

Home/Garden

IPM: Lawn-care p

By KAREN IDOINE
UMass Cooperative Extension

Home lawns, as well as our environment, benefit from the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods in lawn care.

Recent concern about the use of pesticides on home lawns has involved a broad spectrum of citizens, including homeowners, public officials, lawn care consultants and environmentalists. Interest in finding ways to reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers in the home lawn setting has prompted the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Food and

Agriculture to sponsor a Turf IPM program.

The purpose of the program is to identify the primary insect, weed, and disease problem in Massachusetts, to determine threshold levels for various pests and to identify how maintenance practices such as mowing and fertilizing interact with pest problems. An important IPM strategy is to select a variety of pest management approaches that complement each other. This can result in the reduction, but not necessarily the elimination, of pesticide use.

Another critical aspect of IPM is to identify the pest and/or problem so that treatment will be judicious and timely. For example, among the

cause over-poor sect pesti tion. your to wicides eight Th Th Mana the h you l for la creat pests you u

Irises

Auction proves flower lovers' feast

There was a good crowd at Greenfield Community College recently when the American Iris Society (Region I — all the New England States) held a fund-raising iris auction. Iris growers from as far away as Maine attended, bringing a selection of their new introductions and their old favorites. It gave iris devotees a chance to get bargains on fancy new irises, and potential iris lovers a chance to learn about the many varieties of iris.

Shirley Pope brought McEwan hybrids. Dr. Currier McEwan of Harpswell, Maine, now retired from his medical practice as a rheumatologist, is a world-famous hybridizer of irises, specializing in Siberian and Japanese irises. I was interested to find out that colchicine, a drug used in treating gout and rheumatoid arthritis, is also used to induce tetraploidy in plants. Tetraploids have double the number of chromosomes of regular diploids which means they have bigger flowers, more brilliant color and sturdier stems.

Dr. McEwan developed the first yellow Siberian Iris, Butter and Sugar, pink Siberians and a double white tetraploid Japanese iris. Many of his hybrids are continual or rebloomers.

Agnes and Kenneth Waite (Towpath Lane Gardens, Towpath Lane, Westfield, MA 01085) are willing to give tetraploids their due, but they are also fond of some of the diploids with smaller flowers. Agnes, Regional Vice President in Region I, says she is just a "pollen dauber." She daubs pollen and waits to see what happens.

Her husband, Ken, First Vice President of AIS and Awards Chairman, is a real hybridizer. "He chooses his plants for crossing carefully, because he knows what he's after."

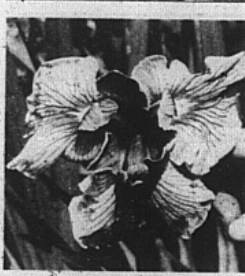
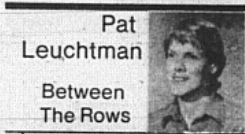
Agnes likes Siberian iris because they are so good for landscaping. They have introduced several new Siberian irises including Harbor Mist, a delicate light blue with a very long bloom period.

Bob Sobek of Westford, Massachusetts fell in love with irises when he was only 11 years old. He teaches high school biology and science, but says that hybridizing irises gives him an outlet for his creative energies that are sometimes frustrated in teaching.

He has introduced 25 hybrids. They are all distinctive because he doesn't want to confuse the public with a look-alike iris, even if it is a good plant. "It must be a good garden grower. There is the temptation to select for the pretty face, but it might not grow dependably for the average gardener. I don't breed irises for someone who is going to spend all their time fussing. Belle of Amherst is a great garden iris. It's beautiful with lots of flowers. The clump increases rapidly and it's resistant to disease and hardy. It tolerates our winters that alternately freeze and thaw."

"Grapeicle is a favorite with me. It's a dwarf bearded iris, only 12 inches tall, that blooms in three shades of purple. The falls are darker than the standard (upright petals) and the beard is yet another shade."

There are many types of bearded iris from the miniature dwarfs (9 inches) that begin blooming at the end of April, standard dwarfs (9-15 inches) that bloom mid-May, intermediate bearded iris (15-27 inches) that bloom towards the end of May



Japanese iris are much more tolerant of damp and wet ground, and, in fact, require rich soil that is moist during the bloom period. They cannot tolerate lime.

and finally the tall bearded iris (28-42 inches), the Queen of the Irises, with big blossoms that blooms in June.

All the bearded irises like sun and ordinary garden soil that is not fertilized with manure or heavy nitrogen fertilizer. The soil must be well drained. It is imperative that bearded irises never stand in water. Neither should they be planted where ice will collect.

Siberian iris and Japanese iris are much more tolerant of damp and wet ground. In fact, Japanese iris requires rich soil that is moist during the bloom period. They cannot tolerate lime and prefer a soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5.

For those who enjoy visiting gardens and seeing new plants I'm happy to say there is still a tradition of opening private gardens to visitors. Interested iris gardeners can get a list of all American Iris Society members in Region I who are willing to show their gardens by writing Larry Doucette, 482 Middlesex Ave., Wilmington, MA 01887 and asking for the Visitors Welcome Guide.

Annual dues for the American Iris Society are only \$9.50. Members receive four informative bulletins a year, announcements of regional activities and information about iris shows. Those interested in joining AIS should write Carol Ramsey, Beachy Ave., Wichita, KA 67202.

Sources: Cooley's Gardens, 11553 Silverton Road N.E., P.O. Box 126, Silverton, OR 97381; Keith Keppel, 451 N. Lillian Ave., Box 8173, Stockton, CA 95208, descriptive price list; Mid-America Iris Garden, P.O. Box 12982, Oklahoma City, OK 73157, catalog; Pope's Perennials, 39 Highland Ave, Gorham, ME 04038, descriptive price list of Dr. Currier McEwan's iris hybrids; Schriener's, 3625 Quinby Road N.E., Salem, OR 97303, catalog \$3.

N
Glu
blc
Ga
Th
Karet
Massa
sion S
Nov
• w
before
en aft
ness, l
they s
• pl
suffici
fore c
with
bone r
strong
resent
• ov
lawn,
ties of
fescue
• pr
sect p
that h
neath
the tre
• te
lime l
lime.
tween
• ha
squasi
from t
area f
a cool.
• ke
the "d
light.
• pl
color.
chrysa
Sa
arc