

## VIRGINIA HAS REBLOOM SPECTACULAR

From Mike Lockett  
AIS Region 4 Reblooming Iris Chairman

Reblooming bearded irises still face obstacles towards their acceptance particularly by the general gardening public. Mass market distribution to big box retailers continues to further cloud the issue. Questionable selections end up discouraging enthusiastic homeowners and landscape professionals. Can reblooming irises be reliable or are they just another promotional gimmick? Garden results for 2012 provide a ray of hope.

This past year's growing season was unique. Winter was unseasonably mild. Spring came early, so perennials, shrubs and trees bloomed ahead of schedule. Tall bearded flowering on rebloom varieties commenced in early April. The consequences for early bloom are usually devastating, but my Central Virginia display gardens somehow seemed to sidestep mid-month late frosts.

Spring bloom was over prior to Mother's Day. By the third week in May, surprises awaited me in my rebloom display plantings at J Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Goochland, VA. Bloomstalks were emerging on tall bearded Again & Again (Innerst, 1999), Gate of Heaven (Zurbrigg, 2004), Northward Ho (Zurbrigg, 1991), Over & Over (Innerst, 2000), Pink Attraction (E. Hall, 1988), Queen Dorothy (E. Hall, 1984), Starring Encore (D. Spoon, 2008) and Sunny Disposition (Zurbrigg, 1991). Medians reblooming in late May were IB I'll Be Back (Aitken, 2004), MTB Lady Emma (F. Jones, 1986), IB Midsummer Night's Dream (Baumunk, 1999), Rosalie Loving (D. Spoon, 2003) and SDB Sailboat Bay (Zurbrigg, 2004). The final curtain on the show did not fall until early November hard frosts. Incredible!!

Rebloom Reports from Lois Rose (FAIS), Colin Campbell (C&P) plus Ginny & Don Spoon (C&P) indicated similar results in their gardens. The common threads in each case were tall bearded Again &

Again, Pink Attraction and Over & Over plus medians Lady Emma and SDB Senorita Frogg (D. Spoon, 2002). As in May, the night temperature trigger remained in place during June in Goochland. Distinct periods of 60°F or less appeared throughout the month in the Richmond metro area. Adequate moisture was another important ingredient driving performance. Twenty-six varieties out of 52 planted at JSRCC were in bloom heading into the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.



Starring Encore  
(D. Spoon,  
2008)

Sunny Disposition  
(Zurbrigg, 1991).



Senorita Frogg  
(D. Spoon,  
2002)



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Temperatures returned to normal for the remainder of the summer, but daytime heat hardly curbed continued rebloom. C & P's Colin Campbell had summer flowers on TBs Feedback (Hager, 1983), Clarence (Zurbrigg, 1991), Starring Encore, Daughter of Stars (D. Spoon, 2001), Liquid Amber (G. Spoon, 2003), City Lights (Dunn, 1991), Cantina (Byers, 1990), Peachberry Swirl (D. Spoon, 2001), Tennessee Gentleman (S. Innerst, 1991) and Spirit of Figi (Zurbrigg, 1985). Colin had similar results on medians Senorita Frogg, SDB Baby Blessed (Zurbrigg, 1979), SDB Purple Joy (D. Spoon, 2009) IB Prince of Burgundy (Niswonger, 1993) and SDB Gingerbread Man (B. Jones, 1969). The Rose garden had summer bloomstalks on TBs Anxious (Hager, 1992) Immortality (Zurbrigg, 1985), September Replay (F. Jones, 1992), Golden Encore (F. Jones, 1973) and Northward Ho. Medians in flower were Senorita Frogg, Lady Emma, IB Hot Glow (Tasco, 2006), Sailboat Bay and IB Lo Ho Silver (Byers, 1989).

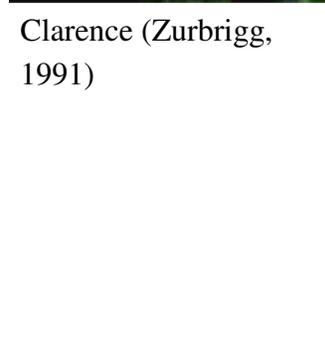
Heading into early fall, the Campbell and Rose gardens continued to sparkle. Colin found significant performance on tall bearded Daughter of Stars, Bountiful Harvest (Hager, 1991), Earl of Essex (Zurbrigg, 1980), I I Stutter (Kanarowski, 2012), Corn Dance (D. Spoon, 2008) and Margaret Wilson (D. Spoon, 2009). Lois found exceptional flowering on TBs Lunar Whitewash (Innerst, 2003), Queen Dorothy, Soda Fountain Shuffle (Lockatell, R2009), Born Again (B. Miller, 1978) and Gate of Heaven. Medians with solid performance were IB I Bless (Zurbrigg, 1985) and SDB Sky Willow (D. Spoon, 2005).

The JSRCC display planting reflects my efforts to place reblooming irises in public settings. Similar display beds have been planted at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden in James City County, VA and at Maymont Park in metro Richmond. All work, materials and travel expenses were donated. With the exception

of Maymont Park, your Region 4 Reblooming Chairman spent 100 plus hours caring for these plantings. Growing conditions varied at each location. There were however some interesting common denominators. TBs Lunar Whitewash and Northward Ho were consistent performers at all three sites. Likewise, only four varieties out of 52 failed to rebloom at JSRCC. Since the horticulture department faculty there is headed by landscape industry professionals, rebloom's outstanding performance did not go unnoticed.



Liquid Amber (G. Spoon, 2003)



Clarence (Zurbrigg, 1991)



Hot Glow (Tasco, 2006)



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Despite having meager rainfall throughout the growing season in King George, VA, Rosalie and Jack Loving had mid-October flower on some familiar tall bearded and median remontants. TBs *Again & Again*, *Matrix* (E. Hall by Zurbrigg, 1991) & *Queen Dorothy* put on a nice show. Medians strutting their floral prowess were *Baby Blessed*, *I Bless*, *Lo Ho Silver* and *Rosalie Loving* (D. Spoon, 2003). Even though the FAIS members had later bloom due to weather, they still reported results on some of the best performing varieties in the Region. Well done!!

Nanette Morrison at Celtic Gardens in Charlottesville, VA had exceptional rebloom on *Immortality*. She reported bloomstalks in early May, late August and throughout September. The well-known Zurbrigg tall bearded variety definitely found a happy home at that address. Region 4 Treasurer and long-time FSK member Carol Warner had summer flower on TB *Silver Dividends* (Zurbrigg, 1991). Don Rude, Region 4 RVP and Blacksburg, VA resident started seeing initial fall bloom on *Gate of Heaven*. *Daughter of Stars* flowered for six weeks until early November frosts ended its stunning show. Don saw significant bloomstalks on *Corn Dance* and *Matrix*. He also reported flowering on two Locketell tall bearded seedlings sent for a recent Region 4 Spring Meeting. 20556 is a pale pink and 20229BB-P&T has a peachy coloring. The later was a guest in the 2012 AIS National Convention master planting in California. It rebloomed for Re-blooming Iris Recorder Carole Buchheim there.

Near perfect growing conditions drove substantial rebloom in Virginia and throughout Region 4. The big news is newer introductions released over the past decade are consistently showing up in yearly reporting. From a breeding standpoint, pollen daubers can be assured subsequent seedling populations will have more reliable fall blooming individuals from these varieties. These hopefuls will also reflect coveted mod-

ern flower form and a better range of colorings and patterns. As new seedlings have more generations of rebloom parents behind them, the late Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg's ultimate goal of reliable summer rebloom seems within reach. Rebloomers may have indeed finally turned the corner in their quest for public acceptance.



Rosalie Loving  
(D. Spoon, 2003)

Gate of Heaven  
(Zurbrigg, 2004)



Daughter of Stars (D.  
Spoon, 2001),