



Mountains & Plains Iris eNews

Iris news that's fit to print . . .

October 25, 2010

The President's Message *By Stephen Blecher*

Hello Everybody. The Mountains and Plains Iris Society is now well established, and is an affiliate of the American Iris Society. We held our first official iris show at the Botanic Gardens the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and our first iris garden tour the following day. We had perfect weather for both events, and once again I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped make the show and tour a success. The iris sale was held at Tagawa Gardens and was extremely successful, and Tagawa's is a most generous and helpful host. We have already booked the 2011 sale at Tagawa's. Best of all, we now have a solid treasury that we can use to cover outside speakers and other expenses of the club.

I was out of commission for a month with sciatica, but I'm now recovering. As a result I haven't appointed a nominating committee for 2011. With your indulgence, I propose to delay the 2011 election until the winter meeting in February 2011.

The new Plant Society Building at the Denver Botanic Gardens (DBG) isn't ready yet, so we will once again hold the fall meeting at the Daniels Fund Building at Monroe St. and First Ave., in Denver, on Saturday Oct. 30, starting at 12:30 PM.* The club will supply soft drinks and a variety of light refreshments. The program will be a presentation by Vince Christopherson showing the latest patterns and colors of tall bearded irises, discussing the terminology used to describe these patterns, and explaining how they were developed. He is an expert on iris genetics and he specializes in developing varieties that are new and unique. He has written a number of articles in *Tall Talk*, the publication of the Tall Bearded Iris Society, and has given presentations all over the country.

Reminder: Dues for 2011 are now due. Send \$5.00 (\$7.50 for family membership) to Sue McCarthy, 395 Balsam St., Lakewood, CO 80226. We will also accept dues at the fall meeting. If you joined **after** June 30 2010, you are paid through 2011.

**Note — Construction of the new Plant Society Building is underway. Installation of the prefabricated building will begin in November and is planned to be complete early in 2011. The building and its parking lot will be outside the fenced DBG perimeter. This means that entrance fees will not apply.*

Mountains and Plains Iris Sale — The Bottom Line

Sue McCarthy, club treasurer, confirmed that the club's second annual 2010 iris sale, held this year at Tagawa's Garden Center, was a bountiful success. The net sale proceeds were \$5,677. Wow! This means that the club's treasury now contains \$8,629; remarkable!

Editor's Note

A warm fall season has meant that gardening has continued unabated for weeks longer than usual. We are still busy refurbishing iris beds and watering the dry earth to keep the garden alive and well. The promised rain hasn't come yet; maybe next week or the week after that. Eventually Indian Summer will end, the tools will be retired for the winter, and we will finally find time for neglected indoor chores.

In this third edition of the Mountains and Plains e-News, read Richard Nolde's article about the wonderfully successful M&P iris sale, and read tidbits about our guest speaker, Vince Christopherson. Hear him speak on Saturday, October 30 at the Daniels Fund Building in Cherry Creek. Remember that the fall meeting will not include a potluck lunch; eat lunch before arriving at the meeting. Refreshments and light snacks will be provided.

Happy Gardening ~ Glenn Guenterberg (editor) and Patrice Van Vleet (publisher)

Christopherson Comes to Denver *By Glenn Guenterberg*

Iris hybridizer, Vince Christopherson, will describe the colors and patterns being developed for bearded irises and will reveal how it's being done. Christopherson, an expert on plant genetics, experiments with plant stock at his Accent Iris

Garden where he has created many Texas-bred bearded irises. He admits to being hopelessly immersed in everything iris. His interest in irises started when he was a child, but set deep roots while he was an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Arlington. Now he thinks of himself as a full-blown irisarian pushing the envelope to expand irises beyond their normal boundaries. Many of the characteristics he has emphasized in his hybrids should appeal to Colorado gardeners: adaptability to heat, drought, soil alkalinity, and short growing seasons.

Christopherson warns . . .

"Contact with irises can be addictive! Laws should be passed that require warning signs at the entrance to all iris gardens. Little do unsuspecting people know, at

first contact, what an encounter with irises may do to them. Let me say that you too may be drawn down the primrose path. Step by step you

may even turn into a pollen dauber." Let us all give him an enthusiastic welcome at the

M&P fall meeting on October 30. See you there!

'*Calm Assurance*,' (pictured above left) is a 2005 Christopherson introduction that grows well in our Hudson Gardens display bed. Look for it there next summer.

Two more of Christopherson's interesting TB's are '*Helping Hands*' and '*Crystal Fountain*' (pictured respectively left and above right).





Iris Sale a Record-Breaker *By Richard Nolde*

Thanks to the generous contributions of our growers and the dedicated efforts of our volunteers, the Mountains and Plains Iris Society 2010 iris rhizome sale was a great success. I know that it was quite a drive and a challenge to find Tagawa's Garden Center, if you have never been there before, but I think we can all agree that sitting inside in a cooled greenhouse beats standing around under a tent dodging the thunderstorms. The staff at Tagawa's was extremely helpful and their efforts to publicize the sale made a huge difference. We did things a little differently this

year, at the suggestion of their event staff, who do this all the time, and I think that things went very smoothly.

We always try to find good pictures of the irises brought to the sale. If you find pictures on the Internet before you come or you can take them with your camera during bloom season, that would be a tremendous help to Marty and all of us. It is also important to get your lists of irises to her early so we don't have a panic on Saturday morning. A rhizome without a picture is much less likely to sell than one with a picture.

We were fortunate to have Rob Proctor stop by on Saturday evening just as we were getting ready to leave. He was looking for some things to mention on his garden segment on the 9-News Sunday morning broadcast and his contact person at Tagawa's brought him over to our sale tables. We found a few nice looking rhizomes for him to show and talk about and customers were beating on the doors to get those varieties when the doors opened on Sunday. We will surely want to contact Rob several weeks before the sale next year.

We sold quite a few more rhizomes than last year and Jackie Goodwin picked up 210 rhizomes from my house for Elmohr's sale when she was in Denver the following week.

The biggest thanks goes to the volunteers and commercial growers: Lucille, Jerry & Pam, Lisa, Diane, Pat, Jeanette, Marty & Jim, JoAnne, Kathy, Rickie & Don, Lynda, Deborah, Bud & Sue, Bob, Randy, Steve, Orvid, and anyone else I've forgotten, who dug and donated so many high quality irises and manned the tables for the sale. Without our volunteers, we would not have an iris society, much less the rhizome sale, which provides most of our income. It seems like the same folks do all the work each year, and it is gratifying to know that we can count on them to come through. Hopefully, having our sale at Tagawa's will introduce new people to our society and bring them to our meetings. I did have several inquiries during the sale.

By popular request, we will return to Tagawa's for our sale next year on July 23rd, 2011. We have already booked the date on their calendar for a one-day sale next year. Everyone thought that we could do well in one day, if we work the media ahead of time, and it will make it easier on a lot of folks, many of whom were there Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. For those who still work full-time, three days in the middle of iris replanting season is a lot to ask, and I could not agree more.

Fewer than a dozen people dug irises for the sale. I could have donated three times as many as I did this year if I had help digging. I heard the same story from other people too. Next year we may have a shortage of irises for the sale as several members replanted their gardens this year. Plan now to grow plants for the 2011 sale.

Article photos contributed by Steve Blecher.



Dedicated workers, Marty Artzberger, Rickie Morgan, & Richard Nolde, at the iris rhizome sale.

