

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING REPORT

SPRING 2015

Languages on the Encyclopedia

There are many websites that have a series of flags representing different countries across the top of their site. By clicking on the flag of your choice you can view the site in that country's language. I checked into that option but found it impossible. Unfortunately, the Encyclopedia's program will not accommodate other languages in this way. Also letters with accent marks and other symbols cause various problems with the search mechanisms of the wiki program. Since the wiki is quite amazing in its ability to search for any word in this enormous database, we must limit the use of symbols to take advantage of the full search capacities. It is an imperfection in the program, but sometimes we have to sacrifice one option in order to have others.

Because we would like the Encyclopedia to be user friendly for other languages we can do several fixes to compensate. But that does not mean that every word deserving an accent or an umlaut will have this in the wiki.

More and more the wiki contains literature in other languages than English. For example: the descriptions of the Irises in *Les Liliaceae* are all in French. As the French text is entered, translation programs are used to provide an English translation. Often the English translations are displayed first, so that the search engine will sift through the information before stopping at a symbol in French language displayed later.

Registrations often have names developed from a variety of languages. Often they are named with made-up words that approximate the sound of the language. Through the years some effort has been made to provide translations for English speaking users. Another goal is to display the original language name as a picture such that it would be recognizable to a speaker of that tongue. Images of the foreign names are especially important for Cyrillic, Hebrew, Chinese and Japanese. Little progress has been made on this front because it requires the native speakers to provide those images. Until volunteers with those skills appear it is hard to implement. Some Japanese translations have been provided in the past by Clarence Mahan and some Hebrew by David Shahak. Russian and Ukrainian names officially registered with phonetic English counterparts are often difficult for English speakers to pronounce and remember, but given a translation they take on new meaning and become more memorable. They may even lead to learning a bit of the language.

ACTION ITEM: The Committee requests the AIS Board to adopt a resolution recognizing and thanking the “Wiki Heroes” for their dedication, willingness, and helpfulness in updating, correcting, and maintaining the Iris Encyclopedia. Our thanks to Betsy Higgins, John Black, Terry Laurin, and Alain Franco.

Voucher Program

As the AIS voucher program begins its third year vouchers continue to be used by affiliates and regions as marketing tools. At iris shows and sales the promise of a free iris with AIS membership and an order to one of the voucher nurseries is an effective incentive.

As Membership Chairman Gormley reports, there have been over 1400 vouchers sent to new or upgraded members and 290 vouchers sent since fall of 2014. The voucher nurseries will see most of these used during this ordering season.

News & Notes - Spring 2015

The AIS monthly electronic newsletter News & Notes has continued to be published on a monthly basis with Special Editions announcing the AIS Medal Awards. The latter continues to be the most popular issue; both in the number of members who read it and in the number who follow links for further information.

Our statistics also continue to be 2-3 times what Constant Contact reports for non-profits. We have a 54% average for opens compared to an industry average of 25%. Our click-through rate is 33% and the industry average is 11.7%.

The monthly edition has continued to have 6 to 10 topics with short action-oriented descriptions and one or more links to more details. Most of the links are to the AIS website, the Iris Encyclopedia, World of Irises (the AIS Blog), and Section, Region, or Affiliate websites. Some of the themes were:

- Conventions - Both the [Portland National Convention](#) and Sections meetings had announcements and reminders. Some were additions, such as [the added bus for the optional tour](#), and some are fixed deadlines like the early registration discount or calls for [donations to the Silent Auction](#). We also [highlighted videos](#) to promote the Portland meetings. Earlier in the meetings cycle we include the call for guest irises and reminders as the deadlines for these approach.
- Showing off irises - Our most popular topic was the previews of [Dykes Medal](#) and other [Medal irises](#). We created pages on the Iris

Encyclopedia showing photos of each of the irises eligible for this year's medals. In addition to familiarizing members with the candidates, we hope it will encourage voting and serve as a source to show potential members.

- Popularity Polls - Another way to show off irises. We worked with the Spuria Iris Society to create pages on the Iris Encyclopedia showing the most popular Spurias of [2012](#) and [2013](#). These contain links to the Spuria Iris Society website, encourage membership, and can be used by the Spuria Iris Society for publicity. Next we created the [2013 Japanese Iris Popularity Poll page](#) for the Society for Japanese Irises. We would like to have these for each of the Sections and Cooperating Societies. We also announce and/or remind members to vote in the respective popularity polls and the Symposium.
- Promoting AIS - As a follow-up to the previews of Dykes Medal candidates and other Medal candidates, we prepared a [World of Irises post](#) and a [working version of News & Notes](#) for everyone to use as AIS publicity. There were also notices of the [H&R Block Nonprofit Referral Program](#) and a reminder of [donations to the AIS Foundation](#) being tax deductible. Andi Rivarola created some great posters for the [\\$25 Voucher Program for new/upgraded memberships](#) and a [Spuria Iris Society new membership promotion](#) which we made available for anyone to print.
- Publicizing Changes - Addresses change on the Internet for a variety of reasons. We have new addresses and websites for at least two sections - [HIPS](#) and [Spuria Iris Society](#), two Regions with new addresses or websites - [Region 6](#) and [Region 21](#), the [AIS Youth website](#) has a new address, and an unknown number of Affiliates have changes. These show up on the AIS website pages and in the Bulletin and we help make them more widely known.
- Working with Sections: This includes a number of items above - popularity polls, web changes and membership promotions - as well as seed or rhizome sales and [announcements of their sectional publications](#).

Our goal is to work with all the Sections and as many of the Committees and Regions as possible. **How can we help you?**

Social Media in separate report.