

Mike Locketell
Roots & Blooms, LLC
 500 Pantela Drive
 Richmond, VA 23235-5020
 cmarti8855@verizon.net
 (804) 330-2916
 USDA Zone 7



Mike Locketell

Eastern Report By Director Mike Locketell

Central Virginia Sees Summer Rebloom

Weather plays an important role in cool season bearded iris re bloom. The Mid-Atlantic Region can generally experience 180 to 220 frost-free growing days each year in Hardiness Zones 6 & 7. Persistent precipitation, drought plus high heat and humidity can easily derail growth needed for summer and fall flowering. If cool season reblooming bearded irises are going to resonate with the general gardening public, future varieties will surely have to overcome Mother Nature's fickle personality.

Spring came early to Central Virginia in 2016. Standard dwarf bearded iris (SDB) began flowering bloom in late March. Annoying rain and high winds affected flower quality and attempts to make successful cross pollinations. To make matters worse, bloomstalks on tall bearded iris (TB) named varieties and seedlings were already appearing in early April. SDB bloom could be protected with large nursery pots, but two devastating hard frosts decimated spring bloom on early and midseason re bloom varieties. To further insult to the proceedings, the Richmond area broke the record for rainfall in May. Would the storyline change during the summer months?

Foliar burn from the April frosts had to be overcome, but the biggest stumbling block to summer and fall re bloom was super saturated native clay soils. Hidden from sight, the consequences were not detected until existing clumps were divided in July and August. There were few healthy roots to mature each rhizome and drive new increase. A mini-drought in both Central and Northern Virginia from early August through September ironically may have aided the recovery process. Foliage color returned to leaves and increase was everywhere. The damage however had been done. Re bloom

stalks on reliable varieties and seedlings would be delayed in October.

My original cool season re bloom trial plantings at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College were renovated in 2015. After clumps were finally divided and the tall bearded bed regraded with new soil, a decision was made to add historic selections to the lineup to support ongoing research on the cool season re bloom's origins. With a few welcome exceptions, the old timers did well this past summer. The best historic performers were easily **'Golden Encore'** TB (*F.P. Jones 1973*) and **'Lady Emma'** MTB (*F.P. Jones 1986*). Both New Jersey bred introductions flowered throughout August into mid-September. The common de-

nominator in each pedigree are TB rebloomers from the late Dr. G. Percy Brown. It should come as no surprise that **'July Sunshine'** TB (*G.P. Brown 1965*) also made my summer list with bloom in late June and early July.

Two recent Kentucky releases continue to shine with consistent summer bloom. **'Cool Character'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2013*) lead the way with continuous flowering from early August through mid-September. A vigorous grower, clump size had no effect on bloomstalk formation. **'Summer Honey'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2013*) had flowers in late July.

The common thread in each case is **'Radiant Bliss'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2005*). This unique reblooming plicata has greyed orange standards veined beetroot and beetroot falls with gold overlay over white ground. One of its parents is **'Earl of Essex'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 1980*). A late Monty Byers' favorite, one parent in the orchid-violet plicata's heritage is **'Au-**



Cool Character TB
(B. Wilkerson 2013)



Lady Emma MTB
(F.P. Jones 1986)



Earl Of Essex TB
(L. Zurbrigg 1980)

**Note: Fall re bloom of guest iris Radiant Bliss for the AIS 2012 National.*

Photo Credits page 22:
 M. Locketell, *(Provided)*
 Radiant Bliss, *C. Buchheim*
 Cool Character, *C. Buchheim*
 Lady Emma, *C. Chapman*
 Earl Of Essex, *C. Buchheim*
 Summer Honey, *C. Buchheim*



Radiant Bliss* TB *(B. Wilkerson 2005)*



Summer Honey TB
(B. Wilkerson 2013)

tumn Sensation' TB (*G.P. Brown 1962*). The near blue amoena is present in the parentages of Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg's best cool season reblooming irises.

The other top summer performer at JSRRC was **'Over And Over'** TB (*S. Innerst 2001*). Some of the original clump from 2011 was left in-



Over And Over TB
(*S. Innerst 2001*)

contact after last year's bed renovation. The Gettysburg, PA introduction found a way to flower throughout the summer despite extreme weather conditions. Simply amazing!

Long time cool season rebloom breeder Betty Wilkerson from Scottsville, KY had her best summer flowering in years. **'Artistic Showoff'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2011*) took top honors amongst named varieties with bloom from June through September. Wow!! Recent releases **'Cool Character'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2013*) and **'Summer Honey'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2013*) flowered in August and September respectively. **'Over And Over'** TB (*S. Innerst 2001*), **'Immortality'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 1982*) and **'Gate of Heaven'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 2004*) stood out with August and September bloom. **'I Do'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 1974*), a ruffled white with green veining flowered in September.



I Do TB
(*L. Zurbrigg 1974*)



Gate Of Heaven TB (*L. Zurbrigg 2004*)

tact after last year's bed renovation. The Gettysburg, PA introduction found a way to flower throughout the summer despite extreme weather conditions. Simply amazing!

Long time cool season rebloom breeder Betty Wilkerson from Scottsville, KY had her best summer flowering in years. **'Artistic Showoff'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2011*) took top honors amongst named varieties with bloom from June through September. Wow!! Recent releases **'Cool Character'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2013*) and **'Summer Honey'** TB (*B. Wilkerson 2013*) flowered in August and September respectively. **'Over And Over'** TB (*S. Innerst 2001*), **'Immortality'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 1982*) and **'Gate of Heaven'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 2004*) stood out with August and September bloom. **'I Do'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 1974*), a ruffled white with green veining flowered in September.



Artistic Showoff TB
(*B. Wilkerson 2011*)

Betty has some noteworthy tall bearded rebloom seedlings in the pipeline. Wilkerson TB 1907-10Re (purple) (*All Revved Up (Wilkerson, 2006) X Blatant (Byers, 1990)*) was impressive with bloomstalks from June through August. Wilkerson TB Cross Pollination 2611 (*involving TBs Again And Again (S. Innerst 1999), Echo Location (B. Wilkerson 2007), Total Recall (B. Hager 1992), Star Gate (Wilkerson 2005), Violet Returns (E. Hall 1988) and Breakers (Schreiner 1986)*) had four seedlings in various colors and patterns reblooming from June through September. A nice TB luminata, Wilkerson TB 2612-03Re, bloomed in September and Wilkerson TB 1605-02Re (white standards and purple falls) had six bloomstalks from August into September. All hopefuls have been lined out.

The law of averages points to at least a few future Wilkerson introductions from this group. After some very difficult years, it was great fun for me to see progress in Betty's seedling rows. Her determination and persistence to advance cool season rebloom will eventually pay handsome dividends for all remontant advocates.

Another rebloom grower and breeder, Linda Mann, from Kingston, TN saw **'Again And Again'** TB (*S. Innerst 1999*) bloom in June. **'I Do'** TB (*L. Zurbrigg 1974*) and **'Twiggy'** BB (*D. Spoon 2004*) flowered in July. Historic plicata rebloomer, **'Summer Fantasy'** TB (*G.P. Brown 1965*) had July and September bloomstalks. **'Oxmoor Hills'** TB (*J. Ennenga 2004*),



Twiggy BB
(*D. Spoon 2004*)



Immortality TB
(*L. Zurbrigg 1982*)



Again And Again TB
(*S. Innerst 1999*)

Photo Credits page 23:
Gate Of Heaven, *G. Spoon*
Over And Over, *C. Buchheim*
Again And Again, *C. Buchheim*
Artistic Showoff, *C. Buchheim*
I Do, *C. Buchheim*
Twiggy, *G. Spoon*
Immortality, *G. Spoon*



Lunar Whitewash TB
(S. Innerst 2003)



Pink Attraction TB
(E. Hall 1988)



Total Recall TB
(B. Hager 1992)



Ozark Rebounder TB
(B. Nicodemus 2003)



Feed Back TB
(B. Hager 193)



Anxious TB
(B. Hager 1992)

Photo Credits page 24:
Lunar Whitewash, C. Buchheim
Pink Attraction, C. Buchheim
Total Recall, R. Probst
Ozark Rebounder, K. Stanton
Feed Back, C. Buchheim
Anxious, C. Buchheim
Just Call Me, C. Buchheim
Sdlg. #21217, M. Lockatell

however, took top honors for the season. The violet blue had September bloom for Linda and flowered throughout the summer in a local garden.

One of the garden tour stops at the 2016 AIS National Convention was the Hillenbrandt garden in Slatington, PA. George Hillenbrandt continues to grow both cool season and warm season rebloomers. He reported several bloomstalks on **‘Cricket Song’** MTB (T. Silvers 2012) in mid-July. He had flowering on **‘Early Harvest’** BB (J.T. Aitken 2014) in early September. George also had developing stalks on clumps of TBs **‘Again And Again’** (S. Innerst 1999), **‘Just Call Me’** (B. Wilkerson



Just Call Me TB
(B. Wilkerson 2008)

2008), **‘Over And Over’** (S. Innerst 2001) and **‘Lunar Whitewash’** (S. Innerst 2003) in early September. These varieties had been purchased from me in six pots the previous November.

Another summer report was received from Stroudsburg, PA. RIS member Carmen Costalas was cheered by rebloom on TBs **‘Pink Attraction’** (E. Hall 1988), **‘Total Recall’** (B. Hager 1992) and **‘Just Call Me’** (B. Wilkerson 2008). It is hoped fortunes will improve for improved garden performance in 2017.

Summer reporting was also received from two locations in the New York City Metropolitan area. Presby Memorial Iris Garden (2016 AIS National Convention host) in Upper Montclair, New Jersey saw rebloom on **‘Ozark Rebounder’** TB (B. Nicodemus 2003) from August 15th to mid-September. Historic **‘Autumn Twilight’** TB (G.P. Brown 1945) started flowering around September 13th. Presby Communications and Donor Manager, Suzanne Brouillon, commented that this brownish yellow and light lavender bicolor of Massachusetts origination “put on quite a show”.

Further north along the Long Island Sound, Rosemary Trompeter from Darien, CT also experienced significant summer cool season flowering. Her best results were found in the median classes. **‘Grapelet’** MDB (J.T. Aitken 1989) and **‘Forever Blue’** SDB (C. Chapman 1997) had two summer bloom periods in June and August. IBs were outstanding. **‘Low Ho Silver’** (M. Byers 1989) and **‘Fast Forward’** (J.T. Aitken 2002) led the way with August flowering and were in bloom again on September 15th. Rosemary also had August

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College Goochland County, VA 2016 Summer Rebloom from 6/1 to 9/15

Belvi Cloud	TB	(K. Jensen 1988) 6/25, 7/10, 7/20 & 7/31
Cool Character	TB	(B. Wilkerson 2013) 8/7, 8/18, 8/22, 8/28, 9/4 & 9/12
Coronation of David	TB	(B. Miller by Niswonger, 2001) 7/2, 7/10 & 7/20
Dawn of Fall	TB	(C. Jensen 1976) 6/25 & 7/2
Eternal Bliss	TB	(M. Byers 1988) 6/25 & 7/2
Golden Encore	TB	(F.P. Jones 1973) 7/31, 8/7, 8/18, 8/22, 8/28, 9/4 & 9/12
I’ll Be Back	IB	(J.T. Aitken 2004) 7/2 & 7/10
Immortality	TB	(L. Zurbrigg 1982) 7/31 & 8/7
July Sunshine	TB	(G. P. Brown 1965) 6/25 & 7/2
Lady Emma	MTB	(F.P. Jones 1986) 8/7, 8/18, 8/22, 8/28, 9/4 & 9/12
Over And Over	TB	(S. Innerst 2000) 6/18, 6/25, 7/2, 7/10, 7/20, 8/22 & 8/28
Pink Attraction	TB	(E. Hall 1988) 6/25, 7/2, & 7/10
Queen Dorothy	TB	(E. Hall 1984) 7/20 & 7/31
Summer Honey	TB	(B. Wilkerson 2013) 7/20 & 7/31
SDB Re Sdlg. No. B88	(M. Jameson)	8/18, 8/22, 8/28, 9/4 & 9/12
SDB Re Sdlg. No. 21245-3Re	(M. Lockatell)	8/18 & 9/4
TB SA Re Sdlg. No. 20556	(M. Lockatell)	7/10, 7/20 & 8/7
TB Re Sdlg. No. 20734	(M. Lockatell)	7/31, 8/7, 9/4 & 9/12
TB Re Sdlg. No. 21013-Sept. Re	(M. Lockatell)	7/2 & 8/7
TB Re Sdlg. No. 21217- 2Re	(M. Lockatell)	7/10 & 8/7
TB Re Sdlg. No. 1810- 15Re	(B. Wilkerson)	7/20, 8/22, 8/28, 9/4 & 9/12



Sdlg. # 21217- 2Re



Early Harvest BB
(J.T. Aitken 2014)



Cricket Song MTB
(T. Silvers 2012)



Fast Forward IB
(J.T. Aitken 2002)



Forever Blue SDB
(C. Chapman 1997)



Grapelet MDB
(J.T. Aitken 1989)



Constant Companion IB
(C. Marsh 1995)



Blessed Again IB
(F.P. Jones 1976)



Eternal Bliss TB
(M. Byers 1988)



Coronation Of David TB
(B. Miller 2001)



Low Ho Silver IB
(M. Byers 1989)

bloom on **‘Constant Companion’** (C. Marsh 1995) **‘Blessed Again’** (F.P. Jones 1976) and **‘Concoction’** (M. Byers 1991). TBs **Immortality** (L. Zurbrigg 1982) and **‘Feed Back’** (B. Hager 1993) had mid-August flowers. **‘Anxious’** (B. Hager 1992) plus **‘Immortality’** were flowering on September 15th.

Despite challenging growing conditions in many Eastern locales, cool season summer rebloom did occur. Results show historic varieties from the late Dr. G. Percy Brown and Frank

P. Jones overcame all obstacles. Some modern TBs such as **‘Over And Over’**, **‘Cool Character’** and **‘Summer Honey’** did well too! Future cool season rebloom breeding objectives must focus on moving the flowering response into the late summer. This year’s summer data proves historic and modern selections do exist to achieve this goal. As always, time, growing space, thorough research and a bit of luck are needed to develop future reliable reblooming irises for our coldest northern climates.

Photo Credits page 25:
Early Harvest, C. Buchheim
Cricket Song, C. Buchheim
Fast Forward, J.T. Aitken
Forever Blue, C. Buchheim
Grapelet, J.T. Aitken
Constant Companion,
C. Buchheim
Blessed Again, C. Chapman
Eternal Bliss, C. Buchheim
Coronation Of David,
C. Buchheim
Low Ho Silver, G. Spoon
Sdlg. #21013, M. Locketell

Searching for Cool Season Summer Rebloom *By Mike Locketell*

Cool season rebloom in summer seemed to be a dream until **‘Immortality’** TB (L. Zurbrigg 1982) appeared in commerce. The Virginia bred introduction could flower a second time in June, July and/or August. After growing one thousand seedlings, the late Earl Hall found another summer rebloomer, **‘Pink Attraction’** TB (E. Hall 1988). This pale pink has been a consistent performer in my trial plantings at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Goochland County, VA. The only drawback to these 1980s-cool season rebloom innovations was mixed breeding results: summer flowering did not transfer to offspring.

A decade later, **‘Clarence’** TB (L. Zurbrigg 1991) could produce summer flowers under favorable weather and growing conditions. This blue-violet rebloomer had groundbreaking modern flower form and received the Wister medal 2000. Unlike **‘Immortality’** and **‘Pink Attraction’**, **‘Clarence’** seems to be raising the bar with its offspring.

So far, **‘Just Call Me’** TB (B. Wilkerson 2008) and **‘Gate of Heaven’** (L. Zurbrigg, 2004) have indeed produced late August bloom. Locketell TB Re Sdlg. #21013-Sept.-RE has a double dose of **‘Gate of Heaven’** in its pedigree. In a miserable year, it still flowered in August. **‘Over And Over’** TB (S. Innerst 2001) has an excellent summer rebloom record in Central VA. This lavender plicata crossed to **‘Clarence’** children has produced August blooming seedlings with modern form.

The late Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg felt it was critical to develop cool season late summer rebloomers in all bearded classes to appeal to a wider public audience. The earlier flowering sequence would allow fall bloom before hard frosts in early to mid-October in Hardiness Zones 4 and 5. Lloyd would be pleased to know his **‘Clarence’** is now helping cool season rebloom breeding to reach this vital goal. The genetics are indeed really there.



Sdlg. #21013-Sept.-RE
TB (M. Locketell)