



I. stolonifera (left) and my tall *I. stolonifera* x *I. stolonifera* sdlg. (right)

I have put together the following photo essay representing the hybridizing efforts of myself and others in regards to the regelia species and their variants. I felt the need to create a record of these irises in the hopes that more hybridizers would consider working with the regelias. This also stands to serve as a visual historical account of what has been done in the past so others can see it and build upon this work.

Text and all photos by Elm Jensen

HYBRIDIZING ADVENTURES WITH REGELIAS (A PHOTO-ESSAY)

by Elm Jensen

LOCATION:

The iris species *Regelia* are found in a wide area of distribution. They occur naturally in mountainous areas in northern Afghanistan, in northeast Iran, in southeastern Russia, in Turkestan, and in Tadjikistan. They grow at altitudes ranging from 5,000 feet to 9,800 feet. The Tien Shan, Pamir Altai, and Hindu Kush mountains are primary sites.

VARIETIES:

In *The World of Irises*, John Taylor and Tom Wilkes list 8 varieties of regelias, while Brian Mathew in *The Iris* and Fritz Köhlein in *Iris* add others. The 3 varieties found in commerce at the present time are the ones that have made the most contributions to the iris gene pool and are the ones I have worked with in hybridizing. They are: *I. hoogiana*, *I. korolkowii*, and *I. stolonifera*.



I. hoogiana



I. korolkowii



I. stolonifera

CHARACTERISTICS:

The regelias are true arils, having a white swollen area or “collar” at the tips of their seeds. Some of the plants, notably *I. Stolonifera*, have orangish yellow stolons or runners that branch out from the main small rhizome for several inches, forming new small rhizomes at the ends. The new growth sprout coming out of the small rhizomes is purple at the tips and is quite interesting to behold as the sprouts push through the soil in the spring. A single bloom stalk rises from the rhizome of the regelias and carries 2 flowers at the tip (in rare cases, 3), but as I understand it, *I. afghanica* has but one flower. The regelia blossom has a beard on all 6 of the petals (both standards and falls).

VARIANTS OF *I.hoogiana*:

In the past, I grew several variants of *I. hoogiana*, among them *I. hoogiana alba* (a gray-white in color), *I. hoogiana Blue Joy* (a breathtaking pale icy blue), *I. hoogiana purpurea* (purple in color), and a form that was passed around among us in the 1970s that someone dubbed *I. hoogiana semi-flared*. *I. hoogiana* and several of its variants are tetraploids and are fertile, except for *I. hoogiana purpurea*, which is sterile.



I. hoogiana purpurea



I. hoogiana alba



I. hoogiana semi-flared

VARIANTS OF I. korolkowii:

There have been as many as 8 variants of **I. korolkowii** listed, but only 2 have been used to any extent for breeding. These 2, which are 2 of my favorite regelias, are **I. korolkowii brown and green** and the beautiful **I. korolkowii violacea**.



I. korolkowii brown and green



I. korolkowii violacea

VARIANTS OF I. stolonifera:

A tetraploid species, **I. stolonifera** has had several variants recorded, among them several of which I have grown. It increases by means of underground stolons or runners, which can be as long as 8 inches. I have always felt it to be a lovely little flower and, for me, it has been extremely easy to grow and quick to increase. Several of these variants are pictured on the next page.

Please note that the shapes of the *I. stolonifera* **bluish elongated** and the *I. stolonifera* **conical** flowers are not compact like those of *I. stolonifera*. Their standards and falls are longer. Though Lloyd Austin of Rainbow Hybridizing Gardens listed them as being variants of *I. stolonifera*, from my work with the regelias, I would guess that *I. stolonifera* **bluish elongated** was the result of a cross with some other regelia or regelia hybrid because of its color.



Bluish elongated



Conical



Decorated bluebeard



I. stolonifera leichtlinii



Turkish Dancer

VAN TUBERGEN HYBRIDS USING REGELIAS:



Andromache RC 1915



Artemis RC 1908



Bronze Beauty RH



Clara RC (@1960)



Clotho RC (1915?)



Dardanus RC



Lucia RH



Lutetia OG



Orestes RH



Theseus RC



Vera RC



Vulcanus RH

OTHER CROSSES FROM REGELIAS:



Here I Am RH
(Houck/Jensen) '86



Kerr's Wide Falls OG
(Kerr/McKusick) '76



Moon Over Shiraz OG
(Clark) '76



Persian Embroidery OG
(Austin '69)



Persian Pansy RC
(Austin '69)



Persian Violet RC
(Austin '70)



Rojen's Saga RC
(Ross/Jensen '86)



Ross 6V68B
(Andromache x Persian Pansy)



Sheik Jamil RC
(Tearington '75)



Turkish Delight RH
(Austin '76)



Turkish Topaz RH
(Austin '76)

ELM JENSEN'S WORK WITH REGELIAS:



Guinivere RC '86



Merlin's Magic RH '85



Merlin's Mantle RH '86



Stonehenge RH '86



Bronze Beauty x
I. korolkowii



Bronze Beauty x
Turkish Delight



Dardanus x
Persian Pansy



I. hoogiana x
I. hoogiana



I. hoogiana x
Persian Pansy



I. korolkowii violacea
x Shalah



Persian Pansy x
Tel Hashi



I. stolonifera x
Bronze Beauty



I. stolonifera x
I. stolonifera



Vulcanus x
Persian Pansy



I. stolonifera x
yellow pumila



I. stolonifera x
(*I. stolonifera* x yellow pumila)



Kazakhstan ('89)
RB+



Stolen Moments ('88)
RB+

The following three iris were my attempts at creating smaller arilbreds from iris with regelia backgrounds. In height, these are about intermediate in size, and all three have SDBs in their parentage. Some of the color patterns and stripes come from the regelias. Ideally, in hybridizing for arilmedians, the pod parent should always be an aril or an arilbred; however, sometimes nature doesn't cooperate, so one has to use the SDB or pumila as the pod parent. (Childsong is limitedly pod fertile, producing 1-6 seeds usually).



Childsong '83



Torch Singer '86

Childsong x
Welcome Reward

CHECKLIST OF IRIS COVERED HERE THAT HAVE KNOWN PARENTAGE:

Andromache----I. korolkowii x I. barnumae mariae

Artemis----I. korolkowii x I. barnumae mariae

Bronze Beauty----I. hoogiana x I. stolonifera

Childsong----Forty Winks x Genetic Artist

Clotho----(I. korolkowii x I. paradoxa) x Artemis

ADDENDA TO ELM JENSEN'S REGELIA HYBRIDIZING:



I. korolkowii violacea x *I. hermona*



I. stolonifera x Merlin's Magic

Dardanus----I korolkowii concolor x I. iberica

Guinivere----Andromache x Persian Pansy

Here I Am----I. stolonifera Red White and Blue x I. stolonifera Decorated Giant

Kazakhstan----Tel Hashi x (I stolonifera x yellow pumila)

Kerr's Wide Falls----I. susiana x Andromache

Lucia ----I. korolkowii x I. stolonifera)

Merlin's Magic----Turkish Dancer x Here I Am

Merlin's Mantle----Bronze Beauty x Turkish Delight

Moon Over Shiraz----(Austin W830 x I samariae) x Sylphide

Orestes---- (probably I. korolkowii x I. stolonifera)

Persian Embroidery----Teucros x Austin H-16-0

Persian Pansy----I. nigricans x I hoogiana Late Amethyst

Persian Violet----I. hoogiana x I. atropurpurea

Rojen's Saga----Persian Pansy x Tel Hashi [Virginia Ross sent me the seed; I germinated it using forced germination cold treatment. The name came from a combination of "Ross" and "Jensen" and, since I am Danish, I added the "saga."

Sheik Jamil----I. stolonifera x Persian Pansy

Stolen Moments----I. stolonifera x (I. stolonifera x yellow pumila)

Stonehenge----I. hoogiana Blue Joy x I. stolonifera leichtlinii

Torch Singer----Stars Over Chicago x Diligence

Turkish Delight----I. stolonifera sdlg. x I. stolonifera sdlg.

Turkish Topaz----(involvements of I. stolonifera)

Vulcanus----I. korolkowii x I. stolonifera

When growing regelias, regelia hybrids, regeliocyclus, or oncogelias, one always encounters variants in the flowers. I have had a seedling from I. stolonifera crosses whose blossom appeared at the top of a 34 inch stem. From crossing I stolonifera with itself, I was able to breed out most of the purple color to where I had a rich chocolate brown color left. I was also able to breed the purple to a rich maroon and even bred the maroon to a lighter rose and the brown to a golden tan. Its garden name was "Cocoa Rose," but I lost it in the flood. In the 1970s some of us shared a plant of Andromache that someone had nicknamed "Ruffled Andromache" where the flower was fluted and almost crinkled on both standards and falls. Once I kept two seedlings from a cross of Persian Pansy x Tel Hashi, in which the flower of one was beautifully tailored; the other was so heavily crinkled it was ugly. Van Tubergen's Theseus also has this tendency to crinkle when it blooms.

One can almost breed the veining out of the falls of stolonifera seedlings to where a signal spot could be laid down, creating a lovely small aril flower. One can add size to the small flower by crossing it with oncos or onco hybrids. Browns and purples crop up frequently, especially purples because purple is a dominant, but one can come up with some lighter colors, too. The door is wide open to possibilities in breeding with the regelias if only someone will step through, take up the tongs, and dab the pollen. Harald Mathes of Germany introduced Balalaika Music, an RC, in 1992. Pete McGrath of Albuquerque introduced Gamaliel's Wisdom, an RC, in 2002. So there is still a little hybridizing going on with the regelias. I hope that someone out there shares the passion I have for the regelias and their descendants and will carry on the work.

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