

# The CVIDS Newsletter

From the Cedar Valley Iris and Daylily Society

August 2001

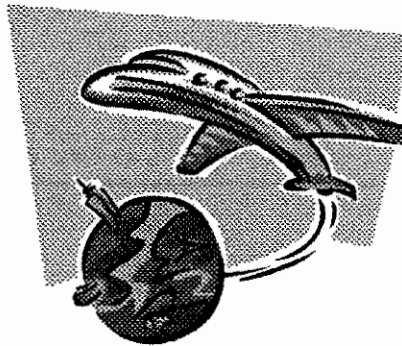
## And now for something completely different

by Kim Edge

I was fortunate enough to travel to England and the Netherlands this June with my husband Ed and my cousin Sue. She's also a gardener, and I got to bring her along so we could go garden touring together. We had a great time, and we saw a lot of lovely gardens, but one thing we didn't see a lot of were daylilies and iris. We did see a few. Thanks to the long cool spring climate in England, there were a few tall bearded iris still blooming. And I did see some very nice iris at Sissinghurst, including the blue Siberian iris 'Placid Waters', an iris laevigata, and iris spuria 'Norton Sunlight', which is a tall yellow. But it wasn't the season yet for the few hemerocallis I saw, MARION VAUGHN or CORKY. What I did see were tons of other plants, and the roses were in full bloom.

I can say that the roses in England in June are an amazing experience. One of the most beautiful settings for them was Mottisfont Abbey, the site of the National Collection of 'old fashioned' shrub roses. Based on the collection of Graham Stuart Thomas, it was established in 1972 and now contains more than 350 varieties.

I think that even daylily and iris gardeners can learn from the rose gar-



*Daylilies aren't the main attraction in English gardens.*

dens of England. One thing is the importance of maintaining collections of antique cultivars. They harbor the genetic potential to pass along important traits like disease resistance and it would be terrible (and irretrievable) to lose these old cultivars, whether or not they are in current fashion.

Another lesson is the value of using plant combinations to provide a prolonged bloom time and the colors and forms that no monoculture can provide. At Mottisfont Abbey the color scheme of the garden is mainly restricted to a pink, white and blue palette. The pink was provided mostly by the roses, but also by plantings of dianthus along the edges of the borders. White came from roses and white campanula, dictamnus, daisies, aruncus, some iris, foxglove and white foliage like ar-

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temisia and lamb's ear, with pale yellow contributed by a few plants such as the iris 'Ochraurea' or a plant that looks like a giant 6-foot tall cream colored scabiosa, *Cephalaria gigantea*. There are no blue roses, just as there are no blue daylilies, but nigella, linum, veronica, nepeta, echinops 'Taplow Blue', perovskia, campanula, monkshood, and stokesia contributed that color brilliantly. These gardens also contained plants that will come into bloom later in the season when many of the antique roses are finished blooming, such as hibiscus, crocosmia and agapanthus, so the garden will still be worth seeing in months other than June.

I also learned a few things I think

*Something Different, continued on page 2*

## An Interview With an IDALS Plant Pathologist About Daylily Rust Disease

The following is from a brief interview with John A. Harri, a plant pathologist with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship on August 9th, 2001.

*Q. Some of the plants received from Florida this spring did not show rust symptoms until three months later. We were originally told symptoms appeared in just two to three days. Could it be that the incubation period for this disease can be months, and not days?*

A. Yes. I think it has to do with heat. It has to be above a certain temperature before it (the rust) gets active. I can't tell you what temperature that is. I found that information on a web site, but I can't recall offhand where. It never gets very cold in Florida, that may be the reason symptoms show so quickly. Once symptoms show here, newly infected plants should show symptoms quickly. The fungus probably infects the rhizome, but we don't know for sure.

*Q. Does the USDA still have hopes of eradicating this disease in the U.S.?*

A. No, I don't think so. Once it's here, I don't think there's any hope of eradication. We have to learn to live with it. We would have to get rid of all daylilies in affected gardens in order to eradicate it. But that might not work either.

*Q. What do you recommend that people who have found the daylily rust on some of their plants do?*

A. They can destroy the plant that is infected or remove infected leaves and burn them or send them to the landfill. I would also spray surrounding plants with recommended chemicals.

*Q. In some gardens, the Florida plants we received this spring have not shown symptoms of the rust. If the pustules have not appeared, is it reasonable to assume that the other plants in these gardens have not been exposed to the spores and have not been infected?*

A. I think it's a reasonable assumption that you have not received a diseased plant, therefore none of your plants have been infected.

We do not know if the disease will survive Iowa's winter. We will have to wait until next year to find out.

### *Something Different, continued from page 1*

American gardeners should *not* do. In England it is the great style to create walled gardens. They do shelter the plants from wind, and soak up heat to create a warmer microclimate. They also give a feeling of privacy in a small country where space is at a premium. However, I can't get over the story of "The Selfish Giant" which, as an only child, my mother pounded into me. I happen to like the fact that people can see my garden from the street. It's pretty. I did it, I'm proud of it, and I like sharing it with passersby. Plus, I'm not doing anything so scandalous in my garden that I feel I require privacy, although my neighbors may wish not to see me running rabbits off the property in my nightgown—but then maybe it's the shrieking and shoe throwing they don't like. Also, after growing up the incredible spaciousness of the US, compared to England, I feel claustrophobic and trapped when penned up inside brick walls. At some gardens like the huge Hidcote Manor, famous for its "garden rooms", I felt like a lab rat lost in a maze.

Altogether our trip went very well. I can recommend the garden tour company "Gentle Journeys" which took us on garden day trips out of London. I've been inspired to create my own purple border, like the one at Sissinghurst, where Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson gardened. It will contain magenta, ruby, indigo blue and burgundy flowers. Allow me to bore you with my trip photos sometime, as I went to a lot more gardens than I've written about here, including the garden of Piet Oudolf in the Netherlands. He is a wonderful garden designer who won Best-in-Show at the 2000 Chelsea Flower Show in London. He is becoming famous for (among many things) using ornamental grasses and prairie flowers that are native to our Midwest in his garden designs.

## Editorial: The Dilemma of Daylily Rust Disease

By Kim Edge

This weekend, I suddenly had a thought about the new daylily rust disease. Initially we were told that the symptoms appear in two or three days. Then I realized, hey, that's not right. The symptoms didn't show up in the plants CVIDS received from Florida for three months! That says to me, maybe we don't know what the incubation time for this disease really is. And therefore, the rust might be out there on my Florida plants right now, still incubating in those club plants.

Not a pleasant thought, although I am hoping, like everyone else, that this fungal disease just turns out to be a minor annoyance. Maybe it won't be a problem up here in the north, where our winters are colder and we don't have as much of that southern heat and humidity (although we get too much to suit me, already). Maybe it won't spread very quickly (although it's already been confirmed in at least 16 states in 12 months\*), or it will respond well to spraying or burning (not that I want to have anything to do with fungicides, as they are very nasty chemicals, and I can't possibly burn off my gardens here in town). Maybe, maybe, maybe.

But then I thought, hey, we have our fall club sale coming up in Monticello on August 25th, and there aren't any meetings scheduled between now and then to talk over the rust issue. Here on the one hand we have an airborne infectious disease about which we don't know a lot, like how serious it is going to turn out to be, or even what the incubation time is. And on the other, we have a sale planned in which we could be passing this disease along, just like it was passed along to us. That doesn't seem fair.

I know that the USDA has lifted its "stop sale" ban to nurseries down south that have had the rust infection, and now the stipulation is that infected *plants* cannot be sold. But how do we know if a plant is

infected or not, with a spore-borne illness that seems to be capable of incubating for months? Some nurseries are dipping plants in fungicides or bleach, but again, it is unknown if this is 100% effective.

It seems to me that in light of everything we don't know about this disease, it is prudent to not go ahead with the fall sale at this time, and just hold the potluck. I tend to be the kind of person who prefers to err on the side of caution. Happily, the club is doing well financially and doesn't need the money—we have over \$4000 on hand.

As for the auction, I had less objections to holding this, because of informed consent. The members of this club should be aware that if they buy a plant in this day and age, they are accepting the risk that the plant may be infected. Whether that risk is acceptable to you or not is your decision.

But then I started thinking, wait a minute. This disease is airborne. I could make the decision that the risk is acceptable to me, but what about my neighbors downwind from me? They didn't have a say in the decision. Is this a time to be trading in plants *at all*?

You can get in a lot of trouble, thinking.

Now, I may be in the minority of the club with this opinion, so I leave it to the rest of the members to decide. Should we really have a fall sale? An auction? Do we really want to take a chance with other peoples' gardens? Isn't that what they did to us in that Florida shipment this spring? How well do we like it?

So, if anyone else has an opinion about this, you'd better start speaking up now. If the majority of members wish to proceed with the sale I think we should at least inform our customers about the possibility of catching the disease, which I suppose means having some photocopied bulletins about the rust on hand to pass out. And I think people who have found rust in their gardens should refrain from donating plants at this time. But again, I shall defer to the majority.

What do you think, CVIDS members?

\*from <http://www.ces.uga.edu/Agriculture/plantpath/daylilyrust.html>  
and <http://www.aphis.gov/npb/daylily.html#Distribution>

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Barry Stoll

In response to the accompanying editorial by Kim Edge, Lynn and I would like to give you our insights into the new "rust controversy". Last month we found three isolated areas of rust in our garden in Lynn's hybridizing area. The disease came into the garden on three of six plants we received in April from one Florida grower. All new plants were quarantined for six weeks before they were introduced into the garden, but no symptoms appeared for three months.

We have spent many hours on the phone talking with major growers and other individuals who have had extensive personal experience with this new plant disease, as well as studying information on a number of Web sites (e.g., those of the Florida and Georgia Depts. of Agriculture). On August 9, two representatives of the Iowa Dept. of Agriculture visited our garden, including the regional plant disease inspector and a plant pathologist, and we had a long talk about what rust is likely to do in the North. We would like to share with you what we have learned from these conversations.

Iowa, along with most other states, considers daylily rust to be a "nuisance," not a serious plant pathogen. As many of you know from the recent article in *The Daylily Journal*, daylily rust does **not** kill the plant, nor does it have any adverse effect on the bloom. It does cause blemishes on the foliage, similar to leaf streak, another fungal disease which it very much resembles. As with leaf streak and thrip damage, individual cultivars vary widely in their susceptibility – one plant may be badly affected, while the next plant in the row may have only a few tiny speckles. As stated in *The Daylily Journal*, the rust is spread by airborne contagion – possibly for miles, possibly for hundreds of miles. For example, one large Florida grower (Dan Hansen) appears to have gotten rust from a commercial nursery eight miles away. The position of the Iowa, Florida, and other Agriculture Depts., along with federal plant pathologists knowledgeable about daylily rust, is that it is too late to contain the disease, and that it will be spread nationwide within a relatively short time. It has already been identified in nurseries in Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, as well as in virtually every Southern state. As the Iowa inspector put it, "The horse is out of the barn."

It is likely that daylily rust will be a more significant problem in the South, with their year-round growing season, than in the north. For example, the Georgia Dept. of Agriculture believes that the rust will not survive over the winter on dead foliage on dormant varieties, but that it will continue to grow on evergreen varieties – which will then re-infect emerging new growth on dormants in the spring. However, in the North all daylilies are "dormant" in the sense that all foliage dies off over the winter. If the rust requires green leaf tissue to survive over the winter, it will not find it in Iowa and Minnesota, except in greenhouses. Also, the rust does not appear to be active until nighttime temperatures are consistently above 55 degrees. We know that infected plants were introduced into our garden in April, but symptoms did not begin to appear until mid-July. If we had not been actively looking for them and had allowed

the disease to run its course untreated, it would have probably been mid-August until they would have been obvious without close inspection. Since most of our daylilies are dormants, and in the natural life cycle of the plants, the foliage of healthy plants begins to die back in September, we question how much of a problem this disease will actually cause in the North. But much still remains to be learned.

We specifically asked the Iowa Dept. of Agriculture inspector and plant pathologist about the advisability of having our club sale as planned. Both of them advised going ahead with the sale, with the understanding that, of course, no infected plants will be offered for sale. Both felt that the danger to the general public lies not in small club sales like ours, where the sellers are knowledgeable and can recognize rust, but from the mass marketers (*e.g.*, Lowes, Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Home Depot, Hy-Vee) where hundreds of thousands of daylilies are obtained from huge suppliers known to be infected – and sold by clerks who have no clue that something called daylily rust exists, never mind knowing what to look for.

Accordingly, Lynn and I feel that we should go ahead with the fall public sale in Monticello as planned. Gerald Hobbs and Jean Hecht concur with this opinion. To avoid any possible suspicion that we might be providing infected plants, neither Jean nor Lynn and I will bring any daylilies to the sale, even though the plants we would have donated are nowhere near the parts of the garden where we have observed any signs of rust, and we have no reason to think they would be infected. Lynn and I will bring hosta and iris to the sale. However, since in previous years we have provided a large portion of the sale daylilies, we ask the rest of you to please make a special effort this year to bring some extra daylilies from your gardens for the sale.

With regard to the silent auction, you will notice that plants growing in the two gardens where rust has been found are identified on the auction sheet. They include the plants from Fred McDowell's garden, which have been in our garden since April. None of these plants show any signs of infection. As a precaution, all the plants in our garden have been treated with a systemic fungicide, and will be disinfected with ZeroTol or Clorox before being delivered. Based on this information, you can use your own discretion in deciding which plants to bid on.

You may be interested in knowing how we are planning to deal with rust in our own garden. After many hours of consultation with knowledgeable growers and others to learn what works and what doesn't, we developed a protocol which we will follow this fall and next spring. It involves a systematic series of spring and fall sprayings with the systemic fungicide Banner-Maxx combined with the surface disinfectant ZeroTol, which kills the spores on contact, along with burning of all infected or dead foliage. No plants with any signs of infection will leave the garden under any circumstances. Plants from unaffected areas of the garden have been sprayed with Banner-Maxx, and will in addition be disinfected with ZeroTol before leaving the garden. The two individuals from the Iowa Ag. Dept. agreed that this should provide the maximal assurance possible that we will not pass on the disease to other growers. We hope that this protocol, with the help of the Iowa winter, will eradicate the disease from our garden. We will not buy any new plants next spring from any source, until more is known about the disease. However, we do plan to add a number of new introductions this fall. (One of the nice

things about having rust is that you don't have to worry about bringing rust into your garden!)

**In summary, *our opinion***, based on everything that we have learned, is that within a year or so, daylily rust will almost certainly be as ubiquitous in daylily gardens as leaf streak is now, and a nuisance of about the same magnitude, at least in the North. It may be a much more serious problem in the South. But North or South, it is something we will have to live with. Commercial growers, and home gardeners who want spotless foliage, will probably have to spray. Many daylily growers are unconcerned and say that they refuse to spray and will simply accept the blemished foliage. Meanwhile, hybridizers and growers alike are focusing attention on identifying cultivars which seem to be innately resistant to daylily rust. What is the greatest danger that rust poses to daylilies and daylily lovers? We believe it's the panic and hysteria that this new potential threat has caused among daylily lovers in other parts of the country, with resulting accusations, threats, name-calling, damaged relationships, and broken friendships. The daylily will survive and so will our club and in a few years from now we will wonder what all the fuss was about.

So – come to our sale and potluck on the 25<sup>th</sup>! Come enjoy the beautiful setting at Riverside Gardens and see the new Visitors Center that our club has helped to support! Enjoy the great food and fellowship with other iris and daylily lovers. We'll be making plans for our fall activities, and we can all share our ideas and experiences from the season that is now coming to a close.

**REMINDER: CVIDS ANNUAL FALL PLANT SALE & POTLUCK**

Don't forget that our annual plant sale and potluck will be held Saturday, Aug. 25 from 10 AM to 1 PM at the gazebo in Riverside Gardens, Monticello. This is our main fund-raising event. We hope all members will be able to contribute plants, help with digging and labeling, and/or help out at the sale itself. Please label all plants with name, color, and price, at a minimum. Choice items might also include year of introduction and list price. **Please bring your labeled iris, daylilies, and companion plants to the park at 9 AM so we can have everything nicely laid out on the tables by 10 AM.** We will have our potluck and distribute club auction plants after the initial rush of public sales subsides; in previous years this has happened about 12:30. There will also be a few club plants available which were not bid on in the auction; these will be priced at the "minimum suggested bid" in the auction, which is approximately half of the average price listed in the current edition of Eureka Hemerocallis.

All plant contributions are welcome. However, we always sell out of all tall bearded irises and hostas, as well as most daylilies in colors other than yellow, so **TBs, hostas, and pink, purple, red, and white daylilies are especially welcome.**

Please price your plants; the members working at the sale may not be familiar with the varieties and may not know what they are worth. Iris and daylilies will be sold as bare-root plants and should be clearly marked with name and color. Older named varieties will be priced at \$3-\$5; "unknown yellow daylily" or "red seedling" for \$2. Newer varieties should be marked with hybridizer and year of introduction, if known, and priced appropriately. Companion plants should be potted, if possible, and labeled. Please be sure to wash your plants; customers (and sale workers) are reluctant to handle plants with dirt on the roots.

We hope all our members will be able to help with the sale in some way. If you have plants to contribute but can't bring them to the sale yourself, please contact Kim, Jean, or the Stolls (946-3471) to arrange for someone to pick them up. If possible, try to bring some pictures of the daylilies or other plants you are contributing. People always ask us, "What does this one look like?" It's really helpful to have some pictures so we can show them, not just tell them. Posters with colored pictures of daylilies and iris would be especially helpful. Just having the color pictures there at a time when most people's gardens are in the late-summer doldrums can generate interest and increased sales.

Don't forget: we need lots of publicity to make the sale a success! Last year we had many more plants than buyers. In addition to our ads in local area newspapers and shoppers, etc, word-of-mouth advertising is very important. Do your part: tell your friends and neighbors. Let's make this our most successful sale ever!

**From the Cedar Valley Iris  
and Daylily Society**

**Hey Members!**

**Your Club Needs You...**

...to hold elected office! We have elections coming up in the fall for the positions of president, vice-president, treasurer, and newsletter editor/secretary. Terms are for two years. Consider throwing your hat in the ring! You make this club happen!

...to write newsletter articles! Got an opinion to share, an article to contribute about a trip you've taken? We print all comers, so mail it in to Kim and become a published journalist!

**Current CVIDS Officers:**

- President: Barry Stoll
- Vice-president: Merry Howell
- Treasurer: Jackie Westhoff
- Newsletter Editor/Secretary: Kim Edge

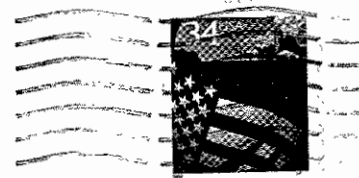


**Welcome, New Members!**

CVIDS is happy to announce that we have gained six new members since the spring sale in Vander Vere Park. They are:

- Gary & Holly Williams
- Sherry Moffit
- Beverly Seamans
- Mary J. Wiemann
- Marla Visser

We are very happy to have you in the club!



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