

The Kuppert Garden

by George Hilton, Jr., New Jersey

THE GARDENS OF KURT AND SONIA KUPPERT ARE LOCATED in the lovely, quiet suburban community of Fox Point in Fredricksburg, VA. Their beautiful two-story home sits diagonally on a corner lot surrounded in the front and side yards by a meticulously manicured lawn and beautifully landscaped gardens including those displaying the guest iris. The back yard was equally impressive with its park-like atmosphere that included a quaint garden shed neatly tucked amongst the various plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers.

Although it was one of the smaller gardens on the tour, it more than compensated with the quantity of iris and the quality with which they were grown. The iris were at peak bloom and growing extremely well. It was certainly a sight to behold. Even after several days of strong wind and heavy rain, this garden remained a class act.

Upon our arrival, we were warmly greeted by our host and hostess, Kurt and Sonia Kuppert, who welcomed us to their gardens and directed us to the different areas of interest: the general garden beds, the guest iris beds and, of course, the refreshment area. After a brief conversation with Kurt and Sonia, it was off to tend to the business of the day.

The first garden in view ran along the right side of the driveway leading to the backyard. It was filled with numerous older iris varieties such as RARE TREAT, SUPERSTITION, GAY PARASOL, and SKATING PARTY, just to name a few. They were growing beautifully and the clumps were quite impressive.

Crossing the driveway and passing the garage, where our hosts had provided an array of delicious snacks and beverages, I headed for the guest beds that lay on the far side of the property. The number of exciting new iris was overwhelming and I found it difficult knowing where to start.

One of the first irises to attract my attention was Anna and David Cadd's FROSTED FANTASY, a pure white flower with beautifully flared and ruffled blooms on tall, very well branched stalks. It was a

great contrast to the brighter colored irises around it, one of which was the Cadd's MIDNIGHT MINK. The flower was a deep reddish-purple with flared falls, an abundance of wavy ruffling, and growing on beautiful stalks.

I was quite taken by Sterling Innerst's BLACK SUITED with its saturated black color. It had formed a beautiful clump and made as bold a statement here as it had in other gardens. It was a striking dark beauty that certainly demanded attention.

Although I was not familiar with the introductions of Ruth Rogers, I found her CHOIR ROBE to be an exciting and beautiful reddish purple flower. The central part of the falls had a flash of violet running from the gold beards to the end of the falls. It was a wonderful combination that really caught my eye.

Two introductions of Joe Ghio that impressed me very much were AMIABLE and MILD MANNER. Though both are very similar in color, they differed enough to stand on their own merits. AMIABLE had pink standards with pink-lavender falls and an orange beard tipped white. MILD MANNER also sported pink standards but the falls were more on the silvery blue-lavender tone that darkened at the edges. Both had terrific stalks and branching.


Rick Tasco's GOLDEN PANTHER was one of the iris I had looked forward to seeing, and I must say, I was not disappointed. The color was somewhat of a blend, but I think golden honey best describes the overall color. It is a color not often seen in iris and rarely with such a great impact. The color was radiant and the bright yellow-orange beards, beautiful ruffling and great stalks completed the package.

A favorite of mine from Don Spoon, SKY AND SUN, was looking remarkable as it had in other gardens. The purity of the clear sky-blue of the standards and falls combined with the bright yellow beards was truly wonderful and left a memorable impression. Another wonderful iris, DAUGHTER OF STARS, also by Spoon, had standards of a rich deep purple with a fine white edge as did the falls that lightened toward the center, with lighter rays extending from a white beard, displaying the luminata pattern. The flowers were very large and were held on strong, well-branched stalks. It was a flower with great garden appeal and, as an added bonus, it reblooms. What could be better than being able to view this beautiful flower twice in one season?

In addition to iris that had been previously introduced, there were many new and exciting seedlings growing in the guest beds. One in particular that attracted my attention was **Hooker Nichols seedling #9555L**. It was a gorgeous, smooth, pale rose with pleasing ruffles, flared falls, and stalks bearing three branches and good bud count. The

overall affect was warm and quite wonderful, and I found the pale rose to be somewhat nostalgic and most comforting. I was so absorbed in taking pictures and making notes, that I completely lost all track of time. It wasn't until the sound of reality rang in my ears that I panicked.

As the first call to return to the bus rang out, I made one last frantic dash around the guest beds, hoping to discover those special iris that I had overlooked. I found many, but our visit was coming to a close and time was rapidly dwindling. Heading back to the bus, I found myself wishing there had been more time to enjoy the extensive array of new iris. All in all, the time spent at the Kuppert Gardens was a wonderful experience. The gardens were beautiful, the weather looked favorably upon us, and our host and hostess were gracious and most hospitable.

So, to Kurt and Sonia, sincerest thanks for not only sharing your beautiful gardens with us, but for also making the visit to your gardens an exciting and memorable part of the 2003 convention. 

Siberian Popularity Poll for 2002:

2002 position/name (hybridizer,year)/number of votes

- 1st (tie): FOND KISS (Schafer/Sacks '99) 14
ROARING JELLY (Schafer/Sacks '92) 14
- 3rd: JEWELLED CROWN (Hollingworth '87) 12
- 4th (tie): STRAWBERRY FAIR (Hollingworth '94) 11
TRIM THE VELVET (Schafer/Sacks '95) 11
- 6th (tie): BLUEBERRY FAIR (Hollingworth '97) 10
LAKE KEUKA (Borglum '94) 10
- 8th (tie): CORONATION ANTHEM (Hollingworth '90) 9
MESA PEARL (Bauer/Coble '94) 9
SHIPS ARE SAILING (Schafer/Sacks '98) 9
SHALL WE DANCE (Hollingworth '92) 9