



**Almanac:
Society for
Pacific Coast
Native Iris**

**FALL, 1999
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PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE SPCNI TREASURER

Prices listed are for SPCNI members

Check List of Named PCI Cultivars

Lewis Lawyer, Editor: 59 pages. Lists and describes Pacific Coast iris and named hybrids through 1995. \$6.00 postage paid.

Diseases of the Pacific Coast Iris

Lewis & Adele Lawyer: ALMANAC, Fall 1986. 22 pages, 9 photographs. \$3.50 postage paid.

A Guide to the Pacific Coast Irises

Victor A. Cohen: The British Iris Society 1967. Booklet, 5.5 x 8.5, 40 pages, 16 line drawings, 8 color and 6 black-and-white photographs. Brief description of species and sub-species including their distribution. \$4.00 postpaid

A Revision of the Pacific Coast Irises

Lee W. Lenz: Photocopy of *Aliso* original. Booklet 5.5 x 8.5, 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. \$6.00 postage paid.

Hybridization and Speciation in the Pacific Coast Iris

Lee W. Lenz: Photocopy of *Aliso* original. Companion booklet to the above, 5.5 x 8.5, 72 pages, 30 figures, graphs, drawings, and photographs. Definitive work on naturally occurring inter-specific crosses of PCI, including detailed account of distribution. \$6.00 postage paid. If ordered together, both Lenz booklets may be obtained for \$10.00 postage paid.

SEED AVAILABLE

Seed of species and garden hybrids is available for \$1.00 for the first packet and \$.50 for each additional packet from the Seed Distribution Chairman.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President, *Jay Hudson*
33450 Little Valley Road, Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 964-3907

First Vice President, *Richard C. Richards*
55885 Cowles Mt. Blvd., La Mesa, CA 91942.
(619) 464-2180

Second Vice President, *George Gessert Jr.*
1230 West Broadway, Eugene, OR 97402
(541) 343-2920

Immediate Past President, *Bob Ward*
54 Belmont Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204
(501) 664-0013

Secretary-Treasurer, *Terri Hudson*
33450 Little Valley Road, Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 954-3907

Editor, *Steve Taniguchi*
3306 Forbes Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95051
(408) 241-5457

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Seed Distribution, *Deborah Cole*
7417 92nd Place SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Trip Chairman.....

Slide Programs, *Damon Hill*
4613 Maddock Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472

ALMANAC REPRESENTATIVES

Washington & B.C., Canada, *Jean Witt*
16516-25th NE, Seattle, WA 98155

Oregon, *William K. Ferrell*
Post Box 207, Philomath, OR 97370

Northern California,

Southern California, *Michael Monninger*
4861 Brookhill Terrace, Riverside, CA 92509

Central U.S., *Robert Ward*
54 Belmont Drive, Little Rock, AR 72204

Eastern U.S., *John W. White*
193 Jackson Hill Road, Minot, ME 04258

MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris is a section of the American Iris Society; membership in AIS is a prerequisite for membership in the SPCNI. If you wish only to receive the ALMANAC (two issues per year), the annual subscription rate is \$6.00.

Membership	Individual	Family
Annual	\$ 6.00	\$ 8.00
Triennial	15.00	18.00
Life	75.00	100.00

Please send membership-subscription monies to the SPCNI Treasurer.

ALMANAC

DEADLINES: March 1 and September 1. Back issues are available for \$3.50 each, postpaid. Please address the Editor.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As your current president, I wish to thank the board for electing me to serve another term. All of the officers will remain the same and I give a big thanks to them for their participation.

This edition of the *Almanac* is the first for our new editor Steve Taniguchi and I hope you will join me in wishing him the best of luck. Being editor takes a lot of dedication and hard work and Steve is fulfilling the task admirably. If you feel you have something to contribute, please do. The more we share with our fellow members the more we all learn.

I continue to admire our founder Lewis Lawyer in his period of ill health. His knowledge, dedication, and strength of character will always be with us. It would be nice if all of you dropped him a note to thank him for what he has done. His address is: Lewis Lawyer, 4333 Oak Hill Road, Oakland, CA 94605.

We are still in the planning stage of a Spring 2000 trek. Region 14 is having their Spring Regional in Mendocino County and since many of our members will be attending, we hope to have it at the same time so that those who wish to participate will be able to do so. At that time of year we will have fields of *I. douglasiana* in bloom along with hybrids at long time member Mae Lauer's garden, my garden, and the beautiful Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden. As plans are further developed we will notify you of the details in a separate mailing. The date will be the weekend of May 12-13, 2000.

Each year we have a program and meeting at the AIS National Convention which is an excellent way to expose our organization to potential new members. Next year the

convention will be in Dallas and I would like suggestions for a short program. Those of you who are planning to attend, please let me know so that we count on you to help participate.

A major project of mine will be to produce a simple color "Invitation to Join" brochure with information about SPCNI and some beautiful color photos. This is working well for other societies and I anticipate they will be used at conventions, sent to clubs, any other member requests for shows, etc., and with all slide rentals.

Sometimes things are taken for granted in our busy days and special people are not recognized enough. Thank you to Terri for her excellent dedication of keeping track of our members, handling the money, doing correspondence, and all the other responsibilities of being our Secretary/Treasurer. It is difficult to follow in Adele's footsteps but she is fulfilling the task.

We have moved our web site to another service provider which provides sites free of charge to non-profit groups. The new address is pacificcoastiris.org. Thanks to Steve Ayala for his continuing work as our webmaster.

I hope all of you have a happy holiday season and I look forward to seeing you at the convention and trek.



Jay Hudson

FROM THE EDITOR

It is a bit intimidating to take over the *Almanac* from the Lawyers. They have done an excellent job for a very long period of time. When I visited the Lawyers to pick up softcopies of the past *Almanacs*, Lewis showed me how he had everything set up (perfectly, of

course). As I typed up this *Almanac*, however, things appeared a little different. So, the *Almanac* has changed a bit in appearance. Not because it needed a change, but because the software I am using is a more recent (and supposedly better) version than the one Lewis

The opinions expressed in articles and letters appearing in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or beliefs of the SPCNI. Remarks about specific irises, companies, products, and services shall not be considered endorsements by the SPCNI.

was using and it seems to have a mind of its own.

My formal education is mainly in mathematics so I lack the botanical knowledge that Lewis and Adele possess. As such, I am unable to compose technical articles of the sort you have seen written by Lewis and Adele in past issues of the *Almanac*. I had this great fear that I would have nothing to publish for this issue except for my own bumbling experiences growing PCIs. Many of you, however, sent articles, letters, and photographs for publication and I thank you.

I would especially like to thank Richard Richards for the excellent article he wrote on *I. hartwegii australis*, and Terri Hudson for her

invaluable assistance and for providing the pre-printed mailing labels (as Secretary-Treasurer, Terri has the most difficult and exacting of the SPCNI positions). I am most indebted to the Lawyers for the articles they wrote and for all of the help they have provided and continue to provide. This *Almanac* would not have been possible without them. Lewis and Adele are still working very hard for the SPCNI – they didn't know how much work it would be to retire from the *Almanac*!



READ ME!

1. As stated in the Spring 1999 issue, SPCNI dues have increased. See the inside front cover for rates.
2. The prices listed for publications on the inside front cover are for SPCNI members.
3. Terri Hudson, who is in charge of memberships, provides the Editor with the mailing labels for the *Almanac*. Therefore, if you have a change of address it is imperative that you notify Terri Hudson.
4. Michael Monninger is our new Southern California SPCNI *Almanac* Representative. We will have some biographical information about Michael in the next *Almanac*.
5. We are looking for a Northern California SPCNI *Almanac* Representative. Please contact the SPCNI President or the Editor if you are interested in filling the vacancy. A description of Representative duties can be found elsewhere in this issue.

AN UPDATE

Gwenda Harris wrote in to say that her Otepopo Garden Nursery address has changed to: **Rural Delivery 12 O, Oamaru, North**

Otago, New Zealand. Gwenda also stated that her mail order is confined to New Zealand.

IRIS SYMPOSIUM 2000

Gwenda Harris and the New Zealand Iris Society invite all of us to "help the New Zealand Iris Society celebrate their 50th anniversary." The Iris Symposium 2000 will be held at Mount Maunganui, New Zealand from 02 through 06 November 2000. There will be some international speakers, garden visits, and post symposium tours.

For an application form, or further information contact:

Peter Berry
Apartment 8D, Tower 1
1 Marine Parade
Mount Maunganui
New Zealand

The flyer that Gwenda sent me states:
NEW ZEALAND – first country to see the sun, spectacular landscapes and distinctive native flora and the place where many types of irises grow beautifully.

FAREWELL TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF DORA SPARROW

Adele Lawyer, Oakland, CA

Terri Hudson, as Secretary of SPCNI, received a letter from one of Dora Sparrow's sons, Steve, writing for her. He expressed her desire to resign from our society because "her eyesight has deteriorated to the point where she can no longer read, and so, regrettably, she has decided to forgo receiving your publications."

This was not unexpected, since in the last letter Lewis and I received from her in the spring, she said she was about to move to join her son, Steven, daughter-in-law, Ann, and their family. She goes on to say, "I am finding it difficult to write now, but I have enjoyed the wonderful years of communication with my friends and the occasions I have had to travel and meet you. I have such lovely memories."

For three successive years, Dora endured the long flight from New Zealand expressly to go on the SPCNI trips to see the PCIs in their native habitat. These were the first one in 1989, and those in 1990 and 1991. Her enthusiasm in

seeing the fields of iris together with other beautiful Pacific Coast flowers and trees unfamiliar to her added to the enjoyment of everyone on the trips.

She grew and hybridized PCIs in her garden. Although she brought and shipped some of her varieties to the states, none survived the move.

IDRIS, and IDRIS DOT, which have been pictured in previous issues of the *Almanac*, are beautiful in form and color. Although Dora also sent us seed, which germinated readily, the seedlings produced have been what we refer to as "dogs." (Those of you who are hybridizers know that 95 percent of the time this result is par for the course.)

All who have come in contact with Dora will miss the pleasure of seeing her among us on the West Coast. Perhaps those of you who have enjoyed her company will call on her if they should travel to New Zealand or detour from the Olympics in Australia.

EAST COAST NEWS

John White, Minot, ME

I just went out to the garden to take count of stock: I have 28 PCIs, from 1 to 3 years old. One or two have survived 3 Maine winters, 2 to 3 have gone through 2 winters, and the rest made it through the last winter. And all of these were moved last August to a better location, sun and soil wise, into a new garden. Several of them are large enough now to bloom next year. The pink *tenax* that bloomed this year was too early to cross with the one that bloomed two weeks later, see enclosed photo. The one in the photo had nine bloom stalks. I have collected seed from both of them.

I have 32 seedlings from Late *Douglasiana* or *douglasiana* X AGNES JAMES. My older plants are hybrids from the PCI seed exchange. There are some *tenax* plants also.

After ten long years I think I am making some progress on getting some hardy plants. I had some seeds from NIGHT EDITOR and I think some have survived our winters. Some of the plants I moved were in the row of NIGHT EDITOR seedlings.

My plants are growing well this summer and look very vigorous, at least some of them. I do not mulch them to protect them in winter. They have got to be hardy enough to survive our Maine winters without any pampering.

The only one I know of now who is growing PCIs in New England is Richard Kiyomoto and he told me this summer that his are doing very well in Connecticut.

<<http://www.pacificcoastiris.org>>

SPCNI WEB SITE

Steve Ayala, Petaluma , CA stevayla@sonic.net

A couple of months ago, Jay Hudson began looking for a more economical place to house the SPCNI internet web site. Mendocino Community Network, managed by the Mendocino Unified School District, offered to host our site for a reduced rate. So in October, it was moved to MCN.org.

The transition wasn't entirely smooth. For a few weeks, no one could reach the new site at all. The Internet group that licenses domain names and assigns them to specific Internet Service Providers responded so quickly to a request to reassign our "[pacificcoastiris.org](http://www.pacificcoastiris.org)" name, that we were caught by surprise. Toward the end of September the name no longer pointed to Sonic.net (our original host), but it

wasn't until mid October that all our reworked pages were delivered to MCN.

We do apologize to everyone who got the "*Netscape is unable to locate...*" messages during those down weeks. Now everything is pretty much back to normal. The web site address is still:

<<http://www.pacificcoastiris.org>>

When we first started at Sonic.net, we had about 200 visitors a month. This will likely pick up as visitors spread the word about this new resource, the search engines start listing SPCNI in their directories, and other horticultural groups include links to our Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris site on their own web pages.

SHEEP DUNG IRISES

Lois Weston Weeth, Bodega Bay, CA

[From a letter to Adele Lawyer]

Even though I have been familiar with *Iris douglasiana* for years, I knew that other species occurred in California, so I have kept my eyes open in various areas of the state. One of the places I enjoy now is at Yorkville, Mendocino County. This place is called "Sheep Dung Estates" in reference to its history. Perhaps you have seen a recent write-up about it in the San Francisco *Examiner* travel section. Anyway, there are 4 solar cottages tucked away on the hillsides, and it is a delightful unspoiled piece of foothill woodland and savanna. There are 320 acres to explore, no sheep or cattle, and much native wildlife. When I first started visiting, I began a plant list, being a botanist. The procedure was trees first, then working down to flowering plants. So, when I found several different irises, the challenge began. And is still going on, since it seems that there are differences between adjacent populations, and different locations. I go up there several times a

year, in order to cover the seasons, and the iris are usually in bloom in late April through May. There is a wildflower show in Boonville the last weekend in April, and I like to go see what is there, and how they are determined and labeled. The collection varies from year to year, depending on the weather of course.

Just to whet your appetite, here are some photos from April 98 which demonstrate the diversity of species at Sheep Dung Estates.

The folks who own Sheep Dung have just completed another retreat on the hills overlooking Boonville, so now I have more acres to explore. If you would be interested in staying at either place, the address is:

Anne & Aaron

P O Box 49

Yorkville, CA 95494.

ph (707) 894-5322,

website: www.sheepdung.com.

CHIEF SEQUOIA WINS THE 1999 MITCHELL AWARD

Lewis and Adele Lawyer, Oakland, CA

CHIEF SEQUOIA (J. Weiler '91) has been awarded the 1999 Mitchell Medal. John Weiler introduced many award winning Tall Bearded iris varieties throughout his hybridizing years, and was an outstanding pioneer in breeding for reblooming types. In 1991, he introduced his only Pacific Coast native iris varieties, BLUE COCKATIEL, CHIEF SEQUOIA, and WESTERN BLUEBIRD.

These were all crosses between ROVING EYE (Stambach '78) and CLAREMONT BLUEBIRD (Lenz '80). ROVING EYE came from *I. munzii* breeding X unknown.

CLAREMONT BLUEBIRD was ALMA ABELL X Lenz's "Big Purple" seedling. CLAREMONT BLUEBIRD was a strong French Blue.

Of the three introductions, CHIEF SEQUOIA was widely grown and admired. It retained the lovely form of ALMA ABELL and a blend of the blue and lavender colors in its parentage. There are few hybridizers who can claim to have a top winner among the only three varieties of the PCI category that were introduced!

DRACULARITY

Debbie Cole, Mercer Island, WA

[Editor's note: I asked Debby Cole to send me a photo of her DRACULARITY for inclusion in the Almanac. She sent me three photos, one of which is on the color page, and she wrote some interesting notes which are published below.]

DRACULARITY bloomed for the first time in 1998, and is from seed I bought from Joe Ghio, I think in 1995, hence the seedling number 95PG7 (P=PCN, G=Ghio, 7=seventh plant to bloom). I'm embarrassed to say I can't find my bloom notes from last year just now, so I can't say whether the terminal held 2 or 3 buds (I think 3), but last year each stalk had up to 2 branches; this year there was no branching.

Also this year it set no pods, although there were lots last year (this year was very rainy).

For the record, DRACULARITY took Best Seedling at both our clubs' shows last spring, and Best Seedling at the Region 13 Convention this spring. It is dark red, with darker veining into a darker signal; styles and standards seem gold at heart. Both standards and falls have a pinkish-white ruffled 1/8" rim. Jay Hudson's Iris Gallery will introduce it in 2000.

GROWING PCIs IN THE VALLEY OF MEXICO

Dan Jeffers, Mexico

[From a letter to Jay and Terri Hudson]

I've been growing Pacific Coast iris for five years in the Valley of Mexico just outside of Mexico City near the town of Texcoco. The elevation is close to 7,500 feet with the average temperature during January of 55 F and 65 for the hottest month of May. Rainfall is 26-31 inches a year, mostly occurring between June and the end of October. In the village where I live, the trees provide protection from the frosts

that occur during the months of November through March on an occasional basis, and there are flowers blooming throughout the year. The Pacific Coast iris bloom for 4 to 5 weeks during the months of March and April when there is a limited number of plants flowering. The plants are prolific bloomers and have been a pleasant addition to the garden.

IRIS DOUGLASIANA T-SHIRT FOR SALE

Terry Hudson's artist contact, Delo, sketched a group of wild flowers growing on a bank along the beach near Santa Cruz. *Douglasiana* is queen of the scene, with beach strawberry, *Fragaria chiloensis*, and blue eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium bellum*, as attendants at her feet.

A picture of the artwork was shown in the Spring 1999 *Almanac*. SPCNI is offering this

lovely shirt for \$18.00, which includes shipping. Please send your order to Terry Hudson. [See address on Page 2 of the *Almanac*.] Monies will go towards the slide sets, so that more AIS members and societies will be able to appreciate the beauty of Pacific Coast native iris.

I. DOUGLASIANA HERBERT

Our President, Jay Hudson, found this section of a book to be of interest for the "fans" of *I. douglasiana*. Plants Used by the Indians of Mendocino County, California, written by V.K. Chesnut and reprinted in 1974 by the Mendocino County Historical Society was first published in 1902 by USDA, Division of Botany.

Si-Lim' (Pomo-several tribes).-The common flag of the region, which grows in clumps a foot or so high, on hillsides throughout the country. The edges of the leaves are so fine and strong as silk and used to be gathered for the purpose of making the strongest kinds of nets and ropes. As the margin of the leaf is alone used, the work of making anything from it was exceedingly laborious. The silky strands were separated from the leaf and thoroughly cleaned from other tissues by means of a sharp-edged oblong piece of abalone shell, which was fastened to the thumb and used to scrape the fiber. Frank Youree informed me that it took nearly six weeks to make a rope twelve feet long. The rope, which was exceedingly strong and very

pliable, was especially valuable in making snares to catch deer, and on this account it was known as "deer rope." Very few of the snares are now in the possession of the Indians, but one man at Round Valley recently made several to sell to a dealer in Indian curios at Ukiah.

A very novel use of the leaves was made a long time ago by the Yokia squaws and was related to me somewhat as follows: When, in their search after manzanita berries on hot, dry hillsides, they were compelled to take their babies with them, they would wrap them up well with the soft, flexible green leaves, and thus, by retarding perspiration, save them from extreme thirst. The Yuki name for the plant is *chē-wish'*; the Wailaki, *zhe-lä'-tsā "-chit*.

ALMANAC REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES

As stated earlier, we are looking for someone to assume the duties of Northern California *Almanac* Representative. Jay and Terri Hudson thought that we should list the duties so that people would know in advance the scope of the job. The main responsibility is to help the Editor acquire material for the *Almanac*. This can be accomplished by polling

SPCNI members in your area and compiling the results, or by asking specific individuals if they can submit an article. The Representative is also responsible for informing the Editor of what articles are in progress and when they will be available for publication. We can provide a list of SPCNI members in your area.

MINI-INTERVIEW: THE LAWYERS

Steve Taniguchi, Santa Clara, CA

[Editor's note: This is the first in what I hope will be a continuing series of short interviews with PCI hybridizers.]

Q: When did you start growing PCI?

A: We received seeds at the San Diego AIS convention from August Phillips. We planted the seeds 11/21/75 and 26 of them were *munzii*.

Q: When did you start hybridizing PCI?

A: Among the 120 or so plants from the seed August gave us we saw an "unusual" color [the *munzii*]. Our first cross was XP1F in May 1976. We still have XP1F.

Q: Why did you decide to breed blue PCIs?

A: The *munzii* from August were an unusual color - I never saw anything like it before.

Q: Do you concentrate on light blue, or do you breed for other shades of blue?

A: Both light and dark blue. We have some darker blues, but the flower shape isn't there yet.

Q: Do you ever use anybody else's stuff in your breeding?

A: We have used some of Joe Ghio's iris including DEEP BLUE SEA, SEABRIGHT COVE, LAGUNA CREEK, and AGE OF CHIVALRY. We have also used one of Thornton Abell's plants, Abell 10.

Q: Which of your iris is your favorite?

A: Lewis: SIERRA DELL. Adele: I like FOOTHILL BANNER. Lewis: You're supposed to say SIERRA DELL, after all, it's named after you. [Sierr Adele, get it?]

Q: The last time I visited, you showed me many pots of PCIs you were increasing for introduction. Have you decided on names

yet? Will their first name be SIERRA? What's the significance of SIERRA?

A: We think we may name one of them THROUGH A LENZ. *Munzii* is from the Sierras, hence the SIERRA prefix. The plants won't be introduced for a couple of years; they still need to be increased more.

Q: How close are you to introducing one of your "lates"?

A: I don't know if that's necessary, the seeds have been distributed [through the SPCNI seed exchange]. We've been crossing mostly with Ghio stuff; the plants have gotten shorter with better blooms and branches. We have an *I. purdyi* that peaks after Late Doug.

Q: There are several people working on color-breaking in Tall Bearded iris, do you think this is possible with PCI?

A: I don't see why not, they are so varied I can't see why you can't get that. The only thing you won't get is "fire engine red." The pigment for "fire engine red" is not present.

Q: Do you have any advice for beginning hybridizers?

A: Stick to it! It's probably a bit discouraging in other parts of the U.S. and the world, but with time we should get PCIs that can grow all over. The easiest way to start is to buy seed from Joe Ghio. You'll get the best diversity of color and form as a starting point. If you start here you'll need to decide on a goal. Or, pick out something you think needs to be improved, that way you have a goal.

IRIS HARTWEGII AUSTRALIS REVISITED

Richard C. Richards, La Mesa, CA

This iris has been pretty much ignored in the past by gardeners looking for *Californicae* to grow in their gardens, and by hybridizers looking for material to add to the genetic pool of the *Californicae* hybrids. I think this situation merits reconsideration. I believe that this iris, plus the species *I. hartwegii* and perhaps its other two subspecies, may contain genes for survival in cold-winter climates, and incorporation of these genes into the pool could extend the geographical range in which *Californicae* hybrids can be grown, thereby bringing pleasure to many who cannot now grow the *Californicae*, and only occasionally appreciate their beauty elsewhere.

The Subspecies Revisited

This iris is the southernmost iris in the Series *Californicae*, and has had little written about it. Occurring in the San Bernardino mountains to the east of Los Angeles, and isolated from all the other *Californicae* species and subspecies, it inhabits the Yellow Pine forest plant community, where it is found mostly in flat or gently sloping areas. It prefers dappled sunlight, but is occasionally found in locations that receive considerable direct sunlight. It is rarely found on road cuts, but likes to produce exceptions to most generalizations.

Since my wife, Marty, and I live relatively close to this iris, we have visited the area in the past while this species was in bloom, but we have not been there during bloom time for the past 15 years or so. This spring we decided to try to see the bloom. While the decision was made in late June, it had been a late year for irises in general, and since normal bloom time for *I. hartwegii australis* is early June, we took a chance. We were fortunate to catch the iris in bloom. We found that 15 years can bring new perspectives to the evaluation of the irises.

Aesthetics

Iris hartwegii australis has rarely been praised for its beauty, and I did not find it particularly attractive during visits years ago. Compared with the other members of the Series

Californicae it is admittedly well down the list of contestants in any iris beauty contest. Nevertheless I saw it from a different perspective this visit. The flowers are small, the flower parts are narrow, the color range is restricted, and the foliage is not noteworthy and would have little ornamental value in the average garden. Aesthetic taste is notoriously relative, but this ignores the development of judgment, sometimes called "good taste." As I have seen more and more *Californicae* in the wild, my own perceptions have been changed, and have perhaps become more sensitive, though that assertion could be argued.

In partial comparison, *Iris douglasiana* is often robust, with flowers that can be fairly large in a wide range of colors. *Iris munzii* has been called "stately." It is impressive enough to inspire the American public, that great judge of beauty, to attempt to transplant (during the absolutely wrong season for transplanting) most of the very choice Coffee Camp stands east of Springville. *Iris chrysophylla* and *Iris tenuissima* can easily be characterized as "fragile." If a brief description of *Iris hartwegii australis* were to be chosen, it would be perhaps "diminutive" or "dainty without being fragile."

The species, *I. hartwegii*, and two of the three subspecies, *I. hartwegii columbiana* and *I. hartwegii pinetorum*, have mostly buff or yellow flowers; however there are reported lavender stands of the species. None of the lavender *hartwegii* is reported to be as dark as the colors that occur in *hartwegii australis*. The color range of this subspecies is restricted to variations on lavender, with charming subtle variations within most stands. There is enough red in some of the clones to produce some interesting purples, and others that approach mauve. Slate gray shows up occasionally, often with darker veining, which makes those flowers attractive in a wildflower sort of way.

Victor A. Cohen in *A Guide to the Pacific Coast Native Irises* notes that a clone of this subspecies grew for years at Kew, and it earned

the word "attractive" from Cohen. That is about as strong praise as I could locate, and I could cite opinions to the contrary.

Value to the Gardener

One of the questions that comes up is whether this subspecies has any value as a garden subject. This question is usually answered negatively, but I think a partial reevaluation is in order.

I have seen it grown in a private garden out of its native range only once. In the late 1960s Leo Brewer grew it in his east San Francisco bay garden from seed which I had collected. I visited his garden and saw plants of the iris quite happily growing under an oak tree. He was concerned that because it had irregular, scattered, semi-horizontal foliage, it was not happy in his garden. I assured him that what one sees of it in its native range is usually scattered, irregular, and semi-horizontal foliage, and his plants were looking extraordinarily typical. He reported that he did get it to flower, if my memory is correct. He also said that he watered it quite infrequently during the summer since it does not get much water in its native range during that time.

Percy Everett, the horticulturist for years at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens in southern California, reports in his publication, *A Summary of the Culture of California Plants at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden 1927-1950*, that he and his staff germinated several collections of seed of the subspecies over the years, and also made several bare root collections as well. They lost it several times until they withheld water during the summer. He states that it was not easy to grow even then; it apparently goes dormant, requiring little water. Everett reports no success with *I. hartwegii*, though fewer attempts were made with the species.

Duncan Eader of Arcadia, California, near Los Angeles, reported in the Spring 1990 *Almanac*, that he had tried both bare root collections, unsuccessfully, and germination of seed, which was very low.

Iris hartwegii australis is clearly a difficult but not impossible garden subject. Their aesthetic value has been discussed, but appears to be minimal except to a wild iris enthusiast.

Value to the Hybridizer

I believe the subspecies, *I. hartwegii australis*, may have value in hybridizing, as may the species, *I. hartwegii*, primarily for the production of cold-hardy hybrids. Both the species and the subspecies occur at higher elevations in the mountains in the plant community called the Yellow Pine Forest, where they are subject to freezing during the winter. *I. hartwegii australis* occurs at heights from 5,000 to over 7,000 feet. Snow piles up at those altitudes, even in southern California, and the temperature can go down to zero or below. Using both the species and the subspecies to introduce cold hardiness into the *Californicae* hybrids seems like a reasonable approach.

It has been traditionally theorized that *I. tenax* contains genes for some degree of cold-hardiness since it is the northernmost occurring *Californicae* species, and that assumption is probably correct. *I. hartwegii* and this particular subspecies have been mostly ignored as sources of cold-hardy genes, but the elevation at which both the species, and this particular subspecies occur, suggests that a fresh look is definitely in order. *I. tenax* does not occur at anywhere near these altitudes, and the duration of sub-freezing weather, as well as the degree of coldness, may be greater at the elevations at which *Iris hartwegii* and *Iris hartwegii australis* occur than that at which *I. tenax* occurs.

I have personally seen only one attempt to use *I. hartwegii australis* in hybridizing for any reason. Part of the problem with such attempts is the time of bloom in the wild of *I. hartwegii australis*, which is June. However, in June *Californicae* species and hybrids in the coastal areas and valleys of southern California are past their blooming season, which normally occurs from March to late May. Thus there are few, if any, flowers on the garden hybrids to pollinate using the subspecies pollen. There are different problems involved for anyone wishing to carry stored pollen from garden hybrids to the mountains to use on the subspecies. [Note: Your editor advises against pollinating a wild population of iris with garden hybrid pollen.]

In the early 1970s, George Stambach, a hybridizer in Pasadena, California, did produce seedlings with pollen brought from the

mountains in June and placed on several late blooming garden hybrids. I saw the results, and since grayish, sparse, scattered, semi-horizontal foliage showed up on in the hybrids, as well as the narrow flower parts, I think he had a successful cross or two. The result was so displeasing that Stambach destroyed the seedlings, since his goal was aesthetic and these seedlings had little appeal.

This strongly suggests there would be little, if any, immediate aesthetic advancement using either the subspecies or the species as parents. Anyone who wants to incorporate *hartwegii* and *hartwegii australis* genes into the generic pool of *Californicae* garden hybrids for the sake of winter hardiness will need patience before aesthetically pleasing clones will result. A little luck will help also.

Using pollen to transfer genetic material from the subspecies to other species and hybrids within *Californicae* is one method by which the transfer might occur. There is an additional method which might also yield the desired result, and that is through the use of seed from the subspecies or the species. Perhaps seedlings could be grown in gardens and pollen obtained from their flowers.

Brewer, Cohen, and Everett have established that the subspecies can be grown from seed under normal garden conditions--with considerable care and persistence. It seems to like hot, dry summers with little water, which is what it gets in its native range. It blooms with the other *Californicae* in gardens, though fairly late, according to reports. Crossing it with other *Californicae* clones and hybrids would be relatively easy under those conditions. That could save a few trips to the San Bernardino Mountains for pollen to use on one's own plants, or to mail around the country to hybridizers in colder climates.

It is worth speculating that both the species and subspecies might grow in some of the marginal areas for *Californicae*, where more cold is normal in winter than most *Californicae* can tolerate, such as the Midwest or the East Coast. Plants produced from seed planted in these areas could be crossed with those clones that already survive in these climates. The result might be a series of hybrids much less

susceptible to cold damage and possible permanently deciduous status. The number of people who have success with *Californicae* species and hybrids in the Midwest and on the East Coast suggests that such a plan might achieve results.

There is a relevant discussion of the problems of growing *Californicae* species and hybrids in cold-winter areas in the Spring 1990 edition of the *Almanac*. Several people who have been successful comment on problems and solutions, especially to the phenomenon of winter kill. I will not repeat that discussion here, but anyone interested in growing any of the *Californicae* in cold-winter areas should consult those articles.

Conclusion

The goal is to extend the geographical range in which *Californicae* hybrids can prosper. If either *I. hartwegii australis*, or *I. hartwegii* can contribute genes for cold hardiness, we may have a means to that end. One method to incorporate those cold-hardy genes is to use pollen gathered in the wild on *Californicae* garden hybrids which bloom late in the southern California season, or mail the pollen to those with later blooming seasons in other, usually colder, climates. A second method would be to collect seed from the subspecies or the species for hybridizers to grow seedlings whose pollen can be used on *Californicae* already growing in their gardens.

Marty and I obtained pollen in the latest visit to the native stands of *I. hartwegii australis* to put on our late blooming hybrids, but it is too early to tell if any seeds will result. We also hope to collect seed of the subspecies in the mountains during the late summer and send it to the SPCNI Seed Exchange. We will see if either of these attempts will provide a first step toward testing the hypothesis that *I. hartwegii australis* can add cold tolerance.

Can this program be ultimately successful? There are always those who relish a challenge. Our members who are successfully growing *Californicae* species and hybrids in difficult areas prove this. Is anyone up to this new project?

ADDENDUM TO *IRIS HARTWEGII AUSTRALIS* REVISITED

Richard C. Richards, La Mesa, CA

After finishing the previous article, it came to my attention that Robert Annand of Forest Ranch, California, registered a Pacific Coast Native hybrid as GOLDEN SCISSORTAILS in

1997, which had *I. hartwegii* as its pollen parent. If my hypothesis is correct, this could be a very important hybrid in the quest for greater cold tolerance in pacificas.

WHAT ARE WE DOING TO OUR NATIVE IRIS?

Steve Taniguchi, Santa Clara, CA

In past years I have noticed various types of bees collecting pollen from PCIs. The PCIs in question were older-shaped flowers, such as AUGIE, which have easily accessible pollen; I have not noticed bees pollinating the more "modern" formed PCIs. It was always interesting to watch the bees collect the pollen, but I never gave it much thought.

This year, however, I noticed some small bees gathering pollen from *Iris tenax* and half *I. tenax* hybrids. I then realized this could have a detrimental effect on the native iris in this area. According to *A Revision of the Pacific Coast Irises*, the irises that live nearby (within an hour drive) would most likely be *I. douglasiana*, *I. fernaldii*, *I. macrosiphon*, or hybrid combinations thereof. *I. tenax* is an alien species that grows reluctantly for me (I think it is too warm here). Is there a chance that bees could carry pollen from my *I. tenax* to areas of native iris and thus pollute the area genetically? Could the introduction of *I. tenax* genes cause a local native iris extinction? How far do bees range? Should I be growing PCI species that don't occur in my area (I also have *I. chrysophylla* and *I. tenuissima*, but they haven't bloomed yet)? Does our Society have a stance on this? I decided that my answer for all of these questions is "I don't know."

Now that I've mentioned *I. chrysophylla* and *I. tenuissima*, I was very happy to see the seeds I received through the SPCNI emerge and grow (although a squirrel dug out three of my *I. chrysophylla* seedlings and replaced them with a peanut - not adequate compensation if you ask me). Every year, some industrious and thoughtful members of SPCNI venture into the wild and collect PCI seed to share with the rest of us. The spring issues of the *Almanac* usually have a reminder to seed collectors to leave some of the seed on the plants. How much seed can we collect, however, and still have a sustainable wild iris population? I'll spare you the math, since I can't remember it anyway, but the most simplistic mathematical models for the harvesting of biological resources state that the harvest rate must be equal to or below that of the natural growth rate of the population. Do we know what the natural growth rate is for a given iris population? I think not. So, how do we determine the amount of seed we can collect?

Should we grow "alien" PCI species in the vicinity of native PCI species, or does the possibility exist of genetic contamination? When we collect PCI species seeds, do we leave enough to maintain the wild population? What are we doing to our native iris?

[Editor's note: I enjoy the challenge of growing PCI species from seed. The Seed Exchange provides SPCNI members an opportunity to purchase seed of the various species, and is one of the benefits provided by our society. I invite readers to write and put my mind at ease regarding the concerns stated above. And yes, I realize that habitat destruction has a far greater impact on our native iris.]

1999-2000 SEED EXCHANGE LIST

Debbie Cole, Seed Distribution Chairman

All seeds on the following list of this year's donations are priced at \$1.00 for the first packet and \$.50 per additional packet in an order. Please order by lot#; including the "variety" may prevent errors. Make checks payable to SPCNI, and send check (with order) to Debbie Cole, Chairman SPCNI Seed Exchange, 7417 92nd Place SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040. Because of the time and cost involved in returning small refunds, no refunds will be made; funds sent for unfillable orders will be considered donations to the SPCNI treasury.

All orders will be held until January 15. At that time all seed will be divided, packaged and sent out as ordered so that buyers may have sufficient time to plant their seed for this spring's germination. Most packets will be generous. In the case of a very popular item, no packet will contain less than 5 seeds, and orders will be filled in the order received. Please specify possible substitutes. We reserve the right to limit the number of packets sent to a single person if the item is in short supply.

There is a stockpile of seeds left from previous years. If you are in search of something not on this year's list, please ask. (Germination of old seed should be more difficult, but not impossible; abrading the seed with a file or coarse sandpaper or nicking it with a knife or file-edge, then soaking it for a day before planting, should help.) If we are unable to provide anything appropriate to your request, your donation to the treasury will be appreciated.

Seed donations received after November 1 may be divided among orders as bonuses (labeled).

Unless otherwise specified, all seeds are open-pollinated. Lot-numbers are followed by the donor-symbol and the item description.

SEED FROM NAMED GARDEN HYBRIDS

<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>
99001	H	Air Show	99023	F	Mayor
99002	D	Banbury Princess	99024	H	Mission Santa Cruz
99003	H	Big Money	99025	F	Mocha Melody
99004	I	Broadleigh Sybil	99026	H	Native Warrior
99005	D	Califia	99027	F	Pacific Frost
99006	D	Candy Banner	99028	C	Pacific Rim
99007	F	Candy Banner	99029	D	Pacific Rim
99008	F	Canyon Orchid	99030	I	Quintana
99009	H	Canyon Snow	99031	I	Rio Dorado
99010	H	"Crandall's White"	99032	A	San Andreas
99011	H	Deepening Shadows	99033	H	Solid Citizen
99012	H	Escalona	99034	I	Tiger Cub
99013	D	Foothill Banner	99035	H	Turquoise Touch
99014	I	Foothill Banner	99036	H	Valet
99015	H	Gold Dusted	99037	F	Valley Banner
99016	I	Gold Dusted	99038	I	Violet Blush
99017	H	Gone Native	99039	F	Western Queen
99018	D	Harland Hand	99040	F	Wild Party
99019	H	Ignacio	99041	I	With This Ring
99020	A	In the Money	99042	D	asstd. garden hybrids
99021	H	Los Californio	99043	K	asstd. garden hybrids
99022	H	Marine Magic			

SEED FROM UNNAMED GARDEN SEEDLINGS

<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>
99050	F	(<i>I. chrysophylla</i> X <i>I. douglasiana</i>)
99051	D	(<i>I. immominata</i> X <i>I. tenax</i>)
99052	F	(Simply Wild X Wild Party)
99053	F	Valley Banner seedling

The following all have *I. munzii* background:

<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>
99054	D	XP54E: Foothill Banner sib	99066	D	XP317B: Large, ruffled, delicate Valley Banner type
99055	D	XP209A: Tall, medium blue	99067	D	XP317E: Round signal with blue veins radiating to violet rim
99056	D	XP210F: Blue-violet, with blue signal	99068	D	XP318A: Pinky-violet, decorative signal, deep pinky border
99057	D	XP214A: Blue lined self, 17" branched stalk	99069	D	XP319A: Powder blue
99058	D	XP215A: White with blue blush	99070	D	XP320: Large Valley Banner-type flower
99059	D	XP224A: Blue-violet, long bloom, vigorous, 14" branched stalk	99071	D	XP323A: Powder blue
99060	D	XP224F: Violet blend	99072	D	XP325M: Late, branched, 4 blooms per socket
99061	D	XP228B: Good deep blue	99073	D	XP360A: Short, branched blue
99062	D	XP270A: Olive yellow	99074	D	asstd. munzii garden hybrids
99063	D	XP273D: Purple blend			
99064	D	XP315A: Light blue blush			
99065	D	XP317A: Valley Banner type with intensely dark styles			

SEED FROM HAND-POLLINATED CROSSES

<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>
99080	A	[Idylwild x <i>I. tenax</i> (93089)] X Night Editor
99081	A	[Idylwild x <i>I. tenax</i> (93089)] X Rare Reward
99082	A	Mantra X Idylwild
99083	A	Mission Santa Clara X Osocales
99084	A	Night Editor X <i>I. tenax</i> (Benton Co., OR)
99085	B	Pacific Rim X Pacific Rim

SEED OF PCI SPECIES

Wild-collected:

<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>
99090	I	<i>I. douglasiana</i> —Mendocino coast, N. CA. Purple.
99091	E	<i>I. hartwegii australis</i> —Benton Flats in San Bernardino Mts, San Bernardino Co., CA, at approx 6000' elev.
99092	G	<i>I. tenax</i> —Hwy 26, between Sandy and Boring, OR
99093	J	<i>I. tenax</i> —Botkin Creek drainage basin, Benton Co., OR

SEED OF PCI SPECIES (continued)

Garden-collected:

<u>Lot #</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Variety</u>
99094	G	<i>I. douglasiana</i>
99095	F	<i>I. innominata</i> , lavender-pink
99096	F	<i>I. innominata</i> , gold
99097	D	<i>I. purdyii</i>
99098	D	<i>I. tenax</i>
99099	F	<i>I. tenax</i> , purple

LIST OF DONORS

A	Steve Taniguchi	G	Don Clark
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F	Mrs. Ted Lind		

CULTURAL DIRECTIONS

Adele Lawyer (reprinted from *Almanac* Vol. XXVII, No. 1; Fall 1998)

Except for areas bordering the ocean, where they tolerate full sun, Pacific Coast Iris (PCI) are generally found growing wild in lightly wooded areas, with well-drained, gritty soils. They thrive where the summers are long and dry, but tolerate rain and snow cover, and some frost, in other times of the year.

Our most up-to-date recommendations for seed culture are as follows: Plant the seeds in a good, moist potting mix. The mix should be fast-draining with a pH of 6.5 to 7. Plant in pots or flats and cover and firm with about a quarter-inch of potting mix. Plant as many seeds as you can physically separate from each other when it is time to transplant them (1/2 to 1 inch apart). Keep in a cool area. PCI seeds germinate best at temperatures around 50 degrees F. They will not germinate at temperatures above 70 to 80 degrees F. Keep pots or flats outdoors or, in hard freeze areas, in

a cool basement or garage. Keep the soil moist until they germinate, which takes two months on the average. Refrigeration only delays emergence.

Transplant the seedlings to the garden or into pots when they are 3-6 inches tall. This will generally be around April or May. If pots are your choice, use 6- to 8-inch pots for each seedling. When planted directly into the garden soil, plant them 6 inches apart in rows which are a foot apart. In that way you will have room to dig those you select when they bloom.

They transplant well as seedlings, but only when actively growing (in late fall or early spring) as adults. They grow best in filtered shade or morning sun. Most hybrid seedlings will bloom the following spring. Some species take two years to bloom.

THE LAST WORD

From The Editor

- 1) I had to delete a couple of sentences from the *I. hartwegii australis* article because my word processing software did strange things at the page breaks when the sentences were present (portions of sentences would either repeat or disappear completely). My apologies to Richard Richards.
- 2) I encourage readers to submit articles and letters for publication in the *Almanac*. Articles need not be technical in nature and can cover any topics related to PCIs. If you've had success growing species or hybrids, tell us how you did it. If you win ribbons at iris shows, maybe you can pass on a few tips to the rest of us (you don't have to give away all of your secrets). If you don't feel up to writing an article, why not write a short letter? Tell us about the PCIs you've seen at iris shows, the special seedling you're growing, the species you like, or the places you've visited that have wild iris. Details about failures can also be informative (you can always state "this person I know, not me, killed all his PCIs by doing such and such"). Do you have comments on recent introductions? Are the falls and standards getting too broad? Do we need to divide the PCIs into separate classes such as classic (narrow flowers) and modern (broad flowers)?
- 3) What do you want to see in the *Almanac*? As stated previously, I am hoping to have a series of mini-interviews with PCI hybridizers. Should we have an "Ask the Expert" section? Is anyone interested in historical articles or biographies?
- 4) If you get a chance, visit the SPCNI web site. I think you will agree with me that Steve Ayala has done a fantastic job! If you do not have a computer or access to the internet, you might investigate whether your local library offers internet access.
- 5) Norma Barnard had to resign as Northern California *Almanac* Representative due to ill health (cancer). In addition, her husband Leo passed away in August. If you would like to write to Norma, her address is **868 Buschmann Road, Paradise, CA 95969**.
- 6) Lewis Lawyer started editing the *Almanac* in 1986 and continued through the spring 1999 issue. I am not very familiar with the history of the SPCNI, but I'm pretty sure Lewis has had the longest tenure as *Almanac* editor. If you have enjoyed the *Almanac* issues as much as I have, please consider sending Lewis a thank you. Also, please consider sending a thank you to Adele. Adele became Secretary/Treasurer at approximately the same time Lewis became editor, and she continued performing flawlessly in that capacity through 1997.
- 7) Here's your chance to vote for the most beautiful PCI variety of the 1900's. This is a pure beauty contest; concentrate on flower color, form, and pattern and ignore the rest of the plant. You can submit either a list of the 10 most beautiful PCIs of the 1900's, or a list of the two most beautiful PCIs of each decade (year of registration). Please limit your votes to those named PCI varieties you have seen personally - do not vote for varieties that you have seen only in photos. Send your entries to the Editor by 01 March 2000. If I get enough response, I will tally the votes and publish the results, including the top two for each decade, in the spring issue of the *Almanac*.
- 8) Enjoy the holidays!



CHIEF SEQUOIA (John Weiler, 1991), the 1999 Mitchell Medal Winner
photo: John Weiler



LACY LADY (Norma Barnard, R. 1995)
photo: Norma Barnard



DRACULARITY (Deborah Cole, R. 1998)
photo: Debbie Cole



Iris hartwegii australis photos: Richard Richards



Irises from Sheep Dung Estates
photo: Lois Weston Weeth



John White's *Iris tenax*
photo: John White