

ALMANAC:

Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris



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Lists and describes Pacific Coast Native Iris and named hybrids through 2005. ~70 pages. Hardcopy or CD: \$9.00 for USA, \$11.00 for Canada, and \$13.00 overseas. For both a CD and a hard copy, the cost would be \$4.50 less for the CD.

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Lee W. Lenz: Photocopy of *Aliso* original. Booklet 5.5x8.5, 72 pages, 9 line drawings, 14 photographs and 12 maps. Definitive work on the taxonomic status of the *Californicae*, with a key to the species and sub-species. Detailed maps and accounts of distribution. \$8.00 postpaid, \$10.00 out of U.S.

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Lewis & Adele Lawyer: ALMANAC, Fall 1986. 22 pages, 9 b/w photographs. \$4.50 postage paid, \$6.50 out of US.

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Two slide sets are available through SPCNI. They can be obtained by requesting them from: Terri Hudson, 33450 Little Valley Road, Ft. Bragg, CA 95437 (707) 964-3907. The charge is \$7.50 for either of the two sets. The first set deals with species: the second set is concerned with hybrids. **The combination set is no longer available.** The slides in each set will be contained in a Kodak carousel. The carousel will be convenient to use and less likely to be damaged in shipment. Payment (payable to SPCNI) should be sent to Terri Hudson. The person requesting the slides is financially responsible for return of the slides.

ALMANAC

DEADLINES: March 15 and September 15.

Back issues are available for \$4.00 each, postpaid.

Index by Subject, Species, Hybrids or by Author, \$4.00 each postpaid. (This is also on the web site to download) Contact Terri Hudson at the address above.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Society for Pacific Coast Native Irises is a section of the American Iris Society (AIS). Membership in the AIS is recommended but not required for membership in the SPCNI.

Membership	Individual	Family
Annual	8.00	10.00
Triennial	20.00	23.00
10 year	60.00	75.00
20 year	110.00	125.00

Please send membership monies to the SPCNI treasurer. For foreign members, annual or triennial, please add \$4.00 per membership per year; 10/20 year membership, please add \$20/\$40 per membership.

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First dues notices will no longer be sent. Please note the expiration date of your membership on the address label. This date indicates the month and year that your SPCNI fees are due. We will continue to send you a final reminder notice if we have not heard from you in 90 days.

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY

Membership of the American Iris Society is not required for SPCNI membership. AIS membership is, however, suggested, and may be of considerable benefit. Send membership renewals or inquiries to the AIS Membership Secretary:

Tom Gormley,
10606 Timber Ridge St, Dubuque, IA 52001-8268
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SPCNI MEMBERSHIP LIST

SPCNI is offering a listing of its membership to members for a slight fee to cover the cost of mailing and printing (approximately \$3.00 for the US, \$4.00 for out of U.S.). This list can be used only for contact purposes and cannot be used or sold as a business mailing list. Members wishing to be excluded from the list should contact the Secretary.

Visit the award winning SPCNI website for great photos and articles

<http://www.pacificcoastirises.org>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Debby Cole

I hope you all, wherever you may be, enjoyed a beautiful bloom season this year. It was cool, damp and late here in the Pacific Northwest, and the colors were all the more vivid because of the coolness. Most of the attempted crosses did not take because of the dampness, but then again, the *I. douglasiana* was still blooming on July 1. I was doubly blessed, visiting friends in California for their bloom in April and then coming home for mine starting (finally) in May.

In between, Richard Richards and I gave a program to the SPCNI meeting at the AIS National Convention, a very well done affair in Austin, Texas. We laid out SPCNI's goals of increasing the geographic range (and so the hardiness) and length of bloom of PCI, and showed pictures of species and available named cultivars that we thought could be significant contributors to the effort. The program seemed to be well received, as did the SPCNI photo CD which we played as a "slideshow" while people were entering the meeting. My only regret was not getting to talk to more of the attendees.

Did you get some good PCI pictures this year? Steve Ayala should have the Second Annual Online Photo Contest up on the website shortly, ready to share PCI with the world and reward your efforts. Please enter early! The more we have to show interested non-member visitors, the more likely they are to decide to join — and more members are always good.

We especially hope you have some great pictures of PCI in garden settings to share, so people can see how lovely they are in the landscape. Terri Hudson will also add them to the PowerPoint presentation she has been developing on PCI, for interested individuals and clubs to use. High-resolution photos are definitely most desirable for this purpose, but even the ones requiring less than 100 KB of memory look great on the website. Send them in!

Terri has also begun scanning the early editions of the Almanac, so we can preserve them on CDs, and finds that it is a long slow process. Even with a newer scanner that makes few mistakes, she is finding it still takes two minutes to scan in one page--and you know how long an Almanac is, and how many back issues there are! If you have a good scanner and some extra time now and then, would you be willing to help with the process? Please email Terri Hudson to say yes — irishud@earthlink.net. Many hands (and scanners) will be very welcome. Jean Witt and I again visited the Glendale-Powers area of southwestern Oregon this spring, and think we are finally ready to lead a Trek to the area next spring. This will be a 1-1/2 day affair, in the first half of June, based in the Roseburg-Eugene area. Trekkers should see three different species of PCI and many lovely companion wildflowers. We'll be monitoring meteorological sites for updated information this winter, and final details will be in the spring Almanac.

Our members and friends in the Canadian province of British Columbia, the British Columbia Iris Society, have volunteered to host the American Iris Society's national convention in June, 2011. There's been only one PCI cultivar sent as a guest iris, but BCIS has vowed that the convention will be a PC showplace, and they are planting display beds of Pacificas at several of the host gardens. With their mild maritime climate (the convention will be based in Victoria) and northern latitude, they should indeed have a good show for the convention. Victoria is a charming city, and I am sure BCIS will plan a couple of good tours beforehand for interested visitors too. I'm planning to attend, how about you? Ted Baker at tedebaker@shaw.ca is chair. Watch the AIS Bulletin. SPCNI members in the Southern Hemisphere are having their bloom season now, and I look forward to joining them for it next year. The New Zealand Iris Society will have its 2009 convention in the Southern Lakes area of the South Island, an astoundingly, spectacularly beautiful area. It will be headquartered in Cromwell, Central Otago on the last weekend of November, and there should be excellent adjunct tours offered here also. Address inquiries to Joyce Brown at Locharburn@xtra.co.nz.

Now to order a few seeds to encourage over winter, hoard my pennies and manage the investments carefully. I pray we may all emerge in the spring with our heads still above water — and our irises leaping up.

Happy holidays,

Debby

NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

Gareth Winter

Those of you who live in the northern hemisphere are entering your wind-down season. The worst of the summer heat has passed in those areas prone to excessive temperatures, while those in colder climes will be starting to check out snow clearing paraphernalia for the upcoming season. For us it is the start of another exciting season, and we are happily leaving what has been a dreary and wet winter behind us.

My winter, though, was greatly lightened by the arrival of an extensive collection of back issues of the Almanac. Our executive committee decided it would be useful for the editor to have access to the vast amount of knowledge published over the years, so I have spent many happy hours curled up in a big armchair, alongside a blazing fire, reading of the collected wisdom of those who have gone before us.

Over the thirty years of the Almanac there have been many wonderful articles. As you would rightly expect, someone whose career switched from horticulturist to archivist, I delighted in those stories that dealt with the origins of the garden PCIs, and in the names of the great personalities that drove their culture in previous years. The personalities of these people began to shine through their writings, and I gained a deeper understanding of just how convoluted the development of our favorite plants has been.

There were many challenges too. I had to have my atlas on the table alongside me as I retrospectively joined in the many field trips, searching for the wild species of Pacific Coast Iris.

I also gained a little insight into the role that the southern lands have played in the development of the garden PCI, and this issue of the Almanac includes a story on PCIs in Australia and New Zealand. I have read many, many stories on the tricks to successfully transplanting PCIs, and on germinating seeds. My own seed raising this year has been very mixed. The seed from the SPCNI has grown very well. I ordered seed of 16 different types, and all but two had a degree of germination. Of those that did germinate, the average rate was about 65%, so I am very happy with that.

My own seed, from planned crosses, germinated abysmally. I have concluded I harvested the seed too green – I was scared the pods would burst – so I will have to be more patient this coming season. In one of the articles, which is reprinted in this issue, there was mention of an Australian breeder crossing his PCIs with *I. unguicularis*. This winter flowering Mediterranean species has virtually no stem, but has a long perianth tube, the flowers appearing well above the foliage. My grandmother, from whom I have inherited my love of PCIs, also grew a number of forms of this species, and this was the first iris I tried to hybridize. The seed pods were difficult to harvest, as they sit flush on the rhizomes, near the ground, and when grown, I found virtually no variation from the pod parent, suggesting the flowers had self-pollinated.

I still have a few varieties of *I. unguicularis* in the garden – the lower growing pink forms, ‘Starkers Pink’, and the white form ‘Alba’, both supposedly weaker growing plants, but both flourishing in a warm, well-drained bed.

Early in the flowering season I noticed a rogue bud appearing on one of my PCI seedlings – about a month ahead of schedule – so I carefully removed the pollen from a ‘Starkers Pink’ and delicately placed it on the PCI. I have no idea whether it has taken yet, or whether the seed will grow, but it sounds like a fun experiment. I hope to be able to repeat the experiment with some PCIs I have potted and grown in my glasshouse. If I succeed, I’ll keep you informed. If I fail, I will, of course, never mention it again!

The season has started here and about 10% of the new season’s seedlings have bloomed, with one or two exciting flowers, with the usual percentage of average plants, and the obligatory number of absolute dogs too. Still, hope springs eternal, and I have had the paintbrush out, pollinating and dreaming!

Make sure you order some seed from the seed pool this year. Bob Sussman has done a great job of putting together fabulous detail on the breeding of the varieties we are offering seed from. This will be of huge interest to those wanting to expand the genetic base of their own breeding program.

All the best from your southern editor

Gareth Winter

PACIFICAS IN THE LANDS DOWN UNDER

The lands down under, Australia and New Zealand, have had a small but significant part to play in the evolution of the garden Pacific Coast Iris.

In New Zealand, the first notable of the PCI growers was the well-regarded TB breeder, Jean Stevens. Her interest was sparked when she received seed of *Iris innominata* from Professor Sydney Mitchell, American Iris Society Chairman for Species, who had acquired it from Dr Matthew Riddle. She was soon raising different coloured seed strains – yellow, orange, red, violet and blue. She also shared her strains with Fred Danks of Australia. Jean Stevens was a great fan of *I. munzii*, saying it gave her the bluest of all irises. She was possibly the first to develop crosses of *I. munzii* with *I. innominata*. The following is from the British Iris Society's Yearbook of 1955:

A Californian Hybrid

by Jean Stevens

There have been quite a few references and some discussion in recent years as to the exact coloring of *Iris munzii*. Dr. Lenz of the Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, who was instrumental in distributing seed of this Californian species, insists that he has never seen a color variation which could justly be called blue. Although several of the seedlings I raised from the seed Dr. Lenz sent me were blue-purple, others were a pure pale sky-blue - the blue we have yet to breed in our tall bearded irises. In correspondence, Dr. Lenz suggested that the color of *I. munzii* here might be attributed to more acidity in this soil than in the Californian soils. This suggestion appealed to me as a possible, in fact as a probable, reason. The color of many plants is affected by the pH of the soil, an extreme case being the hydrangeas, and two lesser cases being roses and violets. Knowing that the pH of the soil in which my blue *munzii* were growing was 5, I sent divisions to a friend, whose garden was very acid, somewhere in the region of 4.5. The plants again produced the same shade of clean pale blue, proving that there was at least no variation in soils of different degrees of acidity. What still remains to be tested is whether alkalinity will induce a violet or pinkish tone in these same pure blues.

At the time when my plants produced their first flowers, I had no reason to believe that the true blue color was not characteristic of some of the color variations of *I. munzii* in its habitat. I was very interested to try to breed blue into some blue-toned forms of *I. innominata*, and therefore crossed the nearest of my *innominatas* to blue, a bluish-lavender, with the blue *I. munzii*, making the cross both ways. Three years ago these seedlings flowered. All except one seedling produced lavender-toned flowers, the one exception being a very pale, almost pure blue. In our hot sun, the color fades out toward the end of the flowering-season (September-October), leaving the blooms an ice-white. Whether it will be possible to breed a blue hybrid which will stand sun without fading has yet to be seen.

The hybrids of *I. munzii* \ *innominata* and those of the reciprocal cross proved almost exactly intermediate between the parents. Form, height, habit, and season of flowering were a rather fascinatingly exact half-way. The foliage reflected the matt texture and glaucous foliage of *I. munzii* in the form of a dulled-green and thicker-substanced *innominata*. I had used one of the new broad-petalled *innominata* forms for the cross, and so the hybrids have somewhat broader petals than have the early *innominatas*, and they are definitely broader than those of *I. munzii* itself.

What has been a surprise in these hybrids is their value as garden-plants. They are extremely vigorous – more so than either parent – but the seedling hybrids gave no promise of what they were to become as established plants. The photograph accompanying these notes was taken in the second year, the plant in the foreground being the sole blue seedling. This photograph, for the sake of definition, was taken as the plant commenced to flower, but in the following weeks each clump produced many dozens of flower-stems. This year, the clumps are twice the size and are producing at least double the number of flowers. Commencing to flower after the first *innominatas*, and earlier than *I. munzii*, they remain in bloom for more than six weeks. Strong stems with side-branches show every bloom to advantage. The height varies somewhat from 15 inches to 18 inches.

So much for the straight hybrid. It remains to be seen what the F2 generation will produce.

The southern hemisphere PCIs returned to the north. The Danks strains were exported to California, and England,

where Fothergill crossed Danks' *innominata* seedlings with *I. douglasiana*, giving rise to the first of the British strains. Seed from Danks' selections was eventually returned back to the United States. Some of it went to Professor Mitchell who passed them onto Jack Craig. The genes from this strain run through most modern hybrids.

Some Danks seed was also sent to Francesca Thoolen, who passed some on to Joe Ghio. Ghio introduced 'Emigrant' and 'Foreign Exchange' from this seed, and also raised a white seedling that has been the basis of his *plicatas*. He also used the Mitchell/Craig strain, crossing them with the most interesting of the Santa Cruz wild irises, hybrids of *I. macrosiphon*, *fernaldii*, and *douglasiana*.

Another breeder was working with PCIs in Australia, as Barry Blyth recalled in a story first published in the Almanac of Fall 1997:

When the Australian Iris Society was formed about 1947, two or three people were particularly interested in the Pacific Coast Natives, and from sources in the United States, obtained seed of the various species that were available from collectors. Two of these people, Mr Fred Danks and Mr Dan Hargrave were particularly keen and proceeded to hybridize what they had. It was not long before Hargrave seemed to disappear from the scene, and Danks was the main authority who distributed seed and seedlings to interested people. But not much was known about these irises and very few people grew them.

Sometimes people would buy seed from Thompson and Morgan, the seed firm in England, and more often than not, the seed would not germinate. This often conveyed the idea that these irises were very difficult. The main species were *I. innominata*, *I. douglasiana*, and hybrids between the two, with occasionally *I. munzii* in there somewhere. When I was a child we knew them as *Innominata x Douglasiana* and that is how we sold them.

In the late 60s and early 70s Joe Ghio sent me some seed from his lines and I grew about 1500 seedlings that I was delighted with, and had them all in one long bed flowering to perfection. As strange things happen in life, a man that I did not know came to the nursery for what reason I never did find out. Maybe it was just to see the irises, as we have a very large range of irises. It was Dan Hargrave, who I had not seen since 1947 when I was six years old! In 1947 he had decided that he did not care to be in the Iris society and all that went with that. But he liked irises and had kept breeding PCIs quietly at home, and no one knew he was even still alive, let alone working on iris. He said to me that he had some nice ones. So I said to him to have a look at what I had been growing. He did have a look and he just pointed to the shed where I kept a large tractor and said, "Plough them in and come and see mine."

Well, I didn't get there as soon as he apparently wanted, so about four days later he called again, this time with a box of about 10,000 seeds for me (I think I had passed some test I didn't know about) and asked me to come and have a look at his Iris. I went and saw his Iris and came home and ploughed in what I had.

Dan's 25 years of crossing them back and forth had created an array of amazing colors and patterns that I had not even dreamed about and he said they included all the recognized PCI species as well as *Iris unguicularis*. [This has never been proved, but stranger things have happened, and there were seedlings that set seeds right down on the rhizome.] He was adamant about this.

I grew his strain until 1987 and carried on crossing the strains he had as well as importing some of Joe Ghio's named varieties and comparing what he was doing along with the Hargrave strain. I also visited Joe's garden a few times to see them bloom, and some Hargrave seed Joe Ghio grew and incorporated into his wonderful range, as well.

I named quite a few varieties after Australian towns with Aboriginal names and most of these varieties are still being grown today by two commercial Iris growers, Iris Acres in South Australia (Carol and Ivar Schmidt) and Red Hill Iris Farm (Alan Glen) in Victoria. Carol and Ivar Schmidt are continuing breeding and naming some varieties. They sell mainly named varieties in spring. A few friends are growing and crossing some each year in their gardens just for their own pleasure and some lovely forms are to be seen in shows occasionally. Helen and Graeme Grosvenor (Rainbow Ridge Nursery) in New South Wales have many thousands of seedlings planted at their country property and grow them just for their own pleasure. They are not good subjects in Sydney (New South Wales) because of their summer rain and humidity.

Pacific Coast Iris do best in Victoria and Tasmania, inland cool areas of South Australia, (mainly east of Adelaide) and down at the southern portion of West Australia around Albany and Margaret River. Most other areas are too harsh, either in dryness or summer rain and humidity.

The work of growing and promoting PCIs continues in Australia as Barry's daughter Heidi Blyth reports:

GROWING PACIFIC COAST IRIS IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

By Heidi Blyth

My first memory of my Mum and Dad growing Pacific Coast Iris was when I was about six or seven. We had a property in South Gippsland, Victoria, in a little place called Ellinbank. The ground there was crumbly, red volcanic clay. It grew a vegetable garden overnight. The Pacific Coast Iris liked it there as well and we had rows of strong bushy clumps.

Lesley and Barry Blyth, my Mum and Dad, grow and breed iris under the business name Tempo Two. My brothers Paul and Tim, and myself, grew up in an irisy environment, our year broken up into the seasons of the iris as much as it was broken into school holidays. Over the years, whatever we did as kids, teenagers and young adults, we were always connected to the family farm and the iris life. Now the three of us have our own iris businesses. Paul and Tim have a wholesale iris business, and are also growing and selling iris to the general public from their own catalogue. I have a business called Sunshine and Dirt, which is mainly Pacific Coast Iris, and is only a couple of years old.

The Pacific Coast Iris have always been one of my favorites, but years ago - maybe twenty - they were no longer included in the catalogue. There was so much work to do with the other iris we grew and Lesley and Barry wanted to focus mainly on the bearded iris. We always had a few growing though, at the end of a row, or a couple in pots, and we would put some seeds in pots and sell the seedlings at the nursery each spring. As soon as the buds popped open and the beautiful colors and patterns could be seen, these little plants were snatched up by delighted customers.

That is about as much as I saw of these irises for years, until a family friend, Stan Lott brought around a few boxes of Pacific Coast Iris seedlings which he did not have room for. Mum and I planted them out on one hot summer day in December, into our grey sandy soil and watered them in with jam jars full of water. The intention was to grow them just for fun in a couple of spare rows we had. Over that summer, we lost a lot of the little seedlings from the heat, but about half survived, and a couple of years later, we had the pleasure of seeing them flower.

The year after that, I decided to grow them on, do something with them, and breed them. Stan Lott has been growing and breeding Pacific Coast Iris for over twenty years in his garden. He is very particular in the ones he selects to breed with and goes for mainly full flowers and striking colors. As his garden space is very limited, he keeps only his most favorite ones, and digs out the others. He seems to move his PCIs around without any problem from late autumn (May) through to spring (October), although they are only out of the ground for a short time and he waters them in well straight away. He has a heavy grey sand/soil.

In Pearcedale, where I grow them, we have grey sand which varies across the property from the consistency of beach sand to heavy-ish grey sand. This year, they are in the heaviest soil and are looking good. I do not seem to have lost any since planting them in late May – late June and it's now September. They have grown well other years in the sandier areas of the property, but the drought here over the past few years has dried everything out so much that some have turned up their toes. They have been planted in full sun and were not mulched though, which can not have helped.

This year, they are planted out in the full sun (as the set-up of our property is for maximum sunlight), but I am planting sunflowers throughout the patch to provide a little shade for them. I will also be mulching them lightly this year, from late spring, with all different types of mulch to see which works best. I fertilize the ground lightly in May with a nine month slow-release fertilizer (Osmocote) and a pelletized organic manure mix (Dynamic Lifter). I start to lift and divide the plants in late May after we have had a bit of rain and the weather has turned cooler. Our rains have been coming later than they used to at the moment, and when they do come, there has not been much, but this year we seem to have had a little more than usual.

I try to get my replanting done by the end of June, as they do not seem to do as well when they are planted later. I can not be sure of this yet though. Next year, I will start replanting in early May, as most of the plants have started their new root growth then. By June many have their new roots well down into the ground, and I don't like to chop these off. Most get watered in with a half-strength seaweed solution like Seasol.

The ones I have planted in pots in June from divisions have done very well. I have lost about 10 % of them, which I am happy with, as I expected more losses. I have them under shade cloth and use a

normal potting mix and add a little slow-release fertilizer and manure at the bottom. I think they would have done even better out in the air and sunlight over winter as I think some have rotted from the damp.

In late May and June I sent out the Pacific Coast Iris in the mail to people who had ordered them from the catalogue.

They were dug, wrapped in damp paper and put in small plastic bags and secured with tape. I was not expecting the amount of orders I got and the time between digging them and getting them sent off was longer than I would have liked. I have not had much feedback yet on how these plants have done, but hope to find out more when I see and speak to customers in the spring and when I put the next catalogue out. Next year, the plants will be dug, packed and sent on the same day.

It has been interesting to see how the plant growth from one particular cross will be very similar for say 10 or 15 plants that came from it, while another cross with 10 or 15 plants will have huge variations throughout it, with very little similarities in growth or flower. Most, though, have similarities in the one cross - growth wise, they may all be very strong with 4-5 new divisions possible each year, while another cross may be all very weak, with most plants struggling to stay alive. It is all still new to me, and I am learning about the different attributes of each variety and the varied conditions they need, then trying to find a happy medium for all of them.

At the moment, the main things I am doing that seem to be working are keeping the beds raised for drainage, giving them only a small amount of fertilizer and manure, and in the summer mulching them lightly and providing dappled shade via the sunflowers. In summer, if there is no rain, I water them about every ten days – two weeks, but I do not think they need this much summer watering, especially with the mulch. Our summers are usually dry with temperatures in the high twenties - high thirties, with some humid spells and occasional rain. Our winters and springs are traditionally wet enough to have water lying around and filling the drains, but we have not had so much the last six or seven years.

The Pacific Coast Iris are just coming into flower for me at the moment so I will be making many crosses over the next month or so. I like all the other colors really but am particularly fond of rich tropical oranges and turquoise blues. I am trying to get good growth with some of the lovely coloured flowers which do not grow really well by crossing them onto the strong, stable varieties. The full, rounded flowers are obviously gorgeous, but I also like the strappy, spidery flowers and I love the ones which curl right under. Not really what's in fashion right now, but they're some of my most favorites. I am also keen to cross the Pacific Coast with Siberian Iris, to get hardier plants and more upright stems, but mostly because of the excitement factor of crossing two of my favorite flowers to see what happens.

A REPORT FROM OUR EASTERN U.S. CORRESPONDENT

David Schmieder

I was late sending out a request for any reports our members east of the Mississippi River might have of their experiences growing PCIs outside their natural range thus I was delighted to hear back from some of them. Unfortunately the news was not all good. Over the past winter Dorothy Willott in Ohio lost all her PCIs that had bloomed nicely in 2007, and John White in Maine is down to three plants: a cross between *I. tenax* and 'Ocean Blue'. John has decided Maine winters are just too harsh for what he was trying to do with the PCI and will spend more time pursuing a yellow Japanese iris instead. Ray Chesnik still thinks it not likely that he will try growing them in his conditions.

Susan Lambiris, Raleigh, North Carolina reports: I have been gardening in Raleigh, North Carolina in an acid clay soil for about twenty years now, and trying to grow many kinds of beardless iris since the early 1990s. I currently have a collection of hybrid Pacificas, almost all bred by Joe Ghio and all purchased from his nursery. In general I have had a middling to low survival rate for iris in their first winter after transplanting. There were one or two years when most of the newly planted iris survived, but in general I expect to lose all or almost all the new plants to rot within a few months of being planted. I suspect this is mostly caused by variation in the amount of stress our weather places on the transplants - some of our winters are very wet, others less so, and we often get sudden cold snaps when the plants have not hardened off. If a plant survives its first winter it usually continues to thrive. The major exception was a well-established clump of 'Fault Zone' which died last winter after a sudden, unusually severe cold snap. I assume its *I. munzii* genes couldn't cope with the rapid drop in temperature.

Unfortunately, during the last year or two I have neglected my Pacificas almost completely, but they have coped surprisingly well with the lack of attention. They grow in well-drained beds with high shade during the summer but plenty of sun during the winter. One bed is under a group of crape myrtle trees, *Lagerstroemia*, the other beneath a chaste tree *Vitex agnus-castus* which is kept well limbed up. I did not give them any extra water during our recent droughts and, other than lightly mulching them before a hard freeze, did nothing to protect them during our Zone 7a winters. I find it important not to mulch these iris heavily during the winter since the local temperature can warm up as quickly as it drops, and without good air circulation rot becomes established very quickly. I do not use a fungicide because I prefer to select for plants that resist rot if I use suitable garden practices. Among the iris that have grown exceptionally well for me are 'Big Money', 'Bat Boy', 'Westerlies', and 'Drip Drop'. Others have increased very slowly, such as 'Deep Blue Sea' and 'Oxymoron'. I had to wait five years for a bloom on my single fan of 'Oxymoron' and am still not sure if a new fan will emerge to keep the plant alive now it has bloomed! Plants which seem to hold their own but not to spread rapidly include 'Tiki', 'Umunhum', 'Herald', 'Silver Bowl', and 'Clever Devil'. Although it is too soon to be sure about these newer plants, 'Wide Screen' and 'Now Showing' also seem to be thriving.

In the past I used to try to make controlled crosses and prevent plants from self-seeding but in the last few years I have left the blooms alone. Very few seed pods have ripened and I have seen no new seedlings in either of my beds.

In summary, once established I have found hybrid Pacificas to make excellent ground cover under deciduous, high-branching trees in this area. They require little special attention and compete successfully with many weeds. In fact, chickweed can be a useful "green mulch" during the erratic weather of late winter/early spring, since it provides cold protection without encouraging rot.

When in bloom Pacific irises are extremely attractive for almost a month and out of bloom they are unobtrusive rather than messy-looking. While I have not tried to combine them with other shade-tolerant understory plants, I am sure they would be very effective in a well-designed mixed planting as well as on their own.

I certainly intend to continue expanding my current Pacifica beds and looking around for other suitable sites to plant them!

David Schmieder, Concord, Massachusetts: My collection appears to have fared better than usual over the past year, under conditions that I would have thought unfavorable to PCIs. I must qualify that statement, as all my plants have been raised from seed mostly from individuals close to the species. In the past I had little luck keeping any modern hybrids more than a year or two at the most. Still, to me these seedlings are just gorgeous, and I plan to keep trying seed from as many different sources and in as many different spots as I am able to keep up.

In the spring issue I mentioned one of the beds still covered with four feet of ice and snow. As that melted it was a treat just to see the emerald green foliage still on clumps that looked better than when I moved them there in late fall. Periods of freezing temperatures at night soon turned them brown, but they then put up new growth and a few bloom stalks for a weak May showing. I am hoping for more there next spring.

In spite of much too much rain this summer, I think the fact that it also remained relatively cool allowed the PCI to tolerate it. Most of June and July was rainy, including 12 inches one week. After a few weeks of drought it became rainy again, with hurricane Hanna bringing us 5½ inches in one day.

Those seedlings that I had left in the woody area had taken the weather fine, but because of loss to rodents or too much shade from a *Clethra* that unexpectedly had grown to 12 ft, bloomed very little. (The *Clethra* is blooming nicely just now though.)

I think the three beds around the driveway are benefiting from the aged pine bark plus pine needle mulch, more frequent weeding because we go by them so often, and some protection from rodents. The PCI seedlings there are sharing that space with many *I. cristata* seedlings and other species such as *I. ruthenica*, *gracilipes*, *koreana*, *tectorum*, *tridentata*, *brevicaulis* and others we enjoy growing. Today I counted about 90 individuals from about 20 batches of seed mostly from 1999 -2006. There is a large variation in the appearance of those plants and their apparent vigor. I look forward to seeing what variations we might get during the next bloom season!

David Schmieder

NEW MEMBERS

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2008-9 SPCNI SEED EXCHANGE

Bob Sussman-Seed Exchange Chair

This year we have changed the way we will process orders. In the past we have held all the orders until around mid-January and then begun processing. This led to a number of problems, the most serious being I seemed to misplace a couple of orders each year. Not good for business! Some members, who sent their orders in early, wondered "Where are my seeds?" after a few months!

To solve these problems, we will process your order when we receive it. You can expect something like a 10 day to two week turnaround from the time you mail me or email me your order until you get your seeds. This is better for you and easier for me.

This year's selection is not exactly the most robust, nevertheless, we still have some very nice seeds to select from.

The ordering system works like this:

All seed packets are \$1.00
Postage and handling is \$1.00
International postage and handling is \$3.00

If you buy 10 packets of seeds and your order is within the U.S., please send the SPCNI \$11.00. If you buy 15 packets and your order is within the U.S., send SPCNI \$16.

You buy 20 packets and you want them sent to the U.K., send SPCNI \$23.

That's it!

What I need from you:

1. Item #, name, and number of packets per item #.
2. Shipping address
3. Check made out to SPCNI. For orders over \$15 you can use a Master Card, Visa, or Amex with card number and expiration date
4. If you have an e-mail address, please detail it and I will confirm when your order has been sent. This will be helpful as well if I cannot read something or have other questions.
5. List of substitute seed items also just in case

Get me your orders by January 15th. That will be the order 'cut off' date.

If we are out of a seed item and you have not given a substitute, I will make that big decision.

Each seed packet will have a minimum of 10 to 15 seeds depending on what is available.

Where to send the seed order:

Bob Sussman

SPCNI

12142 Alison Dr.

Camarillo, California

93012

e-mail works too but hard to send a check: matilija@gte.net

The catalog is alpha sorted. The hybrids are sorted by "pod parent".

The selections are also separated by current year 2008 or old seed. Old seed is anything older than current year.

All items should be considered open pollinated except for crosses. Species collected wild are stated by location and or garden collected. All this should be in the description too.

The descriptions are taken from SPCNI Checklist and thus have considerably more iris info. Also, you'll note the second column has either a L, M, or S, as in Large, Medium, Small. An L indicates large seed quantity and a good chance of getting your order filled.

OVERSEAS MEMBERS: If anything related to seeds has changed this year with your postal authorities, tell me. I may need to attach a letter to your order so you can get your seeds.

Who to thank? Well besides me, the Hudsons, Richard Richards, Debby Cole, Kathleen Sayce, Tim Ross, and me (again) for donating the seeds.

A small note: WE NEED MORE SEEDS FROM MORE MEMBERS! IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

I will work on a spring article on pollination so that more members can send us more and varied types of PCI seeds.

Now put me to work. Order some stuff!

All the best,

Bob Sussman

2008-9 SPCNI SEED EXCHANGE

- | | | | |
|-----|---|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | L | Old | AMI ROYALE (Luhrsen, not R.). Sdlg. 1956-5 8" (20cm) S. lavender (Vatican purple) with ice blue margin; F. plum purple, edged lavender, large gold signal, ruffled, velvety and flaring. Amiguita X Santa Paula. Combsie's Gardens 1957. |
| 20 | L | 2008 | AMIGUITA (Nies, R. 1947). 12" (30cm) E-M. Blue bitone, dark purple signal on wide flaring falls, edges ruffled. Volunteer <i>I. douglasiana</i> seedling. Lyon, 1951. HC 1948, HM 1951, AM BIS 1970, Mitchell Award 1974. |
| 30 | M | 2008 | BIG MONEY (Ghio, R. 1983). Sdlg. PP-382-O 10" (25cm) EM. Mid to dark yellow self. Short Order X PR-309S: ((Corralitos x Banbury Princess) x ((Greenbriar Contrast x California Native) x Santa Rita. Bay View Gardens 1984. HM 1986, Mitchell Award 1990. |
| 40 | S | old | BLACKLIGHT (J. Marchant, R. 1990). Sdlg. 5787. 12" (30 cm), M. S. smoky lilac purple (HCC 31/2); F. ruby red. Portable Acres 1990 |
| 50 | L | 2008 | BLUE MOMENT (Duane Meek, R. 1992). Sdlg. P24-1-7. 15" (38 cm), M-L. Mid to dark blue with hint of violet. T. Abell blue sdlg. X ((<i>I. tenax</i> x <i>I. innominata</i>) x Native Warrior). D & J Gardens 1992. HM 1997. |
| 60 | L | Old | BLUE SAGE (Nies, R. 1947). 18" (46cm) M. Moderate purple blue self. Parentage unknown. Lyon, 1947. |
| 70 | M | Old | BROWNIE POINTS (Joseph Ghio, R. 1999). Sdlg. PB-254K3. 18" (46 cm), ML. Mocha, F. with deeper edge, maroon brown signal. |
| 80 | S | Old | CANYON BLISS- (Emery and SBBG 2006) |
| 90 | L | Old | CANYON SNOW Same as 100 |
| 100 | L | 2008 | CANYON SNOW (Emery, selector, R. 1974). Sdlg. SB67-88 17" (43cm) E-M. White self, yellow signal. <i>I. douglasiana</i> X unknown. McCaskill 1975. HM 1976, JC1976, Mitchell Award 1978 |
| 110 | L | 2008 | CAPE SEBASTIAN (Siskiyou, not R.). 12" (30cm) Lilac self with dark eye blaze on fall. <i>I. douglasiana</i> . Listed in Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery. |
| 120 | S | Old | CARMEL GEM same as 130. |
| 130 | M | 2008 | CARMEL GEM (B. Charles Jenkins, R. 1992). Sdlg. B4-32A. 14" (36 cm), M. S. light purple; light purple style arms; F. purple, elongated yellow center surrounded by ivory border with deep purple radial lines. Californian X Spring Daze. Portable Acres 1992. |
| 140 | S | 2008 | CHIMES (McCaskill by D. Foster, R. 1972). Sdlg. 66W64 12" (30cm) E-M S. cream, ruffled; F. pale cream with dark gold veining and blaze, velvety, ruffled. Parentage unknown. Foster 1972. HM 1973. |
| 150 | L | Old | DEEPENING SHADOWS same as 160. |
| 160 | M | 2008 | DEEPENING SHADOWS (Ghio, R. 1984). Sdlg. PO-210-E3. 14" (36cm) EM. S. dark purple; F. purple, black sheen. Bay View Gardens 1985. HM 1987 |

170	L	Old	<i>douglasiana x innominata</i> -Gold Beach, Oregon-yellow flowers
180	L	old	<i>douglasiana x purdyi</i> -Hwy 1 and Leggett Rd-Hudson 06
190	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -garden-Boring, Oregon
200	M	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -garden-dwarf plant-Whitehead
210	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -garden-knipe
220	L	2008	<i>douglasiana</i> -garden - white with purple styles - Richards '07
230	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -garden-Sandy,Oregon, light blue violet
240	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -garden-U.C. Berkeley
250	M	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -wild-Fort Bragg
260	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -wild-Leggett Rd x Hwy 1-Hudson06
270	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -wild-Mendocino coast-Hudson06
280	L	old	<i>douglasiana</i> -wild-Russian Gulch-04
290	L	2008	DRACULARITY (Deborah Cole, R. 1998). Sdlg. 95-PG-7. 25" (63cm), ML. S. red, hairline pinkish white rim; style arms light gold, light red crests, pinkish white wire edge; F. dark red with darker veining, near black signal, irregular 1/8" pinkish white rim; heavily ruffled. Parentage unknown - Ghio seed. '06
300	L	old	EGOCENTRIC same as 310
310	L	2008	EGOCENTRIC (Deborah Cole, R. 2005). Sdlg. 95-PG-3. CA, 10-12" (25-30 cm), ML. S. rose; style arms and crests yellow cream; F. rose, small yellow-cream signal with red halo; sometimes branched. Parentage unknown, seed from J. Ghio.
320	L	2008	ENCIRCLE (Ghio, R. 1980). Sdlg. PS-186EE 10" (25cm) E. White ground with light blue plicata markings; light yellow signal. Hargrave seed of unknown parentage from Australia X Primo. Bay View Gardens 1981. EC 1980, HM 1983.
330	M	2008	ENDLESS (Ghio, R. 1984). Sdlg. PO-202S 12" (30cm) E-L. S. light rose; F. dark rose. Simply Wild X Wild Party. Bay View Gardens 1985.
340	S	old	EXTRA CREDIT (Joseph Ghio, R. 2000). Sdlg. PB-392-1. 13" (33 cm), ML. S. brown, F. bright gold, wide brown plicata edging. PD-290yelplic: (PG-173B2: (PI-MIX-T, unknown, x PI-205M: (San Felipe sib x Hot Blooded sib)) x PH-231bo: ((Bubbly x (Solid Citizen x (Lighthouse Point x Mission Santa Cruz))) x National Anthem)) X PE-189P3: (PG-177G: (PI-MIX-G, unknown, x Valet sib) x PG-154: ((Black Eye sib x (Napa Valley x Western World)) x PI-MIX-W2, unknown)). Bay View 2000.
350	S	old	FAULT ZONE (J. Ghio, R. 1990). Sdlg. PJ-155L2. 18" (46cm), L-VL. S. light blue; F. blue violet, edged light blue. Pacific High X Idylwild. Bayview Gardens 1991. HM 1994.
360	L	2008	GARDEN DELIGHT (Stambach, R. 1971). Sdlg. 106-64 13" (33cm) L. Light yellow self with large medium brown blaze on the falls. (Sdlg. 52-60 (Western Queen) X Ojai) X Claremont Indian. Foster 1975. HM 1975.

- 370 M 2008 **HARLAND HAND** (H. Hand by D. Lennette, Selector, R. 1989). I. douglasiana. 11" (28 cm), VE-VL. S. purple blue; F. same. Portable Acres 1990
- 380 L old *hartwegii*-wild-Fiddletown
- 390 L 2008 *hartwegii*-wild-Sonora CA. -Rocha 04
- 400 L old *innominata x tenax* - '04
- 410 S old **LASH** (Joseph Ghio, R. 2002). Sdlg. CP-79P. 14" (36 cm), EM. S. white; F. white, purple lash pattern around small yellow signal.
- 420 L old Lawyer-selected PCI- short branched blue-04
- 430 L old Lawyer-selected PCI-blue violet falls with blue signal-04
- 440 L 2007 Lawyer-selected PCI-tall medium blue-04
- 450 M old **LOS CALIFORNIO** same as 460
- 460 M 2008 **LOS CALIFORNIO** (J. Ghio, R. 1988). Sdlg. PL-312-52. 18" (46 cm), ML. Purple, gold sunburst signal. ((Simply Wild x Camp Capitola sib) x (Big Wheel x (Pacific Moon x California Native))) X Miramar. Bay View Gardens 1989. HM 1993.
- 470 S old **MASCARA BRUSH** (J. Marchant, R. 1990). Sdlg. 3187. 10" (25cm), M. Creamy white ground completely overlaid royal purple (HCC 834) leaving 1/16" white edge, F. lightly ruffled. Sdlg. X Sdlg.
- 480 L old **MISSION SANTA CRUZ** (Ghio, R. 1982). Sdlg PQ-255D 12" (30cm) M. Glowing rosy-red-magenta self. Gone Native X Emigrant. Bay View Gardens 1983. EC 1982, HM 1985.
- 490 M 2008 **MISSION SANTA CRUZ X PACIFIC RIM**
- 500 M 2008 **MISSION SANTA CRUZ X SUNOL GRADE**
- 510 L old **MOCHA MELODY** (Alphild Lind, R. 1992). Sdlg. 87-AL-77. 20" (51 cm), E-M. S. cream with berry midrib 2/3rds way down; F. medium berry, feathering out to cream rib. Simply Wild X Wild Party. Iris Gallery 2001.
- 520 S old **MONTEREY SNOW** (B. Charles Jenkins, R. 1992). Sdlg. B30-34H. 14" (36 cm), M. Ruffled white with small yellow flash. Santa Rita X Western Movie. Portable Acres 1992.
- 530 M 2008 *munzii*-plant from Rancho Santa Ana-op 07
- 540 M 2008 **NATIVE WARRIOR** (Phillips, R. 1970). 12" (30cm) E. S. light red; F. same with a yellow flash. Amigueta X Claremont Indian. Cordon Bleu 1971. HM 1972, JC 1973, Mitchell Award 1975, ST Wisley 1976, HC Wisley 1978.
- 550 M old **NIGHT EDITOR** x *I. tenax*- 04
- 560 S 2008 **OCEAN BLUE** (Joseph Ghio, R. 2002). Sdlg. CP-56N2. CA, 13" (33 cm), EM. White ground, heavily washed and lined overall with medium blue, F. with yellow dot signal. AP-193ltbl: (PB-247G5: (High Winds x ((Wilder Than Ever sib x Sierra Dell) x unknown)) x Marine Magic) X Pacific Miss. Bay View 2003.

- 570 L old **OCEAN BLUE** same as 560
- 580 L old **ORCHID RESPRITE** x *hartwegii aust.* – same as 590
- 590 L 2008 **ORCHID RESPRITE** x *hartwegii aust.* - late blooming Richards '07
- 600 L old **OXYMORON** same as 610
- 610 L 2008 **OXYMORON** (Joseph Ghio, R. 2001). Sdlg. AP-292-O. 17" (43 cm), EM. S. deep henna; style arms yellow; F. deep henna, neon violet signal; precise fine ruffling. PC-178H4: (((PI-MIX-A, unknown, x Valet sib) x Spanish Don sib) x Point Santa Cruz) X PB-297: ((Xewe x (PI-MIX-S, unknown, x (Hot Blooded sib x ((San Gregorio x (Montara sib x Mission Santa Cruz sib)) x Latin Blood)))) x (Eye My Eye sib x (PI-MIX-B2, unknown, x ((Bubbly x (Solid Citizen x (Lighthouse Point x Mission Santa Cruz))) x National Anthem))). Bay View 2001.
- 620 L old **PACIFIC FROST** Same as 620
- 630 M 2008 **PACIFIC FROST** (J. T. Aitken, R. 1990). Sdlg. 82PC7. 20" (51cm), ML. S. white, black line down midrib; F. white, bright blue flash. Unknown parentage. Aitken's Salmon Creek Gardens 1990. Cole '07
- 640 L 2008 **PACIFIC RIM X STROKE OF MIDNIGHT**
- 650 L old **PEACOCK GAP** Same as 660
- 660 L 2008 **PEACOCK GAP** (Rigby, R. 1985). Sdlg. 183 12" (31cm) M. S. ruffled pale mauve, darker midrib; F. lightly ruffled. From Meek seedlings. Portable Acres 1988
- 670 L old **PERIWINKLE PERSIAN** (Deborah Cole, R. 2005). Sdlg. 98-PS-3. CA, 4-8" (10-20 cm), ML. Lavender blue self, signal white, yellow
- 680 L 2007 **PLUM LUCK-GOLD DUSTED SEEDLING**-purple with lighter edge on falls and gold-sprinkled signal. Harry Hill '03.
- 690 S 2008 **PRETTY BOY** (Joseph Ghio, R. 2001). Sdlg. AP-299-L3. 12" (31 cm), ML. Heavily ruffled peach self, F. with small maroon signal. Baby Blanket x PB-259-D3:(((It's Wild sib x Herald sib) x Schoolboy sib)) x (((Las Lomas x Shaker) x Villa Montalvo) x (Charter Member sib x Greeting Card))). Bay View Gardens 2001
- 700 L old **ROVING EYE** Same as 710
- 710 M 2008 **ROVING EYE** (Stambach, R. 1978). Sdlg. #4 12" (30cm) EM. S. light lavender blue; F. lavender blue with white ray pattern in center. Sdlg 68-2438, *I. munzii* breeding X unknown. Bay View Gardens 1978. HM 1980.
- 720 M 2008 **SEA GAL** (Lois Belardi, R. 1993). Sdlg PDI-2. 18" (46cm), M. S. medium true blue; F. white ground washed medium true blue, small yellow signal; ruffled. PHD-8: (Pacific High x Del Rey) X Idylwild. Bay View Gardens 1994. HM 1997, AM 1999.
- 730 L old **SHORT ORDER** Same as 740
- 740 S 2008 **SHORT ORDER** (Ghio, R. 1982). Sdlg. PR-295D 6" (15cm) E-M. S. ochre yellow; F. yellow with brown overlay. Banbury Tapestry X San Vicente. Bay View Gardens 1983. Seed 04

- 750 M old **SPRING DAZE** (Ghio, R. 1982). Sdlg. PR-309AA 15" (38cm) ML. S. lavender; F. lavender, veined white; white signal. PU-199,spot: (Corralitos x Banbury Princess) X ((Greenbriar Contrast x California Native) x Santa Rita). Bay View Gardens 1983.
- 760 L old **SUSIE KNAPP** Same as 770
- 770 L 2008 **SUSIE KNAPP** (Phillips, R. 1970). 12" (30cm) M. Blue gray self. Amiguita X Claremont Indian. Cordon Bleu, 1971.
- 780 L 2008 *tenax* - wild - Cathlamet, Wash 2008 - Pink Flowering - collected by Kathleen Sayce
- 790 L 2008 *tenax* - wild - Lewis County, Wa - bluish-lavender to lavender-lilac-Tim Ross
- 800 M old *tenax* - wild- lavender
- 810 M old *tenax* - wild - pink to rose - Boring, Oregon. Don Clark 1997.
- 820 L old *tenax* - wild- blue/lavender
- 830 L old *tenax* - wild-Dark purple-Yachats, Or.
- 840 L old *tenax* - wild-Silver Star Mt., Clark County, Washington
- 850 L old *tenax* - wild-" "Tarbell summit" ", Clark Co.,Washington, 03
- 860 L 2008 *thompsoni* - wild - Del Norte County, Ca.- Diane Whitehead
- 870 S old **TIDY WHITE** (B. Hager, R. 1988). Sdlg. P17. 20" (51cm), M. Pure white with small yellow signal. Canyon Snow X Pacific Moon. Melrose Gardens 1988. '05
- 880 L 2008 **VALLEY BANNER** (Hardy, R. 1958). 15" (38cm) M. S. white with narrow purple midrib; F. white veined purple, styles red purple. collected *tenax*-*chrysophylla* hybrid. Siskiyou 1968. HM 1970
- 890 L old **VIOLET BLUSH** (J. Marchant, R. 1990). Sdlg. 4587. 12" (30cm), ML. S. violet purple (HCC 733/3); F. red violet purple, deeper red. violet and blue signal, halo, and veining. Sdlg x sdlg. Portable Acres 1990.
- 900 M 2008 **WARM SUNSHINE** (J.Ghio, R.2000) Sdlg. PA-92-O2. 16" (41 cm) EM. Pure gold self. (Point Santa Cruz sib x Osocales) x PC-218N: (Candid x Greeting Card sib). Bay View Gardens 2000.
- 910 S old **WESTERN QUEEN** Same as 910
- 920 L old **WESTERN QUEEN** (Stambach, R. 1967). Sdlg. 52-60 15-16" (38-41cm) M. White self with a few dark veins at the haft. Dark veined sdlg. X Ojai. Foster 1972. HC 1967, HM 1973, Mitchell Award 1976.
- 930 L old **WILD TIME** (J. Ghio, R. 1986). Sdlg. PM-192R. 10" (25 cm), E. Maize gold self, maroon signal. Roaring Camp X PP-251L: (Simply Wild x PR-319M, Camp Capitola sib). Bay View Gardens 1987.
- 940 S old **WISHING** (Joseph Ghio, R.1992).Sdlg.PH-274Z.14" (36 cm), ML. S.white ground with strong blue-violet plicata markings; F.white ground, widely edged with blue-violet lining and dotting, yellow signal. Enclosed X Los Californio. Bay View Gardens1993. HM1998.

SOME 2008 PACIFIC COAST NATIVE IRIS HIGHLIGHTS IN OREGON

Debby Cole and Jean Witt

The spring of 2008 was a cool, wet season in the Pacific Northwest, and what we had come to consider a “normal” bloom season seemed postponed by two to three weeks. Jean and I felt we had a fair chance of seeing the PCNs in Oregon’s upper elevations still in bloom – and no longer under snow! – in the last week of June, and we were right.

We drove south from Seattle to Roseburg on Tuesday, June 24 between 9 am and 5:30 pm, stopping for occasional diversions – a sandwich lunch and gasoline in Kelso, then fresh strawberries and raspberries near Salem, then lemonade beyond Eugene – en route. We spent the night at the Windmill Inn, an SPCNI favorite, and enjoyed the evening spent with old friends in Roseburg. Our purpose in going there was to recheck sites in the Coast Range where we had previously seen PCNs in bloom, to see if they were still in bloom at such a late date, and to visit other sites for whose bloom we had previously been too early. We got lucky, and got to see a little of everything.

Wednesday we breakfasted early, bought gasoline, and restocked the larder with sandwiches and water, then headed west on Highway 42 to Myrtle Point and south through Powers on Highway 33. About 12 miles south of Powers we took Forest Service Road 3353 to the right at China Flat, about half a mile in behind the campground to a clearcut we had visited in a past year. Amazingly, there were still a few *I. innominata* in bloom in the open, a sun-faded yellow in company with native rhododendrons, evergreen huckleberry and a lovely pink honeysuckle, possibly *Lonicera hispidula*. Back down around the bend, in the shade 20 feet lower, a few dark yellow irises were still in bloom along the road edge in the second-growth forest, with thimbleberry, poison oak and sword ferns.

We returned to the highway (FSR 33) and continued south toward Agness, enjoying tiger lilies on the verge just before the next bridge to the right. Myrtle Point had not been misnamed, as the “daphnes” of Daphne Grove were also myrtle trees/bushes. We turned uphill to the east onto FSR 3348 at 94 miles from Roseburg, about 17 miles south of Powers; mileage for the rest of the day is given from that point. Two and a half miles up FSR 3348 we were rewarded with yellow *I. innominata* blooming on a north-facing bank to our right, with *Linnaea*, yellow violets, *Trientalis* (star flower) and salmonberry in the ditch. This was rather wet second-growth forest, and we also saw Yerba Buena, native rhododendrons and a nice pink vetch in bloom. At 2.9 miles, *I. innominata* was blooming all along the roadside, and Jean saw a blue *Hydrophyllum* by a stream on the right. Just beyond the “Mile 6” sign we found more *innominata* in bloom. FSR 3358 branches off to the left at 6.1 miles, and just beyond that diversion we found pale yellow *innominata* with red veins blooming with alder and salmonberry in a replanted clearcut with 10-12 foot Douglas firs. There was no poison oak; it may have been too wet and too high there. Our hand-held altimeter read 2020 ft.

Our last sight of *innominata* was on the left road bank at 9.9 miles up FSR 3348. Then, at 11.6 miles, we started seeing lavender *I. tenax* on the left, at what our altimeter said was about 2000 ft. elevation. It had long style arm tips here, and we wondered if it might be a hybrid with *I. chrysophylla*, which we knew grew in the area. At 12.1 miles (by Milepost 12) we saw a short orchid with yellow-green foliage and divergent spathes, at an elevation of 2150 feet. At 12.2 miles, just beyond road 5000, we saw more lavender *tenax*, which continued for more than the next 3 miles, in great sheets along the road. The Eden Valley campground (at about 13.5 miles) had *tenax* ranging from lavender to almost white, which we enjoyed greatly (as well as the restroom) on our lunch break.

Continuing, we saw *tenax* with rhododendrons at 15+ miles. At 2300’ there were rhodies but no *tenax*, but back down at 2250’ there were many irises on the roadsides in sunny spots. We moved into a burned area with sprouted rhodies and red soil, seeing few *tenax*, and then at 19.6 miles (3200’ altitude) found *I. chrysophylla* in the talus by the roadside. A little further, there was *I. tenax* on the left and *I. chrysophylla* on the right on a bank facing NE with arnica, *Rosa gymnocarpa* and manzanita. Again, as we came to the trail to Mt. Bolivar, we saw both species on opposite sides of the road, then after a side road to the right, there was more *chrysophylla* in the ditch with wild strawberries.

At about 21 miles the area shown as Anaktuvuk Saddle on our 2004 Benchmark Maps Atlas was now signed as Arete Saddle, but fortunately the cinderblock outhouse was still there---and the stubborn clumps of chrysophylla in the gravel drive were still in bloom, with rhododendrons and a shrub oak. Continuing eastward, we found the chrysophylla blooming with *Thermopsis*, at 22.7 miles and about 3600' elevation, again all along the roadside.

At 23.1 miles and about 3400' elevation, we saw a strongly orchid *I. tenax*, and discovered that our road was now called Oregon Coast Road 32-8-31, apparently as a result of transition from Forest Service land to Bureau of Land Management territory. Then, at a broad multidirectional intersection, we took the paved leftmost branch on to road 31-9-35. There were many chrysophylla blooming underneath the wooden sign at the intersection and we saw more along the downhill grade, especially at about 23.9 miles (3000' elevation). In another half-mile there was chrysophylla in the ditch, then tenax on a north slope, and this alternation continued for another mile.

After about 25.8 miles we still saw lots of tenax, even some bluish ones, down to about 1900' elevation, but by 28.7 miles we saw nothing but bloomed-out clumps, probably still of tenax. We had driven this road the previous year and were pretty sure we would see no more iris in bloom along it. At about 29 miles we turned at West Fork onto the north half of the Cow Creek Loop and headed toward Riddle and Roseburg.

We wanted to get back to Highway 42 and visit Lee Walker and his Japanese and spuria hybrids at Ten Mile, and decided to get brave and try a new road in the appropriate direction, so at 44 miles we turned left at Union Creek. Olalla Creek Road went off to our right some 4.2 miles later, and we were reassured. Four miles further, at about 2500' elevation, we saw medium purple tenax with *I. chrysophylla*, but no obvious hybrids. Then, suddenly, we were in trouble. Roads were no longer signed, and we guessed that we might now be in privately-owned forest land with roads purposely left unmarked, even though they show in the atlas. At an unmarked Y we chose the left-hand fork, and at 55.9 miles and 2000' elevation we again saw medium violet *I. tenax*. A very large brown bird sitting in the middle of the road lumbered slowly into the air at our approach; it may have been a large red-tailed hawk or a juvenile bald eagle. Finally, at 63.1 miles from where we entered FSR 3348, we re-encountered Highway 42 and found that we had been on Twelve Mile Road, several miles further west than we thought. Ah, well! We had seen only one other car, but it had been a good graveled road, although narrow. We did find Lee Walker's place and enjoyed the tour of his spuria hybrids, especially one rich chocolate one. The season was so late that his Japanese were still only just barely in bloom, and the wonderful Craola hybrids just starting, so we still had time for showers in Roseburg before dinner with Lee at Jack and Phyllis Finney's home. The captive audience was treated to Lee's slides of some of the fascinating patterns and colors he's encountered in his hybridizing. He is playing with SDBs as well as spurias and Japanese iris; can PCN be far behind?

Thursday morning we headed north on I-5 toward Springfield. We detoured several times to check out sites where some Roseburg contacts had reported seeing irises, but the lowlands were bloomed out. At Springfield we went about 10 miles up the McKenzie Highway to visit Ken Hixson, who moved there from the Eugene area about two years ago and still has lots of seedlings in pots – PCN, rhododendrons, California poppies, roses and much more! We were glad of the chance to get acquainted with the person who is now the Almanac's representative in Oregon. We let him know that Lorena Reid, who has hybridized sino-Siberians, Cal-Sibs, Japanese irises and other fun things, lives just a few miles further down his road.

We stopped for gasoline and lunch, then drove back to I-5. We continued north to Highway 20 and drove west by Corvallis and Philomath to highway 34, the route up to the Mary's Peak Wayside at the Alsea Summit, a 1200' pass. Half a mile east of the pass we saw an isolated clump of purple tenax, and began to hope. We turned onto the Mary's Peak Road at the summit, and saw more and more tenax after we turned, over a total distance of maybe eight miles and up to 2800 feet in elevation. The blossoms here were more lavender-blue than orchid, ranging from light to dark. We may have been too early to see them blooming higher up, or they may be naturally limited in altitude. We weren't able to make a thorough examination but couldn't find them in the meadow at 3400', just below the highest

parking lot. There is a lovely view of the Three Sisters peaks to the east, and a gentle hiking trail meanders about half a mile up to the summit of Mary's Peak at 4000'. As it was getting late, we retraced our route to Corvallis, and wound up staying on I-5 in Albany, slightly further north. Someday I want to find out who Mary was, and what she did to have so much interesting territory named in her honor.

On Friday (June 27) we drove north on I-5 almost to Salem, then east on Highway 22 along the North Santiam River toward Detroit Lake, turning south at Gates to find the Monument Peak Road. It was NOT clearly signed, but the road configuration of Gates School Road matched that shown in our Atlas – and there were irises after the Santiam Horse Camp, from which the following mileages are measured.

Again, we were in a second-growth Douglas Fir forest, and we were on the major logging road. We spotted a few iris leaves and the first two tenax flowers at 1.2 miles in and 1200' elevation, but did not find noticeable roadside bloom until 2.2 miles in and 1800' elevation. We pulled off beside a blocked-off side road into a clearcut replanted with Douglas Firs now 20' tall, and found many young iris plants among the trees and shrubs. The flowers were very large here – 3" across – and pale blue, pale lavender, pale pink, and white, with orange signals sometimes crossed with radiating purple veins, poised atop two-flowered stalks maybe 12" tall. Co-foliage included brake (bracken) fern, salal, alder, maple, willow, and the native blackberry plus both alien species. We saw no sign of the pale yellow tenax Jean remembered from a SIGNA fieldtrip to the area in the 1970s, which may have been on a more eastern road. We drove as far as 6.1 miles into the area, to an altitude of 3400', but found that bloom stopped (although the iris foliage continued) beyond about 3200'. The red currant and wild rhododendrons were magnificent. We enjoyed our lunch at a bend in the logging road clothed in many clumps of large 15-inch-tall blue-lavender tenax, and explored a few of the smaller side roads, but didn't see much other bloom.

In the interests of science (and because it was still early on a beautiful day) we returned to Highway 22 at Gates and crossed it to the Gates Hill Road to the north. Iris bloom began at 1500' elevation perhaps a mile from Highway 22, but was mostly gone over in the clearcuts below 1650'. Flowers were pale and pinkish; they continued over the summit at about 2000' and on down the north slope of the hill to as low as 1250'.

After about four miles from Highway 22 we came out onto the paved North Fork Road in Elkhorn Valley on the Little North Santiam River. We turned east and after about 1.35 miles saw blue tenax by the roadside with lupine. There were iris blooming in the ditch at milepost 11 from Mill City, and more in the grass by Fall Creek Road. The pavement ended at the National Forest boundary, and we saw no iris beyond that point. We retraced our route to Gates and continued east on Highway 22 to the lovely new ranger station at Detroit, but saw no more iris and returned west to Salem for the last night of our trip.

2009 SPCNI TREK COMING!

Jean and I felt very blessed to have seen as much iris as we did, of several species over a wide range of elevation so late in the year. We think that much of what we saw can be shared on an SPCNI Trek in 2009, and after consulting the Farmer's Almanac, think that the best dates will be June 12-14. Mark your calendar and save your pennies!

PACIFIC COAST IRIS ONLINE PHOTO CONTEST

Do not forget to keep an eye out on the official SPCNI website for details of the upcoming online photograph contest. Last year some beautiful photographs were submitted in both sections, so this year hunt through the many photographs you took during the bloom season and send them Remember there are two judged categories – Landscape and Individual Flower, as well as the People's Choice award given from votes cast by visitors to the SPCNI website.

FIRST VIEW OF PACIFIC COAST IRIS

Text by Ken Walker, photos by Dennis Kramb

Dennis Kramb and I have been friends for nine years although we only met in person this spring. He gardens near Cincinnati, Ohio and I live in near San Francisco, California. In 1999, Dennis found iris photos on my web site and we have been exchanging e-mail ever since. Dennis has been actively involved in various Iris organizations such as the Aril Society International, the Society for Louisiana Iris, and the Species Iris Group of North America. Dennis established an on-line Species Iris Database whose content comes from the community (including himself, of course). It has received more than one million visits since he created it. Dennis expressed an interest in visiting the San Francisco Bay Area for the 2008 iris season, so I invited him to visit me over the weekend of April 12. That way he could see the Mount Diablo Iris Society's Spring Show in Walnut Creek. This year the show was early enough for a good PCN bloom. These iris do not grow well in Ohio. On Friday, Dennis arrived and saw some blooms in my garden.



Like Clockwork

We got around early on Saturday so I could enter some flowers in the Mount Diablo Show. Ryan Grisso was there preparing lots of his PCN seeding blossoms for the show as well as named varieties. Dennis was captivated by the variety of beautiful blooms; he and Ryan talked while Ryan prepared his entries.

Dennis and I had a full schedule so I eventually dragged him away and we went the U.C. Berkeley Botanical Garden, in the Berkeley hills. There was a lot to see there, including a variety of PCN species. For example:



Iris douglasiana



Iris fernaldii

Also in the Berkeley hills, is the Regional Botanic Garden which displays plants from all over California. There we saw more species.



Iris bracteata



Iris munzii

The garden had potted plants out in preparation for an upcoming sale. PCNs were included.



In order to see the end of the Mount Diablo show we left the Berkeley hills in mid afternoon. Dennis took lots of photos at the show; here is a sampling.



Debby Cole was visiting Gary Knipe that same weekend. They showed up for the show and met Dennis. Dennis and I were already scheduled to visit Gary the next morning. I believe the following are all seedlings. You can tell that blue is a color Gary is working with!



We joined Gary and Debby on a trip to Castle Rock State Park on the crest of the Santa Cruz Mountains. We were too early for *Iris macrosiphon* at that elevation, but Dennis and I were to see that species in cultivation at the end of the day and in the wild on the next day. After lunch we parted ways. Dennis and I proceeded to Big Basin Redwoods State Park where we saw *Iris fernaldii* growing in the wild.



Iris fernaldii



Iris fernaldii, with perhaps some *I. macrosiphon* influence

We ended Sunday with a stop at the U.C. Santa Cruz Arboretum which has both species PCNs and cultivars in its collection.



Iris innominata [*Iris thompsonii*]



We started Monday by driving to the town of Navato. Ryan met us on his morning break to point us a trail in the Indian Valley Open Space. Both *Iris macrosiphon* and the Marin Iris grow here. The Marin Iris has color like that of *Iris fernaldii* but its flower structure is intermediate between *I. fernaldii* and *I. douglasiana*. Some plants of the Marin Iris showed an inclination toward *I. macrosiphon*, but most of the dark purple *I. macrosiphon* were growing in bright light and the pale Marin Iris were growing in significant shade. Sometimes you could see both plants from the same point on the trail without the populations overlapping.



Marin Iris



Iris macrosiphon

From the Indian Valley Open Space, we drove to the Point Reyes National Seashore. Just outside of Point Reyes, we spotted yellow iris growing by the highway. Given their short perianth tube, above the ovary (see pod) and below the petals, and the fact that they were growing happily in full sun, I believe these are *Iris douglasiana*, not the Marin Iris, despite the color.



Iris douglasiana?

Above Limantour Beach we saw fields of "normal" colored *Iris douglasiana*.



Iris douglasiana

That wonderful population of wildflowers concluded Dennis's introduction to Pacific Coast Native Iris.



Dennis (left) and Ken (right) at the Regional Botanic Garden
photo: Ken Walker

SOME SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE SEEDLINGS



Heidi Blyth seedling



Heidi Blyth seedling



Heidi Blyth seedling



Heidi Blyth seedling



Heidi Blyth seedling



Gareth Winter seedling



Gareth Winter seedling



Gareth Winter seedling

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE COLE/WITT EXPEDITION



I. chrysophylla below signpost to 31-9-35



Late China Flat *innominata* with honeysuckle



I. innominata at mile 6.1 on FSR 3348



Pale *tenax* in Eden Valley Campground



Strong orchid *tenax* on 32-8-31



Lavender *tenax* in Eden Valley Campground

SEEDLINGS FROM BOB SUSSMAN'S GARDEN – FROM THE SEED EXCHANGE LIST



Mission Santa Cruz x Pacific Rim



Mission Santa Cruz x Sunol Grade

2008 SIDNEY B. MITCHELL MEDAL WINNER



Wine and Cheese (Vernon Wood)

2008 ONLINE PHOTOGRAPH WINNER!



Liselotte Hirsbrunner's image of expatriate Pacifica iris hybrids growing happily in her home garden in Switzerland won a top prize in the Society's 2008 online photo contest.