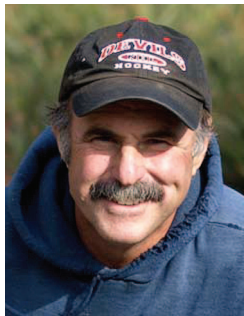


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Eastern Report By Director Mike Lockatell

Rainfall Threatens Fall Rebloom

Prospects were uncertain for cool season rebloom heading into fall in my Central Virginia display gardens. Unlike

Six tall bearded varieties were in fall bloom for eight weeks. Modern selections heading the list were **‘Just Call Me’** (B. Wilkerson 2008), **‘Lunar Whitewash’** (S. Innerst 2003)

in my Central Virginia display gardens. Unlike 2017, only sporadic bloomstalks were found at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in early September. The situation was worse at BP Market in South Richmond near my home. Weekly rainfall continued into fall leaving little or no roots on rhizomes. By the end of the year, parts of metro Richmond had seen 63” of precipitation for the calendar year. (A normal yearly total would be 25”.) Some tall bearded varieties and a few seedlings in the bed would buck the trend with healthy clumps and October rebloom. Median selections, however, such as **‘Lady Emma’** MTB (F.P. Jones 1986) plus **‘Baby Blessed’** SDB (L. Zurbrigg 1979) and **‘Sailboat Bay’** SDB (L. Zurbrigg 2001) were devastated from saturated soils.



Again And Again TB
 (S. Innerst 1999)

and **‘Over And Over’** (S. Innerst 2001). Historics taking a well deserved bow were **‘July Sunshine’** (G.P. Brown 1965), **‘My Friend Jonathan’** (B. Miller 1996) and **‘Queen Dorothy’** (E. Hall 1984). Besides turning in reliable fall rebloom each year, each variety is a vigorous grower. SDBs **‘Baby Blessed’** (L. Zurbrigg 1979) and **‘Rosalie Loving’** (D. Spoon 2003) easily outpaced the median field with continuous fall flowering over eight weeks!



Rosalie Loving SDB
 (D. Spoon 2003)

My breeding program for reliable cool season tall bearded continues to see progress working with **‘Clarence’** TB (L. Zurbrigg 1991) descendants. Like Robin Shadlow’s hybridizing with **‘Rosalie Figge’** TB (J. McKnew 1993), persistence can translate into a successful outcome. Lloyd Zurbrigg’s best advice to me years ago was to cross **‘Clarence’** offspring together. There were few choices amongst his own seedlings, but **‘Daughter Of Stars’** TB (D. Spoon 2001) offered some intriguing possibilities.



Daughter Of Stars TB
 (D. Spoon 2001)

JSRCC is located in a Richmond western rural suburb. The campus is in close proximity to the James River near the Goochland County Courthouse. For some reason, weather systems made detours either north or south around the grounds. The beneficial result was considerably less rainfall. Rebloom was still a month late heading into late September, but bloomstalks and flowers began appearing in large numbers in early October. **‘Again And Again’** TB (S. Innerst 1999) suddenly had fourteen developing stalks on one clump. Wow!

Lloyd’s last TB Re introduction, **‘Gate of Heaven’** (L. Zurbrigg 2004) appeared to be the right mate for the northern Virginia release for pollen daubing in 2005. Out of thirty plus seedlings planted, a moorish blue self had accept-



Lady Emma MTB
 (F.P. Jones 1986)



Gate Of Heaven TB
 (L. Zurbrigg 2004)



Lunar Whitewash TB
 (S. Innerst 2003)



Rosalie Figge TB
 (J. McKnew 1993)



Clarence TB
 (L. Zurbrigg 1991)

able bloomstalk height, attractive modern flower form with substance and reliable rebloom. **'Metro Blue'** TB (*M. Lockatell 2015*) bloomed for five weeks in October and early November at JSRCC in 2018. My Central Virginia introduction will be on AIS Judge's Ballot in 2020 for Award of Merit consideration.

Another Zurbrigg suggestion led to Lockatell Sdlg. #20513 or (Gate of Heaven X Zurbrigg TB SA Re Sdlg. #VV101). After seeing his tall bearded space age seedling flowering during a fall visit to Richmond in 2004, my mentor and friend thought a cross with **'Gate of Heaven'** would correct flower form issues and retain space age plus rebloom. A resulting short tall hopeful with a blue coloring and red beards stood out, so a combination with **'Metro Blue'** seemed like a good idea. **'St. Petersburg'** TB (*M. Byers 1990*) is the pollen parent for **'Gate of Heaven'** with **'Condottiere'** TB (*J. Cayeux 1978*) in its pedigree. The French bitone blue has red beards.

A seedling from this cross would have maiden bloom three weeks prior to the 2013 AIS Region 4 Fall Meeting held in Richmond. Lockatell TB Re Sdlg. #21013A Sept. Re is a hyacinth blue self with a white area around yellow beards tipped white and tangerine in the throat. Despite miserable Richmond weather, fall rebloom was achieved at BP Market and JSRCC. Yearly performance has been consistent so registration is a distinct possibility.

Lockatell TB Re Sdlg. #21013A Sept. Re was crossed to **'Just Call Me'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2008*) and **'Autumn Circus'** TB (*B. Hager 1990*) in 2014. The combination with the Betty Wilkerson rebloomer gave me two interesting near blue amoenas with good stalk height, nice flowers and fall rebloom for seven weeks at JSRCC. Each seedling has improved with time. They may be important steps towards reliable cool season reblooming tall bearded clean blue amoenas. My mentor would be pleased.

A tall bearded seedling from the **'Autumn Circus'** cross offered the biggest surprise. Lockatell TB Re Sdlg. #21415 has medium blue blooms with red beards. Vigor is super with multiple bloomstalks in spring and fall. Rebloom in 2018 at JSRCC stretched from late September to early November. A border bearded blue plicata sibling was also impressive with fall flowering over four weeks at the same location. More chapters on **'Clarence'** rebloom breeding will be written in the years to come.



Mariposa Autumn TB
(*R. Tasco 1999*)



Metro Blue TB
(*M. Lockatell 201*)



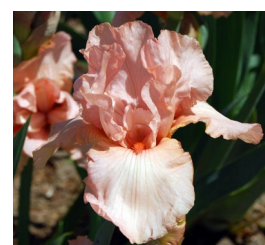
Corn Harvest TB
(*C. Wyatt 1977*)

A few fall reports were received. George Hillenbrandt from Slatington, PA had fall flowers on **'Feed Back'** TB (*B. Hager 1983*) and **'Daughter Of Stars'** TB (*D. Spoon 2001*). Lockatell TB Re Sdlg. #21013A Sept Re and TB Re Sdlg. #20526 rebloomed in late September and October for George. Medians chipping in fall flowering were **'Hi Buddy'** BB (*L. Burton 2015*). **'Cricket Song'** MTB (*T. Silvers 2012*) and **'Tiny Tracks'** SDB (*D. Sorenson R. 2010*). Lockatell SDB Re Sdlg. #21068 rebloomed in early October.



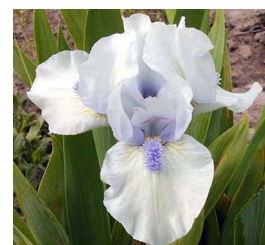
Cricket Song MTB
(*T. Silvers 2012*)

Ruth Harding from Pittsburgh had tall bearded fall flowering on TBs **'Daughter of Stars'** (*D. Spoon 2001*), **'Immortality'** (*L. Zurbrigg 1982*), **'Mariposa Autumn'** (*R. Tasco 1999*), **'Pink Attraction'** (*E. Hall 1988*) and **'Queen Dorothy'** (*E. Hall 1984*). Ruth also had fall bloom on BB **'Love Goes On'** (*D. Spoon 2004*) and SDBs **'Baby Blessed'** (*L. Zurbrigg 1979*) and **'Little Showoff'** (*E. Hall 1989*). Harding is looking forward to seeing her collection continue to rebloom each summer and fall in the coming year.



Pink Attraction TB
(*E. Hall 1988*)

Rosemary Trompeter from Darien, CT had fall flowering on TBs **'Corn Harvest'** (*C. Wyatt 1977*), **'Immortality'** (*L. Zurbrigg 1982*), **'Gate of Heaven'** (*L. Zurbrigg 2004*) and **'Over And Over'** (*S. Innerst 2001*). Rosemary has done a great job obtaining rebloom in her unique micro-climate near the Long Island Sound.



Little Showoff SDB
(*E. Hall 1989*)

Betty Wilkerson will have left us two years ago this April. Her passing was a great loss for cool season rebloom. She was an important sounding board for Eastern breeding. Even though the phone is silent now, her named varieties and seedlings plus my own seedlings from them, thankfully, keep her memory close at hand particularly while working in the garden.



Feed Back TB
(*B. Hager 1983*)

As of this writing, Central Virginia is still experiencing weekly rainfall. Soils need to dry out for bearded irises to recover and flourish again. My best wishes for memorable rebloom in 2019. Please send me your reports.