



MONTEREY BAY NEWS

Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Iris Society

www.montereybayiris.org

September, 2007

Next meeting Friday, 21, 2006
Doors open 7:00 P.M.
Meeting 7:30 P.M.
Place Native Sons Hall
239 High Street, Santa Cruz

2007 Calendar

Monthly meetings are held in Native Sons Hall unless otherwise stated.

Regular Meeting

Friday, September 21, 2007..... 7:30 P.M.
Program..... Tall Beardless
Refreshments
Volunteers Needed

Regular Meeting

Friday, October 19..... 7:30 p.m.
Program..... Pacific Coast Iris
Refreshments
Volunteers Needed

Regular Meeting

Friday, November 16 7:30 P.M.
Program..... TBA
Refreshments
Volunteers Needed

Annual Holiday Dinner

Green Valley Grill
Friday December 21 6:00 p.m

Iris Sale

Joe Ghio will have a One Hour Sale of surplus irises on Saturday, Sept. 22nd, 9 to 10 A.M. in the driveway at 1201 Bay St., Santa Cruz.

NOTE!!!

Early Deadline for October Newsletter! Deadline for all newsletter submissions is September 28th



Spuria iris, Wyoming Cowboy. One of the doorprizes from September 2004.

From The Prez

FOR MANY HOME GARDENERS, this is a quiet time of the year. They watch as the final blossoms fade and begin thinking about new plantings during the fall. September and October are the prime season for putting new plants in the ground, in anticipation of seasonal rains.

Iris growers have a different perspective: as Joe emphasized in last month's Culture Tips, "August is the month to finish planting and resetting your bearded irises."

If you haven't completed this annual ritual, you are now "officially" late!

I'll admit that as I write this message, I'm behind schedule. Although I have completed a major landscape planting of iris in my front yard garden, I still have several rhizomes to plant and several plants that I really must divide this year. I'll try to get it all done before our meeting on September 21st. During that meeting, I'll invite a show of hands by those who have completed their planting...to see whether or not I'm the last one!

Our program for the September meeting will be on beardless irises, with Joe Ghio as our esteemed speaker. Bring your questions and your readiness to expand your knowledge.

Last month, I mentioned a current policy issue regarding the role of AIS Region 14's iris societies in providing funds needed for regional operations. While the



matter has not been resolved as yet, two ideas are being discussed both locally and at the regional level. Both ideas are alternatives to the plan for each society to sell rhizomes from the Region to their members.

One idea is to assess each society to contribute a "fair share" of the Region's budgetary needs. The shares would be based on the number of members and the contribution could be through either the sale of rhizomes from the Region or an assessment. It appears that the Region cannot mandate such contributions or assessments, so they would have to be voluntary.

The other idea is to reduce the Region's expenses by publishing the quarterly electronically rather than on paper. The positive aspects of this approach are a great reduction in the costs of printing and distribution and free access to color for photos of irises, people and activities. The negative aspect is well known: some members do not have access to computers. The transitional strategy, i.e., until all members have computer access, would be to do as MBIS does: send paper versions to those who request them and electronic versions to everyone else.

Our board of directors has not voted on either of these concepts. Your comments are welcome, as always. Please provide your input to any board member. ❀ Tom

CULTURE TIPS

SUMMER IS BEHIND US as we enter Autumn. The days are shortening but between Mid-September and Mid-October we have our hottest weather with temperatures often in the 90s and even touching 100 degrees. Watch your newly planted irises and be sure they are getting enough water. Depending on your soil type, water every 7 to 10 days. Established clumps really don't need any water. A period of stress seems to improve bloom performance in the spring.

With the longer nights, the pesky winter weeds begin germinating. Annual bluegrass will be a carpet in no time. However almost all pre-emergents will prevent and even stop its germination if you get it right now. That awful oxalis begins growing. It grows from bulbs, so be sure you get the entire bulb or it will be back. Constant digging it will wear it out as well, but you might wear out first!

This is the month to dig, divide and replant all beardless irises except for the Pacificas. Remember that compared to the bearded irises, beardless iris can not tolerate drying out. Replant immediately after digging or hold them over in a bucket of water until you are ready to plant them. It is wise to change the water every 5 to 7 days.

All beardless irises except for the spurias, prefer a slightly acid soil. Depending on the PH of your soil, just adding compost and/or manures is enough of an acifier of your soil. A soil test kit available at any garden center is a wise investment to see what your soil PH is. Sample several different locations since the PH will vary from place to place. If the soil

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is too basic, soil sulfur will bring the PH up to more acceptable levels.

Be sure to get the last of the bearded you have hanging around planted now! While you can continue planted them into even December, the longer you wait, you will see a decline in growth and bloom size as you plant later and later.

❀ Joe

Picnic Recap

It was a beautiful summer day, the kind that Santa Cruz is famous for. MBIS members gathered under the shade of the old oak tree. A bounty of food was being placed on the tables. Our members take this opportunity to showcase favorite recipes. (I found this wonderful recipe at Costco) Soon, discrete nibbling began, then, when it seemed that most members were present, the feasting shifted into high gear. During the picnic, Danita and her son, Frazier, worked the crowd, collecting \$165 in raffle ticket sales. Good job! Danita is the daughter of Wayne and Carolyn Craft.

Contented moans and tighter belts signaled that the iris auction would begin. Joe Ghio, our esteemed auctioneer, took his place at the iris display table. Holding up coveted recent introductions he would describe the beauty of each. The bidding was spirited and competitive. A total of \$603 was collected from the auction. There were 15 bidders, with one bidder buying \$135 worth. Cultivars bringing the

highest bid were: Glamour Pants \$17; Phoebe's Frolic \$15; Jazz Band \$14; Overboard \$13; Drifting Bubbles \$12. After the raffle tickets were drawn, there were many raffle irises left on the lawn so Joe announced a free for all. I think we all left with more irises than we have space for in our gardens. A good time was had by all, and the club made some money.

Thanks to all the gourmet cooks, Joe Ghio for auctioneering, Larissa Daniel, Jim Cummins, Wayne Craft, for their sharp-eyed bid spotting, Rosa Radicchi in accounting, Danita and Frazier in sales, and, of course, the *big spenders!*

Annual Iris Sale

MBIS held their annual rhizome sale on August 4, adding \$3,143 to our income for the year. Unfortunately, our sale income is down about \$1,800 from last year. Of course, 2006 was one of the best years. A contributing factor to the lower income is that fewer rhizomes were made available for sale this year. However, the sale was in no way a failure. A longer line of eager buyers waited anxiously for the "opening bell". We sold almost all of the rhizomes by 10:45. A good turn out of members worked hard helping the buyers select rhizomes and promoting the club. From my observation, it was another successful and fun MBIS event.

Nominating Committee

This is the month we start the process of getting our set of officers for 2008.

The President appoints the chair and two additional members are voted on from the floor. The Committee will report at the October meeting. Further nominations may be made from the floor and the election is held at the November meeting. The new officers are installed in December.

New members

We have three new members to welcome. Sara Roche joined at the iris sale. She lives in La Selva Beach and we hope to see her at the meetings. Our other two new members joined at the last meeting. Megan Farley and Ashley Devery, both youth members, have been coming to meetings with their grandmother since last May.



Beardless Iris

Siberians and the Pacific Coast Natives can tolerate light shade but the Spurias, Japanese and Louisianas demand full sun. Louisianas and Japanese require moist conditions during the summer months while the Pacific Coast Natives enjoy a very low humidity and dry soil no matter how hot it may get. All, except Louisianas, should be planted in a permanent spot where they can remain for many years as they resent being disturbed. Louisianas tend to "creep" and therefore, should be tended to every few years. All are heavy feeders and need to be fertilized regularly.

Some spuria are difficult to establish. Basically spuria need water, manure, and mulch to become established. Begin the planting by making sure the soil will allow for good drainage and is enriched. Then make a hole about two inches below the surface. Add fertilizer (14-14-14 is suggested) to this hole. Then put lots of water into this hole. Finally add the rhizome, cover with soil and mulch. Watering this new spuria rhizome from the top of the soil is not sufficient for establishing a clump. Mulch spuria the first year of growth. Saw dust is the best mulch to use. After the clump is established, the mulch may be removed during the blooming season.

Japanese Iris should be planted 2 to 3 inches deep in a depression which will help catch water. Then fill the depression with organic mulch such as peat moss. After planting or division it is essential to not let the JI dry out. Planting the iris in a depression is important because new JI roots grow in above the old roots.

Japanese Irises prefer a rich soil with ample organic matter, which helps in water retention as well as adding nutrients. The soil pH should be slightly acidic, ideally between 5.0 and 6.5. NEVER ADD LIME, as this will raise the pH and eventually kill the plants.

Japanese Irises are heavy feeders. A liberal application of a balanced fertilizer (10/10/10) in the spring and just before bloom is beneficial. Weak plants will be invigorated with a biweekly foliar and drench application of a water soluble acid fertilizer such as Miracid. The preparation of your iris bed with composted manure and peat will be a good start for your JI, but once planted do not fertilize transplants until they have become established. (The same is true for Siberian Irises)

Japanese iris need to be divided every three to four years when the new roots will be coming out right at the soil level. A clump that has formed a solid ring with a bare center needs to be divided. After the plants have been divided, trim the leaves to a height of four to six inches. Replant the divisions in a depression and it is essential to keep the new divisions wet.

At the time of division, the iris should be moved to a new location where Japanese iris have not grown before. Japanese iris in Japan are commonly grown in pots and it is easier to replace the soil the iris grow in.

More information about Beardless Iris can be found online. Some sites to look at are:

<http://www.spuriairis.com/culture.htm>

A site for information on hand pollinating Japanese Iris:
<http://academyhouse.mystarband.net/pollinatingji.htm>

History of Japanese Iris

http://www.kcis.org/kcis_education/et_japaneseiris.htm





Door Prizes

Japanese were ordered from Aitkens and spuria from Cadds for door prizes this month. Plus any others members donate. Last call on bearded. Please bring any excess bearded or beardless iris to share.



REBLOOMERS

Bring your reblooming irises now through March for show and tell. Drawing for first choice of door prize for those showing.



Cabrillo Fall 2007 Horticulture Lecture Series

Thursday Evenings, 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the Cabrillo College Environmental Horticulture Center, room 5005, "Top of the Campus." The series of five lectures is \$40 when purchased as a group; or \$10 per lecture if attended individually.

September 27th: The New Urban Watershed, speaker, Paul Kephart (Rana Creek)

October 4th: Landscapes and the Water Industry, speaker: Toby Goddard (City of Santa Cruz Water Department)

October 18th: Rain Water Harvesting: Design and Integration for a Sustainable Landscape, speaker: Bobby Markowitz (Earthcraft Landscape Design)



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