

From the Georgia Iris Society Facebook page, copied March 2025.

AIS National Convention, 1992

Hosting a National Convention was a major undertaking for the members of the GIS and Region V. Mr. Bob Terpering was the General Chairman of the Committee to bring this about. He did a wonderful job in coordinating with the AIS and all the affiliates for their assistance in all phases of these plans. Mrs. Ruth Wilder was the RVP and Dick Hammond was President of GIS at this time. Plans were set for the “Region V Comes Alive” Convention to be held at the Waverly Hotel in Atlanta, GA, April 28-May 2 1992. All the meetings would be held at the hotel, along with a flower show. Optional tours were also scheduled, with attendees taken to their choice of locations on their first day, and boarding busses for a tour of the gardens each day after that.

In the spring of 1991, a mini bus-tour was scheduled to see if the plans were feasible. The rehearsal included the Kopp Garden in Jonesboro, GA, the Lewis Garden in Conyers, GA, the Jellum Garden, Orchard Hill, GA, the Lockerly Arboretum in Milledgeville, GA, and the Stewart Garden in Griffin, GA, plus a luncheon at a local Church. The mini tour was enjoyed by all attending, and the plan declared a success.

Over 1021 varieties of guest iris were sent by hybridizers to be planted in guest gardens for the convention. Many of them were multiples, intended to be planted in more than one garden. Mr. and Mrs. Embry took charge of these rhizomes, making garden markers and distributing them to the garden owners. They also created lists of the varieties, color codes, and beds in which each iris could be found in the gardens. Their magnificent guide was published in the Convention Handbook.

Much enthusiasm was exhibited by the members of the GIS and Region V. Everyone was happy to jump in where they were needed. Many came and volunteered to weed and clean the areas. Some of the members took posts in the gardens, to greet and answer any questions that might arise, and to help serve food and beverages. GIS Members and Region V Members donated some wonderful Southern treats for the attendees—there were many comments about how good the food was! Attendees arrived from all across America, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland. Everyone worked—and worked hard—but it was an enjoyable and an educational experience for us. Many laudatory comments and letters were received after the Convention. So, it was a success!

The twelve Convention Gardens consisted of:

- Duke Garden, Preterra, Ken Duke, Atlanta, GA
- Hartzog Garden, Betty Hartzog, Forest Park, GA
- Hawkins Garden, Arnold and Carolyn Hawkins, Jonesboro, GA
- Jellum Garden, Orchard Hill, GA
- Kopp Garden, Jerry and Jean Kopp, Jonesboro, GA
- Lewis Garden, Laura and Maurive Lewis, Conyers, GA

- Lockerly Arboretum, Milledgeville, GA
- Smith Garden, Deen Day Smith, Duluth, GA
- Stewart Garden, Bill and Lucy Stewart, Griffin, GA
- Turner Garden, Harry and Juanita Turner, Snellville, GA
- Watson Garden, Joe and Janet Watson, Milledgeville, GA
- Yearwood Garden, Earnest and Juanita Yearwood, Milledgeville, GA

The Guest Garden planted at the Waverly Hotel was disrupted by construction on the site and many of the name plates were misplaced in the moving of the rhizomes to a different area and some were lost to bacterial rot.

Pre-Convention descriptions were featured in the October 1991 AIS Bulletin and the follow-up articles on the gardens are in the October 1992 AIS Bulletin.