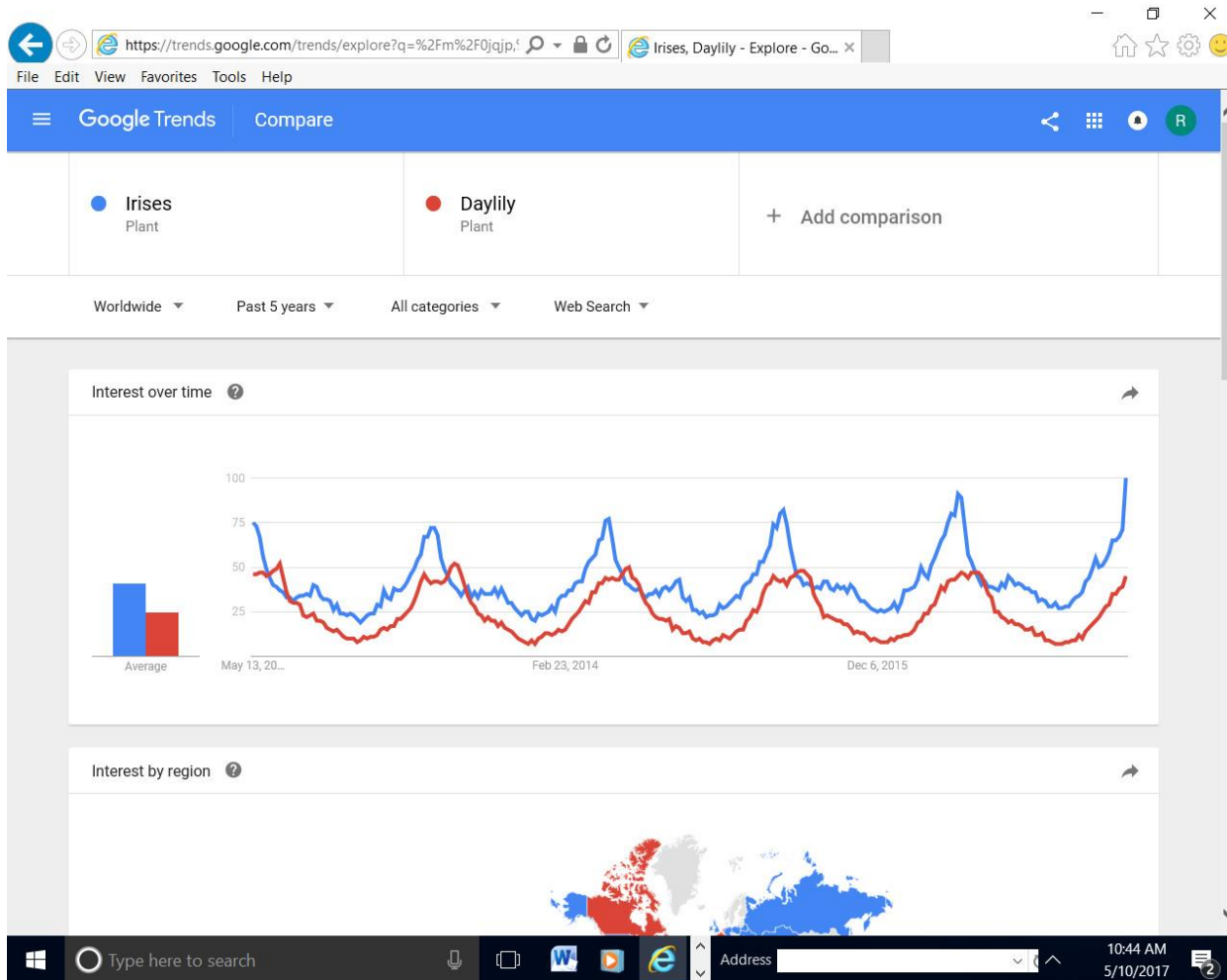


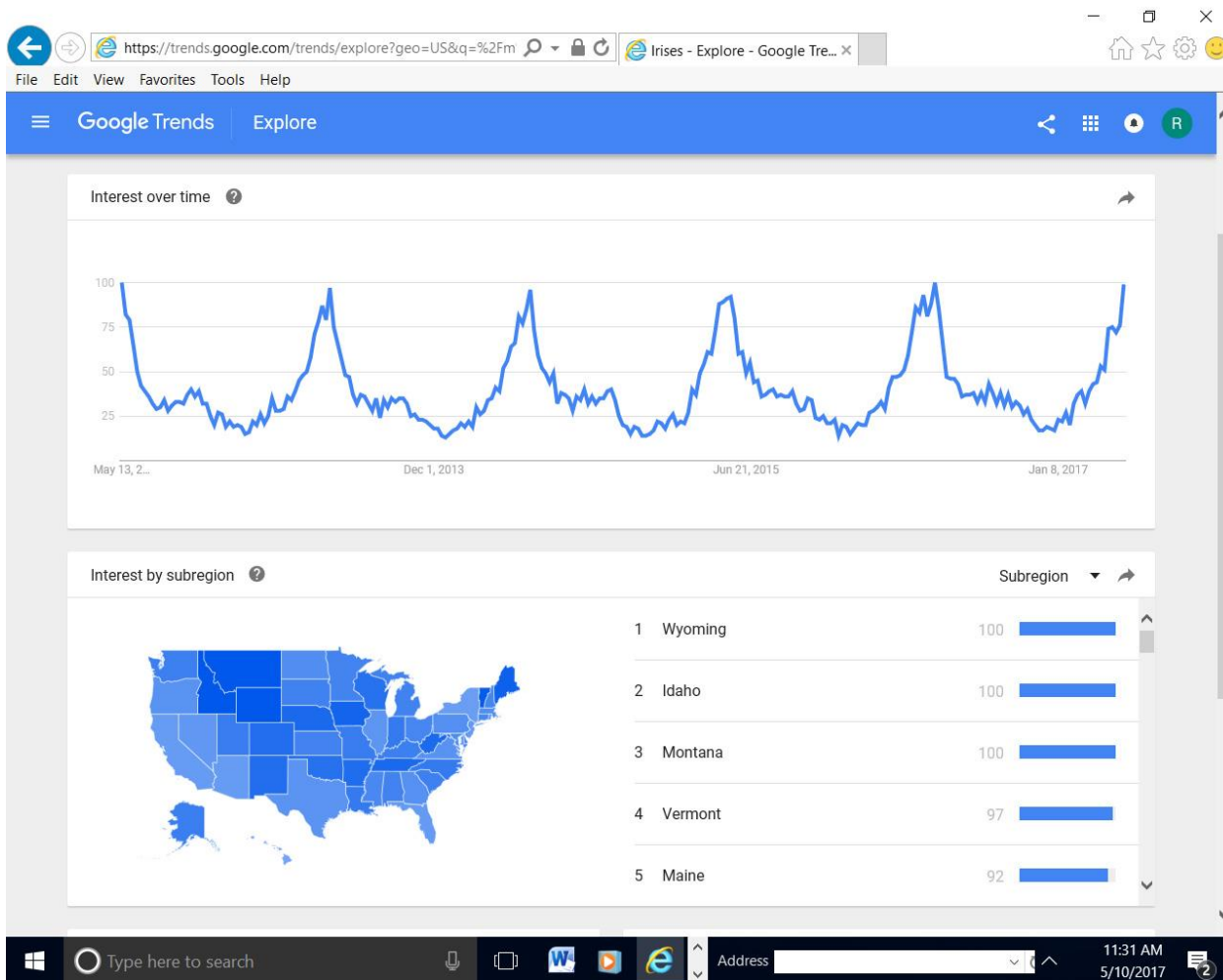
# PR and Marketing Report – Spring 2017

## Overview

How are Irises doing? Well if Google Trends is any indication there have been many more searches for Irises (the plant) than daylily (the plant);



Notice that worldwide the searches for Irises has increased about 25% over the last 5 years. That should indicate that AIS should not be declining in membership. Perhaps last year's dip was an anomaly. But if one looks at Iris searches just in the USA it would appear interest is constant but flat. See next page



The enormous growth in Iris interest appears to be centered on Eastern Europe and the Near East. Respectively the top countries were Ukraine 100; Belarus 91; Russia 84; New Zealand 55; and Iran at 52 which tied with the USA at 52;

The rest respectively where; Australia 46; Taiwan 45; Kazakhstan 44; Canada 39; United Kingdom 36; Poland 30; South Africa 29; Hungary 28; Ireland 26; Austria 24; Saudi Arabia 21; Germany 20; Philippines 15; Argentina 9; Netherlands 9; Vietnam 6; Spain 5.

Years ago on AIS's first website there was a debate over there should be a World Iris Society. Russia wanted to have one centered there. But the consensus was that the AIS already functioned in that role. AIS inherited that status because they were untouched at home by World War II. Now obviously the world has recovered. I must warn that If AIS wishes to maintain this lead role it must be careful to be serving the world as best it can. At some point I would like to see a discussion of this by the board.

When searches for The American Iris Society are compared to Irises in general AIS has too few to even register. That is not necessarily bad news, since it means the potential for AIS to be a resource of information for Iris interest is enormous and virtually untapped.

The Iris Encyclopedia is THE most complete iris information resource on the web. This May we are on our way to 20,000 users. We have no measurement of the number of users of the AIS website since there are no analytics in place to measure that. But we do know that only 5% of the 20,000 wiki users come through the AIS

website. Others come by way of search engines and amazingly most come from references from e-mails or return via their favorites list. Indeed it would appear that most wiki users become regular visitors and on average visit 2-3 times a month. During this May there will be over 40,000 visits with over 3 million hits on the wiki.

## **Encyclopedia update:**

### **Growth:**

While Interest in irises has grown worldwide by 25% in the last 5 years, the users of the Encyclopedia have grown by 25% in the last year alone, and has essential increased by 300% in the last 4 years. The potential of the Encyclopedia is unknown but possibly 50,000 users or more.

### **Work:**

As usual considerable work has been done since November on the Encyclopedia. Approximately 70% of the wiki entries have been updated which means we still have about 18,000 pages to update and if everything proceeds at the same rate I would expect to finish early next year. About 40% of the Iris cultivars Have images and the number is still growing. One can understand that it is difficult to find images of many very old irises but surprisingly we have been finding many. Unfortunately we still average only 40% of new introductions with images.

**Over 1,000 catalogs in online library.** Work continues on adding to the catalog library. We have added some great finds; Lemon's original descriptions of his 1840's irises were found. They still need translation from the French but now we have descriptions for these early irises. Many of Barr's catalogs have been added that give descriptions of Irises prior to 1910. Indeed by excerpting descriptions from these early catalogs we now can flesh out the 1939 and 1949 catalogs.

### **Overall:**

Response from many members has been extremely positive. Very many have said the Encyclopedia is the best thing the AIS has done. Compared to the volume of information presented the number of errors have been infinitesimal. And of course because it is a wiki everyone can help to correct any that appear. Many disparities in other AIS references have been corrected. Note the AIS checklists and R&I's are static so the errors that are made remain with errata appearing later. Our practice on the Encyclopedia is to point out those errors and note how and when they were corrected. The Encyclopedia is still not complete, due to the time it takes to add data, but errors of omission are continually worked on. And the Encyclopedia can easily claim to be the most complete single Iris reference in existence.

The **Voucher Program** continues to be a good marketing tool and more nurseries are needed to enhance the program. This work will be a focus in the months ahead. Plans are being made to make every Region more aware of the advantage of promoting the Voucher Program to prospective members and the upgrade in membership to existing members. At every iris show and sale an affiliate should be using the voucher as one of the marketing tools to attract new members.

# The American Iris Society

## News & Notes - Spring 2017

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 continue to be higher than the averages Constant Contacts reports. For example, the most recent issue currently has a 46% open rate (versus 18% industry average) and a 30% click-through rate (compared to 12%).

A recent change by Constant Contact allows us to download a PDF of each issue with active links. We have used this to post a recent issue to help publicize News & Notes as a reason to become an AIS member. Members can point to this page on the Iris Encyclopedia to show others. The page can be found at:

<http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view/Main/InfoNewsNotes>

We also have prepared a slide about News & Notes that can be included in presentations. That slide, in various formats, can be found on the same page.

You may have noticed some recent changes in News & Notes appearance. Members had suggested removing a permission reminder at the beginning of the email to make it appear better in mobile devices. We have removed this (there is still an unsubscribe link at the end of the email) and received no negative feedback.

Again, **please let us know when you have topics that should be included and what else you would like to see in News & Notes.**

Wayne Messer

News & Notes Editor