



Mr. and Mrs. Sydney B. Mitchell visit in the Nies garden. Eric Nies (left) and Stafford Jory (right).
from kodachrome by corliss

Below: Professor Stafford Jory watches, while Eric Nies points out a new spuria to Professor Sydney B. Mitchell.
from kodachrome by corliss



In Memoriam—Eric E. Nies

MARION R. WALKER, FRANK SEWARD WALKER, Calif.

On January 29, 1952, the American Iris Society lost another of its great men with the passing of Eric Nies, horticulturist and iris breeder, in Hollywood.

Eric E. Nies was born in 1884 at Saugatuck, Michigan, one of thirteen children. His parents had come from Holland to join a Dutch settlement near the city of Holland. His father was a hardware merchant. Young Eric worked for some years, Saturdays and after school hours in their store.

Mr. Nies attended Michigan State College, where he was an outstanding pitcher in intercollegiate baseball. He graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science. Later he took advanced work in botany and education at the University of Southern California. He was a member of Phi Sigma, the botany honor society.

In 1908 he married Grace Perry of Charlotte, Michigan, who survives him. Five years later they moved to California with their family and thus began a long career of teaching in Los Angeles.

He gave of his best to the young people in his classrooms, where his penetrating wit and wholesome sense of humor endeared him to his many pupils.

Mr. Nies was vitally interested in civic affairs and conscientiously studied history and government. He deeply enjoyed the best in music and was an outstanding singer.

His interest in botany led to his becoming an outstanding landscape architect. He had an exceptional love of beautiful flowers and plants especially the delicately textured ones such as the bearded iris.

The 1939 Edition of the Check List describes him as a collector and hybridizer of iris "for twenty years"; not many men today can claim a longer period of study in the field. The twenty years, and those that followed, have brought to the world a steady succession of headliners along the path that Eric Nies chose to pioneer, the hitherto almost neglected spuria section. Bronzspur, Saugatuck, Russet Flame, Dutch Defiance, Fifth Symphony, Two Opals, Color Guard, Morgenstraal, Cherokee Chief—these are but a few of the varieties that have poured out from the back yard up on Kingsley Drive in Hollywood. I am told that the Nies garden this past year contained some of the greatest advances to date in the spurias; knowing the keen discrimination with which he conducted his hybridizing work, these last of the Nies selections will surely attest to his outstanding position amongst American breeders. Perhaps not as widely known are his superlative Douglasiana introductions, Orchid Sprite and, more recently, Amiguita.

Few other breeders can boast of his versatility, for tall bearded and Louisiana varieties also bear his name.

Eric Nies was one of the first members, and was two separate times President, of the Southern California Iris Society, the organization that has done so much to cement iris interest in the Southland. He served as Regional Vice-President of the American Iris Society during the forties. He was for many years active with the Hollywood Garden Club, and in that capacity was instrumental in establishing the annual Hollywood Iris Show, now in its thirteenth year. Up to the last, he maintained an active interest in local iris affairs in spite of his precarious health; only a few weeks before his passing he sat with others of the local society over plans for this year's iris show. He was looking forward to 1956, when the AIS is scheduled for Los Angeles, with the keenest anticipation, and had been exhorting the local growers to place more emphasis in their plantings on the native varieties for that event.

Eric Nies has become a monument in Southern California iris circles; the future will not be quite the same without his incisive, sometimes acidulous, but always pertinent, guidance. He has, in his work, sketched the dimensions of a goal, and it remains for a younger generation of hybridizers, all of them cherishing the memory of his friendship and assistance, to bring that goal to attainment.

BREEDERS—PLEASE NOTICE

Certain original records concerning registrations made by Mr. Robert E. Allen, formerly Registrar of the American Iris Society, have been lost. In order that the new Registrar Mrs. George D. Robinson may be able to release present and future name applications it will be necessary for DUPLICATE records to be made.

Therefore all breeders who have received approvals from Mr. Allen **for the year 1951** please mail completed registration form to

Mrs. George D. Robinson,
167 East Hamilton Lane,
Battle Creek, Mich.,

and in addition, please advise of any approvals pending, which are being held upon the authority of Mr. Allen. Such approvals are hereby declared null and void unless re-instated before May 1st, 1952. Your registration forms sent to this office will be returned to you immediately.

(Signed) MRS. GEO. D. ROBINSON, *Registrar*