

2015 Year End Report of the Southeast Regional Director
May 9, 2016

Wow, 2015 was a 'live wire' and whirlwind of change and progress. Great discussions, brainstorming sessions, coordinating on the fly real work we did but can't put a finger on it.

2015 was the second year of my three-year term as SE Director.

I served on the Budget Committee as we prepared the 2015 HIPS Annual Budget. The Committee has made progress towards orienting the BOD to a formal budget process with less need to consider and deliberate money matters on an *ad hoc* basis.

In 2015 there was considerable and positive change on the communications front: new ROOTS editor, new HIPS website and webmaster, the vacant Public Relations chair was filled. As the dust settles going forward I look forward to our exploring ideas for using these tools to increase information flow in both directions between BOD members and general members. For me, the website forum has always been the most active and spontaneous means of communicating with general members and I participate in it regularly to capitalize on the potential. However, there is a substantial sector of HIPS members that do not use the forum, and perhaps do not visit the website so I am on the lookout for other means to establish dialogues.

I continued to look for reports and evidence of bearded irises that grow well in the hotter and more humid sections of the Southeast. I've gathered a few reports of people successfully growing some in sections of Zone 8 and 9 where conventional wisdom says they should not do well. I will continue to look for means to gather more data. Judy Schneider is partnering with me since her director's region includes TX and LA, both of which have geographical areas of interest.

Most or all of you know the general circumstances behind the project we now call the 'Thelma's Irises Project. Following leads, in spring 2015 I began making visits to the site of this private family collection in Winston-Salem, NC. The family sells surplus irises on-site. The collection of almost 2,000 cultivars includes a few hundred historic which have only one or no other HIPS documented sources. I began collection assessment work, which continues now. In August I helped facilitate a HIPS members group order. The project remains active for 2016.

I look forward to continuing work with the Board and the general membership and I welcome comments and suggestions from all.

Respectfully submitted;
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