



PRESCOTT AREA IRIS SOCIETY

May 2012

Volume 9, Issue 3

President's Message

It's June already and a few months ago we could hardly wait for the iris to bloom. Now we are getting ready for our rhizomes sales and our busy season is upon us.

We just had the garden tour, thanks to Sharon Phelps for her hard work putting it together and thanks to Linda Rossman for hosting the potluck.

Saturday, May 19th was the iris exhibit, "Kaleidoscope of Color". What an exciting and rewarding time. 143 iris stalks and 13 floral arrangements were entered by 22 members. The volunteer crew was composed of 22 members and their spouses. Many thanks to co-chairs Carolyn Alexander and Judy Book. I believe our exhibit made a lasting impression on our visitors.

PAIS holds 3 fund raisers every year as a source of income which supports the spring exhibit, meeting programs and upgrading and maintaining the iris beds at the Yavapai Sculpture Garden. In order to make these events successful, we need everyone to take responsibility for volunteering to help. Don't assume we have enough workers.

Mark your calendars for our marking party, July 14 at Diane Clarke's home. The participation of members last year was most gratifying. Let us see if we can top that. Now is the time to decide which clumps you will be dividing for the rhizome sale.

We still need 11 volunteers on Saturday, July 21 and 15 workers on Sunday, July 22 at Sharlot Hall Museum. See the sidebar for sales times. We could use a few more helpers at Dan's Garden July 28. Call or email Dan 602-300-5791 or dan@mccoyletc.com to sign up for either sale.

Carolyn Alexander is chairing the July 27 Chino Valley sale and needs six volunteers. Contact her at artwest@cableone.net or 778-1551.

Dan Schroeder

SACKS, SACKS, SACKS, do we ever have them. Roger Osgood and friends collected a large number, Verde Valley members brought over 80 sacks to our April meeting and Patrick Beatty has secured 1,000 brown paper sacks via Safeway and his donation. These sacks were being collected to store the iris rhizomes that we expect to receive from Region 15. Each member of Region 15 (of which we are a member) will receive a large quantity of the iris that were planted for the national convention. We also use a sack for each named variety that is donated by our members. These iris are then sorted, labeled and sold at our annual rhizome sale. SEE THE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE AND DATES ON THE UPCOMING PAIS RHIZOME SALES.

But, I do think that we have enough as of this date...so hold off saving those paper sacks. And many thanks to all who have helped us collect this vast quantity.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 14—MARKING PARTY

RHIZOME SALES

July 21 11 am—5 pm

July 22 12 pm—4 pm

Sharlot Hall Museum

415 W. Gurley Street

Prescott

Friday, July 27

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Lavender Tea House

1097 N. James Drive

Chino Valley

Saturday, July 28

Dan's Garden

10 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

17618 Foothill Rd., Yarnell

AUGUST 11--SILENT AUCTION

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

SEPTEMBER 15--MEETING

NOVEMBER 17--MEETING

MEETING TIME 1:30-3:30 P.M.

1235 E. GURLEY, Prescott



Supreme Sultan
Best Bi-Color



Dream Lover
Best Historic



Study in Black
Most Unusual



Best Artistic Design



Kaila's Dance
Best Tall Bearded



Photos submitted by
Carolyn , Darrell,
Vera and Judy.

Kaleidoscope of Color

Kaleidoscope: a scene, situation or experience that keeps changing and has many different aspects. This definition aptly described our spring iris exhibit this year. Almost every type and color of iris imaginable, including spuria, were on display.

Almost every year it seems that mother nature throws us a curve with a weather surprise and the chair of the spring show gets nervous wondering whether or not there will be enough blooms to display. Again this spring, the exhibit co-chair sent out a plea for iris blooms, any iris blooms. Club members came through as never before! This was the biggest showing of blooms our club has ever produced. There were 143 stalks and 13 arrangements. We had four members who were first time exhibitors. Entering an exhibit for the first time can be an intimidating experience and they are to be congratulated for participating. We appreciate everyone who participated. Start planning for next year!

It is always interesting to see how many duplicate varieties are entered. The duplicate entries were: Caption, Cheetah Cheese, County Cork, Laugh Lines, Vanilla Frappe and Victoria Falls. Only one Median iris was entered due to the lateness of the exhibit.

People's Choice Awards:

Best Tall Bearded -Kaila's Dance	Exhibited by Barbara McLandress
Best Median-Waiting for October	Exhibited by Linda Rossman
Most Unusual-Study in Black	Exhibited by Dennis Luebkin
Best Bi-Color -Supreme Sultan	Exhibited by Linda Rossman
Best Artistic Design	Exhibited by Linda Rossman

Dennis Luebkin has taken over the job of publicity chair and due to his efforts, we had visitors from Flagstaff to Nogales and Kingman to Payson. Thank you, Dennis!

For the first time, we had exhibit income from the sale of potted iris. Diane Clarke, Roger Osgood and Stan Book donated the iris. This income more than offset our expenses. See the financial report on page 7.



My Participation in the 2012 PAIS Exhibit

Darrell Levi

Although I have grown iris for several years, I became serious about it only two years ago. I had never exhibited **before 2012 and would not have done so except for Judy Book's call for more exhibitors. I chose to exhibit the three best iris in my modest garden: Goodbye Heart, About Town, and Pink Attraction.** As I suspected, these iris, while beautiful in their own right, could not compete with those produced by more experienced growers, but no matter.

The experience of exhibiting iris was a learning experience, as indeed has been my participation in PAIS this year. I received valuable advice on exhibiting from Linda Rossman and Carolyn Alexander, and earlier I received good counsel from Diane Clarke on iris care. I thoroughly enjoyed helping to set up and take down the exhibit and most of all, seeing all the beautiful iris.

PAIS Spring Garden Tour May 12, 2012

We escaped the freeze, but the thrips were waiting this year to do their best to keep our iris at their less than lovely presentation. HA, we fooled them. By some luck, the weather held, the bugs decided not to invade in too many droves and our iris looked lovely. We had four gardens to tour plus the Sculpture Garden. I think that all involved were holding their breath that we would not have freezing temperatures which happened the past two years.

It was a grand day starting with our guest hosts at the Sculpture Garden, Diane Clarke and Patrick Beatty. If you missed this garden, please plan to visit next year during the blooming season. Per my count last year we have over 50 varieties of iris in different areas of the garden PLUS over 75 plantings of Dyke's medal winning iris from 1927 to the present in a special section of the garden.

On to Carolyn Alexander's gardens which are always a treat. She outdoes herself planting special beds of iris named "ancient ones", "ageless beauties", "checkers", "Cat alley", "Shout USA", "Chocolate Vanilla Swirl", "Peacock Crossing", and "Candy Cane Lane" to name a few. In addition, there are always so many other plantings to peruse AND she has grass. **I HAVE A PRIZE FOR ANYONE WHO CAN IDENTIFY WHAT TYPE OF IRIS ARE PLANTED IN EACH CATEGORY FOUND AT CAROLYN'S.** EXAMPLE: Her area named "again and again" are rebloomers. The first one who emails me or calls with the most correct answers will win a prize. (HA, if you didn't participate or are not reading your newsletter top to bottom, you don't stand a chance!) Above, I listed eight named areas of iris in her garden, can you name the type of iris growing in them all?



Roxanne and Russell Hull grow such lovely iris. Even with all of that Chino Valley wind, their iris were gorgeous. It was so worth the trip down the dirt road to find a bevy of beauties in the front yard. The garden has beds of named iris, beds of unnamed old favorites and a few historic iris. A feast for the eyes in a rural setting.

What can I say about Sharon Phelps' garden...it is a river of iris. The morning of the tour, a cloud of thrips descended on her red iris (she loves those reds) and by the next day all were being attacked by those worthless creatures! During the tour, she had some help in naming a few of her iris that somehow, Bruno the dog, helped to mix up the markers.

And how can we do without the huge, lovely gardens at "Hummingbird Gardens" hosted by owner and iris lover, Linda Rossman. If you escaped without ordering a "few" additional iris for your garden, you were among the few. Linda hosted our potluck lunch and thanks go to many who brought such yummy delights.

We had over 25 who toured (including five guests) and about 22 who met for lunch. Vera Stewart and Sharon Phelps donated a few door prizes to entertain the attendees.

Neither wind nor bugs kept us from having a great time. Thanks to all of you who helped.

Sharon Phelps





Mme. Chereau



Grand Canyon Gold



Comic Opera



Hakuna Matata



Hull's Garden



An old favorite



Circus Stripes



Sharon's Garden



No name, help!



Bewitchment



Linda's Garden



American Classic

AIS 2012 National Convention

Patrick Beatty

I had the privilege of attending The American Iris Society National Convention hosted by Region 15 in Ontario, California in April, 2012. Since I have a mild character defect that causes my eyes to glaze over if I look at too many different iris in a 24 hour period of time, I used the available time during the bus tours to seek out and question the various growers about how they cultivated their various gardens for the guest plantings of new iris especially for the convention. Alex Stanton of Stanton Iris Gardens told me his main focus in growing iris rhizomes was to use plenty of mushroom compost. He can obtain this locally at an inexpensive price and uses it by the truckload to mix with the soil before planting. He mixes fertilizer with the compost and then tends not to fertilize unless needed. He uses the flat irrigation tape to water his beds.

The Herb and Sara Holk Memorial Garden at the Jurupa Mountain Discovery Center is an all volunteer iris garden cared for by the Inland Region Iris Society. They have 4 raised beds built in 2005 for mostly TBs and several adjacent beds with Louisianas and Spurias and a climate iris seem to love. The volunteers had planted the guest iris rhizomes in the outer 2 rows of each of their raised beds. They have transitioned to starting all their rhizomes in pots filled with a mixture of sand, peat and perlite with some blood meal as the initial fertilizer and then using a balanced fertilizer and alfalfa pellets when the rooted rhizomes are transplanted. They water by hoses at ground level and did not have a permanent irrigation set-up. The second commercial garden was Mystic Lake Gardens in Nuevo, California. Paul Buchheim prepared his garden for the guest iris rhizomes over a 3 year period. He started by placing plastic over the beds to kill and compost the weeds. A winter crop of Barley and alfalfa pellets were introduced into his soil and he tilled down several feet with a striker bar pulled by his tractor. He mulches with wood chips from a horse farm and uses the flat irrigation tape. He showed me how he could dig down a foot or more without a shovel in his iris rows.

The Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Moreno, California planted a special guest iris garden using a professional staff and numerous volunteers. There was no one available to discuss the iris plantings. They did have a special exhibit for AIS visitors which consisted of several dissecting microscopes with magnified dissections of various iris parts for viewing.

The two commercial and the two volunteer gardens and their methods of cultivation made for lots of opportunities to view new iris. Some of these will eventually make it to Prescott for our July rhizome sales.



Greatest Show on
Earth, Kerr '10
Franklin Cook Cup



Easy Being Green, Richards '09
President's Cup Award



Man's Best Friend , IB
Black '08
Ben R. Hager Cup
Favorite Median Iris

Treasurer's Report for the Month ending May 31, 2012

dated 6/1/2012

\$ amount = value of donated items

INCOME

Garden tour guests @ \$5 each	25.00
<i>In kind Donations received-printing, ice, goodies/iris show</i>	31.21
Iris Show income from % vendor sales (Carolyn A, & Solar Stuff)	149.50
Membership Dues (most dues come in 2nd half year)	36.00
Retail Sales (markers, culture books, postcards,etc)	276.00
Region 15 proceeds (iris auction/sales)	
Rhizome Sales-potted at Iris Show	424.00
Rhizome Sales - iris from members	
TOTAL INCOME	\$910.50

current month total excludes carry over 1/1/2012) & In kind to show correct bank & checkbook balance

EXPENSES

<i>Previous year expense correction: Carolyn Alexander</i>	
AIS Convention donation	
AIS Convention PAIS publicity/ad	
AIS affiliation & dues for Exec. Board	
Gifts	
Garden tour expenses	38.21
mail box rental/pym't incl.2 yrs rental	
meeting/program expenses-supplies, food, restaurant/speakers	
newsletter (printing & postage)	
Office supplies/Admin. Costs (incl. gen'l postage)	
plant markers purchase for resale	
Region 15 sale/auction of rhizomes, amount to be returned	
<i>In kind reg. 15 donated value of expenditures</i>	
rhizome sale expenses (Sharlott Hall)-includes rent \$350	13.50
Sculpture garden expenses, fertilizer, Dykes, mulch	32.88
<i>In kind Sculpture garden expenses</i>	
Spring Iris Show/Exhibit expenses-non judged	163.21
Spring Iris Show reimbursement 80% vendor sales (C.A.)	95.60
<i>In kind iris show expenses donated</i>	
Storage unit rental	
Travel expenses for board members AIS nat'l convent. CA in '12	
web site-prepaid 3yrs '10domain+2yrs '10 hosting	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$343.40

TOTAL PAIS BANK ACCT & PETTY CASH 5/24/2012 **6,897.71**

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon S. Phelps, Treasurer

Another Challenge

The blooms are gone, the weeds are growing and the blooms talks need to be cut off. **Don't feel let down, a new season of iris gardening has just begun.**

Now it is time to decide which iris clumps need to be divided. As the clumps begin to spread, they frequently grow into the neighboring iris clump if they have been planted too close together. The best time to have defined these clumps was during bloom. However you can still tie florists tape or a string around the base of the clump so when it is dug and given to the rhizome sale, the rhizomes from two varieties are not accidentally intermingled.

Perhaps you have purchased a rhizome you were particularly interested in growing, only to discover at bloom time, that the iris was not identified correctly. Please be diligent in keeping your iris correctly named.

July 14 is our marking party and more details will follow in the next newsletter. Save the date. Make a list of the iris which need to be divided. Rhizomes for the sale should be dug just prior to July 14.



The Iris Transition (Spring to Summer)

Carolyn Alexander

So the bloom is over and what happens to your iris plants during this transition period before July? Actually, this is an interesting question and the answer helps explain why iris are transplanted during July and August in the Prescott area. Bloom in the Prescott area is just about finished by the end of May and all that energy in the form of starch that was stored in the rhizome has been used to form bloom stalks as well as causing an overall increase in leaf growth and enlargement.

Do iris go through a period of dormancy after bloom? A number of iris writers say this is so. Actually, iris are not "dormant" but rather changing the growth pattern from one of bloom (May) to that of plant enlargement and the beginning of new fan development from the rhizomes. The larger the rhizomes and leaves, the more successful this new fan development will be. Smaller, less vigorous plants will produce smaller new fans. New fans developed during this period last year continue to grow as these fans are the 'chosen ones' and possibly will bloom next year. In our environment, water the plants regularly and fertilize around each clump before and after the bloom.

Spring

1. Take photos of your blooms for your own documentation and for the rhizome sale.
2. Double check correctness of variety name on plant markers. Go to the internet and search by the name of iris for a photo of your flower to verify that it is correct. A good place to search is the American Iris Society Iris Encyclopedia, <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view> which will have an accurate description and usually a photo of the bloom.
3. Update your iris notebook with bloom information and culture notes.
4. If your varieties are starting to grow together, tie a string or florists tape around the base of the clump to separate clumps so you will know where to dig in the summer.
5. Begin thinking about which iris you will be dividing that are getting too crowded.

Summer

1. Cut off all spent bloom stalks near the base of plant. Leaving the stalk will take nourishment from the plant.
2. Give your iris a feeding of neutral fertilizer, either granular or foliar such as 10-10-10. If you are growing rebloomers, consider feeding them Triple Super Phosphate to encourage the next bloom cycle.
3. Any mystery iris that were not true to name can be dug and given to someone who doesn't care about the named iris.
4. Plan what your next beds will look like.
5. Make a list of iris clumps you will dig and donate to PAIS.
6. Watch for sales on potting soils, fertilizers and topsoil. For maximum bloom replenish soil every 2 years in the iris beds.
7. Keep your beds weed-free and be on the lookout for grasshoppers, aphids and thrips.
8. To insure newly received rhizomes are disease free before planting, soak rhizomes in a weak 10% bleach solution (10 parts water to 1 part bleach) for 5 minutes, rinse and let dry thoroughly before planting.

A colorful, hand-drawn style graphic that says "Happy Birthday!" in various colors and fonts.

6/1	Michael Morgan	7/9	Judy Columbo
6/12	Ray Floyd	7/19	Jane McGraw
6/17	Gerry Snyder	7/23	Sharon Phelps
6/19	Valerie Casale	7/25	Valerie Phipps
6/24	LaVon Levi	7/26	Judy Morgan
7/6	Diane Clarke	7/26	Victor Velonis

PAIS Officers

President Dan Schroeder Dan@McCoyEtc.com

Vice President Patrick Beatty patrick.beatty@att.net

Secretary Vera Stewart flwrlovr@cableone.net

Treasurer/Membership Sharon Phelps
ssphelps12@gmail.com

PAIS website: <http://prescottirissociety.org/index.htm>

Iris Encyclopedia web site:
<http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view/Main/WebHome>



Up Coming Meetings

September 15— Dan Schroeder acquatics, Louisianas in a pond setting*

Candy Peters—How to Identify an Unknown Iris

November 17 Linda Rossman—**The ABC's of Fertilizer**

***How much more rhizome planting training do we need? Well don't miss the September 15 meeting when Dan will explain what a horse and kitchen broom have to do with planting rhizomes.**



Why Plant a \$50 Iris in a 10 Cent Hole?

Linda Rossman

Preparing the planting hole when digging and dividing your rhizomes

You can dig your iris anytime from now to the last week in August. **If you are planting your iris closer than 18" apart, make your holes at least 12 to 14 inches around, but remember you'll have to divide more often than every three years.** I recommend digging a hole the size of a tire rim, remove the dirt and the rocks. Rock removal is easily accomplished with a box screen made of hardware cloth (wire mesh). I then mix the dirt with 50% forest compost. Place the mixture back into your hole and fill hole with water; this will settle all air pockets. In the next day or so when you can pack the soil down without getting muddy then you can plant your iris. Remember not to plant if your soil is still real muddy, your iris will settle lower then you want them to. You should be able to pick up the soil and have it fall through your hands. Moist but not soggy!! If you must, you can add to the prepared hole a tablespoon of bone meal, and a tablespoon of cottonseed meal, mix well with the soil. **Do not use any more than that. After I plant, I'll use a mixture of Monty's joy juice and molasses, water well and then keep the iris moist but not soggy.** Repeat fertilizer/molasses every 2 weeks. I use 3-4 TBS. molasses to a gallon of water. **Follow the manufacturer's directions for adding the liquid fertilizer. Spring is the preferred time to add bone meal and only a small amount per plant.** Scratch it into your soil, water well and do not get any on your rhizome.

Potting iris from the auction, rhizome sale or rhizomes received through the mail

- * **It is best to pot your iris in one or two gallon pots first, that way you'll be able to keep your iris moist and can check on how much water they are getting.** I use fifty percent natural soil and fifty percent forest blend compost. Stay away from compost that has cow and or chicken manure in it. Compost with horse manure is okay. Good compost is essential to starting root development. Get the iris off to a good start with three to four tablespoons of unsulphured molasses to one gallon of water plus a liquid plant food with 2-15-15 or 8-16-8. Remember your iris need to get a good root system started before the first frost. Now you are ready to prepare your planting beds. It takes around three weeks for your iris to develop roots. By using pots you not only save water, but you can use less of your compost mixture. When fans start to appear, your iris are ready to be transplanted into the prepared beds.
- * **If you get your iris dug and don't have time to replant them immediately, you can pot them until you are ready to plant.** Remember to harden them off first. Hardening them off means that after you dig them, wash the dirt off the roots, mark them, trim them, set them in a cool place for three to five days. **Once you dig your iris up the roots die, so don't think you can save them.** They will need to dry.
- * It is possible to divide the clump with a shovel and immediately replant the cut off portion in a new hole with renewed soil and fertilizer.

Morris and Maxwell Memorial Awards

Who are the awards honoring?

The Most Unusual Iris award honors Dorothy Morris, a master gardener and plant lover extraordinaire. She attended meetings when the club was be an extension of the Phoenix Sun Country Iris Society. When AIS officially formed, Dorothy was the club's first Vice President. Later she became treasurer. She was a dynamic advocate and enthusiastic supporter who served on the board until her death in 2006.

Dorothy had a green thumb and grew everything you could imagine on her Williamson Valley property. She had a vegetable garden, flower gardens, iris bed, indoor plants, lovely hollyhocks and a host of plants to numerous to mention. To top it off, in her entry patio, there was a small pond full of beautiful, Louisiana iris. Dorothy not only knew how to grow everything successfully, but she willing shared cuttings and entire plants with anyone that visited her home.

Dorothy frequently purchased her iris from Golden's Iris Garden. One time when I was placing an iris order at the same garden, the owner informed me that one of the iris I had chosen was one of the his more unusual selections and that Dorothy frequently selected "way out" iris.

Dorothy's unexpected death after a brief illness, was a shock to club members and the decision to honor her memory was a decision the board made soon after her passing. Bob Morris, graciously donated all of Dorothy's iris to the club to distribute to members or sell at a rhizome sale.



Charles Maxwell, received the first place award at our first club iris exhibit. He was a soft spoken, tall stately gentleman who had been active in the Prescott community since 1974. He joined PAIS in 2003 and became an active member almost immediately. He willingly volunteered to help the fledgling club in any way possible.



A fond memory I have is of the club's first rhizome auction. One of our club members acted as auctioneer and at first the bidding proceeded at a very slow pace. Then Charles started bidding because he wanted some new stock for his hybridizing program and the auction became a lively, spirited, affair.

It was several months after Charles joined the club that members discovered he was hybridizing iris. Charles gave several club members his newly hybridized iris to grow in their gardens to determine how well they would grow in different gardens in the area. As a condition of growing the iris, the recipients were expected to give a detailed report of how well the iris grew.

On a visit to Charles home, guests were invited to view his extensive iris notebooks where he kept track of all the iris he grew and the iris he hybridized. No visit was complete without a trip to the backyard to see his iris beds. The entire backyard was full of row after row of iris. Charles' seedlings were never introduced, but some may still linger in members' gardens. Harriet Maxwell unselfishly invited the club to dig up all the iris from the backyard to use for whatever

purpose fulfilled the club's needs. Several of the iris were transplanted to the front yard for Harriet to enjoy.

Because several of Charles' seedlings were bi-color, it was decided this would be a fitting way to honor Charles' memory.

Judy Book



Iris Add Majesty - Mrs. Kuntz's Prize-Winning Variety
Originally from Plants Alive magazine, August 1978, by J.D.Foraker

Talk about beginner's luck. On her first attempt at breeding iris, Lois Kuntz created the Debby Rairdon variety which later won the Dykes Medal, the highest award in irisdom.



Debby Rairdon blooming in Sculpture garden

Housewife, mother of two, grandmother of ten--Mrs. Kuntz had belonged to the American Iris Society for years. After reading in one of its publications how simple hybridizing was, she went out and randomly crossed two iris, "For the fun of it. It sure is simple."

Twenty seedlings resulted from her cross. When they bloomed, "They were a kind of muddy, ugly pink, most of them. I just threw them away." The last seedling to bloom looked different. Very slow to open, it finally unfolded into a yellow and cream-white bloom. Mrs. Kuntz thought, "This is kind of nice. I guess I'll keep that one." It had exceptionally

good substance (thickness and strength). "Rain and wind would hit it; it just stood there. Still, I had no idea it would someday be a prize-winner. I just thought it was a nice iris."

Friends spread the word about her lovely iris with the wonderful substance. A dealer-grower named Mrs. Noyd, now retired, came to see the beauty. "Now, that iris ought to be introduced into commerce," she proclaimed.

Mrs. Kuntz knew nothing about introducing flowers, so she gave Mrs. Noyd some rhizomes. Mrs. Noyd planted them in her garden. Delighted with the variety's performance, she introduced it through official American Iris Society channels, sending rhizomes to test gardens all over the United States.

Mrs. Noyd informed Mrs. Kuntz, "It's got to have a name." She provided Mrs. Kuntz with the address of the registrar. Mrs. Kuntz's granddaughter Debby, who was about eight years old at the time, had already asked her grandmother what she intended to name her creation. "Well, I guess we'll call it Debby," decided Mrs. Kuntz. Debby was thrilled. But when Mrs. Kuntz wrote the registrar, he replied that it couldn't be called 'Debby' because they already had a 'Debby'. 'Miss Debby' was also rejected. "I couldn't very well change the name at that point. Debby'd have been so disappointed. Finally, I thought to put her last name on it. They accepted that."

Each year from 650 to 850 new iris varieties are registered with the American Iris Society's registrar. Many are the products of amateurs like Mrs. Kuntz. Only a handful possess the qualities needed to be sold nationally. Mrs. Noyd received good reports about Debby Rairdon as it moved up the iris ladder. Debby first got honorable mention from the American Iris Society in 1966. In 1968, Mrs. Noyd called to inform Mrs. Kuntz her iris was one of 12 to receive the national Award of Merit. Mrs. Kuntz was understandably surprised. Judges from across the country voted Debby Rairdon top iris of the year 1971. Mrs. Kuntz said, "When it won the Dykes, I about fell over."

There was no presentation ceremony for Mrs. Kuntz. "I had a letter telling me I'd won and they told me to watch for the medal. The medal came through the mail from England."

Mrs. Kuntz once met an iris nurseryman who puts out catalogs. "He said out of thousands of seedlings they may keep maybe four to observe. Most of them they throw away." She still can't believe that out of only 20 seedlings she discovered such a prize as her Debby Rairdon.

Mrs. Kuntz could have made a good profit from Debby Rairdon. But she made a wrong choice. "Mrs. Noyd asked, 'Shall I pay you, or would you like to have a percent?'" "I should have taken the percent because she told me afterwards that she did very well on it. She paid me \$150 in cash and gave me \$150 in iris. At that time, I thought it was great. But if I'd done it the other way, I'd have made a great deal more."

Mrs. Kuntz will never breed another iris. But, "If I were doing it now, I'd pick not necessarily the biggest iris, but the nicest shape—where the standards are held up and not floppy. I'd cross that with one that I liked the color of."