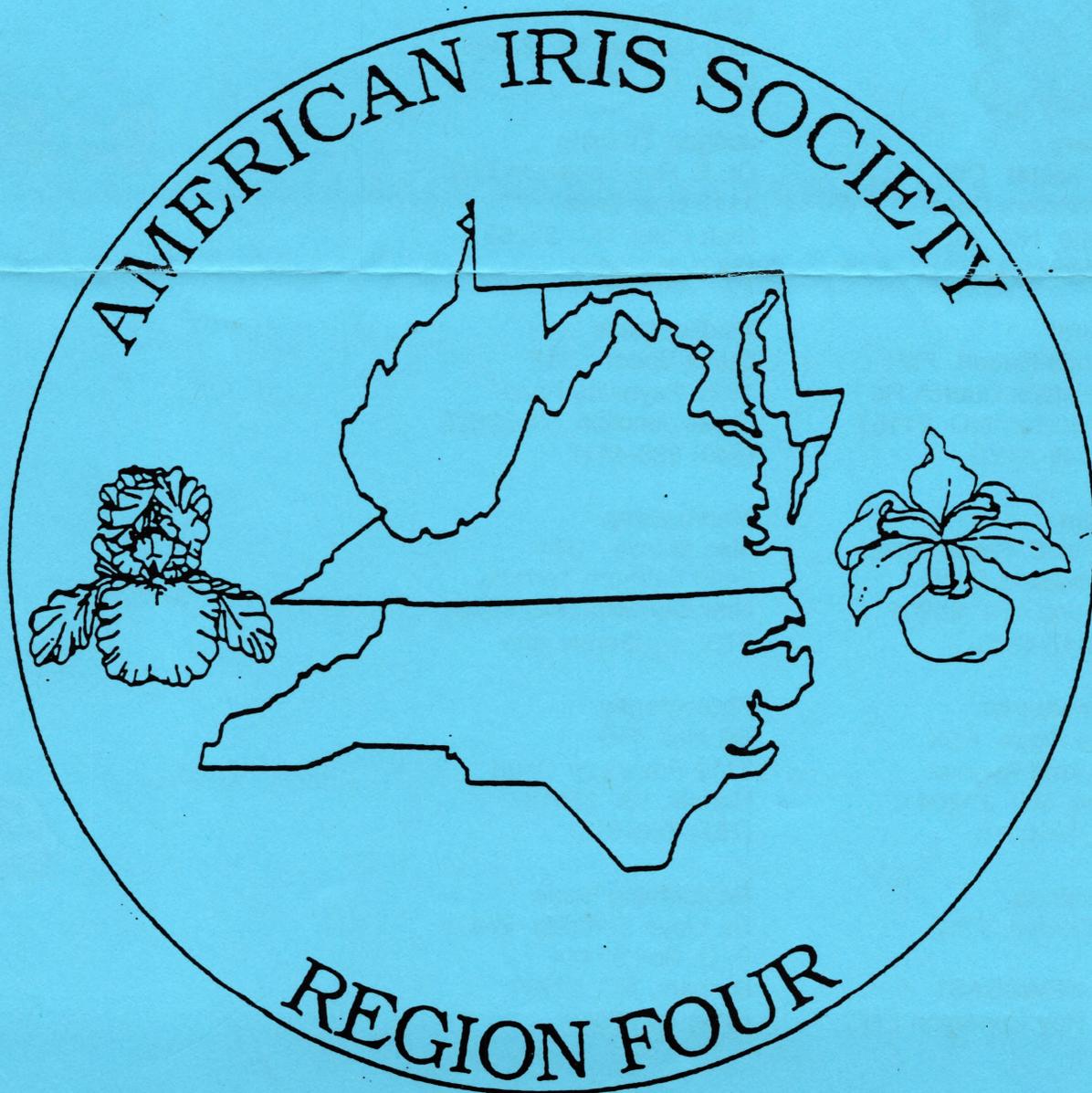


Newscast

Region 4 of The American Iris Society

Vol. 45, No. 1

MARCH/APRIL 2003



AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY - REGION 4 BOARD

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Ginny Spoon C&P
1225 Reynolds Road
Cross Junction, VA 22625
(540) 888-4447

Assistant RVP

R. Jerry Coates FSK
120 Record Street
Frederick, MD 21701
(301) 662-1664

Immediate Past RVP



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(304) 647-4395

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4 Maryland Avenue
Towson, MD 21204
(410) 337-9118

Conventions

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Editor NEWSCAST

Dr. E. Roy Epperson ENC

Auction

Roslyn and John Mitchell
2100 Hillock Drive
Raleigh, NC 27612
(919) 787-2088

Beardless and Species

Carol Warner FSK
16815 Falls Road
Upperco, MD 21155
(410) 374-4788

Budget

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10483 Edgehill Lane
King George, VA 22485
(540) 775-4043

Judges' Training

Dr. E. Roy Epperson ENC
1115 Delk Drive
High Point, NC 27262
(336) 883-9677

Median Irises

Ginny Spoon C&P
1225 Reynolds Road
Cross Junction, VA 22625
(540) 888-4447

Membership

Mac Shawe C&P
6405 Fairborn Terrace
New Carrollton, MD 20784
Z7Sh-we@erols.com

Photography

Bill Mull TIS
7112 Fox's Lair Court
Norfolk, VA 23518
(757) 858-5521

Reblooming Irises

Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg ENC
P. O. Box 52444
Durham, NC 27717
(919) 489-6960

Robins

Libby Cross
8907 Potts Creek Road
Covington, VA 24426
(540) 747-2123

Youth

VACANT

Legal Counsel

Bill Kuykendall
Rte 2, Box 232
Keyser, WV 26726

Newscast

Region 4 of The American Iris Society

Vol. 45, No. 1

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Editor: Dr. E. Roy Epperson, 1115 Delk Drive, High Point, NC 27262
(336) 883-9677 kirklee@triad.rr.com

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY
Membership Secretary **Mary Brown**, P.O. Box 2968, Baltimore, MD 21229

Communications regarding **American Iris Society** membership, dues and change of address should be addressed to **Mary Brown**.

Region 4 is comprised of the states of **Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia**, and the **District of Columbia**.

NEWSCAST is free to AIS members in Region 4. Subscription rate for those not in Region 4 is \$5.00 per year. Checks made to Region 4, American Iris Society should be sent to the Region 4 Treasurer.

Permission is granted to reprint any material appearing in *NEWSCAST* provided that proper credit is given.

The Purposes of The American Iris Society, and Region 4, shall be to develop the science of horticulture and any activities related to the study, propagation and culture of the genus Iris; to stimulate and foster interest in horticultural pursuits, conservation and protection of these plants; to cooperate with other organizations, public and private, in the scientific and horticultural education of all those interested in learning any phase of the genus Iris, by any and all means which may be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors. These shall include but are not limited to:

- a) encouragement and support of scientific research, including those pertaining to the solution of diseases related to but not necessarily exclusive to the genus Iris, and investigation and conservation of the genus in the wild;
- b) collection, compilation, and publication of data concerning the history, classification, breeding and culture of Irises; and,
- c) education of the public through exhibitions, public display gardens, published standards for judging, and local, area, regional, and national meetings open to the public.

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IN MEMORIAM

Claire B. Barr
Past-President, The American Iris Society

JaNiece Mull
Immediate Past-Regional Vice President, Region 4

RVP's MESSAGE

As I write this message, there is still a foot of snow left from the thirty inches of last week's storm. I can barely see the tops of labels in some of the pots, and no bare ground in sight. However, by the time you receive this issue of *NEWSCAST* there will be bulbs and dwarf irises in bloom. In about two months, the 2003 AIS Convention will be upon us. The success of our convention will depend on the contributions of all Region 4 affiliate clubs. Some of our affiliates are baking cookies, some have contributed money to the Convention fund, and some are sending members to help in the gardens and as chairmen for committees. The 2003 AIS Convention will be a success due to the joint efforts of the members of Region 4 and each person who contributes can feel proud of their accomplishments. In July, we will be digging and sending the various affiliates a portion of the guest irises for their sales and auctions. This will make it possible for Region 4 members to purchase some of the newest irises at reasonable prices. The hybridizers are happy to have their irises grown by AIS members so that they can be seen and hopefully voted for awards.



Speaking of awards, I want to remind each member of Region 4 to vote the Symposium that will be in the July issue of the *AIS Bulletin*. Please vote for some of your favorite irises, even if you only vote for a few. You do not have to vote for the maximum number of 25. It is especially important for our hybridizers in Region 4 that you participate in the voting. If our own Region does not vote for irises they see growing in their area, then we will not be very well represented as a Region to the whole society. The Symposium is due to me by July/August so that I can tabulate the results and send them to the AIS representative. If you are attending the Convention, you will see some of the irises that are on the Symposium in the guest gardens. If you are unable to attend the convention, try to visit gardens in your area and make some notes on irises that you feel are good growers, have good branching and bud count, and have clear colors. *DUSKY CHALLENGER* is a top favorite of the Symposium and has been for years. It grows well over the country and has all the desirable traits of an award-winning iris. If you are not an AIS judge, the Symposium is the one place where you can make yourself heard. Please vote. Last year, there were only 22 Region 4 members who turned in a ballot.

Meeting Schedule

Monday, May 12, 2003

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	Coat Room
1:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	AIS Board of Directors	Salon VII
	(Break 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. for Dinner)	

Tuesday, May 13, 2003

8:00 a.m. - Noon	AIS Board of Directors	Salon IV
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	Coat Room
10:00 a.m. - Noon	Society for Japanese Irises Board	Salon I
10:00 a.m. - Noon	Reblooming Iris Society Board	Salon II
Noon - 2:00 p.m.	SIGNA Board	Salon I
Noon - 2:00 p.m.	HIPS Board	Salon II
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Optional Tour - D.C. Memorials	Lobby
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	RVP Board of Counselors (all RVPs)	Salon IV
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AIS Section Representatives	Salon III
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Spuria Iris Society Board	Salon I
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Median Iris Society Board	Salon II
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	AIS Affiliated Societies	Salon III
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Dwarf Iris Society Board	Salon I
6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Optional Tour - D.C. Memorials	Lobby
6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Silent Auction Open	Ticket Lounge
7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	AIS Board of Directors	Salon IV

Wednesday, May 14, 2003

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Registration	Coat Room
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Aril Society International Program	Salon I, II, III
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	HIPS Program	Salon IV
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Spuria Iris Society Program	Salon V
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Society for Louisiana Irises Program	Salon I, II, III
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Dwarf Iris Society Program	Salon IV
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Reblooming Iris Society Program	Salon V
Noon - 1:30 p.m.	Society for Japanese Irises Program	Salon I, II, III
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Society for Pacific Coast Natives Program	Salon IV
1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Tall Bearded Irises Program	Salon V
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Median Iris Society Program	Salon I, II, III
3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Society for Siberian Irises Program	Salon IV
4:00 p.m. - 5:50 p.m.	SIGNA Program	Salon V
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Youth Reception	TBA

5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Robin Reception	TBA
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Bus Captain's Meeting	TBA
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	No Host Reception - Cash Bar	Ballroom Foyer
7:00 p.m.	Welcome Banquet	Fairfax Ballroom
After Banquet	Silent Auction Open	Ticket Lounge

Thursday, May 15, 2003

7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.	Registration	Coat Room
7:30 a.m. - 4:40 p.m.	Garden Tours (Buses load at 7:15 a.m.)	
6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Silent Auction Open	Ticket Lounge
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Judges Training	Salon IV
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	Judges Training	Salon IV
9:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	Judges Training Chairmen	Salon IV

Friday, May 16, 2003

7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.	Registration	Coat Room
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Garden Tours (Busses load at 7:15 a.m.)	
5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Geek Dinner and Auction	TBA
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Silent Auction (Bids Close 9:00 p.m.)	Ticket Lounge
7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Judges Training	Salon IV
9:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	ALS Foundation Meeting	Salon I
9:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	Past, Present & Future Convention Chairmen Meeting	Salon II
9:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.	Irises & Computers	Salon VI -VIII

Saturday, May 17, 2003

7:00 a.m.	Silent Auction Winning Bids Posted	Ticket Lounge
7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.	Registration	Coat Check Area
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Garden Tours (Busses load at 7:15 a.m.)	
5:00 p.m.	Deadline for Ballots	Coat Check
5:45 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.	Registration	Coat Check
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	No Host Reception & Cash Bar	Ballroom Foyer
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Awards Banquet	Fairfax Ballroom



SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

by Bill Shear

Iris foetidissima is a misnamed species - those of you with a bit of Latin will translate its name as "most stinking." However, this is a slander; the characteristic odor of this species is released only when the foliage is bruised, and the flowers actually have (in some clones) a faint, pleasing fragrance. Come to that, the smell of the foliage is not bad either, and has resulted in its common name in England of "Beefsteak Iris."

This fine and useful species produces evergreen glossy foliage in fans about 18 inches tall. The flower stalks somewhat resemble those of the Spurias (to which I suspect there is some relationship) in having clasping leaves, wait the flowers in the leaf axils rather than on long branches. The flowers themselves are rather like miniature Spuria blooms, complete with the nectar drops at the bases of the falls. The color range is from pale blue shaded with thank to attractive light yellows. However, the real glory of this iris is in its seeds. In late fall, the capsules open wide, exposing the still-attached bright scarlet seeds. These are prime material for dried arrangements, though they do fade somewhat in a month to six weeks. English sources mention varieties with orange, yellow and even white seeds, but I have never seen these. [Editor: K. van Bourgondien & Sons, Inc., lists the white form for sale as *I. foetidissima* "Fructo Alba"]

I. foetidissima also has the reputation of being one of the few irises that will grow and bloom in shade, and indeed this is true. However, bloom in shade is much reduced. There is a variety, rarely available, with variegated green and white foliage that makes a good show in an open woodland.

In its native Europe and North Africa, *I. foetidissima* is found in hedgerows, light woods and open fields - wherever soils are reasonably moist, but it does not do well in strongly acid soil. In my garden, it does well in several partly shaded localities; I haven't really tried it in full sun. During the colder winters, the leaves take some damage and have to be trimmed in spring. Plants are sometimes offered through general mail-order nurseries or iris species specialists, but it is so easy to grow from seed that it seems a waste to spend money on the plants. Seeds should be planted as soon as ripe in fall and given a brief (4-6 weeks) period of refrigeration (NOT freezing). With gentle heat from beneath, they will readily germinate and you will have substantial plants to set out in spring. While good increasers, I find the plants to be fairly slow. A clump almost ten years old, for example, is now only about a foot in diameter. Fans may take two to three years to reach blooming size.

In the fall, I take a handful of *Iris foetidissima* seeds and just toss them into the woods. Over the years, a number of plants have popped up from these seeds, and make interesting vertical accents among other woodland plants. Despite slow growth, they persist and seem to be good competitors. [Reprinted from CVIS Standard, March 2003.]

GROWING IRISES IN POTS

By Ginny and Don Spoon

Thanks to club members Bill and Kitty Ackerman for suggesting that we write this article. Many of you know that Dr. Ackerman is a Camellia hybridizer as well as a Japanese (*I.ensata*) iris hybridizer, but did you know that Bill's latest book was published last June? It is entitled "Growing Camellias in Cold Climates" and can be ordered at www.barnesnoble.com or www.amazon.com. Earlier in his career, Bill hybridized with other plants as well, and is a recipient of the esteemed Luther Burbank Award.

Don's first experience growing irises in pots happened about 15 years ago when he chaired a show for C&P at the U.S. Botanical Gardens in Washington, D.C. David Shied was the director then, and David had a total of 75 cultivars planted in five-gallon pots the summer before the show. David had the pots brought indoors when the stalks were first starting to show and placed them around the inside of the Botanic Gardens Conservatory. There were up to five tall bloom stalks per pot and the visitors were enchanted with both the lovely flower show and the perfusion of irises flowering in the pots throughout the building. About ten years ago, Don's mother started digging her irises and putting them in pots. She was in her eighties then, and it made it easier for her to weed them. Don brought more pots to her and she potted all her irises for her move to her daughter's about five years ago.

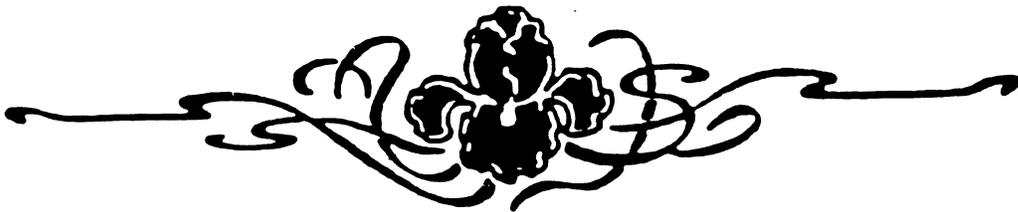
About four years ago, we built a large gravel-based pot field of over 500 pots. Two years ago, Don and I moved a large number of our irises to make room for the 2003 convention guest beds. We started putting them in large pots (2 to 4 gallon-size) and then alphabetizing them elsewhere in the garden. We bought a hand truck (model 39-4055 PA48BT) with oversize 10" rubber tires, from Griffin Nursery Supplies (804-233-3454) 5612 Pride Rd., Richmond, VA 23224. This cart makes it easy to move the large pots full of soil around the garden. We found that putting them just under the edge of the forest canopy keeps them from drying out. A thin layer of leaf mold on top of the soil in the pots helps keep some moisture in the soil mix. Last year, Don did not have time to prepare his seed beds so planted his seeds in pots. They germinated just as well in the pots as they did in the garden. Of the seedlings, one, an SDB, even rebloomed that very fall in a pot. They need to be divided about every two years but that is fairly easy to do, just turn the pot upside down and pull them apart and place the root ball in a larger pot and fill with soil.

The soil preparation for the pots consisted of our regular mix of topsoil that we order with leaf mold and concrete sand mixed with clay soil, about equal parts of each. Add some fertilizer to the soil mix, we use Sta-green Nursery Special Plant Food™ (12,6,6) with trace elements, and then plant the irises. Fill the pots to within one inch of the top, higher or lower levels of soil cause drainage or growth rate problems. Labeling the irises is the toughest job of all. If you put plastic markers in the pots, the markers fade in a year or two, or they can frost heave and then the wind can blow them away. If you buy pots with smooth sides, you can label them with waterproof labels from Avery (5520) if you have a laser printer. If not, you can use the Brother P-touch label maker with the weatherproof labels. We use wires and metal tags inserted in the pot soil. If your pots are large enough and have some organic matter mixed in with the soil, you should not have to water them except in an extreme drought. Last year, we only watered them three times the whole season, except for the seed pots that we kept watered once a week if it did not rain. We usually get 30 to 40 inches of rain in our area per year. We now grow over 2,000 or our 7,000 cultivars in pots, some in up to 10-gallon size pots.

Pots also work well to rescue an iris cultivar that is not doing well. We have found that when put in a pot, the iris recovers and grows new increases quickly. If kept weeded and fertilized, irises in pots grow as well, or better than in the ground. The irises develop a more diffuse root system in pots, nearly filling the pot in a season. If you sell irises, the customers love to buy irises in

pots. When the iris plant gets crowded, just empty the pot, divide the rhizomes and distribute in more pots, label them, and give them to friends, bring to your club sale, or sell them at a local farmer's market. You can also just move the entire plant to a larger pot and fill in with soil. Probably the nicest feature of growing irises in pots is that they are raised off the ground making them easier to weed and closer to eye level when they bloom. Since it requires less bending over to weed in pots there is less stress and strain on the leg and hip joints. It is easier to control invasive weeds like sorrel in pots. It is important that the irises are in a pot at least 10 inches deep, ideally 14 inches deep so they have a good root run. Since the irises in pots have so much vertical space, they require less horizontal space, and **you can plant more cultivars in the same space**. Don believes that this is his manifest destiny.

Another advantage to growing irises in pots is that it makes it hard for voles to get into the rhizomes. We have heard reports of voles chewing into the thinner pots, but the thick plastic (in the larger pots we use) is virtually impossible for them to chew through. A good source for pots is to purchase the used pots from your local nursery. We buy them for 25 cents each. The Griffin Nursery Supply also sells new pots, but they are 50 cents and more each. If you have only a few irises you could go to a local hardware store and purchase the large plastic pots that look like terra cotta and you will have a breathtaking display. We hope you will have success and enjoyment growing your irises in pots. Several people have already made the observation that "Don is definitely going to pot".





Ensata Extravaganza

"Celebrating the Beauty of Japanese Irises!"

Bill Smoot, Chairman

Next year's Spring Regional Meeting will be something unique for Region 4 members. We'll also extend a southern invitation to the members of The Society for Japanese Irises to join us. At the Memphis Society for Japanese Irises Board meeting in May, SJI President Jill Copeland challenged those present to promote Japanese irises by offering to host a mini convention, or symposium, during alternate years between SJI Conventions. Members of the Hampton Roads Iris Society took her challenge to heart. We had already volunteered to host an AIS Region 4 Spring Meeting in 2004. By combining a Spring Regional Meeting with a Japanese iris symposium we'd promote Japanese irises and offer something never tried before to Region 4 members!

At first the suggestion seemed a little crazy, but as we bounced this idea off of other Region 4 members, they offered their support and convinced us that perhaps we were really not "that" touched by the Memphis heat. This would be unique and different! We have many local hotels in this resort area, an international airport, and Interstate connections. Our membership has several Japanese iris enthusiasts and the society has two public gardens housing our Japanese Iris Display Beds. We've hosted several regional meetings, and we've done this before! The more we thought about it, the more we realized that "We can do this". Hence, the blossoming of *Ensata Extravaganza!*

Ensata Extravaganza will have something to offer the beginning as well as the advanced Japanese iris enthusiast. Our main focus is to introduce everyone to the beauty of Japanese Irises. We're still in our planning stages, but here are some of the activities that we've finalized;

❖ **Six Hours of Judges Training**

- Exhibition Judging of Japanese Irises (2hrs)
- Garden Judging of Japanese Irises (2hrs)
- Judging the Design Division (2hrs)

❖ **Japanese Irises for Beginners 101** – a two hour education series of mini-courses covering topics such as JI growth, culture, showing, dividing & planting, color patterns & form, and hybridizing.

❖ **An AIS Beardless Iris Show** with a Federation of Garden Club design division.

❖ **Exhibitions, Demonstrations & Displays** There will be a Sumi e flower painting demonstration and exhibition,, a Ikebana flower arranging display, and our own Japanese iris Photography Contest.

❖ **A Day of Garden Tours** *We will be featuring some interesting visits to unique gardens. We'll visit:*

- *The Norfolk Pagoda – a Chinese Garden featuring a two- story pagoda, goldfish & koi ponds, unique plants, and the HRIS display bed of JIs. From the second story you have a great view of the Norfolk waterfront. An interesting side-trip will an opportunity to go aboard the Battleship Wisconsin, which is berthed adjacent to the garden.*
- *You'll tour a private Japanese Garden owned by a private company with a large plantings of JIs.*
- *We'll also visit 3-4 private gardens of HRIS members.*
- *Lastly, we'll tour The Norfolk Botanical Gardens, and visit the HRIS display planting of Japanese irises there. You'll have an opportunity to tour the gardens and to take a boat or tram ride thru the gardens.*

❖ **A Super Plant Auction!**

We intend to have more surprises and additions! Mark your calendars now for next year. This will be an event you'll not want to miss. *Ensata Extravaganza* will be held on the 3rd, 4th, & 5th of June 2004 in the Norfolk, Virginia. Further information will be forthcoming as our plans finalize. Watch for updates in "Newscast", the Region 4 web page www.irisregion4.com/, or The Society for Japanese Irises web page at www.socji.org.

Come and help us celebrate the beauty of Japanese irises!



SOME AFFILIATE ACTIVITIES

CAROLINA MOUNTAINS IRIS SOCIETY - Danee Hoover

2003 Officers: President: Danee Hoover
 Vice President: Mavis R. del Vecchio
 Secretary: Jeanne Grundies
 Treasurer: Flossie Nelson

May 10 Spring Show, Hendersonville, NC

June 13-14 Japanese Iris Show, Hendersonville, NC

August 9 Iris Auction and Sale

CENTRAL VIRGINIA IRIS SOCIETY - Linda Laing

May 3 Spring Iris Show @ LaPrade Library

CHARLOTTE IRIS SOCIETY - Carrie Winter

May 3 Spring Iris Show @ CrossRoads Mall

CHESAPEAKE & POTOMAC IRIS SOCIETY - Don Spoon

May 24:10 -4 Hybridizing Clinic for Youth - Winterberry Garden

July 12 Bearded Sale and Auction: Shrevewood Elementary School
 Falls Church, VA 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA IRIS SOCIETY - Margaret Pearson

May 3 Display of iris at local nursery

July 12 Annual Plant Auction

FREDERICKSBURG AREA IRIS SOCIETY - Jim Schroetter

June 21 Tour Garden guest iris dig

July 26 Annual Rhizome Sale @ Roxbury Farm and Garden Center

HAMPTON ROADS IRIS SOCIETY - Frances Thrash

May 11 Bearded Iris Show @ Norfolk Botanical Gardens

June 8 Beardless Iris Show @ Norfolk Botanical Gardens

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REGION 4 2003 FALL MEETING

October 11 and 12, 2003

Hosts: Chesapeake and Potomac Iris Society

Headquarters: Holiday Inn, 1017 Millwood Pike, Winchester, VA
Telephone: 540-667-3300 FAX: 540-722-2730

Complete Details will be in the August 2003 issue of *NEWSCAST*.

Registration Form will be published in that issue.

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REGION 4 JUDGES' TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Falls Church, VA, May 15 & 16:

Siberian Irises (1 1/2 hours credit)

Instructor: Robert Hollingworth

Louisiana Irises (1 1/2 hours credit)

Instructors: Melody and Jerry Wilhoit

Species Irises (1 1/2 hours credit)

Instructor: Carla Lankow

Fall Regional Meeting, October 11, Winchester, VA

BB and MTB (2 hours credit)

Instructors: Lynn and Stephanie Markham

KOMMENTS FROM KIRKLEE and THE EDITOR

This has certainly been an interesting winter here in Piedmont North Carolina - severe ice storm in early December (described as the storm of the century), another ice storm in February, and several snows. The ice storms caused extensive damage to the trees on my property and extensive damage to my garden labels. AND, I fell in the late-January snow and broke my right wrist. Being right-handed, this has not been fun. However, SPRING is here! SDBs, IBs, and at least one TB opened the bloom season on April 4. CHINA SPRING, a siberian, is showing bloomstalks! I often wonder if there is any longer such a thing as a "normal" season.

It is difficult for many people to accept that this heavy precipitation (snow and ice) this winter are a result of global warming. Perhaps it would be better if we referred to this global warming and its effects as climate change. The latest computer models predict increasing numbers and severity of storms, increased precipitation, and decreased soil moisture. The rainfall patterns seem to be shifting north. There are data to support that the Sahel (Sahara desert) decreased rainfall pattern is mirrored with increased rainfall in northeastern Europe. Will Massachusetts become a semi-tropical climate zone? Some computer models project this.

If you are involved in accredited shows and show schedules this season, please note that at its fall meeting the AIS Board of Directors modified the AWARD RIBBONS statement (*Handbook for Judges and Show Officials*, 6th Edition, 1998) page 41 to read: "Only one first place award ribbon (blue), one second place ribbon (red), and one third place ribbon (white) may be awarded to each cultivar in any given section."

Keep these dates in mind:

May 12 - 17: 2003 AIS Convention in Falls Church, VA

June 12 - 15: 2003 Siberian-Species Iris Convention in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

October 10 - 11: Fall Meeting of Region 4 in Winchester, VA

See all of you at one or more of these meetings !!!

Roy

<<<<<<< >>>>>>>

REGION 4 AFFILIATES

ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS IRIS SOCIETY - MARGARET STONE
229 Crowfield Circle, Lewisburg, WV 24901 (304) 647-4395

CAROLINA MOUNTAINS IRIS SOCIETY - DANEE A. HOOVER
133 Horizon View Drive, Horse Shoe, NC 28742 (828) 891-2847

CENTRAL VIRGINIA IRIS SOCIETY - LINDA LAING
P. O. Box 1804, Midlothian, VA 23113-1804

CHARLOTTE IRIS SOCIETY - CARRIE WINTER
5801 Masters Court, Charlotte, NC 28226-8046 (704) 542-3812

CHESAPEAKE & POTOMAC IRIS SOCIETY - DR. DON SPOON
1225 Reynolds Road, Cross Junction, VA 22625 (540) 888-4447

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA IRIS SOCIETY - MARGARET PEARSON
241 Camping Creek Road, Franklinton, NC 27525-7265

EASTERN SHORE IRIS SOCIETY - ANN DUMLER
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