

THE TEXAS RAINBOW FLYER

IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

NOVEMBER 1991

JIM LANDERS, Editor

OFFICERS

President Mel Landers
Vice-President Jan Sherrill
Secretary Pat Freeman
Treasurer Pauline Guerrero

NOVEMBER MEETING

The next meeting of the Iris Society of Austin will be November 12th in the Green Room at the Garden Center in Zilker Park at 7:30 P.M. Everyone is urged to attend, and as usual, visitors will be sincerely welcomed. As mentioned at the last meeting, everyone is asked to bring a list of their Irises to the meeting. The registered name of the Iris is all that is needed. We are attempting to make a list of all the named cultivars that are among the Austin group. Your cooperation in this will be greatly appreciated and hopefully we will be able to set up some type of wish list for exchanging and trading Irises between members of the club.

Machines

Lawn mowers and weed eaters won't be of much use as winter arrives and grass quits growing, so get them in shape for winter. This is a good time to have them serviced so that they are ready to go next spring -- lawn mower blades can be sharpened, and machines can be cleaned up. Remove old gas and oil if you won't be using the machines at all this winter, so you'll be ready to start with fresh fuel next spring. Enjoy the time off from yard work, but don't forget to take action to prevent cold damage to your yard.

THE GENUS IRIS

One of the legendary books in the history of gardening is **The Genus Iris** by William Rickatson Dykes. First published in a limited edition in 1913, it subsumed the lifetime knowledge of the world's foremost authority on the Iris. Dykes was not only a classificatory botanist; he was a renowned grower of Irises, a breeder of new varieties, and a collector with a flair for obtaining rare specimens that previous writers had only dreamed longingly of seeing.

The Genus Iris was immediately recognized as a landmark in the literature when it appeared. It established for the first time the classification of the Irises, converting what had been a chaos of cultivated hybrids and varieties, a tangle of false species and confused nomenclature into a clear grouping that made sense from both the botanical and horticultural points of view. This classification has remained the basis for all future work.

In addition to classifying Irises, Dykes prepared a work that all but exhausts its subject. He combs the early literature of the Iris; the structure and distribution of wild and cultivated Irises, Iris diseases; Iris hybrids, raising Irises from seeds; and the borderland plants, like moraeas that have sometimes been termed Irises. The great work, however, lies in the central descriptions of all known Iris species. These included the

complete nomenclature, used by all botanists; distribution; absolutely full descriptions, including pollen; comments about relationship and resemblances to other Irises; special diagnostic features; and a world of miscellaneous information.

One of the most remarkable features of **The Genus Iris** results from the collaboration of F. H. Round, who prepared 47 watercolors of the varying Iris plants. These watercolors, beautifully reproduced, have been considered among the finest botanical illustration ever prepared, and have rendered Round's name immortal among plant portraitist.

For decades this has been a rare book, beyond the means of any but the larger libraries or the most wealthy enthusiasts. Now it is available for every Iris lover, to provide hours of pleasure in reading about his favorite plant. Despite its scholarly stature, most of the work is not technical, and can be followed very easily and with great profit by the layman.

October Meeting Highlights

Plans to do the beds at Elizabeth Ney Museum were canceled. They do not want us to extend the Iris beds. Their plans are for a more formal type garden. Instead of Elizabeth Ney we went to David Grost's yard and helped him with his new beds. Reblooming Iris, donated by Lorraine Dragon, were distributed to the members attending. A suggestion was made to try to plant in Mayfield Park. Beth Alley will see if they are interested.

We have purchased a C D at Texas Commerce Bank.

The planned display of reblooming Iris was canceled. We will try to schedule a time at the Garden Center for next fall.

Mel Landers appointed Pauline Guerrero, Don Freeman, Beth Alley, Florence Foster, and David Grost as a Show Committee for our Spring Show on April 12th.

Members are requested to bring a list of the Irises that they grow to the next meeting.

Also, \$25 will be donated to the Austin Area Garden Council for the new fund that has been established to purchase a Television set and a VCR for the Garden Center.

DALLAS

The Iris Society of Dallas was organized in 1954. Today, it is one of the larger groups of Iris enthusiasts in the state and is known for its activities and the quality of its show. To promote the growing of newer registrations the Society purchases a number of newer rhizomes and presents them each fall as attendance prizes. This program is known as "Christmas in September". Those who receive a gift rhizome agree to return two increases within the next two years to the annual September auction. The Society holds two public sales each year. One in July and the second in September. The rhizomes offered for sale are usually increases from member's gardens. Members of the Society are active in both Regional and National affairs of the American Iris Society. A large percentage are also members of the National Society. There are several certified A.I.S. Judges in their membership. Officers for the coming year are installed at the June Meeting. The year's activities begin in September and meetings are held each month through June.