JSRCC & MAYMONT PARK

Rebloom Notes

8/24 & 8/25/13

By

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A cold front made my Sunday trip to J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College in Goochland, VA a pleasant one. Thanks to Scott Burrell’s efforts, a major improvement in the Ornamental Horticulture Department’s Display Garden awaited my arrival.

Scott has meticulously upgraded every element in the display beds and plantings. The latest refinement was installing edging and top dressing walk paths with new crushed gravel. The new contrast enhances existing plants along each border. Since the garden has a slight slope, the edging and gravel also serve as an above ground drainage system to divert rainfall runoff. It was a nice surprise.

Persistent weekly summer rains have their advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, bearded iris clumps are healthy and starting to sprout new increases. Developing bloomstalks were found on additional rebloom varieties since my last visit in July. On the downside, broadleaf weeds continue to germinate in substantial numbers in some areas. Moisture and humidity have also caused some bacterial soft rot outbreaks.

Rebloom quantity and quality are slowly improving. I was greeted at JSRCC with a dazzling show stalk on **TB Just Call Me** (Wilkerson, 2008). It was simply gorgeous. This Kentucky bred tall bearded introduction has a consistent record for late summer rebloom.

The late Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg’s last tall bearded rebloom introduction, **Gate of Heaven** (2004) has also turned in reliable late summer bloom in my Central Virginia gardens. A child of Clarence (Zurbrigg, 1991), the medium blue has already flowered on one bloomstalk in July. A second clump at JSRCC now has five developing stalks. A nice show of color will soon follow in the coming weeks.

On the median side, **SDB Baby Blessed** (Zurbrigg, 1979) had five will spaced open flowers. One of the few rebloom varieties to win an AIS national award, there were more developing bloomstalks to come.

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The overall summer stars at JSRCC trial beds were **TBS Pink Attraction** (E. Hall, 1989), **Clarence** (Zurbrigg, 1991), **Over & Over** (Innerst, 2000), **Again & Again** (Innerst, 1999) and **Queen Dorothy** (E. Hall, 1984). **Over & Over** has a wealth of new bloomstalks. The lavender plicata’s record is solid again in 2013. **IB I’ll Be Back** (Aitken, 2004) has also put up similar results. White flowers with red beards continue to appear on a large clump.

My first visit to Maymont Park since early summer held a nice surprise on Monday morning, August 26th. Due to restoration work scheduled for last winter on the Carriage House, Director of Horticulture was forced to dig reblooming iris clumps out of the display beds around the building. Originally installed in February, 2012, the plantings exhibited fall rebloom. After work was completed in early spring, Maymont staff replanted rhizomes.

Some varieties such as **TBs Echo Location** (Wilkerson, 2007), **My Friend Jonathan** (B. Miller, 1996) and **Rosalie Figge** (McKnew, 1991) are growing into nice clumps capable of fall flower. **Lunar Whitewash**, a nice ruffled white, had the most fans and a developing bloomstalk to boot. Unlike the JSRCC rebloom plantings, the display bed at Maymont is an integrated one with companion annuals and perennials. The irises are **not** the vocal point, but a nice accent. Besides attracting the public’s interest, the Maymont trial garden’s chief goal is to measure the effects of metro Richmond’s weather on fall performance. It is hoped a longer autumn bloom season will yield some important results. I am grateful Peggy has given me some valuable growing space for testing. The bed’s location is in the Courtyard against the back wall of the Carriage House. Take a look for yourself. It is a dynamite sight.