

BAY NEWS



Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Iris Society

www.montereybayiris.org

August 2005

Next meeting Friday, August 19th, 2005
Doors open 7:00P.M.
Meeting 7:30P.M.
Place Native Sons Hall
 239 High Street, Santa Cruz

From The Prez



EAR IRIS LOVERS:

In case you do not have all the irises you ever wanted yet, there will be several opportunities to acquire more. We have such an abundance this year because of the Regional!

Please come to help Vicki Dudley dig her guest irises, at 17285 Tamara Lane, in Watsonville on Monday, August 1st, 9 A.M. until finished. The club will provide sandwich makings and soft drinks for all the garden helpers. The irises at Vicki's are the irises that need to go to the Region, and we do need people to load their trucks with the irises and take them to Oakland for the Regional Sale. Bring chairs, clippers, markers, rubber bands, big boxes and a sun hat! Please let me know if you can help - 728-1339 or debsampson@baymoon.com.

On Thursday, August 4th, the club will meet at Joe's ranch garden on 386 Corralitos Road to dig the guest irises at his place. Bring chairs, clippers, markers, rubber bands, big boxes and a sun hat! Again, soft drinks and sandwiches will be provided to all the helpers.

On Saturday, August 6th, come at 7 A.M. to help set up for the sale at Deer Park Shopping Center, at Rio Del Mar Blvd. and Hwy. 1. We need people to put out the signs, unload and sort the irises, and help customers choose their irises.

Please also, post the flyers advertising out sale where gardening people might see them: libraries, shops, and grocery stores. I have e mailed the newspapers, but if someone would like to contact newspapers to get more advertising, please let me know.

Thank you to all those who helped with our picnic and auction, and to all those who helped dig the guest irises from my garden. I now feel like an artist with a clean palette. We are so lucky to have a group of active gardeners who really like to work together. I hope everyone will help in the next two weeks. Even if you can only come to sit and label irises, please do come! Every rhizome to be named, and the paper labels peeled off the metal stakes. Each person's effort is appreciated!

❁❁ Diane



Diane Eigenman, Carolyn craft and Christine Dickenson acting like triplets at the picnic

August 19 Meeting

The program will be Landscaping with Iris presented by a professional in the field. The refreshments will be provided by Diane Sampson and Carolyn Craft. Door prizes will be lovely surplus rhizomes donated by Joe and other members of the club.

Digs

Diggers, cutters, labelers, and unlabelers needed. At Vicki's Monday, August 1st, 9 A.M. until 1 P.M., at Joe's August 4th, 9 A.M. until 1 P.M. Please RSVP to Diane debsampson@baymoon.com since she will buy lunch supplies.

Calendar of Events

Monday, August 1	9 A.M.–12 P.M.	Iris Dig	Vicki's House
Thursday, August 4	9 A.M.–12 P.M.	Iris Dig	Joe's Corralitos Ranch
Saturday, August 6	9 A.M.–12 P.M.	Annual Iris Sale	Deer Park
Friday, August 19	7:30 P.M.	Meeting	Native Son's Hall
Friday Sept 16	7:30 P.M.	Meeting, beardless iris	Native Son's Hall
Friday, Oct 21	7:30 P.M.	Meeting, PCIs	Native Son's Hall
Friday, November 18	7:30 P.M.	Meeting	Native Son's Hall
Friday, December 16		Holiday dinner	Green Valley Grill



CULTURE TIPS



UGUST IS THE MONTH to finish planting and resetting your bearded irises. If your soil has been used before or it is very light, it is well to add organic matter to your beds in the form of compost, manures or even something like mushroom compost. A light application of super phosphate or bone meal is also helpful. You can apply by broadcasting and work them in or put a handful in each hole as you plant.

Before replanting it is best to dip all your irises, newly acquired or even your own, in a bleach solution, one part bleach to 9 parts water. Submerge the plants up to at least one inch above the rhizome. Keep them in the solution for 10-15 minutes, then dunk them in clear water and set them out to completely dry before planting. This last direction is very important or else you are likely to have deformed plants in the spring. This process of soaking in bleach is helpful in killing off any fungus you do not want to introduce to your garden.

Bearded irises tolerate being out of the garden for some time, but keep them in the shade. Cut them back just before planting to keep them from falling over and to force new growth to form. TBs do best if the sun can get to the top of the rhizomes. Keep the weeds away from the plants, if you do not feel like pulling weeds later on, sprinkle some pre emergent on your beds after you are done with your planting. Be sure to use markers to label your plants, and draw a map of the new area showing the new varieties, so you will know which iris is which even if you lose the markers.

Water newly reset irises weekly, or more often in sandy soil or hot weather. Keep this regular watering schedule until 4 full new leaves grow out of the center of the fan (4-6 weeks). Then you can cut back the watering to 10 day intervals until the fall rains take over.

Death by Iris

The picnic was fun; so was coming home with bags of new iris. I don't know if you saw that Robin Williams movie where he died and woke up in heaven smooching through flowers like they were wet paint? I feel like I'm in iris heaven. Dead by iris.

I have a friend I met in classes at school. One night last Spring she came into the computer lab with a plate of chocolate. She was taking a cooking class and this was everyone's chocolate effort. Dark chocolate, best of good quality of chocolate. "Here," she said, "take this away from me." She looked totally green and was weaving. By the end of the evening she was holding her head between her knees. I had to drive her home. Boy, those chocolates were sure good! Dead by chocolate.

Well, I've maybe got too many irises. Everywhere I look there are iris. Iris nightmare. Iris bliss. So many iris. Of course I'm compulsive and have found pictures of most all and am making a page of them—two pages of them. But, I'm realizing that some will have to go. I will of course keep all the newest and greatest. And of course all those old goodies that I had on my wish list. Some of the old ones in the bed I'm digging up at the end of the month will have to go. The dog is now losing yet another hunk of the yard to the new iris. The front bit by the sidewalk now really needs having the weeds dug out, new dirt and compost put and of course iris planted there. The back is still a construction zone and will be for a while if my bedroom gets an outside door. THEN the ivy, blackberry, and bamboo jungle needs to go and of course more iris planted there. In the



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mean time, everything is going to pots and more pots. Nolan tried to warn me, but I bought iris at the regional, then you gave away iris after the regional, then there were the digs, then the picnic, and of course the door prize iris. Did I mention the trip to Oregon and the iris purchases? Oh, my! Oh, MY! Death by iris! Was that why they put iris on graves in cemeteries—for those, like children in candy stores—that iris over did?

Origins of Our Bearded Iris

Early references to the iris made mention of its use in medicine or in folk-lore, then in 1576 the Flemish Carolus Clusius, wrote exact descriptions of species iris, including 28 varieties of bearded iris. Caspar Bauhin, 1623, and Linnaeus, 1753, published even more iris descriptions. These books on iris prior to the 1800s described the species of iris that were known at that time and added the new discoveries, all found in the wild or semi-cultivated state.

Iris albicans, first mentioned in 1802, originated in Yemen or Arabia. Sacred flower of the followers of Mohammed, it was carried back from Mecca by pilgrims and spread throughout the Moslem world from North Africa to Spain. It was placed on the graves of soldiers that died in battle. By 1858 it was in gardens in Copenhagen. From Spain these iris were carried to Americas, which, up to that point had no native bearded iris, and are now found growing semi-wild in parts of Mexico.

Iris germanica, the subject of Van Gogh's painting, is the most common of the species iris. Easily naturalized it has been carried and spread like the plague, literally perhaps, considering the custom of



Iris albicans Garden of Mu



Iris germanica Garden of Mu



Iris florentina Garden of Mu



Swertii Iris City Gardens

putting iris on graves. Grown from ancient times, it is thought to be a native of the Mediterranean. *I. germanica* is so difficult to pollinate that it is often considered sterile, setting seed only in when it has ideal conditions including mild winters; its rhizomes however are difficult to kill and easily spread. Natural hybrids include *I. florentina*, grown in Florence for orris root; *Amas*, from Amasya, Turkey; *Askadensis*, from Russia; *Kharput*, from Harput, Turkey; *Nepalensis*, from Katmandu, Nepal; *Kochii*, similar in form to *Nepalensis*; and *Sivas*, from Turkey. Other iris closely related to *germanica* are *I. belouinii* (Morocco), *I. biliottii* (Turkey), *I. cypriana* (Cyprus), *I. junonia*, *I. Mesopotamia*, and *I. trojana* (Turkey.)

Our modern hybrids come from *I. pallida* (Italy) and *I. variegata* (Hungary). *I. pallida* is a tall graceful plant with a flower of a single color, lavender or slightly darker violet color, always sweet smelling and very hardy. One variety, *dalmatica* or *Princess Beatrice* has been prized for at least 300 years. *I. variegata* is short with yellow standards and veined brownish purple falls. It is thought that the yellow of *variegata* is the source of the yellow coloring current iris. Hybridization of these two plants occurred naturally or with human assistance. Early hybrids include *Favenscens*, a sterile pale yellow; *Swertii*, the first white, blue edged plicata; and *Samucina*, a purple, rose and gold blend.

1840 in Paris, Jacques Lemon issued a catalog of his iris including *Jacquesiana* (named after Jacques his mentor) and *Honorabile*. Other Lemon irises are *Mme. Chereau* (1844), *Faustine* (1858), and *Celeste* (1858). *Honorabile* (1840) was a garden favorite—legend has it that the pioneers took this iris with them as they traveled west, leaving it along the way so now it is found the Midwest.

John Salter of England became one the first to hand pollinate. His *Gypsy Queen* (1859), bronze and gold with purple striped falls and red based foliage, is now difficult to find, but *Queen of May* (1859) can still be added to your garden.

In the early 1800s William Prince, of New York, published a catalog of iris, importing and selling *I. germanica* and other varieties for 25 cents each. Then in the early 1900s Farr printed a color catalog selling the latest iris hybrids for the outrageously high prices of 50 and 75 cents. His introductions included *Quaker Lady*, *Juniata*, *Mt Penn*, *Wyomissing*, and *Anna Farr*.



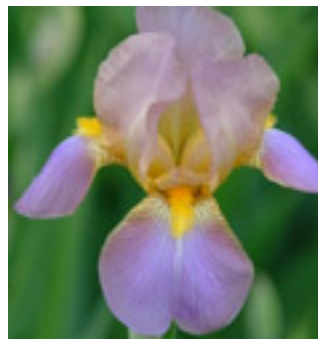
Thanks to Mike Unser with the Historic Iris Preservation Society and to Greg McCullough of Iris City Gardens for giving permission to use their wonderful photographs. Please do not reproduce them without asking them first.

If you want to find more information about Historic Iris, be sure to visit the Historic Preservation Society website at <http://www.hips-roots.com/>. It has more photographs, information and links to sources for these irises. You can also purchase iris from Iris City Gardens, <http://www.iriscitygardens.com/>, Argyle Acres Iris Garden, <http://www.argyleacres.com/>, and Superstition Iris Garden, <http://community.webshots.com/user/rickt103>. You can see the iris in bloom by visiting Superstition Iris Gardens in Cathey's Valley. Of course, you can also visit the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens in New Jersey. Sources

Dykes, Willam Rickatson: *The Genus Iris*; Mathew, Brian: *The Iris*; Price, Molly: *The Iris Book*; Warbuton, Bee, editor: *The World of Iris*



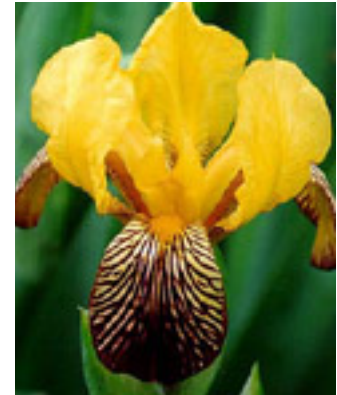
Queen of May Iris City Gardens



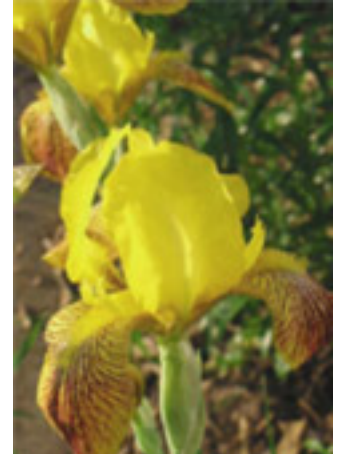
Quaker Lady Iris City Gardens



I. Pallida Garden of Mu



I. Variegata Courtesy of Mike Lowe



Honorabile S. Scheel



Mme. Chereau Iris City Gardens

BAY NEWS

August 2005



Wayne Craft takes tallies, while Joe auctions, and Eva Marple bids at the annual picnic and auction.



MBIS Annual Iris Sale

When Saturday, August 6th, 2005
Where Deer Park Shopping Center,
courtyard in front of the Red
Apple Café

Set up Time 7:30 a.m. We need help for the
set up. Helpers get first choice of
selections.

We hope you will help us set up and sell. Please take the surplus iris from your own garden to Joe's ranch on Thursday, Please cut the fans to about 12", cut roots to 5" or 6", **print the name clearly on the middle leaf with a permanent marker**, and write the color if possible. If you bring varieties other than TBs, please mark IB (intermediate), BB (border), SDB, (standard dwarf), DDB (miniature dwarf, MTB (miniature tall).

Sale Time 9:– to noon (or sell out).

If you cannot get to Deer Park early, please drop your donation iris at the home of a member who will be there for set up.

Please bring brown grocery bags if you have any, comfortable shoes, and lots of friends to buy our iris.

Joseph J. Ghio, Editor
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