

HIPS Public Relations Annual Report for 2017
Submitted by Cathy Egerer, PR Chair

HIPS had a busy year and continues to grow. Public relations highlights for the year:

AIS Convention, Des Moines, IA

- The AIS convention in Des Moines was well-attended and HIPS stocked their information table with past issues of ROOTS, membership brochures, and informational flyers on the Guardian Gardens program. All the copies of ROOTS and most of the other brochures were taken by conference attendees.
- We also showcased a list of 100+ irises that had disappeared of the Member Databank list in 2016, and asked attendees to let us know if they had any of the irises. Five irises were located.
- Several canvas photos of irises were donated to the AIS silent auction on behalf of HIPS.
- I presented a program on hybridizer Agnes Whiting during the Saturday symposium at the convention. The presentation focused on her life and work, including information on HIPS and our efforts to preserve rare irises through our Guardian Gardens program.

Member Outreach

- In January, the first HIPS e-newsletter was sent to members who have an e-mail on file with us. Subsequent issues followed approximately every month. The e-newsletter contained information on iris events, HIPS news, requests for missing irises, and other iris-related news. As of December, 2017, we have 680 members receiving the email newsletter, or approximately 80% of our members.
- We continued to offer HIPS brochures to members who requested them. They were used at HIPS display gardens, garden shows, local iris club events, and iris sales.
- We reprinted the HIPS brochures in the fall of 2017, and printed 500 copies of our Guardian Gardens FAQ to have available.

Public Outreach

- HIPS and the Guardian Gardens program were featured in several prominent online publications in 2017. The popular garden blog *Gardenista* did an in-depth interview with Doug Paschall. Old House Gardens ran an article in their e-newsletter. Both publications reach an audience of several thousand gardeners. This resulted in a large uptick in requests for information on how to join the GG program.
- HIPS worked with a number of gardens in 2017 to increase their holdings of historic irises. Schreiners Gardens announced plans to expand their new historic iris bed, and HIPS members helped replace some lost irises. The Iris Society of Minnesota planted the new Northeast Minneapolis Municipal Iris Garden at Columbia Park, and HIPS helped by sending historic irises to plant. The Brookby Estate in Grand Rapids, Michigan is restoring a historic garden from the 1920s, and HIPS sent irises. Plans are underway to assist gardens in Oregon and Virginia in 2018.

Details of our PR projects are included in ROOTS in the HIPS Outreach column.