



Pacific Iris

Almanac of the Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris

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The Sydney B. Mitchell Medal 2019



Joe Ghio has struck gold again, winning this year's Sydney B. Mitchell Medal with his stunning 2010 introduction, 'Da Vinci Code'. Resulting from a cross between 'Like Clockwork' and a sibling to 'Foggy Days', this late mid-season blooming PCI continues Joe's success with breeding with this pattern.

The medal is the highest award for a Pacific Coast Iris as determined by the American Iris Society (AIS), and named in honor of Sydney B. Mitchell (1878-1951), one of the organisers of the AIS.

He was interested in Pacific Coast Iris, and had plantings of various forms of *I. innominata* and *I. douglasiana* in his garden.

For information on the genetic background of 'Da Vinci Code' check page 8., and look for photographs of its ancestors on pages 17-18.

Photograph—Leonine Iris

Front cover—John Taylor seedling

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John Taylor seedling—Photo John Taylor

**PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE
FROM THE SPCNI TREASURER**

Prices listed are for SPCNI members in the US.
For out of US, please add \$3.00.

PRINT ARTICLES

Check List of named PCI species and cultivars, 2005
Lists species and named cultivars and hybrids to 2005. \$9.00
If ordering both print and CD checklist versions together,
\$14.00

A Guide to the Pacific Coast Irises

Victor A. Cohen, 1967

Reprint of British Iris Society 1967 booklet, describing
species, sub-species and distributions. 40 pages, \$8.00

A Revision of the Pacific Coast Irises Lee W. Lenz,
1958 Reprint of Aliso journal article 5.5x8.5, 72 pages. \$8.00

Hybridization and Speciation in the Pacific Coast Irises

Lee W. Lenz, 1959. Reprint of Aliso article 72 pages, \$8.00
If ordering both of Dr Lenz's reprints, \$14.00
All three volumes, \$20.00

Diseases of the Pacific Coast Iris

Lewis & Adele Lawyer, 1986. Fall 1986 Almanac, 22 pages,
\$4.50

Almanac Index, 2005,

includes the following indices: author, subject, species,
hybrids, \$4.00, or download free PDF from the SPCNI
website.

COMPACT DISCS

SPCNI Photo CD, 2009.

Compiled by Ken Walker, this CD includes 423 photos of
species and hybrids, neatly labeled. \$9.00.

Welcome to the Beauty of Pacific Coast Iris CD, 2009.

A 15-minute presentation with a concise overview of PCN
species, early hybridizers, Mitchell Medal winners,
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SPCNI has a users group site at

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/PacificIris/>.

Members are encouraged to join this group, which provides
a simple online way to ask questions about finding and
growing PCIs. To join this site, you must register with
Yahoo, but do not need a Yahoo e-mail account. You may
post photos here, check on scheduled activities, and contact
other SPCNI members.

Editor's notes

It has been a strange spring in our neck of the woods in New Zealand. We had a relatively mild winter, but then a wet and cold spring, with late frosts. That has severely hampered the bloom season, with many stalks suffering damage that causes them to lie flat on the ground. It seems the cells in a portion of the stems are damaged and it cannot support the flower, even though it continues to develop and opens on the ground.

Maybe I need to breed more stalwart iris like those Kathleen Sayce has highlighted in her excellent opening article this issue.

Mary Barrell shares some results from her breeding programme, with some intriguing looking pink-ish seedlings. It will be interesting to see progress on that front.

Garry Knipe ventured north from the San Francisco Bay area and visited a number of Seattle gardens along with Immediate Past President Debby Cole. As he writes, he was entranced with Bob Seaman's Leonine Iris Garden.

Mary's Peak in Oregon is another Pacific Coast treasure to the botanically-minded. Debby tells us of a recent visit, and the plants she saw growing there.

Debby has also given a little reminder about the value of contributing seeds to the exchange, with a story about some unusual plants she has in her garden. Kathleen Sayce has followed up with a warning about the way borders are closing to the movement of small parcels of seed into the EU and other countries. This is of crucial importance for overseas members who rely on our seeds to access new genetic material.

I have contributed an explanation of who Fernald's iris was named after, and had a look at the remarkable range of Mitchell Medal winners that are in the background of Joe Ghio's latest MM winner, 'Da Vinci Code', including photographs from the AIS' Iris Encyclopedia, showing the dramatic changes in form in a relatively short time.

Gareth

Stalwart Pacifica Iris for the Garden

Words by Kathleen Sayce

Returning to a topic of perennial interest among PCI growers, the following discusses those tough enduring species selections and putative hybrids that often grow for decades in gardens, surviving neglect, weather vagaries and thriving year after year.

These are notable for their endurance in many gardens along the West Coast. With climate vagaries on the rise, these may persist while more recent hybrids vanish. As you will see, PCI 'Canyon Snow' is a major contributor to durability. Debby Cole and Bob Sussman shared names and photos of recent hybrids that show good vigor. Several photos were downloaded from the AIS Iris Encyclopedia.



PCI 'Canyon Snow'

(*I. douglasiana* x unknown), 1975. Dara Emory, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

Photo—Gareth Winter

This tough PCI survived weeks out of soil when a local gardener passed plants to me two weeks after digging up the clump. This hybrid also contributes to several more PCI known to endure garden conditions well.



PCI 'Cape Sebastian'

An *I. douglasiana* selection, not registered, from Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery:

Photo—Kathleen Sayce

For every passion there is a trigger event, and seeing this PCI in flower in my garden for the first time was that trigger for Pacifica Iris.



PCI 'Clarice Richards'

(Stambach red sdlg. X McCaskill 72-60), 1983,
Richard Richards.

Photo—Kathleen Sayce

Richard developed several very tough PCI, selecting for plants tolerant of hot dry growing conditions at elevation, east of the Los Angeles basin in southern California, although he has only registered this one. It may be that tough under hot/dry conditions is also tough under cold/wet conditions in the Pacific Northwest.



PCI 'Harland Hand'

1989, D. Lennette

Photo—Kathleen Sayce

This smaller-flowered variety has thrived in my garden for more than a decade



PCI 'Native Warrior'

('Amiguita X 'Claremont Indian'), 1970

S. August Phillips

Photo—Unknown

If you are looking for red genes within PCI it might be an idea to start with PCI 'Native Warrior'.

Hybrids from Joseph Ghio, Bay View Gardens, Santa Cruz, California have endured for several decades along the West Coast. Many of his hybrids tend to flower too early to set seed reliably in the Pacific Northwest, but these three are sturdy and return year after year.



PCI 'Big Money'

1982 Ghio

Photo—Kathleen Sayce

The only aspect of growing frilly yellows PCI that I do not like is the petals melt in the rain. Otherwise, if late April-early May is dry, PCI 'Big Money' is gorgeous.



PCI 'Los Gatos'

1974 Ghio

Photo—Richard Richards

Los Gatos' is one of Joseph Ghio's early introductions, but it is a reliable variety for me.



PCI 'Mission Santa Cruz'

1982 Ghio

Photo—Kathleen Sayce

One of my very first PCI, and still outstanding each spring in the garden. Also a great source of genes for future hybrids. I'd like to do wide species crosses with this as one parent, with Siberian group species

The next three are from Debby Cole, Mercer Island, Washington, west of the Cascades and just east of Puget Sound; Puget Sound gets half the rain of the ocean coast, with colder winters and drier summers.



PCI 'Brevette',

2018: Debby Cole

Photo—Debby Cole

This new hybrid is showing signs of good durability, though it's a very recent registration.



PCI 'Egocentric',

2007, Debby Cole

Photo—Debby Cole

This PCI shimmers with pink in the garden on a gray day. For those who live in cloudy areas, it's marvelous at brightening up the garden.



PCI 'Periwinkle Persian',

2004, Debby Cole

Photo—Mike Unser

Another of Debby's introductions, 'Periwinkle Persian', also shimmers, but in a cool and calming way amid the shade it prefers.

From our president, Bob Sussman, of Matilija Nursery, southern California, come three tough PCI that cope with SoCal's alkaline water and long, hot dry summers. As with the Richards hybrids, these seem to do well in the Pacific Northwest.



PCI 'Canyon Banner'
('Canyon Snow' x 'Valley Banner'), 2019:
Photo- Bob Sussman

Parent 'Valley Banner' is also a durable garden iris, though more difficult to find these days than during the late 20th century.



PCI 'Chocolate Parfait'
('Pacific Rim' x 'Garden Delight'),
2019, Bob Sussman,
Photo- Bob Sussman



PCI 'Dr. Richie'
('Canyon Snow' x *I. douglasiana* x 'Ciao' red seedling),
2019, Bob Sussman
Photo- Bob Sussman

Another older variety that is a reliable performer is the Dolores Denney introduction of 'Canyon Orchid', a child of 'Canyon Snow'.

PCI 'Canyon Orchid'



('Canyon Snow' x (*I. douglasiana* sdlg. x Abell
I. munzii sdlg.)) X Lenz purple *I. munzii* sdlg.,
1985 Dolores Denney

Photo- John Weiler, AIS Iris Encyclopedia

Looking for vigorous PCI genes for hybridizing? *Iris douglasiana* seedlings of garden heritage tend to be more durable than other PCI hybrids. Flowers are species-like in color and form, foliage varies from low to tall, and from light green to very dark green. Some selections have outstanding dark evergreen foliage.

Two of my oldest PCI are *I. douglasiana* plants, ex garden. One is an outstanding pass-along plant from an elderly friend who had gotten her starter clump from another gardener, and grew it for decades before giving a clump to me. The second is a low growing selection with lavender flowers. A few years ago, I received another selection, from coastal SW Oregon, with outstanding dark green foliage and lavender flowers; this plant is worth growing for the foliage alone.

Several PCI species may persist in gardens longer than hybrids, if base soil is acidic and well drained. Some of my *Iris tenax* plants are more than fifteen years old, and thrive on a slope in afternoon sun each summer, and flower every year. On the other hand, *I. innominata* from seed has dwindled and no longer flowers; I may have to move my plants to sunnier locations.

Iris munzii, *I. hartwegii*, and other Californian species of limited natural range may be too fussy to grow in 'strange' soils. I moved *I. hartwegii australis* (seed grown, from a private garden) from sandy soil to a planter two years ago; while the plant has thrived, it has yet to flower. An *I. douglasiana* X *I. chrysophylla* hybrid thrives for me, but again, it is probably the *I. douglasiana* genes doing the thriving.

Enjoy the flowers. Study the geography of their gardens of origin. This may help you find a PCI that thrives, and endures, in your garden for decades to come.



'Councilman' - Photo AIS Iris Encyclopedia

The road to the Mitchell Medal

One of the rules of producing award-winning irises is to start with good genetics—and who provides more proof of that than Joe Ghio. This year he has won the Mitchell Medal with the lovely 'Da Vinci Code', A quick look into the breeding of this winner shows how good seed lines lead to good seedlings.

'Da Vinci Code' is the result of a cross between 'Like Clockwork' and seedling #FP265U, a sibling to 'Foggy Days'.

'Like Clockwork' was not a Mitchell Medal winner. However, it is the product of a cross between two winners—'Bar Code', winner in 2011, and 'Ocean Blue', winner of 2012.

If we go back further in the breeding of 'Ocean Blue' we find other Mitchell Medal winners— 'Pacific Miss', a winner for Lois Belardi in 2007, 'Sea Gal', another Lois Belardi winner in 2002, Joe Ghio's 'Idylwild', winner in 1996 and his 'Simply Wild', winner in 1994, 'Sierra Dell', which won for Lewis Lawyer in 1995, Joe Ghio's 'Big Wheel', from 1986, his 'Councilman' winner in 1982 and his 'Restless Native', winner in 1981, 'Amiguita', Eric Nies' winner in 1974 and then back to Marion Walker's 'Ojai' the winner of the first Mitchell Medal in 1973.

Seedling #FP265U is a sibling to Ghio's Mitchell Medal winner 'Foggy Days'. It is another child of 'Bar Code', this time resulting from a cross with his 'Lash', which has Ghio's medal winner 'Sierra Azul' as a grandparent.



'Ojai' - Photo AIS Iris Encyclopedia

In the pink in New Zealand

New Zealand PCI breeder Mary Barrell reports on some interesting seedlings from the last flowering season, and details her experiments to try and get on top of that perennial problem— weeding. All photographs—Mary Barrell

This year's bloom stalks are popping up and last year's bloom is but a distant memory. When asked to describe how last year's hybridising went I had to resort to photos.

There were a couple I liked and some 'same old, same old'. I was surprised to get pretty white edged pinks in various depths of colour. The next three photographs illustrate their beauty.



One of their great grandparents is 'Karapiro Princess', a cream with pink edges, and one parent has a small white centre with violet purple surrounds which I have nicknamed 'Blueberry Princess' just for fun and may introduce when stocks allow.

I do like green, glossy foliage. Some of my crosses have been found wanting with coarse leaves possibly with *I. douglasiana* in their background. As all my plants come from unnamed Joe Ghio seed many, many years ago I have no historical background knowledge of their parentage.

I would like to create a pink amoena. So far, so good but it will need further work.



I liked the seedling below—the spotting appealed to me. I also like the hint of turquoise in the middle of the standards. If I like it this year I will have to try hybridising with it and see what I get. Barry Blyth once told me to just use your instinct sometimes so perhaps I will ‘be creative’.



I also like the one with a dark centre



and the purple with white edging on the standards is a new pattern to me.



I have also been trying to cut down on weeding. Can there be anything more soul destroying than weeding solidly for days and seeing little green shoots coming up back where you started?

In my very unscientific trial I have found bark does not work for me on my flat section. On my previous sloping section it was fine provided it was on a sunny slope. Pea straw is my favourite. Barley straw was a lovely clean mulch but seems to get waterlogged. There have been no lost plants however so perhaps it is not too bad.

A new mulch I have tried is a New Zealand product made from Lucerne—better known as alfalfa. It is chopped finely and packed into heavy plastic foil lined bags where it ferments. It is acidic and it is directed not to apply to close to plants and to not plant into the mix but to let it settle for two weeks.

So far it seems to suppress weeds very well and the mature Pacific iris plants I put it around have not been troubled by it. The advertising for the product states you will not need to use any other fertiliser, mulch or compost.

Editor’s note:

Since laying out the report I have had another message from Mary, explaining how Murphy's Law has been at work for her!

She says: “ I have found out that the company went down the tubes and has been sold. The new owners will still make stock food I think but have discontinued the Fiber Earth side of the business. I have been running round stock piling as many bags as I can.”



Karapiro Princess

An Amazing Pacific Coast Iris Garden

California-based member Garry Knipe ventured north to look at Pacific Coast Iris growing in the wild, and in gardens. He came away impressed with Bob Seaman's Leonine Iris Garden!

Many times over the years, I have been asked where folks can go to view a good collection of Pacific Coast Iris. After visiting the Seattle area this spring, I now have the answer:

After PCI bloom season finished in California, my wife and I headed north to visit family and friends and take a little vacation. While in Seattle, past SPCNI president Debby Cole, took me to a number of public and private gardens. Under a slight misty rain, I enjoyed her home garden with its collection of named PCI and her latest batch of seedlings.

But when she took me to see Bob Seaman's garden, I was not prepared for what I saw.

In a quiet neighborhood situated on the side of a rather steep hill, Bob's house sits high above the street nestled amongst trees and rhododendrons. Front yard flower beds are arranged in terraces held up by beautiful rock retaining walls. A set of stairs provides access to each level where meandering flagstone paths allow you to explore the abundant blooms in every nook and cranny. Many bearded and beardless iris species are present, but the sheer number of Pacific Coast Iris was completely mind blowing! Rivers of color seemed to flow everywhere and each plant was clearly labelled with its name, hybridizer, and year of introduction.

Along the side of the house, more PCI line the path to the backyard which is relatively flat, a pleasant change from the more vertical front yard. Here, flagstone paths wind around the trees, a small pond, past sculptures, and connect a few wooden decks.



Photo—Debby Cole

Intermixed with the other flowering plants, the PCI continue to amaze with their numbers and beauty. In the very back of the yard, a few more terraces climb up to the back fence providing a home for even more PCI varieties and seedlings.

After viewing literally hundreds of different named PCI, we sat out back and talked to Bob about his garden and the small mail order nursery that he runs out of his home. He described his attempts to find and grow as many named varieties as he can. He tries to grow each variety in two or three different locations in his garden to ensure survival and help determine optimum growing conditions. Bob also mentioned that he is still looking for some varieties, like ‘Pacific Miss’ (let him know if you have some).



The back yard at Leonine Iris Garden
Photo—Garry Knipe



‘Amethyst Cloud’ - Emma Elliott 2013
Photo—Garry Knipe

Besides the thrill of seeing an almost endless array of PCI in bloom, my favorite part of the visit was seeing many named PCI like ‘Conga Line’ for the first time, some of which I had read about and others that I had never heard of.

One of my favorites was a beautiful PCI named “Amethyst Cloud” by Emma Elliott, 2013.

Anyone wishing to see this phenomenal garden can visit on any Saturday during the month of May, when the garden is open to the public. See Bob’s website, www.leonineiris.com for information on his location, and open yard hours, and to view his extensive gallery of PCI photos.



‘Conga Line’ - Joe Ghio, 2017
Photo—Garry Knipe

Seeding inspiration

Past-president *Debby Cole* has been collecting and gathering seeds for the seed pool, and has written to explain about a few different items she will be adding to the list this year.

My seeds will go in the mail tomorrow, I think. I decided to include packets of seed from a few interesting/unconventional things, thinking there may be people who are interested.

I have a good 'clump' of a navy blue *I. douglasiana*, about a foot tall, with long perianth tubes. It was given to me by two different nursery friends as being *I. macrosiphon*, for which it passes in the trade. Why do I think it's not? It's branched---and supposedly only *I. douglasiana* is branched. It seems very like the *I. douglasiana* at Point Reyes, which may indeed have hybridized extensively with *I. macrosiphon* in the past. And it's a great late iris!

I was also given (by a different friend) an iris supposedly *I. innominata*. It has small yellow flowers with dark red veins, fairly narrow long leaves. The person who collected it, has forgotten where it came from. What boggles me? The stalks are two feet long.



The PCI masquerading as I. innominata
Photo- Debby Cole

My best guess is that it's a hybrid from the Illinois River drainage area in southern Oregon or northern California, where *I. thompsonii* originates; I have seen other things there with similar stalks. The stalk is green, its base is reddish, and it has a couple of purple-tinged bracts along its length.

It seems quite different from the *I. bracteata* I got from Wild Ginger Farm. Further input welcome!

Many years ago, I wondered what would happen if I crossed something as distinctive as 'Gold Dusted' with a species PCN, say, *I. tenax*. I tried it. The results were pretty much like the species (orchid pink-mauve), often with a sparkly sort of signal area. I wasn't excited enough to go any further, but what would happen if you back-crossed the seedlings to 'Gold Dusted'? Or went in a different direction? How strong is the species' influence, and what good qualities might it impart?

The label for this last iris has long ago faded into obscurity, and it was never mapped, but I think it was from a 'Valley Banner' cross whose seed was sent in by Barbara and David Schmieder many years ago. I think it has bloomed before. Its flower is just sort of lavender doug-ish, and I'm sure I just yawned. For some reason I happened to look at it just after bloom this year, and discovered the feature of interest: the tips and ribs of its ovaries are red!!! Wouldn't this be a fun characteristic to have in a colorful cultivar!?! Maybe the Schmieders can add info here.

I hope some members have a little extra space to try some of this weird stuff. The next Mitchell or even Dykes Medal may start here.



The PCI masquerading as I. innominata
Photo- Debby Cole

Another Pacific Coast Treasure

Words by Debby Cole

If you will be passing through western Oregon in some future June, you may want to allow at least an extra half-day for a side trip to Mary's Peak. This 4,097-foot mountain, once known as Mouse Mountain because its shape was thought to resemble that of a crouching mouse, is the highest point in Oregon's Coast Range. From its summit one can see, on a clear day, the Pacific Ocean to the west and many peaks of the Oregon Cascades to the east, and the view is breathtaking.

But the featured attraction here is the Mary's Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area. Access is easy, an hour's drive from the I-5 freeway via Oregon highway 34 west through Corvallis and Philomath, and both the signage and the road to the summit are excellent. There are five hiking and biking trails, of varying length and ease. A modest day-use fee is requested. One caveat: there is no food or water available in the area, so come prepared.

The Botanical Special Interest is of course the vegetation. At the Area's lower elevations it is fairly typical of the Coast Range Province, but a bit unusual near the summit. There is an almost pure noble fir forest there, 150-200 years old with a few even older trees. Wildflowers in the 130-acre bald meadow near the summit include tiger lilies, yellow and purple violets, several kinds of penstemon, delphinium, wild strawberry and *Iris tenax*. Areas around deep snowbanks on north-facing slopes have large populations of bright yellow glacier lily, which blooms just after the snow melts. The neighborhood of the summit parking lot is different yet, gravelly and totally exposed to the elements but still with its own set of wildflowers.

There is an illustrated pocket guide to the Peak's wildflowers available at several outlets in Corvallis and one in Philomath.

It is the *Iris tenax* that commands attention, almost from the moment one turns into the Area from highway 34--- a few spots of lavender on the roadside, a strip of lavender in the ditch, a big clump of color on a bank, and finally even huge washes of orchid, perhaps dotted with orange Indian paintbrush, blue delphinium or purple penstemon.

One sees the tenax at the Area's lower elevations by mid-May, so even then this side trip would not be wasted. But its extent and its variety of companion wildflowers increases as the season warms, and there is said to be a wonderful display through midsummer. We found generous iris bloom nearly to the summit by mid-June in the giant meadow, with pull-off parking for four cars, about a mile down the road from the day-use parking nearest the summit. This was, however, an 'early' year for bloom, so a visit near the end of June might be even more satisfying.

For a longer stay, there are accommodations in Corvallis and Philomath. There is a campground in the Area, but it is small and doesn't take reservations. There is a wealth of information about the Mary's Peak Scenic Botanical Special Interest Area available on the internet.

But there is one question which strikes most visitors, for which there doesn't seem to be a definitive answer: who was Mary?



Iris tenax on Mary's Peak - Photo: Rita Butler

Developing Issue with Plant Imports to EU countries:

All imported plant lots may require Phytosanitary Certificates

Compiled by Kathleen Sayce, from Mike Mace, via PBS list_serve, October 19, 2019, with Joyce Fingerut and Gareth Winter

As a member of Pacific Bulb Society, I (Kathleen) participate in a listserve with world wide members. One of PBS's members (Joyce Fingerut) has been tracking coming issues with plant imports to the EU, and as well as imports and exports in the US. The EU enacted legislation three years ago to require phytosanitary certificates for all lots of plant materials, which goes into effect December 14, 2019.

Here is the link to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, List of NPPOs of IPPC Contracting parties in the European Union <<https://www.ippc.int/en/countries/nppos/list-countries/>>, and it lists the office, the officer in charge, and the email for contact.

This has an initial impact on seeds going out of the US into EU countries. Seeds are the primary way SPCNI shares Pacifica Iris to members in other countries. Australia is also tightening its import standards, so Aussies, take note—a similar effort is needed to keep small seed lots available for import to your country.

A similar regulatory change was implemented in the US several years ago, but hobby growers and small seed lot sellers got an exception for small lots of seeds (e.g. fewer than fifty seeds per lot). It is time to aim for this critically important exception for seeds going to and from EU countries.

Concerned Irisarians within the EU should contact their country's "national plant protection organization" representatives immediately, and ask them to contact the EU and tell them about the need for a "small lots of seeds" exception. This regulation is aimed at commercial lots of living plant materials, such as starter potatoes, not at small seed lots for retail sales and hobbyist gardeners.

Input from non-EU countries is also relevant, and vitally important to iris societies, including SPCNI. If you live outside the EU but are worried about the impact of this on plant societies and suppliers, it's a good idea to have your country regulators ping the EU about it.

Also, note that it's the US plant regulators who flagged this issue for the EU and notified Joyce Fingerut, a member of PBS. This is a direct result of the work Joyce and others have been doing to create and maintain

a working relationship with the US federal regulators. That's been a long, unknown, and pretty much thankless task for Joyce; if you ever get a chance to chat with her, please tell her thanks.

More background from Mike Mace:

A US customs staffer from APHIS-PPQ who had discussions with the European Commission earlier this month, brought up the subject of the new requirement for a phytosanitary certificates to accompany all seeds entering any country within the European Union, and requested some kind of exemption for small lots of seed.

Apparently this was news to the EC, as they had not heard from anyone else that the regulation (to take effect on December 14, 2019) would produce any sort of hardships.

So, if you have been contacting your country's national plant protection organization (NPPO), it would seem that your NPPO representative has not made any contact with the Commission. As the Commission said that they would consider a derogation for small lots of seed if they also heard from other countries (especially those within the EU), it is time to light a fire under your NPPO representatives.

Please contact them (again, if necessary) and let them know that it is crucial for them to make their wishes for a modification of the regulation known to the Commission... soon. Very soon.

APHIS-PPQ is about to send a formal letter (as requested by the EC) stating the facts around the need for this exemption. I (Mike) will be helping by sending every bit of information I can muster:

1. Who would be harmed by the requirement for PCs
2. What further effects would be felt in agriculture, horticulture, environment;
3. How the same results can be obtained through a permit, rather than a PC;
4. Additional benefits to the NPPO from the data gathered via permits.

From Kathleen: The solstice holiday period is busy for many of us. Please think about taking time to help all small horticultural societies, like SPCNI, SIGNA, PBS, etc, stay active and continue to be able to send and receive small lots of seed throughout the world. If we don't step up, we may find that borders are permanently closed to seed imports.

Fernald of *Iris fernaldii*

Words– Gareth Winter

Pacific Coast Iris have been named by all sorts of methods. Some are named after plant explorers – think of David Douglas and *Iris douglasiana* – while others have names that reflect botanical characteristics such as *Iris macrosiphon*. Sometimes they can even be named almost as a joke – the plant long known but never botanically described was tagged *Iris innominata* – the no-name iris.

But sometimes the plants are given commemorative names of people who may not be closely associated with the actual plant, *Iris fernaldii* among others.

This species is found in the North California mountain ranges, and is regularly found in the San Francisco Bay area. It is prone to hybridise with others species it grows in close association with, and the true form has disappeared from Marin County, largely as the result of natural hybridisation with *Iris douglasiana*.

It is usually creamy white through to rich yellow but sometimes light lavender forms can be found.

Occasionally the lavender varieties have a touch of turquoise on the falls. They are upright before arching downwards, and often feature a bright golden signal, while the standards tend to be narrower and upright, normally with the same tones as the falls. The leaves and spathes often have a deep red base.

As stated above, this species crosses freely with other Pacific Coast Iris in the wild. It crosses with the similar-looking *I. macrosiphon* hybrids tending to grow in the sunnier aspects preferred by the latter species. Some experts speculate that the yellow colouring found in some natural macrosiphon hybrids may come from *I. fernaldii*.

It has also played a part in the advancement of garden Pacific Coast Iris, being incorporated into the early breeding programme of Joe Ghio, near whose garden it grows wild.

So who is this iris named after, and who named it? The name was given by Robert C. Foster whose *Cyto-Taxonomic Survey of North American Species of Iris* was published in 1937. He also named *Iris thompsonii* and

Iris munzii. A prominent botanist who worked at the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University, he published many papers on different botanical matters. and was a collaborator with Dr Lee Lenz.

It was another famous botanist and the director of the Gray herbarium that Foster honoured by naming the iris - Merrit Lyndon Fernald, 1873-1950.

Fernald was born in Maine, where his father taught at the Maine State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, which later became the University of Maine. He started studying there himself in 1890, but was soon working at the Gray Herbarium at Harvard, and presenting two academic papers each year. He spent the rest of his working life there, serving as Fisher Professor of Natural History from 1915 to 1947. He was also curator of the Gray Herbarium, 1935-37, and director, 1937-1947.

His work was mainly centered in Eastern North America, doing field work in Quebec and Virginia. He does not seem to have done any field work in the area that the iris named after him grows.



Merrit Fernald, 1873-1950

Photo –Gray Herbarium, Harvard University

Some ancestors of 'Da Vinci Code'



'Amiguita'



'Simply Wild'



'Restless Native'



'Sierra Dell'



'Pacific Miss'



'Big Wheel'

All photographs on this page and the next from AIS Encyclopedia



'Idylwild'



'Lash'



'Ocean Blue'



'Like Clockwork'



'Sierra Azul'



'Sea Gal'