

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

**Spring, 2006  
Volume XXXIV, Number 2**

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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.

## ALMANAC

DEADLINES: March 15 and September 15.

**Back issues** are available for \$3.50 each, postpaid. Please request from Secretary/Treasurer.

**Chronological index** \$2.00 postpaid, Index by subject matter, or by author, \$4.00 each. Contact:

Steve Taniguchi  
3306 Forbes Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95051 ST1732@aol.com

## PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE SPCNI TREASURER

Prices listed are for SPCNI members

### Check List of Named PCI Cultivars

Lists and describes Pacific Coast Iris and named hybrids updated to '05. ~70 pages. Hardcopy or CD: \$9.00 for USA, \$9.50 for Canada, and \$16.00 for Europe. For both a CD and a hard copy, the cost is \$4.50 less for the CD.

### SPCNI Photo CD

A CD of 280+ PCI's compiled by Ken Walker. \$9.00.

### A Guide to the Pacific Coast Irises

*Victor A. Cohen:* The British Iris Society 1967 Booklet, 5.5x 8.5, 40 pages, 16 line drawings, 8 color and 6 black-and-white photographs. Brief descriptions of species and sub-species including their distribution. \$8.00 postpaid, \$10.00 out of US.

### A Revision of the Pacific Coast Irises

*Lee W. Lenz:* Photocopy of *Aliso* original. Booklet 5.5x8.5, 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. \$8.00 postage paid, \$10.00 out of US.

### Hybridization and Speciation in the Pacific Coast Irises

*Lee W. Lenz:* Photocopy of *Aliso* original. Companion booklet to the above, 5.5x8.5, 72 pages, 30 figures, graphs, drawings, and photographs. Definitive work on naturally occurring inter-specific crosses of PCI, including detailed account of distribution. \$8.00 postage paid; \$10.00 out of US. If ordered together, both Lenz booklets may be obtained for \$14.00, postage paid, \$16.00 out of US.

### Diseases of the Pacific Coast Iris

*Lewis & Adele Lawyer:* ALMANAC, Fall 1986. 22 pages, 9 photographs. \$3.50 postage paid, \$5.00 out of US.

## SPCNI SLIDE SETS

Two slide sets are available through SPCNI. Our Slide Chairman, Damon Hill, has produced them and they can be obtained by requesting them from him: 4613 Maddock Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472 or iris4u@comcast.net

The charge is \$7.50 for either of the two sets. The first set deals with species: the second set is concerned with hybrids. **The combination set is no longer available.** The slides in each set will be contained in a Kodak carousel. The carousel will be convenient to use and less likely to be damaged in shipment. Payment (payable to SPCNI) should be sent to Terri Hudson, SPCNI Secretary/Treasurer. The person requesting the slides is financially responsible for return of the slides.

### SPCNI WEB SITE

For great articles and photos!

<http://www.pacificcoastiris.org>

Web Manager, Steve Ayala

929 Pepperwood Lane, Petaluma, CA 94952

e-mail: steveayla@sonic.net

**MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris is a section of the American Iris Society. Membership in AIS is not a requirement for membership in the SPCNI, but is suggested and may be of considerable benefit.

Membership	Individual	Family
Annual	\$8.00	10.00
Triennial	20.00	23.00
10 year	60.00	75.00
20 year	110.00	125.00

Please send membership monies to the SPCNI Treasurer. For foreign: annual or triennial please add \$4.00 per membership per year; 10/20 year membership, please add \$20/\$40 per membership.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER**

**Dues Notices**

First dues renewal notices will no longer be sent. Please note the expiration date of your membership on the address label. This date indicates the month and year that your SPCNI dues are due. We will continue to send a final reminder notice if we have not heard from you in 90 days.

**AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY**

Membership in the American Iris Society is not required for SPCNI membership. However, AIS membership is suggested and may be of considerable benefit.

Send Membership renewals or inquires to the Membership Secretary:

Tom Gormley  
 PO Box 38  
 Cedar Hills, MO 63016-0028  
 e-mail: aismemsec@earthlink.net

Annual,	Single:	\$25.00
	Dual:	\$30.00
Triennial,	Single:	\$60.00
	Dual:	\$75.00
Life,	Single:	\$450.00
	Dual:	\$545.00

**Overseas Rates:**

Annual,	Single:	\$30.00
	Dual:	\$35.00
Triennial,	Single:	\$65.00
	Dual:	\$80.00

Calendar year memberships. May be paid by check, VISA or MasterCard. Overseas memberships include first class postage, and are payable in U.S. currency.

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**SPCNI MEMBERSHIP LIST**

SPCNI is offering its membership list of individuals for a slight fee to cover the cost of mailing and printing (approximately \$3.00 for the US, \$4.00 for overseas). This list can be used only for contact purposes and cannot be used or sold as a business mailing list. If anybody wants to be excluded from the list, please contact Terri Hudson.

**PLEASE ADVISE SPCNI AND AIS OF A CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

## President's Message

Richard Richards

It is with a sense of both gladness and sadness I leave the position of President of SPCNI. Sadness in that I will have less contact with the many devoted people who make SPCNI function so effectively. Gladness in that I have made so many wonderful friends, and gotten to know even better the people I knew before assuming this office.

We have accomplished several things of which I am proud. We have continued the tradition of treks to see *Californicae* in their native areas. I am especially proud that we were able to work with the National Park Service to visit the stands of *I. munzii* within Sequoia National Park, and have our friends from New Zealand with us.

I am proud of the Almanac, which, though it has had two changes of Editor, has remained a fine publication. Steve Taniguchi, who did such a good job, was forced to quit because of professional commitments, and the Hudsons continued the work until Jody Nolin came forward and took over, not missing a beat and continuing the tradition of quality.

We have an outstanding website. Steve Ayala created it, and it continues to be an award-winning site. He was on the job when I came on as President, and he is still there, quietly modifying it to keep the quality high. Steve is typical of the dedicated service that SPCNI gets from so many people utilizing their talents for the organization.

AIS decided that each section needed a Recorder to ease the burden on their Recorder. Ken Walker volunteered his knowledge and enthusiasm, and is defining this position in so many wonderful ways that I could not have anticipated. Among other things, he is creating a database of digital images of as many of the PCI introductions that can be found. If you have old slides, photos, or other visual images of any PCIs, please send them to Ken. He will return them as soon as they are reproduced for our database.

These people, and so many others, have earned my thanks. Special mention must be made of the Hudsons, especially Terri, who does Herculean duty as Secretary-Treasurer. Even listing what she does would go far beyond the space this column ought to take. Terri is the heart and soul of this organization, anticipating our needs, taking swift action to execute the Board's and my decisions, and simply making things work.

In addition, the Hudsons have been especially active in donating plants and other goods to the Society for fund raisers. We have colored pictures in the Almanac because of their efforts at bringing in extra funds for such projects as this.

Our new President, Debby Cole, is bringing fresh ideas to the job. I know we are in good hands with Debby. She loves the pursuit of PCIs in the wild. She has introduced PCI hybrids. She is in all realms an experienced irisarian, with wide contacts in the iris world. She'll do a fine job on her own, and with the willing help that so many people provide this organization, I believe she will experience the satisfaction of seeing this organization continue to thrive.

I am not retiring from SPCNI. As Immediate Past President I remain on the Board of Directors, and will be active in writing for the Almanac. I believe that the history of SPCNI needs to be chronicled, and as one of the few surviving Charter Members, I am in a good position to do that. I will be available to help where I can, in the ways I can, to keep this organization thriving. The enjoyment of *Pacificas*, in the wild, in the garden, and in the hybridizers' seedling patches, is a lifetime activity, and I intend to enjoy all of these activities as long as I can.

Thanks to all for your wonderful spirit and cooperation.

SPCNI TREK 2006  
There's still time!

There are still spaces left for the SPCNI Trek, Sunday, May 21, in Portland.  
Trek leaders Jean Witt and Debby Cole report a wide range of bloom color in the area. Come see!  
Reservations of \$75.00 include transportation from the Red Lion Hotel and box lunch.  
For reservations contact Terri Hudson.

# 2005 New Introductions

\*AROUND THE BAY (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

BARENDEAN TWILIGHT (Claire Patten, R. 2005) CA, 15" (36-38 cm), L. S. pale pansy-violet (Wilson 033/3), purple stripe shading to blue from base to half height; slightly frilly; style arms pale pansy-violet (033/3); F. pale pansy-violet and dark pansy-violet (033), darker striping and darker feathered halo around signal, faint yellow stripe from signal to small blue flash at center edge of halo; small yellow signal. Parentage unknown; seed from Dora Sparrow.

\*BOWL OF FLUFF (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

\*BUBBLE WRAP (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

BURGUNDY KIWI (Mary Barrell, R. 2005). Sdlg. 95-01. CA, 13" (34 cm), M. S. burgundy pink, veined darker in center, style arms cream, burgundy pink center vein and tips; F. burgundy pink fading to cocoa pink, darker thumbprint and veining running to edges. Parentage unknown, seed from Ghio.

CHARLESTON HAZE (Colleen Modra, R. 2005). Sdlg. PC-22. CA, 13" (33 cm), M. S. creamy lavender, darker around edges and base; style arms lavender, creamy yellow midrib; F. creamy lavender, slightly darker on edges, signals violet, dark veining, faint yellow on midrib, flared and ruffled. Parentage unknown, seed from Ghio.

CHARLESTON SMOKE (Colleen Modra, R. 2005). Sdlg. PC-21. CA, 7" (18 cm), ML. S. smoky lilac-lavender, darker veining at base, style arms cream edged lavender; F. lilac lavender, lighter around signal; signals purple veined darker; flared, lightly ruffled. Parentage unknown, seed from Ghio.

\*CURLIQUE (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

DIANE MARIE (Vernon Wood by Terri Hudson, R. 2005). Sdlg. 98-79. CA, 15" (38 cm), EM. S. white, thin purple midrib, pale purple dusting at outer edges; style arms bright purple; F. white overlaid with heavy bright purple veining, giving appearance of a purple band at edges, 1/8" outside rim of pure white, signal gold yellow covered with purple veining. Parentage unknown X High Splendor. Iris Gallery 2005.

\*EASTER BREAK (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

EGOCENTRIC (Deborah Cole, R. 2005). Sdlg. 95-PG-3. CA, 10-12" (25-30 cm), ML. S. rose; style arms and crests yellow cream; F. rose, small yellow-cream signal with red halo; sometimes branched. Parentage unknown, seed from J. Ghio.

ENCHANTING TEMPTRESS (Vernon Wood by Terri Hudson, R. 2005). Sdlg. 20-27. CA, 12" (30 cm), M. S. pale yellow, heavily veined mauve-lavender; style arms bright purple; F. strong vivid yellow, heavy veining of mauve extending to create edging of darker mauve-lavender veining, signal bright yellow overlaid orange brown. Parentage unknown. Iris Gallery 2005.

ERICKA DENISE (Vernon Wood by Terri Hudson, R. 2005). Sdlg. 20-42. CA, 12" (30 cm), M. S. apricot veined red purple, top ends mauve lavender; style arms orchid purple; R. rosy pink heavily veined dark purple-red, signal is dark wine around lighter area of gold-veined dark purple. 99-27, unknown, X 98-53: (96-29: (93-29: (Rich Boy x 91-45:(89-7 x Riva)) x Comet Trails) x 96-35: (High Splendor x Mission Santa Clara)). Iris Gallery 2005.

\*EYE CATCHING (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

FIRST UP (Colleen Modra, R. 2005). Sdlg. PC-01. CA, 9-13" (22-32 cm), EML. S. violet veined darker; style arms pale violet; F. violet, edges lighter, white around dark veining; signal yellow spreading to veining.

Echuca X unknown.

\*JABBERBOX (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

LILAC LULLABY (Mary Barrell, R. 2005). Sdlg. 90-02. CA, 14" (36 cm), EM. S. pale lilac, darker lilac veining at center; style arms white tinged lilac; F. pale lilac veined gold on top third, darker lilac wash around small yellow signal, faint turquoise flash below signal. Parentage unknown, seed from Ghio.

\*MISSION SOLEDAD (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

\*MIXED BAG (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

\*MULTIPLICITY (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

\*NEW BLOOD (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

\*ON THE BUBBLE (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

PERIWINKLE PERSIAN (Deborah Cole, R. 2005). Sdlg. 98-PS-3. CA, 4-8" (10-20 cm), ML. Lavender blue self, signal white, yellow center stripe, blue flash appears on F. as flower ages. Parentage unknown, seed from SPCNI.

PINOLE PRINCE (Vernon Wood by Terri Hudson, R. 2005). Sdlg. 97-67. CA, 15" (38 cm), M. S. lavender purple veined dark purple; style arms lavender purple; F. lavender purple veined overall deeper purple, lighter lavender-blue rim, circular gold signal veined dark purple, well defined; rounded form. San Lorenzo Valley X 95-12, unknown. Iris Gallery 2005.

\*SPENDING SPREE (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

STARSHINE BRIGHT (Mary Barrell, R. 2005). Sdlg. 90/01. CA, 16" (40cm), EM. S. ivory white, slight yellow veining; style arms white, veined gold at center; F. ivory white, gold veins radiating from large gold signal. Parentage unknown, seed from Ghio.

\*WIDE SCREEN (Joseph Ghio, CA, R. 2004). Bay View 2005.

### **SPCNI Meeting**

4:30pm, Weds, May 24, 2006

"Red Lion on the River" Hotel, Jantzen Beach

AIS National Convention, Portland, Oregon

**Speaker: Glenn Corlew**

Hybridizer, AIS Judge Emeritus and SPCNI Charter Member

"SPCNI, Past, Present and Future"

and

**Auction of new PCI Introductions**

## SEED EXCHANGE: Thank you!

### Debby Cole, retiring Chair

Thirty-two SPCNI members placed orders for 640 packets of seed this year, and generously included almost \$100 in donations with their payment. Three members charged their purchases, and one foreign member took advantage of the opportunity to renew membership as well. The most popular items were seed of 'Sunol Grade,' 'Oxymoron,' 'Nightgown,' and 'Jolon.' Many thanks to all of you! After expenses of approximately \$75, the treasury was increased by \$413. This is one of several fundraising efforts that enable SPCNI to keep its dues tolerable while continuing to bring members this quality publication, the Almanac.

Bob Sussman has volunteered to take over the Seed Exchange from me, and will be glad of all your help and participation. Please let him know if there is no germination in some of your seed lots, so those can be removed from the listing, and send him (see address under Seed Chair, inside front cover) seed of many interesting PCI in the fall for a great Seed Exchange next winter! He would appreciate notice of your intended donation in September, so the seed listing can be done in time for the Fall Almanac. If you haven't yet tried raising PCI from seed, make a note to yourself to try it next winter-directions are supplied.

Watch for the species in bloom in the wild this spring, and enjoy the glory. If you return to harvest seed this summer, be sure to do so responsibly. If on private property, get the landowner's permission, or obtain any necessary permits if on public property but endangered. Harvest randomly, and don't take more than ten percent of seed in an area. Record the location accurately. Take wonderful pictures! And if there's a story you'd care to share, Almanac editor Jody Nolin would like to hear from you.

Have a great iris season, and thanks for the memories.

### Eastern Report

#### John White, Minot, ME

There is not much news on PCIs up here in the Northeast. Other than David Schneider in Concord, MA and myself, I do not know of anyone else who is growing PCIs.

Maine is not the ideal location for growing, although I had some success for ten or eleven years before I got wiped out in the winter of '04. One of the coldest, driest, windiest and mostly very little snow on record. I lost a few hundred plants that winter, some of which were 10 to 17 years old. They were all I. tenax crosses. I started over again in '05 with a lot of seedlings, 100 according to my garden chart. They are mostly I. tenax x Sea Gal and they survived the winter of '05 very well. I have about 40 seeds getting the cold treatment. I will bring them out into a warm room in mid-March.

Concord, MA is a little warmer than where I live and I think Dave is having better luck with them. Just a few years ago I gave Dave some of my seedlings. He still has a few that have survived the winter of '04. As for my seedlings, I will have quite a few bloom for the first time this spring. I will have more news in the fall.

I am coming to the convention, along with about 18 others from the Portland, Maine area. I will be on the PCI tour. Hope to see you all there.

## Spring Report from Canada, 2006

### Harry Hill, Roberts Creek, BC

The big news among iris growers on Canada's west coast is this winter's formation of the British Columbia Iris Society, which will bring together lovers of both beardless and bearded iris. The new group will be loosely associated with both the Canadian Iris Society and the American Iris Society.

Garden tours have already been arranged to take place this May and June on Vancouver Island, Salt Spring Island and on the mainland near Chilliwack, and will probably catch the end of the Pacific iris season here. It is to be hoped that exposure through these sorts of tours that people who are already growing bearded, Siberian and other iris will be won over to the virtues of Pacific iris!

For more information on the society, please go to: <<http://www.bc-iris.org>>

Diane Whitehead of Victoria, BC, reports that she has been growing PCIs for about 40 years, from seeds she collected in Oregon. Then she saw a SPCNI display at the 1993 NARGS Western Winter Study Weekend in San Mateo, California. "I was startled by hybrid colours and patterns, so different from the modest species I grew. Adele Lawyer noticed me copying iris names, signed me up as a SPCNI member, and invited me home to see her plants."

"I've been growing hybrids ever since," she says. "I think I may be the best customer the seed exchange has. Some of the resulting plants are exciting in themselves. Others are boring and get composted, but maybe some shouldn't have been. I was just about to toss some when I realized there were more flowers than usual - actually ten on each stem. Another nondescript one rebloomed, and a couple are dwarf enough for a rock garden. So I saved them and am crossing them with beautiful flowers."

"Last year a wonderful tall blue munzii hybrid bloomed for the first time - XP280 from the 1997 exchange. It was the only survivor from fifteen seedlings, and I hope it will produce hardier, faster-blooming blues."

"Taking advantage of the efforts of hybridizers is a short-cut to developing my own hybrids, but I think it is time to go searching for wild plants again. I want to find some plants with red stems and spathes, and if I bring some pollen back from California, I'll be able to pollinate my May-blooming plants."

Dee Fitton of Salt Spring Island, BC, has a question about when is the best time to cut back PCI foliage. "My PCIs are looking quite beat up right now, and I suspect wind damage to the foliage. So I have been busy cutting off the dead stuff and trying to clean up the plants. There is new growth, but I may lose some flowers stems as I cut back. I'd like to know what other growers do with dead leaves."

"I am quite amazed at the hardiness of PCIs in my cool garden and I don't give them any help," she says. "They are exposed to sun and wind yet they are healthy and flower well."

Paige Woodward co-owns and operates Pacific Rim Native Plant Nursery Chilliwack, BC, and grows Pacific iris species, not hybrids. "We have all or almost all the species," she says. "I can't be sure because it's early spring, but they all survived winter 2004."

"We have plants from hundreds of different seed lots. I am finally going to make some selections this year and grow them out in the ground, in rows," she says. "Our first special offering will be our maroon and gold iris, which I now take to be *innominata*, this fall. It has yet to be named."

Paige has some interesting observations on Pacific iris germination: "Several years ago I received tag ends of a lot of very old seedex seed lots. No one else was ordering the leftovers and the person in charge thought they should be sown or discarded."

"I gave every seed lot - however small - a number, and have kept records, but have not had time to analyze my results formally," says Paige. "In general, however, I have observed that iris seeds, after a couple of years in dry storage, do not act the same as seeds collected and sown in the same year. The older they are, the fewer germinate at one time. The more staggered the germination, the less confident one becomes about throwing old seeds out. I can imagine one or two seeds in a million germinating after decades. Nonetheless I no longer plan to sow seeds more than two years old unless the taxon is rare."



## Below the Surface - in the Dark Where Wriggles Tell

Glenn Lewis, Los Angeles, CA

Understanding of root depth could be an advantage in understanding the oddities of PCI culture. Mature iris roots, thin, wirelike and brittle, will not withstand even the slightest disturbance. I call these mature roots 'pipelines', which like pipes, do not self-repair or absorb any water. Rather, the thick and newly formed young roots manage slight movement and only the microscopic hair roots absorb water and nutrients with any efficiency.

Our experience shows that if PCI's are moved with only the old 'pipeline' roots, the iris will die of drought if not watered and die of rot if it is.

How deep do PCI roots run on plants established in fairly light soil? I am reluctant to dig one for this information. Surely others have tested this rather than rely on guesswork.

Many dryland plants of the West send roots far deeper than one might think. I have seen fresh cuts for road building expose 35 feet of sheer drop with many plants of around a foot high having roots that plunge to those 35 feet and still run to unknown depths beyond. UCLA tested the annual *clarkia* from a December sowing at the top of a 15 foot trough to find that, by bloom time in May, roots had descended the 15 feet. I suspect that established Pacific Coast Iris can run considerably deeper than that.

Obviously, no one will attempt the too-delicate job of following the roots of an established plant in a garden. The wooden trough method would seem the only practical way, and one of considerable work unless an established trough could be reused.

My 25 PCI have been recently planted in an anomalous garden media of 6 feet pea gravel with some 5% organic amendment. Established now for 12 years, a huge variety of plants have proven to flourish there in the super-airy and breathing mix. Roots of almost anything are known to grow downward with great speed and to become exceedingly branched seeking nutrients. This type of bed is patterned after the rockgardeners' scree. Among its many advantages are:

- It is truly clean,
- Weeds are almost nonexistent,
- Easy transplanting from complete root release,
- and rot and soil diseases are near zero.

My guess, based on feeling, not fact, is that my plants roots will go to the moisture retaining heavy clay base beneath the six feet of pea gravel.

## Plant Life Clippings - There's gold in these paintings

by Valerie Easton

Vashon (WA) botanical artist Jean Emmons was honored with a gold medal at the 2005 Royal Horticultural Society Exhibit in Birmingham, England, this past June. Emmons describes the big international show as "the Olympics of botanical art." In preparation, Emmons grew an assortment of Pacific Coast hybrid iris for four years, painting them as they came into bloom. Eight of her life-size paintings were exhibited along with the work of 80 other selected artists from around the globe. The British judges questioned the near-turquoise blue of our native 'Magic Sea' iris, wondering if perhaps Jean had exaggerated its unique coloration. An expert was called in from the BBC's "Gardeners' World" television show, who confirmed the iris' vivid blue as an accurate depiction of the real thing.

"It was the best morning of my life," says Emmons, who brought home not only the gold but a deal for the RHS Lindley Library to buy four of her paintings for its permanent collection.

From the artist, Jean Emmons:

My thanks to Richard Greenberg for sharing his irises and his advice for the last 5 years. I'd also like to thank Richard Richards for looking up iris registration history for my labels. Both Richard R. and Terri (Hudson) helped me figure out I had the false 'Amiguita.' I put it in the exhibit as "Iris cv. received as 'Amiguita' -- correct cultivar name to be determined."

*Ed. Note:* See page 19 for Jean's wonderful paintings, and 'Amiguita'.

## Rescuing Seed Pods

Terri Hudson and Debby Cole

Several years ago, I wrote a short article about collecting seed pods. I wrote this, as we always seem to vacation when the pods are opening. I learned from Carla Lankow how to make fine mesh bags to place over the pods, then tie with a baggie tie. This is quite a task with a garden of PCI's as large as ours, but I considered it my duty to be able to send seeds to Debby Cole, the Seed Chairman.

Speaking with Debby about this at one time, I recalled that if I cut the pods at the 'Right Time', that I wouldn't need to do go through the mesh process, which of course meant collecting them, untying and removing them from the bags (not always easy as there is a sharp piece near the pod that snags in the bag!)

On with my story. Debby wrote; 'I once tried cutting all the pods on a clump just after the last bloom was done, and that was way too soon, the seeds weren't developed. My current theory is that, as with humans, the babies need to incubate in the mother until the third trimester! PCI seem to take about 9 weeks to reach the pod-splitting stage, and seeds harvested after at least 6 weeks seem to be well enough developed to produce plants.'

Debby wrote this to me after I told her recently about an experiment I did. I mesh bagged some 'Orchid Resprite', but with some plants, I cut the green bee pods, put them in an open brown lunch bag in the garage. This was probably just about 6-8 weeks after the plants had bloomed. I planted them this last fall, marking each batch separately to see what would happen. I was so excited when my husband came to tell me that I had sprouts from my pods that had been cut. Yes, I have sprouts from the mesh bagged ones also, but if it isn't just my imagination, the seedlings from the cut pods seem to be a little bit taller and wider!!!

To add to this, Debby shared with me that Dora Sparrow, one of SPCNI's earliest members, always felt that fresh seed germinated much faster than dried seed, although Debby didn't have hard evidence to support that.

I felt with Debby's expertise and my experiment, this was noteworthy for the Almanac. Please remember, speaking as your Treasurer, the more seeds our new Seed Chairman, Bob Sussman, can have, the better our Seed Distribution Sales will be. If this blurb has helped inspire anyone, then I have done my job!

I know that our enthusiastic new Editor, Jody Nolin, would welcome discussion on this topic, so if you have thoughts on this topic, pro or con, please send a note to Jody for the next Almanac.

### Notes from your Secretary/Treasurer

As I type this, we are beginning to have bloom with the PCI's. Our first to bloom this year were 'Pacific Rim' in January in our cold frame and 'Blue Sage' in the ground in February. Now, many buds are beginning to show, 'Clarice Richards' and 'Ojai' having beautiful bloom in the cold frame.

We still have plenty of room for late registrants with no extra charge for the Trek on May 21<sup>st</sup> leaving from the hotel in Portland. Please contact me if you are interested ASAP. We need to know for the # of busses we hire!

We have updated the Checklist through 2005 so if you are interested, see the inside cover for details. This will be in the form of hard copy or CD for \$9.00.

By the middle of May, we will have a photo CD, compiled by Ken Walker, our Registrar. I am estimating that the CD will have at least 225 photo's of PCI's . Please remember to note if your address label on the envelope with your Almanac indicates that your membership is due to send me a check!

I hope to see you at the National in Portland this May

Terri Hudson

SPCNI Financial Report

1/1/05-12/31/05

Income/Expenses

Income	
'06 TREK - INCOME	300.00
BACK ALMANACS	45.50
BOOK SALES:	200.50
CHECKLIST	22.50
DONATIONS	168.50
DUES	1435.00
INTEREST EARNED	34.82
MISC INCOME	27.00
SEED EXCHANGE	528.84
SLIDE RENTALS	30.00

Total Income \$2,770.16

Expenses

ALMANAC	1865.18
BOOK EXPENSES	475.15
SEC-TREASURE:	40.54
SLIDE PROGRAM	14.65
WEB PAGE	160.20
Expenses - Other	25.00

Total Expenses \$2,580.72

Total Income/Expenses \$189.44

SPCNI 2005 Balance Sheet  
12/31

Assets

Cash and Bank	
Accounts	
CD ACCOUNT	\$4,661.46
CHECKING	\$4,180.69

Total Cash and Bank Accounts \$8,842.15

Total Assets \$8,842.15

Liabilities \$0.00

On Sale!  
At the National Convention

SPCNI Photo Gallery CD  
Over 280 color photos of PCIs  
Only \$9.00

**Check List of Named PCI Cultivars**  
Lists and describes Pacific Coast Iris  
and named hybrids through 2005.  
~70 pages. Hardcopy or CD: \$9.00

Also potted PCIs, seeds and PCI notecards!

Welcome New Members

Carol & Jim Adelman  
5690 Brooklake Rd NE  
Salem OR 97305

Ken Foster  
1216 Rosario Street  
Davis, CA 95616  
kennancorp@sbcglobal.net

Rick Goodwin  
1434 Mariposa Street  
Richmond CA 94804  
mariposa\_rpg@yahoo.com

Ann Mendez  
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San Diego CA 92176-6377

John Schoustra  
8000 Balcom Canyon Road  
Somis CA 93066  
john@greenwoodgarden.com

Keith Weinstock  
3484 Green Pine Place  
Simi Valley, CA 93065-7251

Alun Whitehead  
Aulden Farm  
Aulden, Leominster, Herefordshire HRG0JT  
alun@auldenfarm.co.uk

## Pacific Coast Iris Spring Care in the State of Washington

David Pettenski, Bothell, Washington

The natural northern range of the Pacific Coast Native Iris is about Chehalis, Washington located in the middle of the western edge of the state, on the Pacific Coast side of the Cascade Range. North of Chehalis, Washington you begin to encounter conditions that challenge the PCI grower and the plant. While there are pockets of sub tropical and desert-like conditions around the Puget Sound area due to geography, generally the winter temperatures decrease and the winter rain increases as you head north. These conditions can result in the PCI looking somewhat “challenged” after a Northwest winter.

I look at my PCI's in February and March and think how poorly they are growing and whether they will survive. Then the sunshine and warmth returns and they start to grow vigorously and get ready to bloom. I always wonder though, what should I do regarding dead leaves, old leaves, weeding, fertilizing, dividing, transplanting and just general plant clean up to achieve optimum growth and flowering. I have heard extremes from growers who do nothing to those who would mow the plants to within a couple inches of their lives.

I decided to ask a few questions of local (Seattle, WA) growers to add to my personal observations. I am grateful for the input from Jean Witt, Carla Lankow, Debbie Cole, and Fran Hawk (all gardeners), Richard Greenberg (a landscape designer/installer/gardener), and Nils Sundquist and Jim Mossman (both commercial nurserymen). I posed the following questions to the group. Their answers with my lead in follow:

### 1. Do you trim old leaves off? When? How? Benefit?

I have been growing PCI for about six years and have about 200 plants. Most of my plants are hybrids from Joe Ghio. I have a few species and a good mix of natural hybrids. When I first starting growing PCI I would meticulously prune off every dead, dying and deformed leaf. All of the clippings would be recycled off of my property. If I delayed the pruning until new growth was two to four inches tall it was a true labor of love or pure idiocy! There had to be a better way. Age and the power of observation give one the wisdom to not do the same dumb things again. I humbled myself and asked those who have done this before. The solution that I came up with was to attempt to remove all dead and dying leaves prior to significant growth in the spring. Don't dawdle: cut low, discard the leaves and move on to the next plant. This should be done in February and March just before new growth takes off in earnest. The removal of the leaves allows air and light into the new growth and limits the leaf born pathogens and harborage for insects and slugs.

Nils indicates that he removes all leaves before the new flush of growth most all of the foliage will eventually die down by midsummer and no longer serves a useful purpose. Deb mows down the plants before new leaf and flower spike growth, usually in late February and early March. If she is late she trims off dead leaves with scissors. Deb says this leaf trim gets rid of leaves that may be growing rust as well as ones the slugs have ruined and the ones that have died of old age, it takes away nesting grounds for slugs and insects, and also gives her a better shot at enjoying the blossoms and clean green foliage. She reports one batch of PCI that had grown bushy in various directions. Deb explains she cut off all its leaves in November, rather than waiting until spring. We will have to hear a report back on that one later. Richard agrees with Deb, cutting the PCI at the same time with scissors down to about four to five inches. He claims the removal of the old leaf debris improves the overall health of the plant. Jean explains that she removes dead leaves in the spring, permitting the foliage to act as a winter protection. Fran states she pulls off the dead leaves when easy by hand and will trim off the bad or yellowed tips as needed. She claims the same benefits as above. Carla follows a similar practice to Fran by pulling only dry leaves off in the spring but does no routine trimming of the leaves. One interesting comment on this topic made by Jean was the thought of burning off the dead leaves with straw similar to the how bearded iris were treated in the past. This may be an effective option, which probably occurs in nature through lightning fires. Jim indicates that he trims most leaves off in the fall except for *I. tenax* and *I. douglasiana*, which seem to stay green most of the winter. He uses sharp scissors or pruning shears.

### 2. Do you divide/transplant in the spring? When? How? Success rate?

I have divided PCI in the fall and the spring. In our climate I prefer the spring because of the increase in daylight

and warmth stimulating growth of roots and leaves. The fall can be touch and go regarding weather with the fact that it is getting darker and colder each day until December 21 This can result in the plant sitting in the dark, cold, wet ground rotting away. Therefore I wait until about March to divide. I look for new white roots emerging from the base of the plant just below the soil level indicating new growth. If I am redoing a bed, I will remove the entire plant, wash off the soil and divide into three to four fan divisions with a sharp pruning shear. I plant the divisions into the garden or pots within the day. If I need to hold over for more than a day I will replant into pots for later planting into the garden. I use band pots with a cross bottom or one gallon plastic pots for larger plants. I make sure the soil mix has good drainage by mixing in some sand and perlite, If I just want to divide a plant I will cut out a wedge out of the mother plant and immediately replant the wedge. My success rate has been about 75% for the fall and probably up to about 90% for the spring. I also will sprinkle in some 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer if using bark mulch. In one of my first dedicated PCI beds a few years ago I even tilled in some green sand, rock phosphate and alfalfa granules with very good growth noted the next couple years. I just have not been consistent with this practice.

Jean reports that she has divided in the fall and spring with a preference for the fall but not after October 20<sup>th</sup>. She claims Mother Nature will water the divisions over the winter whereas she has to remember to do it in the spring. She also does not divide below three fans and looks for new white roots around the edges of the plants before dividing. Jean indicates we should consider dividing one half of a clump one year and the other half the next year to prevent a loss of the entire clump if all divisions die. Richard reports dividing in the spring around March, again looking for the new white roots. He will lift the whole plant, cutting it apart into divisions of three to six fans and replant immediately into the garden or a pot. If he is going to sell the divisions or give to a friend he will make sure of the new growth, wash off the soil, pot it up or wrap the roots in wet newspaper placed inside a plastic bag, to be planted as soon as possible. He claims a success rate of 80-90%. Jim divides and transplants his PCI in the fall around October. He gently pulls apart the divisions and has a 90% success rate. Jin says he uses a tablespoon or so of alfalfa meal in with a gritty, well draining topsoil mix. He claims this gives a kickstart to his plants. Fran prefers spring dividing and no later than mid-April. Although she says she has divided blooming plants in May with good survival. Fran feels the spring timing results in better survival due to improved root development.

### 3. Do you fertilize? When? With what?

I generally will top dress in the spring (March/April) with a granular general-purpose fertilizer line 5-10-10 or 10-10-10. I have observed that my best plants are growing on a small hillside, with full early and mid-day sun, poor soil, no routine fertilization or irrigation and general neglect. I think because of the natural habitat of PCI growing in poor, well draining soil that fertilizer should play a minimal part in their cultivation.

Nils reports that PCI break the mold of typical iris, which prefer traditional garden conditions. He has observed they prefer less fussing and do not like to be disturbed. He notes PCI respond to compost mulch as long as it is well draining. Jean uses a minimal application of compost or 5-10-10, once in the spring before the new growth really begins. Fran fertilizes with 5-10-10 at the same time she does her bearded iris. She makes two applications one before and one after bloom. Jim uses a commercial 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 in March. Carla fertilizes lightly with a little 5-10-10 in February or March. Deb uses an azalea/rhododendron fertilizer in the spring and once sprayed a crop of PCI seedlings with weak doses of water-soluble fertilizer (Miracle -Gro) once or twice each month after planting out. She stated the seedlings bloomed a year earlier than most. Richard reports that he does not fertilize PCI except with a small amount of organic compost. He says after all they are natives accustomed to poor soil.

### 4. Do you perform any weed control? When? What? Do you use any mulch?

My primary weed control has been by hand. I have recently had an infiltration of oxalis, which is very difficult to keep under control without chemicals. Deb has suggested using a broadleaf herbicide used on lawns to kill the weeds between my iris. I may try that this year. If I do I would apply it at the lowest rate and during a dry spell in the spring. I have used conifer bark mulch around PCI to control weeds, provide acidity, cool and improve the soil. I try to keep it about 1-2 inches thick and not pile it up close to the plant. This last fall I obtained some conifer wood chips about ¼ inch square, which I am using as mulch to control weeds in a new PCI bed. I have found when using wood mulches the decomposition process will consume nitrogen so I will use 10-10-10 versus 5-10-10. I would recommend to be careful not to mulch too thick or too close to the plant base for fear of rotting the PCI.

Fran prefers to pick weeds by hand and does not use mulch due having a large number of plants in a small garden. Jean uses pine needle mulch to a depth of about one inch for weed control. She presented me with an idea of using shredded paper as a new possibility and I would think the material produced by a cross cut shredder may be worth looking into. Richard also weeds by hand and is trying a little mulch between plants but away from the base of the clump for weed control this year. Jim reports that he also pulls weeds by hand and does not use mulch. Carla developed the thumb, forefinger and pull method of weed control. Her PCI are planted under a Big Leaf maple, which provides winter leaf mulch that she removes in the spring. Nils weeds by hand because he has not yet found a good pre-emergent herbicide. Deb uses a pre-emergent herbicide after weeding by hand and claims she has no more weeding for the year. She explained when she first started growing PCI almost twenty years ago, winter in Seattle was much harsher, and she was warned to mulch recently-planted PCI three inches deep in bark, branches or whatever. She stated she wouldn't have considered planting in December. Now we get temperatures barely below freezing only a few times each year. Deb now mulches newly-set plants only one inch deep, and they're all doing fine despite having had several night freezes. Deb further says she does not mulch her established PCI.

5. Are any species more problematic regarding cleanup than others?

I seem to notice that some of my PCI die down to the base each winter and others do not. My *I. tenax* leaves are gone each spring and that is to be expected. The *I. douglasiana* have a lot of dead tips and the *I. munzii* hybrids seem to come through with intact foliage. These are my observations and a lot has to do with the locations in my garden, the hybrid background and of course the weather. Nils explained to me the observation that just because the foliage dies down over the winter on one plant and not on another, does not make it less hardy. In fact the plant that dies down to the base may be protecting itself by limiting the amount of plant activity because there is no photosynthesis without leaves. *I. munzii* on the other hand may not die down as easily in the Puget Sound area and this could cause a plant liability in certain weather conditions. Anyway I believe unless you are growing pure species the issue regarding die down and spring cleanup is not worth avoiding a plant.

Carla reports that she may have to pull more dead leaves off the PCI with some *I. tenax* background but most of the modern hybrids are such a mix that it is hard to tell. Jean notes *I. tenax* are more deciduous in our area and *I. munzii* seems to be tender. Fran notices the *I. douglasiana* and related hybrids are hardier. She does not observe a significant difference between the species hybrids regarding die down and spring clean up. Richard explains *I. tenax* loses a lot of leaves in winter but a closer haircut two to three inches in late winter seems to work fine for clean up. *I. douglasiana*'s get brown tips in severe weather which he just trims off and he hasn't had to trim *I. munzii*. Jim reports *I. tenax* and *I. douglasiana* are a little harder to trim up if let go until spring.

6. Have you noticed anything unusual with your PCI's after this winter (extreme cold, unusual warmth and lots of rain in Seattle)

I have noticed a little bit of frost damage to tender new growth that came out early with some of the warm January weather, but that is about all. Carla also reports some freeze damage on the new growth that started during the warm wet weather before the freeze. She doesn't know what that will do to bloom, but hopes the buds were not up far enough to be damaged. Fran reports that she used soil mounded around her new PCI's planted in the fall to protect them from the cold. She previously used pine needles and mounded them under and over the leaves. This mulch or soil is removed as new growth begins in the spring. Fran says the plant survival looks as good with the soil mounds as with pine needles. Richard observes more exposed clumps of OCI were burned by the cold and showed some orange-tan browning on their leaves. Jim claims with his outdoor set up for potted PCI this winter he may lose some plants due to the excessive winter rainfall. Jean has noticed the *I. tenax* leaves have come up early this spring due to the warm January.

In summation PCI's in the Pacific Northwest seem to do best when grow on exposed slopes, with reduced water, limited fertilizer, if at all, and minimal transplanting. They are good for less active gardening as Nils would say. Clean up and removal of dead and old leaf growth should be done in the spring to improve the growth and health of the plant. Dividing and transplanting, if desired, are better done also in the spring around March for the best success rate.

## Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

Richard Richards

The Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens is the second garden in Southern California where PCIs can be viewed in abundance during the spring. We featured the other garden, the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens, in an earlier issue.

The SBBG covers 65 acres, of which 42 are open to the public, and is the older of the two botanic gardens devoted entirely to research, preservation, propagation, and display of California native plants. It was founded in 1926 in the foothills of the Coast Range above Santa Barbara, and features a wide diversity of plant communities from all over California.

Naturalized PCIs are found in many of these communities, mostly *I. douglasiana* planted in past decades from collections of plants and seeds from the wild. The southern end of the range of *I. douglasiana* is less than one hundred miles up the coast from Santa Barbara. Naturally enough, *I. douglasiana* is quite happy in the Garden, and puts on a lavish display during the early to late spring months. Some *I. innominata* clones have found a home here also, though *innominata* generally does not like southern California.

Supplementing these species are named varieties, acquired over the years and naturalized in the Garden. Older irises such as 'Ojai', 'Arioso', 'Roving Eye', and 'Garden Delight' can be seen. Some newer varieties, such as 'Los Californio' and 'Mission Santa Cruz', among others, can also be found in plantings around the Garden.

The SBBG is famous for the PCI cultivar, 'Canyon Snow', accenting the Garden with patches of white all spring. The late Dara Emery, then the Horticulturist at the Garden, registered this variety, and it won the Mitchell Award. Its origins have been lost in the fog of time. The author pointed it out to Dara Emery when it was found growing in one of the canyons in the Garden. Its wide form as well as its color made it unlikely that it was a seedling of any of the irises in the area. Emery marked it for propagation in the fall, and it subsequently showed up in the propagation area.

The rest, as the cliché goes, is history. The mostly *douglasiana* iris proved to be extremely easy to propagate and grow even in the hot, demanding interior climates of California, and has become a staple in the commercial pacifica trade. If your local nursery has any PCIs at all, it most likely has Canyon Snow.



Carol Bornstein

This brings us to the present, and to Carol Bornstein, the Director of Living Collections and the Nursery. Carol has held several positions at the Garden since her arrival. She ultimately replaced Emery after his retirement, and is working to build the Garden's collection of iris species and hybrids for naturalization in the garden. She would like to see several of Emery's seedlings available to the public over the next few years.



*I. innominata* Ken Walker



Canyon Snow SPENICD



Carol arrived at the SBBG in 1981, having received a BA in Botany from the University of Michigan and an MA in Horticulture from Michigan State. Her interests are obviously not restricted to PCIs, of course, since her responsibilities involve the preservation, propagation, and display of as many species and hybrids of California native plants as will grow in the coastal climate of Santa Barbara. With over 5800 species of native plants in California, Carol's job involves a great deal of work. The Garden has over 1000 of those species, and is always interested in adding more.

The Garden also has a Herbarium with material from more than 110,000 species of native plants. The Garden has introduced 26 varieties of native plants and hybrids to the nursery trade over the years. Canyon Snow was just one, but for native iris buffs, it is one of the best known.

The Garden is a wonderful place to visit at any time of the year. Tranquility is one of its strong points. Of course in the spring there is a lavish display of bloom on the part of most of the plants, including PCIs, from the quiet beauty of the naturalized *I. douglasiana* in a wide range of colors, to the more spectacular blooms of recent hybrids. Bring your walking shoes, a camera or two, and more than a handful of time. This is not a garden to be breezed through in an hour, and if you are a native plant enthusiast, you can spend a day here in spring without taking it all in.

## A Short Story

By Bob Sussman

My strong interest in PCI's is fairly recent, going back only a few years. Our business, Matilija Nursery, is one of growing and selling plants that are native to California. This is a business that I started in 1992, after a brief 18 year career in banking where I became increasingly tired of spending 4 hours a day driving to and from work, wearing a suit, and having no time to spend with our 4 children that now range in age from 12 to 22. And of course now they have no time for us, such is the story of civilization. As part of the native plant business we grew and still grow Douglas Iris, a couple of selections of PCI, and mixed PCI's.

Every year the Irises we didn't sell had an untimely death in their containers. A couple of years ago we took all of the Irises "dead or alive" and planted them in the mulch pile, which was actually both pretty good and well draining soil under some trees. By October it was clear that there was life under the mulch pile. We watered the mulch pile!! By spring it was undeniable, the flowers and plants were both stunning and easy to grow. The customers loved them too.

As a result of my chance iris discovery I went to the world wide web to find out more and thus began the obsession. Over the last couple of years and joining the SPCNI, I've been working on increasing my collection. The collection is still small but growing, with the help of some of the members. Last spring we began to hybridize, sort of like having children without the obligation of sending them to college. While germination has taken place I know I will have to wait to see the real results. As part of my obsession I have begun giving talks on PCI's. While I'm not exactly the expert, sometimes expert is a relative term plus the pictures do the talking.

I have also been changing out large parts of the yard as a place to expand "the PCI collection." We live in Camarillo which is in Southern California, it can get warm in the summer and I plant all year. The soil has a high clay content and doesn't drain well at all. As a result we have been planting somewhat "high," which greatly reduces the incidence of rotting. My wife has begun to take a small interest in the collection and the teenagers can't be bothered because I guess PCI's aren't "pimp," which sort of means "in" if you're a teenager?

About a month ago or so I noticed in my Almanac that someone was needed to take over the seed exchange job. To me this seemed like great fun and a way to get to know more people that have a similar interest so I volunteered. I am looking forward to doing this next fall/winter and including some of the seeds from my own creations too.





Mugshots . . .



Ghio Seedling



Ghio Seedling



Ghio seedling and friend



Grisso Seedling



Grisso Seedling



Grisso Seedling



Grisso Seedling

Your photo could be here.  
Please send photos and captions to the editor by mail or e-mail at a minimum of 300 DPI.  
We will crop and prepare it for publication.



Grisso Seedling



Pinole Prince V. Wood by T. Hudson 2005



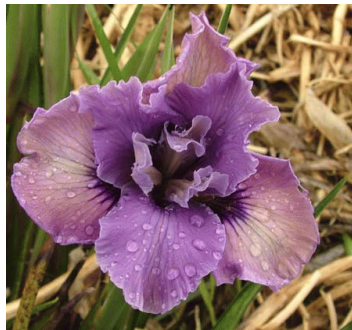
Ericka Denise V. Wood by T. Hudson 2005



Mission Soledad Ghio 2004



Multiplicity Ghio 2004



Charleston Smoke Modra 2005



First Up Modra 2005





'Night Gown' by Jean Emmons



'Ununhum' by Jean Emmons

**ALERT!!!...AMIGUITA MYSTERY SOLVED!**

Terri Hudson

If you should have 'Faux Amiguita' in your garden labeled 'Amiguita', please change the name so the plant doesn't continue to be shared with the wrong name. The plant, 'Faux Amiguita' is such a great garden plant, increasing well with good foliage, it has likely been shared with other PCI lovers. Thank you for helping to keep 'Amiguita' labeled correctly.



Faux 'Amiguita'



Real 'Amiguita'

## PACIFIC COAST IRIS SOURCES

Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden, 608 NW 119<sup>th</sup> St., Vancouver, WA 98685. (360) 572-4472, fax: (360) 576-7012, website [www.flowerfantasy.net](http://www.flowerfantasy.net), e-mail: [aitken@flowerfantasy.net](mailto:aitken@flowerfantasy.net). Catalog is \$3.

Bay View Gardens, 1201 Bay Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. (831) 423-3656 (call after dark Pacific Time). Fax: (831) 423-7610, e-mail: [ghiobayview@surfnetusa.com](mailto:ghiobayview@surfnetusa.com). Catalog is \$3.

Boonebrier Farm, Jim and Ann Mossman, 11067 NE Arness Rd., Kingston, WA. 98346. See website for details and on-line catalog at: [www.boonebrierfarm.com](http://www.boonebrierfarm.com) or call (360)297-7431. Visitors welcome in display gardens during Open Farm dates or by appointment.

The Iris Gallery, 33450 Little Valley Road, Fort Bragg, CA 95437. (707) 964-7971 or 1-800-757-IRIS, fax: (707) 964-4890, website: [www.allthingsiris.com](http://www.allthingsiris.com), e-mail: [theirisgallery@earthlink.net](mailto:theirisgallery@earthlink.net). Catalog is \$3 (has color pictures of PCI).

Wildwood Gardens, 33326 S. Dickey Prairie Rd. PO Box 250, Molalla, OR 97038-0250. (503) 829-3102, e-mail: [gardens@molalla.net](mailto:gardens@molalla.net). Catalog is \$3 (has color pictures of PCI).

The following have offered PCI in the past. You will need to contact the proprietors for more information.

Beautiful View Iris Garden, 2048 Hickok Road, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762. (916) 933-2218, email: [harold@directcon.net](mailto:harold@directcon.net), website: [www.beautiful-view-iris.com](http://www.beautiful-view-iris.com).

Broadleigh Gardens, Bishops Hull, Taunton, Somerset TA4 1AE, England. Website: [www.broadleighbulbs.co.uk](http://www.broadleighbulbs.co.uk). (EC sales only)

D. and J. Gardens, 7872 Howell Prairie Road, N. E, Silverton, OR 97381.

Nature's Garden, 40611 Hwy 226, Scio, OR 97374.

Maritima Mail Order Nursery, 2 Worcester Street, Hampden North Otago (NZ sales only).

Native Plant Nursery, Paige and Pat Woodard, 44305 Old Orchard Road, Chilliwack, BC V2R 1A9, Canada. (604) 792-9279, fax: (604) 792-1891, website: [www.hillkeep.ca](http://www.hillkeep.ca), e-mail: [plants@hillkeep.ca](mailto:plants@hillkeep.ca). PCI species. Mail order worldwide. No printed catalog. Garden and nursery visits by appointment.

Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery, 2825 Cummings Road, Medford, OR 97501, website: [www.srpn.net](http://www.srpn.net).

Westonbirt Plants, 9 Westonbrit Close, Worcester, WR5 3RX, England. Phone/fax: 00 44 (0) 1905 350429.

Save Those Seeds!

Bob Sussman

As you enjoy the holiday blooming season give a thought to our Seed Exchange. A successful Seed Exchange depends on both providers as well as buyers. Please make a mental note of cool and interesting plants for seed collection. When collecting use good judgment, no excessive collecting in "wild" and get "permission" if necessary. We have no legal defense fund!

We want the Exchange to continue to be both fun and successful. Your welcome to direct any questions to me——Bob Sussman, 805-523-8604 or e-mail [matilija@gte.net](mailto:matilija@gte.net).

Pacific Coast Irises

Philip Jones, Birmingham, England  
From The Review of the Group for Beardless Irises, British Iris Society

Due to bereavement and bad health the last twelve months of gardening have not been very fruitful. However, I did try to make some crosses. It was quite a challenge. The two questions that exercised my mind were what plants to cross with each other and how to go about it.

I have always tended to assume that Pacific Coast irises will all cross with each other but in fact some of the species do not naturally hybridize. Apart from *I. douglasiana*, *I. bracteata*, and *I. innominata*, the species are divided into two groups, according to the length of the perianth tube and spathe formation, and it has been found that the plants that belong to the short-tubed group don't necessarily cross with the long-tubed group. In his booklet 'Hybridization and Speciation in the Pacific Coast Iris', Lee W. Lenz says that no hybrid swarms have been found between *I. Hartwegii* and *I. macrosiphon* even though they may be growing within a few hundred yards of each other. He also says that *I. bracteata*, which has a short perianth tube but a different spathe formation, apparently does not hybridize naturally with the long-tubed *I. chrysophylla*. However, in his 'A Guide to the Pacific Coast Irises', which appeared printed nine years after Lenz, Victor A. Cohen mentions that he had collected seed from hybrids and that they were flowering. However, it is worth keeping in mind that when one sets out specifically to cross one plant with another there may be factors at work that make the cross difficult.

I found the task of hybridizing difficult because I seem to have a problem with near vision. I was unable to see whether the pollen had actually been deposited on the stigma. However, I divided my irises last year and so I have quite a few plants of each variety and was able to make a number of crosses and hope that some of them will take. There has been plenty of seed, but whether this is due to me or the local bees we shall have to wait and see.

The walk into the unknown was trying to decide which plants to cross and give the reason why. What exactly is one trying to achieve? I mentioned before that I have a violet purple plant that is the first to appear and the last to leave. I naturally want to see if this robust quality could be imparted to other irises. That seems a fairly obvious idea, but I also have a most elegant tall orchid pink iris with rather small flowers which is my favorite. I have tried to cross this with other colors, but I suspect it will take a lot of crossing and re-crossing before I can capture the same elegance in violet, white and yellow.

There is, of course, a much easier way to arrive at something special. It was pointed out at our last meeting at Aulden Farm that one can buy a large packet of seed from John J. Ghio and stop worrying whether the bees got to the flower first. A good thing about the hybrids is that they flower within a couple of years from sowing. The species seem to take ages. *I. tenax*, *I. douglasiana* and *I. innominata* are now on their third year here and not a flower in sight.

### **Congratulation to these 2005 Show Winners!**

**PCIs were Best Specimen of Show:**

**BAR CODE** exhibited at **Sydney B. Mitchell Iris Society,**  
**Oakland, CA, by Ryan Grisso**

***I. douglasiana*** exhibited at **West Bay Iris Society, San Jose, CA, by Garry Knipe**

**SOJOURNER** exhibited at **Santa Rosa Iris Society, Santa Rosa, CA, by Elyse Hill**

**NATIVE WARRIOR** exhibited at **Mt. Diablo Iris Society, Walnut Creek, CA, by Ryan Grisso**

