

The Cassebeer Garden

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AN IRIS breeder who is well known throughout the country and whose garden will be one of the tour gardens at the 1961 convention is that of Fred Cassebeer. He is a director of the Horticultural Society of New York, a former director of the American Iris Society, and was the editor of the *AIS Bulletin* from 1940 to 1945. While editor of the *Bulletin*, since iris pictures were hard to get, he took many himself. His flower pictures are outstanding and have illustrated also many articles in newspapers and magazines.

The Cassebeers' home is in West Nyack, New York, which, with its winding roads, tall trees, and many quaint, old houses, seems far, far removed from New York City, where Fred's pharmaceutical business is—his apothecary shop, as he likes to call it. He is the fifth generation to carry on the business and he was, as he says, a city-bred boy. When he moved to West Nyack in the country he became very interested in gardening. He enjoyed growing all kinds of flowers and says that he believes he grew practically every flower described in the Burpee catalog. He became interested in iris and visited other gardens to view them, including the Wayside Gardens. His first iris trek was into New England, where he visited the Kellogg gardens and those of the Nesmiths. He met Robert Schreiner and was soon interested in breeding iris. He swapped iris and iris knowledge with Ken Smith, a Dartmouth classmate.

The Cassebeers' home is on Lake De Forest, with views across the lake and the surrounding hills, clothed with tall tulip trees, oaks, and elms. At one end of his three acres is a group of trees, but otherwise the place is open to full sunshine. It comprises a large, flat field in which are grown the seedlings, and some thirty-seven iris beds which follow the natural contours of the land, sloping down to the edge of the lake. The house is built so that the glass corner of the living room has a fine view across the lake and, as Mrs. Cassebeer says, it is loveliest at night when moonlight is on the lake.

The iris grown in the beds are the recent originations of hybridizers from all over the country and include a fine, almost complete, collection of Jesse Wills' iris. There are also collections of modern varieties of Siberica iris, a collection of Lilliputs (standard dwarfs), and some two hundred of Fred's selected seedlings. He says that he has never gone into breeding on a large scale; not over fifteen hundred seems to be to his liking.

Region 19 members visit the Cassebeer garden each year sure of a cordial welcome and interesting iris viewing and talk. Since the Cassebeer area was for many years part of Region 19, there is a great feeling of friendship and mutual liking. He is included in many of Region 19's efforts, for they feel he is still part of them.

Among the seedlings that interested a great many is one Fred is naming PATRICIA'S SWEETHEART, because it is a child of PATRICIA and SWEETHEART'S FOLLY. When asked where he got the name SWEETHEART'S FOLLY, he laughed and said that it came about because his wife, Marcia, wanted a certain cross made which he assured her wouldn't amount to anything. The cross however produced a very lovely flower, so he called it SWEETHEART'S FOLLY. PATRICIA'S SWEETHEART is a cream iris, ample in substance, yet with an unusual luminous quality.

The Cassebeers have a twelve-year-old son, John, who is very interested in his father's iris and knows where each iris is planted. In fact, more than once Fred, while trying to remember where a certain iris is located, has been told by John just where it is. They call him their walking catalog. Last summer John said he would like to have some leftover iris at transplanting time to sell and Fred said he might have some. John filled his express wagon and announced he was taking along two friends, one to pull the cart and one to talk. When he came home he had made ten dollars and said he gave three dollars to be divided between his friends and kept seven for himself. A bit shocked, Fred finally said it looked as though there might be a business man in the family at last.

The Cassebeer garden is to be visited on Monday, the 29th of May, and a cordial welcome is awaiting the membership of the American Iris Society.

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International Horticultural Exposition Hamburg 1963

American iris growers are cordially invited to participate in this latest of a series of international horticultural expositions sponsored by the city of Hamburg and the National German Association of Horticulture. The last of the series dating from 1869 was held in 1953.

Every field of horticulture will be represented in this exposition, which is scheduled to open April 26, 1963, and close October 10, 1963. The exposition grounds will cover more than 250 acres, including the botanical garden and neighboring areas within the environs of the city. Participation of 18 foreign countries already is assured and others are expected to accept invitations that have been issued to them.

Arrangements are being made for receiving iris entries from abroad during the summer of 1961. Transportation charges will be paid by the exhibition committee, which will return all guest irises to the owners; but the committee reserves the privilege of buying them, unless owners stipulate that all are to be returned.

Shipping instructions for American hybridizers will be printed in the April *Bulletin*.

Help Them Along!

"Dear Mr. Benson: I am enclosing my check for \$5.00 to pay for a membership in the American Iris Society. I have wished to join for a long time, but have been too busy growing, hybridizing, and weeding the things. I simply didn't get around to joining the American Iris Society before this." (Name withheld.)

Better late than never! If you have friends who love irises and who have not gotten around to joining the AIS, lend them a copy of the *Bulletin* to look over before it is again time to "weed the things."