

Establishment of the Iris Garden in Cedar Brook Park.

First Annual Report of Committee - 1932

The Plainfield Garden Club.

I Introduction

For several years it had seemed to me that there should be, what is technically known as, An Iris Display Garden in one of our Parks. Mrs. Wells was of the same opinion, and Mr. Tracy of The Union County Park Commission was enthusiastically responsive.

So this year I told the Executive Board that as a Member of the American Iris Society I was ready to work on such a garden; but, that if the Club would sponsor the enterprise it could be undertaken and known as a Club project and the Club would have the credit - one more star in its crown. The Board at once voted to recommend this project to the Club; and, at the special meeting held at Mrs. Ladd's on March the ninth, the Club voted to proceed.

II Advance Plans

Early in March Mr. Tracy and I chose what seemed to us the most suitable location in Cedar Brook Park - a basin near the playground for the Japanese Iris and a plateau on the northwest corner for the Siberian and Bearded. This latter location is almost ideal. There are sloping exposures - at openings in the shrubbery - to the northeast, and to the south; and the background enclosure is just right. Almost surrounding - but far enough away to retain the sense of spaciousness - are borders of beautiful shrubbery; along the west side are several groups of Locust trees; still farther west are young Oaks, growing well; and a group of large old trees protects the extreme northwest corner.

Mr. Gallagher, a member of the firm of Olmsted Brothers of Boston, came out on March seventeenth (17), approved our

location, and listened to tentative planting plans. On March twenty-sixth (26), we received his draft for the beds - an extensive and unusually good design.

Location and design were highly commended on October twenty-sixth (26) by Mr. Richardson Wright, Trustee and Treasurer of the American Iris Society, the first and so far the only official of that society who has seen the new garden.

The color scheme - a very definite one - is my own, but it bears the stamp of Mrs. Well's approval.

### III Planting

1. On April second (2), the beds for the Siberian and Japanese varieties were dug - four of the latter - and filled as soon as finished. All of the Siberian, which filled a very large bed, were the gift of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden through Dr. Reed, and so were two varieties of Japanese, of which there were enough plants to fill a sizable bed. We bought enough Japanese seedlings to fill two large beds, and the people from whom we bought them gave us some handsome named varieties which, with those given by members of the Club, filled the fourth bed.

The next week two long, narrow, border beds were prepared for Orientalis and Pseudacorus - and they were planted. The former came from the garden of the chairman; and the latter, which the Park Commission gave from its beds, had previously come from the garden of our honorary member, Mrs. George P. Mellick.

2. In late May the beds for the Bearded Iris (on the plateau) were marked out; planting began there the second week in June and continued through the month. These plants came from Club members, plus a box from Mr. Wister (via Mrs. Peckham), and a generous gift from Mrs. McKinney.

A large consignment sent by Mrs. Peckham from the Bronx Park Iris Garden, plus a few from her own garden, was planted in mid-July.

In late August and early September - greatly delayed by the chairman's illness - this work was concluded by another generous gift from Mrs. McKinney; large quantities from my own garden; and a dollar order from a grower, to finish out the border of Dwarf-Bearded.

3. Down by the bridge, in a bed from which the shrubbery could not be removed until Autumn, we planted some handsome Japanese Iris (part of which we bought) late in September, and thought we were through.

4. The very next week, however, an unexpected package came from Dr. Reed (Brooklyn Botanic Garden) with eighteen roots of Vinicolor, a Native Specie Iris of Louisiana. A bed was made especially for them - very quickly - and then we were through.

IV. Varieties and Quantities Now in Garden

(The following count under rather than over, estimates):

<u>Japanese</u>	196 varieties	263 plants
Named Varieties	18	
To be Identified	8	
Seedlings	170	
<u>Siberian</u>	25	"
<u>Orientalis</u>	1	"
<u>Specie</u>	2	"
Native-Vinicolor	18	
Pseudacorus	74	
<u>Crested</u>	3	"
<u>Bearded</u>	341	"
Tall Bearded	215	
Intermediate	11	
Dwarf	15	
	468 "	3444 "
Round Numbers	470 Varieties	3450 Plants

V. Labelling

Because such gardens - open to the public - are intended to be educational as well as beautiful, it was - is - necessary to have some kind of label. It needed to be legible, durable, available but inconspicuous, and harmonious. We think we have just the right article, which a draftsman in the Elizabeth office of the Park Commission has lettered perfectly. Probably most of these are correctly placed - no doubt some will have to be changed next year, as some of the temporary labels had been broken.

VI. Donors of Plants

All of the plants, save one only, whether bought or given, came from people who are members of the American Iris Society, or of the Garden Club, or of both organizations.

1. Out-of-town Donors

Dr. Reed (Brooklyn Botanic Garden)	Japanese, Siberian and Species
Mrs. Peckham (Bronx Park Iris Garden)	Bearded
(Her own garden)	"
(Mr. Wistor's garden)	"
Mrs. McKinney	"
Mrs. Cleveland of Eatontown	Japanese
Mrs. Kellogg of Hartford	"
Mr. Schreiner	Dwarf-Bearded
The Union County Park Commission	Pseudacorus

2. Club Member Donors

Mrs. Atterbury	2 Varieties
Mrs E. T. Barrows	8 "
Mrs Eaton	3 "
Mrs Genung	6 "
Miss Halloway	100 "
Miss Harman	1 "
Mrs Lawrence	25 "

Mrs Marshall	1	Varieties
Mrs Annie Stewart	2	"
Mrs Irwin Taylor	(Japanese)	2
3. Also Mr. Pinto - a handsome Japanese		

VII. Cooperation

1. Planting

Mrs. Wells spent a half day, at a time when it was most inconvenient, and Mrs. Devlin a day and a half in the heat superintending the planting of the Bronx Park Iris - while the chairman was attending to pneumonia.

2. Transportation

Mrs. Connor and Mrs. Dudley Barrows helped repeatedly when there were many boxes of plants to be taken over. Others helped one or two other times.

3. Park Commission

It would be impossible to say too much about the amount and kind of cooperation from this source.

The day-laborer who works so willingly; the Superintendent who says "Let me know when you want a workman - any day you set"; and the department head who sees to it that beds are staked out to be made ready when they should be, and that plants are brought from such places as Mrs. McKinney's; all reflect the attitude of the Executive Head.

They have supplied the ground, the landscape architect, the labor, the labels (which they bought especially), and the understanding and appreciation which encourages one to continue.

It would be impossible to have better conditions with which to work.

From the beginning Mr. Tracy has shown keen interest, a broad-minded, generous-minded attitude, active cooperation limited only by present financial conditions, with courtesy and appreciation unlimited. To him is due in large measure the accomplishment of so great an amount in only seven months' time, and the final touch to the success of the enterprise. For, as a surprise, he asked whether I'd like to put in some bulbs and, when I said "Yes, Narcissi", sent a crate of Poet's Narcissus. Just a week ago we put into the beds of the Bearded Iris, between groups of varieties and in all of the few sizable vacancies, seventeen hundred - one thousand and seven hundred-Poeticus Queen of England!

Picture that plateau next Spring!!

(Signed) Harriette R. Halloway  
Chairman of Committee on Iris Display Garden