

A lot of information and enhancements were added to our website this year.

Photo Gallery

My main focus was to add vetting symbols to every existing photo in our gallery. Provenance where noted was also added, and it is my goal to get more provenance added, so as time goes on, we know where verified cultivars can be, or were located at one time.

In addition I was able to add 500 new gallery listings to the gallery which consisted of:

- HIPS Slide Archival Photos
- Donated photos –from Mike Unser’s days as webmaster which he did not get a chance to enter
- Newly submitted photos from our members.

In addition I was able to add about 200 additional photos to existing gallery entries where we had a few or of poor quality. Catalog images were also added when available (and marked as such) as a good reference to actual photographs.

I still have many photos that will be added over time; this is a long term project, and I am still interested in acquiring new photos as well. My objective is not to fill the gallery with a large quantity of photos per cultivar, but to add quality photos and photos of iris which are not readily available. We do not want 10+ photos of the same iris. I have already removed and replaced some of the poor quality photos in our gallery. We also are enlarging the size of the new photos in our gallery so they are not the small 375x375 images that were inherited from Mike Unser’s Website, our new photos when available are approximately 2x as big). Our objective is not to compete or replicate the AIS Photo Gallery, but to offer a different experience.

We also resurrected Mike’s practice of adding a group of new historic on New Years, as a representative sample of the graduating class. These photos of 1987 can be retrieved as a set thru the advanced features, but they will be merged with the decade set of 80’s iris in a short time.

Composite ID Pictures

Our composite pictures project, which consisted of a collage of photos by one photographer of each iris, to be used as an identification tool is almost at the launching point. These collages can be linked to when available from the Gallery pages, and also on a standalone page. Explaining the Composite ID project and asking for volunteers. It will be a long term project which we hope will attract photographers to contribute to these ID composites.

In addition the website has been enhanced with the following this past year:

- A GG forum for the exclusive use of GG participants
- Updated HIPS store, where new items as well as literature is available. The problem of international shipping has been solved with the request to email the shopkeeper for a shipping price via a carrier of choice, rather than a standard set fee.
- Posterity Planning page with documents to use for wills and bequests when one is no longer able to maintain their iris collection
- AIS Color Chart post 1950 is now available as a feature on the front page
- A new main menu section called ‘Library’ is a quick and easy way to reference our literature and videos. Our first video is a link to the HIPS AIS convention presentation in May.
- Enhanced ‘Iris for Beginners’ has been set up as a feature by Cathy for those who are new to the world of iris.
- We are able to provide two ‘broadcast’ Message areas on the site which can be changed easily. The first is on the main page where we want to let the public and HIPS members know certain events such as Rhizome Sales or Christmas Shop Sales. The Rhizome Sale announcement was extremely successful, resulting in a very large turnout for rhizome buyers. A second message area has been set up in the forum section where Notices for Members Only can be posted and changed.
- Help Wanted section has been posted to fill open positions and also attract volunteers
- Minutes of Meetings are all being posted under Society Business so that the public and HIPS members is aware of what HIPS has been doing.

Jack Finney who is an experienced irisarian has volunteered his services to work on the website with me. Jack is interested in our NOID gallery, which sadly has been neglected due to the immense amount of work that had to be done in other sections. The goal is to have NOIDS of interest posted. First of all, NOIDS are beautiful and we want to enjoy each others NOIDS. Secondly more exposure may lead to some identification of these NOIDS.

Communications The webmaster has fielded approximately 50-100 emails from the public this year. Notes ranged from just comments on the site, suggestions for the site, requests for identification or finding a specific iris, questions about the rhizome sale, and the vast majority were questions on how to sign up or how to access the member section. The Webmaster responds to every request, and refers some to specific areas that can help the inquiry more effectively. We have not received any negative or inappropriate emails. My objective is to respond to each request even if we cannot help the emailer.

Successes Many people are finding the advanced search and comparison features of value. The notices on the Home page are effective, and the forums are slowly gaining more popularity.

Wish List Other items that we want to implement in 2017 are the following:

- Clean up of the Membership area. Currently Membership and Users are unique databases on the website although they are not visible to the public. They work together updating each other, but need to be cleaned up to reflect the true population of HIPS members since only approximately half of our members are registered on the website.
- More information on identification, such as composite pictures, possibly videos, and identification aides are planned.
- Some kind of page of the Rebert Project where many of the Rebert photos can be displayed encouraging help from HIPS members and the public on identification.
- A Donate button will be added for those who would like to give a charitable donation to HIPS.
- A Locator service page is in the talk stage, where a member is looking for an iris, but is not available either from the Commercial Sources or is in the Databank. This would be similar to the Locator feature in ROOTS, or the AIS website.

Technical Wish List

- Since the website has become a focal point in learning about, researching, and becoming involved in the historic iris community, it would be useful to expand our memory and storage space (these two come as a package deal), which we could do incrementally. I suggest the additional 10-15.00 per month level. This should eliminate the occasional website stoppages (which you may not have noticed) but sometimes we do not have access for about one minute because of heavy usage. It should also increase speed, as our gallery search and fetch is not very fast.
- "Possibly" a better forum where we will again have the ability to post private messages to the posters. This has been mentioned to me several times but our current Forum is a 'bare bones' variety which does not offer this. However finding something else, whether it be a plugin or whatever, is in the back of my thoughts.

If I forgot something, or you have suggestions for expansion, please do not hesitate to contact me. Development is slow on our site due to our lack of expertise and resources, but I love feedback and will keep all suggestions in mind for future planning.

Laetitia Munro