committee is faced with several choices. It can leave the contest as it is, or modify it along one of the several lines suggested. These alternatives will be discussed at the Director's Meeting this fall. Meanwhile, the members may accept the results with whatever grains of salt they deem advisable.

The ballot this year listed 119 varieties, each of which received H.M. either this year or last year. Each Garden Judge was asked to select not less than ten and not more than fifteen favorites. The rule for not less than ten eliminates judges who have been unable to see a representative number of the new things in the current season. The maximum number of fifteen represents about half the number of varieties the average good judge probably has seen enough times to know each one pretty well. Ballots listing fewer than ten or more than fifteen were not counted. 373 on-time ballots were received. The favorite 25, including ties, are:

Rank	Variety	Votes	Rank	Variety	Votes
1.	Taholah	111	16.	Melodrama	50
2.	Eleanor's Pride	96	17.	Annette	48
3.	Gold Cup	85		Rose Sails	48
4.	Star Fire	83	18.	Purple Haven	47
5.	Violet Haven	75	19.	Full Reward	45
6.	Fleeta	70	20.	Fortune's Gift	44
	Galilee	70		Lantana	44
7.	Violet Hills	69		Midnight Blue	44
8.	Front Page	65		Total Eclipse	44
9.	Lynn Hall	64		Witch Doctor	44
10.	Pastella	62	21.	May Magic	42
11.	Dreamy	61		Sassafras	42
	Trim	61		Surprise Party	42
12.	Patience	60	22.	Hermit Thrush	41
13.	Bazaar	57	23.	Lady Elsie	39
	Constant Comment	57		Luscious	39
	Nomohr	57	24.	Golden Crown	38
	Snow Goddess	57	25.	Concord River	37
14.	Dotted Swiss	55		Frost & Flame	37
15.	Orchid Ruffles	52		Nashborough	37

POPULARITY POLL, 1957

The Seventeenth Official Symposium

This is the annual balloting in which every member is urged to take part. The Ballot this year contained 408 varieties, and each member was asked to select his favorite 25. The important feature of the SYMPOSIUM is that it is a selection of *favorites*, varieties which have proved their worth in garden use. Relatively few novelties find their way onto this Favorite 100 list. The newest varieties on the list have been tested several years, and the oldest have been in wide use for as long as thirty years. These are varieties which should do well in all soils, in all climates where tall bearded irises will grow.

While the balloting for the Official Honors is primarily for the benefit of the AIS membership, this selection of the Favorite 100 can be said to be a service for all gardeners, everywhere. A new gardener, making a raw start, could do no better than to select his first irises from this list. Indeed, many do. No long-time favorites have been barred from this list by not being on the printed ballot. Each member is invited to list five varieties not on the ballot, in addition to his choice of the favorite 25 listed on the ballot.

This year's balloting marks a turning point in the general level of