

Society for Spuria Iris Organized

MRS. ELLEN WILKERSON, Texas

On May 27th, at the home of Mrs. John E. Green, Jr., in Houston, Texas, the Society for Spuria Iris, a subsection of the American Iris Society, held its first meeting under the guidance of Mrs. J. Willis Slaughter.

The following slate was elected: Mrs. Slaughter, president; Mrs. John Green, vice-president; Mrs. John Cashman, secretary-treasurer; Mrs. A. S. Parks, membership; Mrs. Edward Wilkerson, Bulletin correspondent; Mrs. L. A. Stevenson and Mr. Franklin Jones, co-chairmen slides; Mrs. John Green and Mrs. Charles Daly, co-chairmen test garden; Mrs. Birdsall Briscoe, publicity. The Board of Directors is as follows: Mrs. L. A. Stevenson, Mr. Franklin Jones, Mrs. Allen Myers, Mrs. Albert Fay, Mrs. Lloyd Smith and Mrs. James Britton.

The purpose of the group is to further interest in growing Spurias, and to encourage a hybridizing program with the goal of better form, wider color range, longer bloom season, etc. To this end test gardens will be established for guest iris, in order that as many people as possible may see the new introductions and become familiar with their culture.

In addition we will maintain our own iris in beds open to the public, and will institute a program of hybridizing under the direction of Mr. Edward Courtade.

Spurias grow well here on the Gulf Coast. They are practically untroubled by disease, and if their few cultural requirements are met, they seem to thrive in the heat and humidity which makes the bearded iris impossible for us. However, in view of the fact that they take longer to establish good blooming clumps than do the bearded and Louisiana iris, it has been suggested that the usual three year period for guest iris be extended to five in the case of the Spurias.

The work of Mr. T. A. Washington and Mr. Eric Nies, who pioneered in the hybridizing of Spurias, has greatly stimulated interest in this most worthy member of the Apogon group. Working in a field hitherto almost untouched, they have demonstrated how much can be done in a relatively short time by careful selective breeding. Undoubtedly much remains to be done, and we look forward to some fine things from today's hybridizers.

Meanwhile, our first aim is to establish our test garden where the iris may be seen. The expense of this has been undertaken jointly by the River Oaks Garden Club and the Garden Club of Houston, and work is proceeding at present. We will be ready for guests in August.

After that we shall turn our attention to some sort of bulletin, of necessity modest at first. Mr. Douglas, your Bulletin Editor, has



Mrs. J. Willis Slaughter, organizer and first president of the Society for Spuria Iris.
photo courtesy houston press

promised us a column in the AIS Bulletin. We want to hear from those members of the American Iris Society who are Spuria minded, and we hope that from time to time we will have news of interest so that you may hear from us.

Membership in the Society for Spuria Iris is \$1.00 annually, and dues may be sent either to the AIS, Franklin Road, Brentwood, Tenn., or to 302 West Cowan Drive, Houston, Texas.