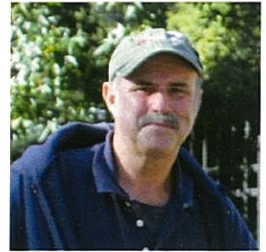


Director's Reports

Eastern (ASI Regions 1,2,3,4,7)



SUMMER REBLOOM MISSING IN ACTION

By Mike Lockett

Central Virginia gardeners had a tough time growing bearded irises in 2018. Metro Richmond, for example, experienced its third wettest year on record at 61". Clay soils were saturated leading to significant disease issues and overwhelming grassy and broadleaf weed germination. Reblom was not abundant.

More rainfall greeted 2019. Totals were above average going into the summer months. Daytime temperatures in late April and early May hovered in the high eighties and low nineties compressing spring bloom. As a breeder for cool season reblooming bearded irises (Zone 8 and below), this author had a scant four days to make meaningful cross pollination on tall bearded. Under trying circumstances, seedpods thankfully appeared. Phew!!

Soils finally began to dry out by mid-summer. My display bed at BP Market, near my home in South Richmond, could finally receive a badly needed renovation. Four-year clumps had virtually no healthy roots. Rhizomes could be easily plucked from the ground. Some survivors were left in place. The rest were potted up. As a mini drought took hold in mid-August, new growth suddenly appeared. Amazing!

Despite the weather, TB Re **'Northward Ho'** (L. Zurbrigg, 1991) had one snaky bloomstalk at BP on August 9th. TB Re **'Just Call Me'** (B. Wilkerson, 2008) saw summer flowering at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC) in Goochland County, VA on 8/30 and 9/15. The late Kentucky breeder's near blue amoena continues to be overlooked and underappreciated. Growing among a cherry tomato volunteer, MTB **'Lady Emma'** (F. Jones, 1986) was the lone median to see summer bloom with a stalk on September 15th at the Goochland garden.

As a hybridizer for cool season reblooming bearded irises, it is important to trial seedlings in different microclimates for reliability to make final decisions on registration and introduction. Candidates continue to be sent as guest irises to AIS National Conventions and AIS Regional Meetings. Bloomstalks are also entered in AIS sanctioned Fall Flower Shows. Requests for guests were received in 2018 for the 2020 Spring Meetings in AIS Regions 4 and 7. Kim Bowman from Morristown, TN has the master planting for the Region 7 event at her Dancing Dragons Iris Garden. Named varieties and reselect seedlings were sent.

Lockett TB Re Sdlg. #21013A or ((TB Re Gate of Heaven x Zurbrigg TB SA Re Sdlg.#VV101) X TB Re Metro Blue (Lockett, 2015)) had open flowers on July 25th. Hyacinth blue blooms have a white area around beards and petals are diamond dusted.



MTB **'Lady Emma'** (F. Jones, 1986) [AM]



Lockett TB Re Sdlg. #21013A [ML]



Lockett TB Re Sdlg. #21220-02Re [ML]

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A consistent rebloomer since 2013, this seedling has been registered as 'Hidden Sky'. Locketell TB Re Sdlg. #21220-02Re or (TB Love Lines (Wilkerson, 1996) X TB Re Metro Blue) with a victoria blue coloring was in bloom in Morristown on August 26th. Bloomstalks measured 43" in height with three branches and two spurs.

TB Re 'Northward Ho' has been a faithful rebloomer in multiple garden locations for me in Central Virginia. Overshadowed by TB Re 'Clarence' (L. Zurbrigg, 1991), this pink-brown plicata has proven to be a "blank canvas" for cool season performers. BB Re 'Double Dare' (M. Locketell, 2014) was my first 'Northward Ho' seedling to be registered and introduced. A rich burgundy red plicata with flared falls, its blooms easily fit the border bearded class.

Two tall bearded reselect offspring from this important parent were sent for the Region 7 Meeting Locketell TB Re Sdlg. #21233 or (Northward Ho X TB Wearing Rubies (Blyth, 2001/02) had open flowers for Kim on August 17th. This hopeful's coloring appears similar to TB Re 'Cantina' (M. Byers, 1990). This author continues to work for improved tall bearded cool season red plicatas. Locketell TB Re Sdlg. #21334 or (TB Re Northward Ho X TB Re Echo Location (Wilkerson, 2007)) instead resembles its pollen parent. This butter-yellow plicata (red haft markings) seedling is a vigorous grower and has previously rebloomed in July at JSRCC. Summer flowers also occurred at Dancing Dragons Iris Garden on August 17th Both hopefuls are now under serious consideration for registration.

Bowman's master planting also contains rescued seedlings from the late Betty Wilkerson's Scottsville, KY garden before the property was sold in 2018. Six selections rebloomed in either July or August. We hope one promising reselect can make the cut for future registration. It surely would be a nice tribute to Betty for her dedication to cool season rebloom development.

Diana and Dean Dudley are hosting the 2020 AIS Region 4 Spring Meeting in Raleigh, NC for the Eastern North Carolina Iris Society. The Dudleys reported summer rebloom on Locketell TB Re Sdlg. #21013A or 'Hidden Sky' on August 30th. Locketell TB Re Sdlg. #21220-02Re had bloomstalks the following week. Microclimates matter, so it is hoped these surprising results can be replicated in future years.

Kim Bowman's Tennessee plantings also saw TB Re 'Oxmoor Hills' (J. Ennenga, R. 2004). TB Re 'Rosalie Figge' (J. McKnew, 1993) and TB Re 'Cantina' (M. Byers, 1990) flowered in August. TB Re 'Buckwheat' (Byers, 1989) rebloomed in mid-September.

Summer rebloom was dismal in Central Virginia for the second year in a row. Weather is a study in extremes. Gardeners must manage expectations despite their best cultural practice efforts. As daytime temperatures cooled down in late September and moisture began to return, would there be any bloomstalks to enter in the AIS Region 4 Fall Flower Show held on October 5th in Richmond? The Recorder's spring edition will provide that answer.



'Clarence' (L. Zurbrigg, 1991) [AM]



'Rosalie Figge' (J. McKnew, 1993) [AM]



'Double Dare' (M. Locketell, 2014) [AM]