



# "THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

Journal of the  
Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

<http://alpinegardenersofcvi.wixsite.com/agcvi>

Issue # 45

Part 3

Early Spring 2017



Present **Alan McMurtrie**



To speak on  
**MAGICAL CANADIAN BRED  
RETICULATA IRIS**

**Monday, May 8, 2017, 1-3 p.m.**  
(doors open 12:30),  
**QUALICUM BEACH CIVIC CENTRE,**  
**747 JONES, Q.B.**  
**\$10 at door (\$5 for AGCVI, AGC-BC &  
VIRAGS members) includes entry in prize  
draw & coffee/tea & goodies.**

This talk will focus on Alan's work, from his early days of hunting species Iris in Turkey, to his achievements in hybridizing dwarf Reticulata Iris. His beautiful new cultivars have been enthusiastically received in England and Europe and have started to become available in Canada in the last two years. Some you may have seen include "Eye Catcher" and "Scentsational".



Alan McMurtrie is a retired Electrical Engineer. He has been an Iris "nut" for close to 40 years. In 1985 & 86 he went plant collecting in Turkey with a primary goal of finding diploid *Iris danfordiae*. As a result of his hybridizing work, he has opened up a whole new world of colours and patterns for Reticulata Iris. "So far we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg."

Info? Valerie: 250-594-4423 or [Melanson.valerie@gmail.com](mailto:Melanson.valerie@gmail.com)

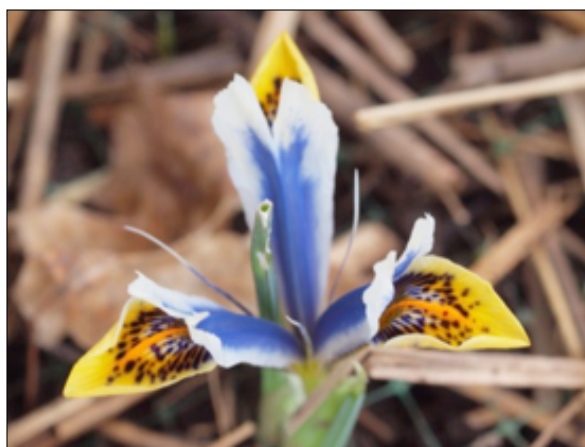
Previously Alan told us of his earlier work ("The Crevice" issue # 39, part 2, Winter 2015-2016, pp. 28-30).

Now he updates us on his newer breeding work. (This article was published in the AGC-BC Quarterly Bulletin, volume 60:1, Winter 2017, pp. 21-26 and is reproduced here.)

## Canadian Bred Reticulata Iris – Down The Road

*Alan McMurtrie, Toronto, Ontario*

I'm going to tease you with something you can't have; or more precisely, can't have for 10+ years: **Tequila Sunrise** (09-LE-2). It bloomed for the first time in 2016. I couldn't believe my eyes when I first saw it. I never would have imagined anything like this was possible. In case you don't realize, this is an incredible colour break. It's almost like someone took parts from two different flowers and glued them together. I hope people like it as much as I do. The **Catch-22** is, it will be about 12 years before there are enough bulbs to start sales. The good news is, it exists, and does reasonably well. It's a touch on the small side at 45mm tip-to-tip, but I have put it into a lab for conversion to polyploid, of which a tetraploid version could be 15-25% larger with slightly thicker petals (which might allow the flowers to last long). Typically I don't come up with a name until we're close to introducing a variety, but in this case **Tequila Sunrise** just seemed to fit.



*Tequila Sunrise (09-LE-2)*

I will be speaking to AGCVI in Qualicum Beach on May 8, VIRAGS in Victoria on May 9, and AGC-BC at the Van Dusen Gardens in Vancouver on May 10. The aim of this article is to wet your appetite and give you a glimpse of what I'll be showing, and to hopefully ensure you'll attend one of the talks.

When I went plant collecting in Turkey over 30 years ago to collect a diploid form of *Iris danfordiae*, one of the things I wanted to do was create a pale yellow Reticulata Iris. *Iris winogradowii* is a lovely pale yellow from alpine meadows in the Georgian Republic, but it needs moisture during the Summer which is something we often don't have in Toronto. **Smile** (03-CC-3) is that plant.

Another hybrid from 2003 seed that I particularly like is **Pristine** (03-FQ-1). It was shown for the first time at the RHS Early Spring Plant Fair in London, England in February 2016 and received a Preliminary Commendation. It has **Orange Glow** in its parentage.



*Smile (03-CC-3)*



*Pristine (03-FQ-1)*

Typically whites have blue ribs on their style arms as well as dotting on their falls. I refer to this as “blue accents.” Rarely there has been dark green accents, which may be the result of chlorophyll. One hybridizing goal is to create a white with cherry accents (i.e. purple accents). Time will tell whether this is possible.

I’ve shown you **Eye Catcher** (98-NP-4), which is a lovely white with navy markings and is available in Canada. My goal is to have you enjoy my hybrids, and hopefully have them last in your garden. They aren’t perfect, which is why I recommend planting some bulbs in a second location; just in case something happens to one of the plantings. Try to avoid the temptation to plant them too close together for an instant clumping effect. Well-drained soil is important. They enjoy moisture in the Spring, but it’s not good if they are sitting in it. Key is providing a long growing period so the bulbs can fully regenerate, and reward you with bloom year after year. I’m hoping that you enjoy them so much that you’ll want to try growing more – but not more of the same variety – more of other varieties. **Eye Catcher** is truly a beautiful variety. Another along this same line is **Cool** (03-FO-2). In 2016 the current Dutch grower was passing a small stock of it in the field and said it looks too much like **Eye Catcher**. To me **Cool** is a lovely pure white, with perfectly contrasting rich blue markings. I do hope to ensure it gets to market. The difficulty is needing enough bulbs to be able to bring it to market at a reasonable price. Something you probably don’t think about is it does cost money to build up a stock, and it takes many years. In the case of bulbs we’re talking 10+ years.

One Iris to bloom for the first time in 2010 was **It’s Magic** (05-HW-1). The name explains where the lovely brown fall markings come from. Being “magical,” one might hope it would give some interesting children. The first to bloom was 10-CR-1 in 2016 (two more are expected in 2017). Of particular note its orange colouring lasted four days before it started to fade!





*Cool (03-FO-2)*



*It's Magic (05-HW-1)*



*10-CR*

Back in 2008 I was visiting the Dutch grower who I was working with at the time. He asked me if I had a name for 98-YS-1, and I said no, I didn't. He replied that he and his son thought it should be called Holland's Glorie. That made me smile – that he thought it was so good that it deserved a name like that. Of course I can point to the exact spot in my front garden in Toronto where Holland Glory/Holland's Glorie first bloomed.



*Holland Glory (98-YS-1)*



*Neptune (03-JM-2)*

You may be interested that both **Holland Glory** and **Lilac Beauty** have **White Caucasus** parentage. White Caucasus is one of the last Reticulatas to bloom and is available in Canada.

One hybrid that was quite colourful in the field in Holland is **Neptune** (03-JM-2). The Dutch grower seemed quite impressed.

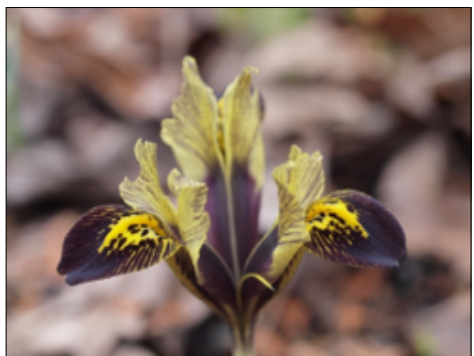
A cross that has proven quite good is 05-GQ. Four of its 25 seeds bloomed; one each year starting in 2010. The one I like best is **Wow** (05-GQ-3), but the others are quite nice as well. 05-GQ-2 is not necessarily as showy, but it has done well in my garden. All four are in Holland with 05-GQ-1 being there the longest, and so should be available first. I have a tetraploid version of it, which is about 17% larger. A few bulbs are now here in Toronto. I am particularly keen to find out whether its flowers last longer.



*05-GQ-1*



*05-GQ-2*



*Wow (05-GQ-3)*



*05-GQ-4*



*Lilac Beauty (03-AN-3)*



*Tetraploid It's Magic*

I now have a few polyploidy versions of my hybrids in my garden. I won't have time in my talks to explain why I'm doing this work, but hope to report some observations. In the photo above, based on the coarseness of the tunic, I wonder if the bulb on the left is octoploid (8n), or possibly even hexadeciploid (16n). The goal of polyploids is to be able to hybridize them at the tetraploid level. I have been cautioned that octoploids may be slower growing and as a result have smaller flowers, but I wonder if even thicker petals of octoploids would make the flowers last even longer than tetraploids. I won't know for sure unless I have the lab I'm using in Holland produce some. I was so keen that I paid an extra conversion fee to specifically have them create an octoploid version of **It's Magic**.

## Final Words

Unfortunately supply of several of my hybrids will be limited over the next two or three years. A Dutch grower who had some of the stocks rented a field for 2015/16 that turned out not to drain properly. As circumstances would have it, my smallest stocks were planted right at that end, and coincidentally 2016 turned out to have a wet Spring. What then didn't help is he oversold a couple of the varieties. At the end of January 2016, he announced that he was closing his company. He told me not to worry, he would look after 2016 sales, but I would need to find another grower for the

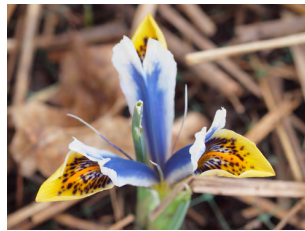


2016/17 growing season. It turned out he wasn't concerned about future sales; he simply wanted to maximize his share of the profits. So on one hand it was great to learn last fall that we sold 22,500 Sea Breeze, but it turns out I now hear from the new grower we only have sufficient stock to sell 7,500 in 2017. It would have been much better to limit sales to 15,000, and then have 22,000 available for 2017, with that or more for 2018. Needless to say, I'm not happy with that grower.

Sales of **Eye Catcher** were "through the roof." We couldn't supply all of the orders: going from 9,500 in 2015 to 47,000 in 2016! Plus there were unfilled orders for 10,000 more. As a result of the way orders came in we oversold, so only 26,000 will be available this year. E.g. a customer ordered 4,000 bulbs and subsequently asked for

5,000 more. The order was approved, but somehow got recorded as 5,000 when the actual order was for 9,000. Given the demand, the aim is of course to build the stock, so we need to cut back sales a bit in order to make that happen.

Hope to see you at one of the talks. Check out [www.Reticulatas.com](http://www.Reticulatas.com)



Tequila Sunrise (09-LF-2)



03-CV-4



03-EK-1



sophenensis



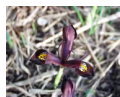
98-ND-1



Çat ANMc2175



97-DZ-8



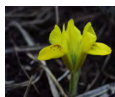
88-AX-1



danfordiae ANMc2325



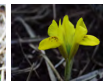
91-FC-3



danfordiae ANMc2325



Çat ANMc2175



danfordiae ANMc2325



danfordiae Atilla



sophenensis

*L: Tequila Sunrise's family tree*



Present **Jirí Papoušek**



To speak on

## **SMALL DAPHNES AND THEIR CULTIVATION**



**Monday, June 12, 2017, 1-3 p.m.**

**(doors open 12:30),**

**QUALICUM BEACH CIVIC CENTRE,  
747 JONES, Q.B.**

**\$10 at door (\$5 for AGCVI, AGC-BC &  
VIRAGS members) includes entry in prize  
draw & coffee/tea & goodies.**

Jirí will share his experience with growing daphnes in crevice & open gardens, pots and in tufa walls. He will also share his experiences in propagating these lovely little plants and shrubs.



Jirí Papoušek, "The Alpine Parrot", is well known in Czech and European rock and alpine gardening circles. He has 30 years experience of growing & exhibiting alpine at the famous Prague Rock Garden shows and has been on the International Czech Rock Garden Conference Committee of 2008, 2013 and now 2017. In the last 5 years he has given lectures in Scotland, USA, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

*Info? Valerie: 250-594-4423 or [Melanson.valerie@gmail.com](mailto:Melanson.valerie@gmail.com)*



*In a previous issue of "The Crevice" (# 43, Fall 2016), Zdeněk introduced us to one of Jiří Papoušek's creations. Now he gives us a more in-depth report.*

## **TUNNELING INTO FIRST CLASS ROCK GARDENING**

By Zdeněk Zvolánek, Czech Republic

With photos by Zdeněk Zvolánek & Jiří Papoušek

During a cool February at my home, I write this because I want to introduce you to my rock gardening friend, Jiří Papoušek (the Alpine Parrot). Jiří is soaring to become the leading Czech rock gardener of the next 25 years (while I am making my slow departure from the blooming stage). This relatively young man has very good qualifications: Prague University, a very nice knowledge of English, a good position in an international parcel service, a fine tuned sense for putting stones together in a noble and practical way, green fingers for propagating alpine plants and contacts with the best growers abroad (including Scottish wizard Cyril Lafong). Above all, at home in the Czech Republic, he has had a tender start as an intelligent disciple of yours truly.

Jiří Papoušek has a perfect advantage: he does not drink poisonous alcoholic drinks like we gardeners love to do, thus losing our good sense, time and money. He is very busy building his own garden in Roztoky near Prague. It is a great project with a rich future. God bless him and keep his body and mind in the best of shape!



Jiří discovered a huge heap of dark metamorphosed schist near the entrance of the new car tunnel (part of the motorway bypassing Prague) and made many trips to haul large, flat stones in his trailer. I helped him to start one outcrop with vertical layers and plenty of crevices. Later he constructed other outcrops with a master's inventive style. I like his design of low outcrops with many nice peninsulas surrounded by fine screes, allowing easy access for photographing the plants. The scree is a perfect bed for the seeds of all the active mother plants.



Elsewhere in his playground are raised beds in semi shade. These are made of peat blocks and here it is possible to keep *Cassiope*s, dwarf Himalayan rhododendrons and *Gentiana*, *Shortia soldanelloides* and all sorts of desirable small woodlanders. Plantings of interesting trees for shade and flowering shrubs for their show is the part of his landscaping which needs time for a happy maturing of the garden.

Behind his house is a long new alpine house with his miniature fragile alpines - his collection of species and hybrids of the genus *Dionysia* (he collected some himself recently in Iran). Here is suitable venue for grafting difficult *Daphnes* and miniature conifers. He is good taking cuttings at the right time. Jiří has a good connection with Czech seed collectors (Vladimír Staněk and Vojtěch Holubec), that helps to bring many new alpines for trial here.





In part of the garden, along one fence, is a long frame edged with railway sleepers (a gift of mine) that serves as a small nursery for selling plants and keeping some tender mothers for propagating.



There is an unfinished, that is unplanted, limestone crevice garden with a nice limestone grit top dressing, that was built by his talented friend Martin Brejník in the front of the family house. Brejník was his regular partner for exploring *Daphne petraea* and *Daphne x hendersonii* natural habitats near Italian Mt. Tremalzo.



Jiří Papoušek is an extremely busy man but a lazy writer! He is a keen organiser of the Czech International Rock Gardening conferences. I worked on two of them with him along with the Master of our Stone Art, Vojtěch Holubec. The third conference is coming up for us in May this year in Průhonice, near Prague.

So it is my privilege to write something about a new growing technique invented by Jiří Papoušek: it is a tunnel with the benefit of tufa walls. It is actually a hybrid of two techniques: a tufa (soft travertine) wall placed in large tunnel, thus providing better cooling and ventilating of the space (here it is 50 m<sup>3</sup>).



The basic design of this kind of alpine house filled with tufa was made by the guru of *Dionysia* breeding Michael Kammerlander from Wurzburg, Germany. But one summer day he forgot to shade the glass roof and half of his collection was burnt.

Papoušek's tunnel must be shaded on hot days too, but the air is naturally drafting or running through the tube of tunnel and so the cooling of alpinists is easier. Thus there is a run of different temperatures for the air inside and outside the tunnel. The temperatures inside the tunnel range from 1C - 39C.



It is sensible to stress **SOME ADVANTAGES** of growing plants in tufa holes and natural looking tufa crevices in the tunnel compared with uniform pot culture in alpine houses. Plants have a free root run into the porous & softer tufa stone with neutral chemical reaction. The symbiotic relationship of saxatile plants with bacteria and fungi inside the rock works and plants' lives are prolonged without a need for regular repotting. Evaporation of moisture from the tufa boulders is a bonus for its occupants. The tunnel has closing side walls provided for winter frost free comfort without the need of artificial heating. Everybody can enjoy earlier flowering because of the glass house effect.

The soft travertine (tufa bought in Slovakia) wall forms a west oriented slope with some boulders offering southern or northern nooks. The wall is 10 m long, 3 m wide and 1.5 - 1.8 meters high. It accommodates about 300 plants. Tunnel covers 20 m<sup>2</sup>.



**DISADVANTAGES:** *Dionysia*, *Primula allionii*, *Saxifraga*, the smallest Daphnes and classic alpinas from alpine lands have different needs for watering during our crazy seasons. So a general system for watering the area is impossible and trouble with plants going thirsty or rotting from too much moisture sometimes occurred. The owner is conducting a trial using controlled spot watering right now.

It is always pleasure to visit this place, that great theatre with many attractive actresses seasonally changing dresses. It is a kind of slow and quiet ballet for me and always a dancing place for friendly insects.

Jiří Papoušek is a well known lecturer (soon covering our northern hemisphere from Sweden to Canada) and I wish him a pleasant tour in 2017.

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## **TWOPHOTOS FROM THE AGC-BC SPRING SHOW & SALE, taken by David Sellars**

For more photos & a report see the forthcoming AGC-BC "Bulletin", Spring issue, due out early May



**The Show Main Table**





*Pleione*



*Fritillaria*



*Saxifraga dinnikii*