

The SUBURBAN and COUNTRY HOME FLOWERS, FRUITS and VEGETABLES

EDITED by EDWARD C. VICK

The Pleasure and Profit of Growing Iris—Leading Varieties

The kind reception given my recent paper on the herbaceous peony has prompted the request for a similar article on the profitable growing of the tall bearded iris.

The formerly used term of German iris was never correct, as it included many forms not botanically called "germanica." The French name of fleur de lis is familiar to all.

The English, Spanish, Siberian and Japanese iris are for a variety of reasons eliminated from this discussion, as are all dwarf sorts which have stems too short for cut flower purposes.

In our study of this one great group of iris there are possibilities for profit from the manufacture of face powder, perfumery, dyes and flavoring extracts, which we will leave to the chemist and confine ourselves to considering the iris from the florist's standpoint.

There is hardly anything grown that can be moved with as little regard to season as the iris. In the spring if a short plant is standing behind tall ones, move it forward any time, even when flowering, and it will go on the same as ever.

When moving iris cut back the foliage to a height of four inches and remove most of the fibrous roots. If the leaves are not thus trimmed when boxed for shipment the plants require more space and may be injured by heating in transit.

The regular shipping season is after August 20 and until the leaf stalks are not over four inches in height in the spring, having when the ground is frozen. In late years quite a little local transplanting of iris is done two weeks after they are through blooming in June.

To demonstrate the tenacity of life of an iris root, I have cut all the foliage off a rhizome together with all the fibrous roots about July 1 and placed this tulip like root on a shelf in the house, without any moisture, and planted it out of doors two months later and it bloomed the following season.

Any one can divide the rhizomes, as the heart roots are called, leaving one tuft of leaves to each section of root. To obtain the greatest number of divisions the plants should be lifted every two years. If short of land they can remain undisturbed for many years, but they do not multiply as rapidly.

Plant in rows two and a half feet apart by ten inches between plants down the row. Never set them more than one and a half inches deep in the ground. Though considered an aquatic they do best in a well drained location.

When a blooming stalk is cut and developed in the house every bud, often nine in number, will open in its series even if it takes ten days to do so, providing the water is frequently changed and the stems shortened. The withered blooms must be snapped off before they begin to curl.

The local florist growing anything out of doors can do no better than to raise iris, and there are better some varieties at their best on Memorial Day.

They are very dependable bloomers, come earlier than most annuals, increase rapidly, require but little water, thrive even in partial shade and poor soil, and never need covering in winter.

No other flower has so many combinations of color, especially of the delicate and unusual shades, and the name of rainbow flower is most fitting. They are absolutely hardy, as beautiful in form, texture and coloring as any orchid, and many are delightfully fragrant.

The new varieties of recent introduction so far surpass the old sorts that a modern list of best varieties is largely made of new names.

In tabulating the desirable varieties of tall bearded iris it seemed unwise to try to educate the public up to a botanical classification, because it was often found to be totally at variance with the usual grouping by color.

For instance, we find botanically deep purple, like Kochi and Germanica, lined up with neglectas like Arch- eveque, Monsignor and Black Prince, and pallidas like Caprice and Edouard Michel.

Two things were dominant in making the division by color. First the decided shades, like purple, violet, yellow and white, were separated. Second, so many desirable yellows and ambers or bronze sorts appeared that all not really yellow were put together in a class as bronzes. The same condition prevailed among the violets, so we rather arbitrarily divided them into blue violet and pink violet. Finally came those not included with the others, having a white ground variously mottled or pencilled, which for want of a better name we called "frilled." The universally known Mme. Chereau belongs to this class.

When the standard or erect petals vary from the falls, or lower petals, the bloom is classified by the standards. This makes seven distinct groups as to color.

Next to consider is time of blooming to obtain a well distributed list covering representatives of striking individuality over the greatest range of time.

As in our study of the peony, we have also made a "master list of iris." Here are first installed the absolutely unassailable varieties, then others are temporarily put into their respective sections until they finally demonstrate their final fitness to remain or are superseded by similar but more desirable sorts. A consensus of those studying together, assisted by the

judgment of the large number of discriminating buyers who make their selections in the field, determines the most valuable. A test of five years is given to assure ample opportunity for full development. The annual records also includes the constitutional traits, and these share in settling which are to be carried.

Not more than seven kinds are wanted in a section and less are preferable to keep the maximum within fifty varieties. A preference is given to those whose standards and falls are of a general similar shade, as when massed they best carry out a decorative color scheme, though some representatives of two color effects, like Rhein Nixe and Walhalla, are retained.

This program works out as follows: Take Iris Cordella, a very choice, rich purple of the same shade and effect as Monsignor; when blooming side by side people always prefer Monsignor. We therefore, after growing Cordella for five years, sold out our complete stock.

Albert Victor and other forms of pallidas are too similar to the stalwart dalmatics and are not needed.

In my travels I have visited Goss and Koenemann in Germany, the originators of Iris Koenig, which is truly the king of the iris and no longer carry its paternal parent, Maori King, which has such a short stem. They have sent out too many yellow and brown combinations for our list, but Loreley is a gem and the fastest multiplier on my place. Varieties like these have but Sans Souci and Osmian out of the running. On account of its short stem and slow propagating, we prefer the sturdy Rhein Nixe to Clio.

The list of frilled sorts is culled from thirty different forms, all pleasing but not essential.

Upon growing Paro de Neully and Crepuscule side by side for years so little difference was found that the freer bloomer was retained.

For lack of constitution, in our climate, the following very desirable sorts have been dropped—Neglecta Black Prince, Oriflamme, Tamerlan, Diane and Ingelberg.

A delicate pastel shade like Chereau soon bleaches in the field to white and gives way to Mrs. Alan Gray as a more enduring pink. Nuee d'Orange, the storm cloud from France, though true to its striking name, under another appellation would be passed unnoticed as a neutral in the search of prospects for the Hall of Fame.

The following classification represents my study up to date and of course omits varieties not yet thoroughly tested out.

In the brief description given "S" indicates the erect petals or standards; "F" the drooping petals or falls. The inches shown designate the height of bloom.

The varieties are listed in each section in their order of blooming. The earliest appearing at the head.

Reddish Purple.
Kochi (germanica), 24 inches, S. & F. both of the deepest purple. Buds soot blue. Often sold under the name of Black Prince.

Governor Hughes (Fryer seedling), 23 inches, S. deep violet tinged with red, F. still deeper shade. Very large

orange beard, much heavier than on any other sort.
Caprice (pallida), 30 inches, S. & F. a delicate purple blending into a silky lavender at the base. Has a decided grape juice fragrance.

Paro de Neully (pallida), 28 inches, S. & F. a navy blue of roddish tinge, with an ever changing effect.
Edouard Michel (pallida), 32 inches, S. & F. unusual shade of rich reddish purple.

Monsignor (neglecta), 28 inches, S. & F. velvety purple crimson falls. A stately, massive and imposing variety.

Blue Violet.
Walhalla (interregna), 24 inches, S. light violet, F. dark purple, very showy, large flowers. A striking bicolor.

Gertrude (pallida), 34 inches, S. & F. same shade, rare violet blue. Unexcelled for house decoration where a clear uniform shade is desired. Perfect form variety.

Perfection (neglecta), 30 inches, S. fresh lavender, flecked with deeper shade, F. rich velvety lavender, dark reflections. Has more blossoms on one stalk than any other sort.

Dalmatica (pallida), 44 inches, S. & F. delicate lavender with pink reflections. A pastel shade much sought for, with broad glaucous foliage.

Alouzar (squalens), 36 inches, S. blue violet, F. rich ruby slightly veined.

Violaeca Grandiflora (pallida), 33 inches, S. & F. fresh clear violet. Very massive and blooms late.

Pink Violet.
Dorothee (germanica), 30 inches, S. & F. a robin's egg blue blending to deep heliotrope. Iris.

Mrs. Alan Gray (pallida), 32 inches, S. & F. delicate orchid pink all the same shade.
Lobengrin (pallida), 23 inches, S. & F. pink silvery mauve, shading nearly to white at the claw. A tall, strong grower, with wide leaves. Undoubtedly the most desirable of all the pallidas.

Inoline (squalens), 36 inches, The Imperial Mandarin, S. opalescent lilac 3 inches long, surmounting an apron of 3 1/2 inch mauve falls.
Her Majesty (pallida), 30 inches, S. pinkish violet tourmaline, F. deeper shade heavily veined. The most pink variety in the collection.

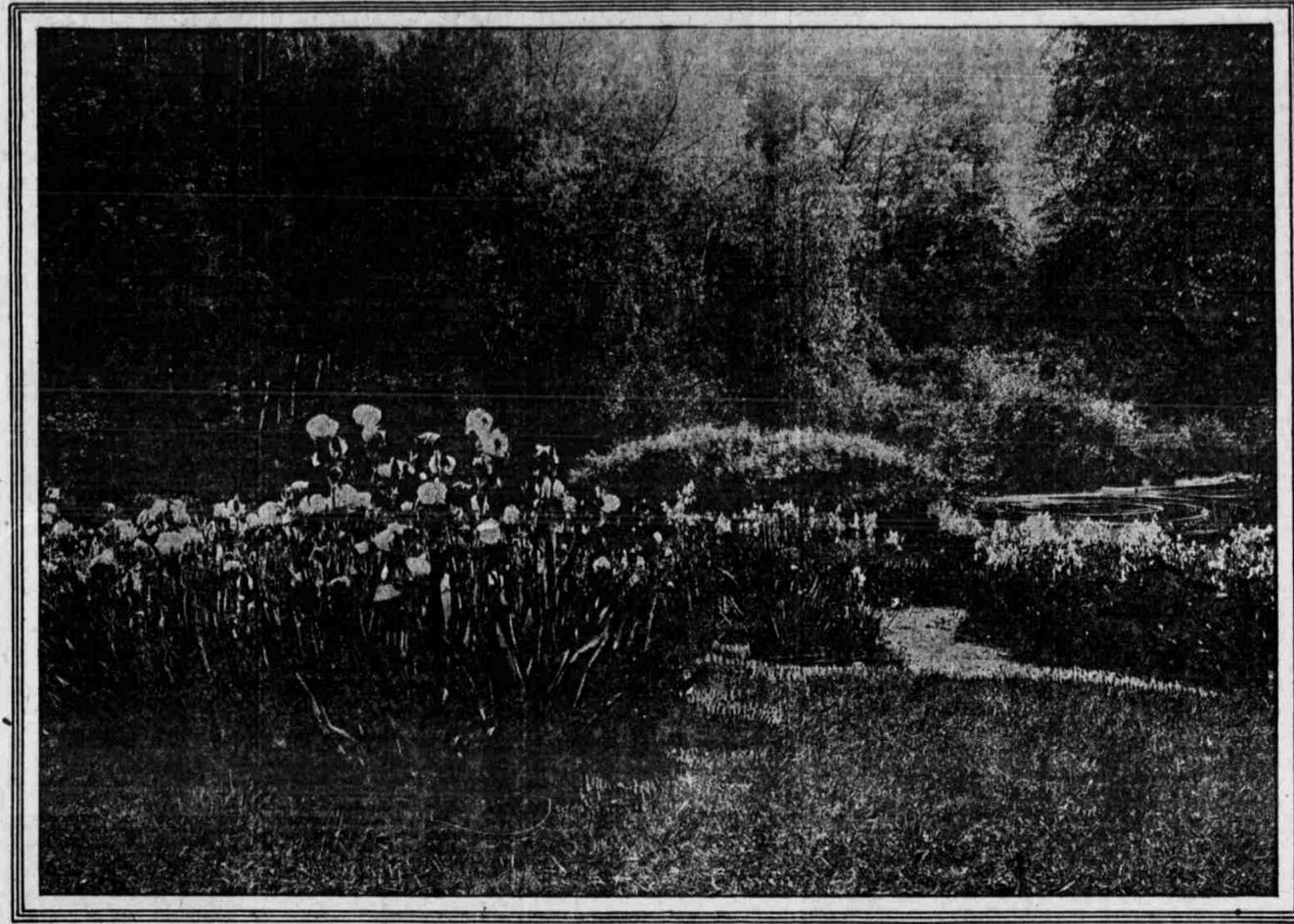


Photo by Miss Grace Sturtevant, Wellesley Farms, Mass.

Iris border surrounding a pool.

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- Perfection blue violet
- Dorothee deep heliotrope
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- Lohengrin pink silver mauve
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IRIS border surrounding a pool.

Photo by Miss Grace Sturtevant, Wellesley Farms, Mass.

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Queen Alexandra (squalens), 30 inches, S. lavender, F. pale purple, very self-reliant in attitude.

Bronze.
Prosper Laugier (squalens), 30 inches, S. fiery bronze, F. velvety ruby purple, like a pansy bloom.

Eldorado (squalens), 33 inches, S. fiery opalescent, F. old gold silhouetted with burnt purple.

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Set out berry bushes this autumn for home use or for fruit for market. There is always a demand for good berries.

Every school where the children are obliged to eat lunch should be equipped for preparing and serving one warm dish with the children's meal.

There would be a great saving to large purchasers of fruit trees if they could place their orders two years ahead.

Nurserymen take chances on what varieties will be in demand in growing fruit trees, and as a result there is usually great waste. A shortage of some varieties and a surplus of others that are thrown away. The trees destroyed are total loss.