

2001 Retic & Juno Bloom (draft)

By Alan McMurtrie P. Eng

Reticulatas (Iridodictyums)

visit www.Reticulatas.com

2001 returned to being a "normal" year. Reticulata bloom started on March 20, which in fact is a bit early, but cold weather for more than a week kept things essentially on hold. Those first blooms were at the front of the house (southeast facing): a *hyrcana* Thalish self, as well as a *hyrcana* hybrid. Not far behind was one of six blooms of the lovely cream Iris x *mcmurtriei* 94-HW-1.

It was interesting to observe that a number of buds were already up as the snow disappeared. If you didn't know better you might have said they were actually growing under the snow. I can't really believe this is possible given the ground was frozen as hard as a rock and the snow right at the soil surface appeared to have turned into ice crystals. And thus was itself quite hard. Perhaps though it was water coming down from the melting upper layers that caused the snow to turn to ice crystals near the ground. Prior to that maybe it wasn't as hard. A couple of the flowers had curved stems, suggesting they tried to grow up into the snow but were held down. Of course the majority of buds were still below the soil surface. What surprised me most was the fact the ground was indeed hard as a rock when the first few buds were opening. I didn't try to see how deep the frost extended. Was it simply the sun's warmth hitting a bud that caused its stem to elongate, allowing the bud to emerge from its sheath?

On April 8th temperatures soared to 22°C, but that was just for the day. The days leading up to it, as well as following were if anything, slightly below normal.



Of course the most exciting blooms were the new F2 *sophenensis* x *danfordiae* crosses (I. x *mcmurtriei*). Two years ago, in 1999 there were two: one white and one light blue. Last year an additional 6 bloomed: 3 white, one yellow, one blue (its flower tip had been nipped by a bug), and the lovely spotted 96-BN-1. This year there were 14 more, spanning 4 years of hybridizing. Of these, four were 1997 hybrids, which meant they were 1 year ahead of the typical 5 years from seed to blooming bulb. I had actually been anticipating more 1997 blooms since many seemed to germinate the first Spring after being planted, rather than in the normal second.

Of particular interest was the fact that quite a number of this year's were yellow with varying amounts of blue. I would now say there is a clear second generation pattern emerging: white (7); yellow (7); blue (5). I hope that in future generations this can be broken. Always wanting more... It's of course quite something to have simply have gotten the lovely results I have so far! Though I don't want in future to simply keep getting more similar results to what I already have. It was however interesting to see the new whites that bloomed this year; to see the differences in them compared to the ones I already had. I wonder what all the possibilities are...

<u>White (7)</u>	<u>Yellow-Blue (7)</u>	<u>Blue (5)</u>	<u>Spotted Light Blue-Green</u>
94-AT-1	94-AT-2	94-DS-2	95 unknown *
94-DS-1	94-HW-2	94-GU-1	96-BN-1 *
97-CC-1	95-F-2	95-F-1	
94-HW-1	96-BN-2 *	96-TN-1	
95-CS-1	96-SD-1 *	97-AG-2	
96-DZ-1	97-AG-1		
96-FW-1	97-CC-2		



Blue = new in 2001 * = back cross to *danfordiae*

Table 1 2nd Generation Iris x *mcmurtriei* Hybrids

94-GU-1 and 96-SD-1 were absent this year: 96-SD-1 is of course recovering from last year's near loss, however I had thought I might see one 94-GU-1 bloom. It should bloom next year [check]. I consider it a bit poor, mainly because it doesn't regenerate well, but also because it was quite small-flowered when it bloomed 2 years ago. Both parents are of reasonable size, so it's just a case that this time they produced a smaller-sized offspring. Perhaps there's reasonable (at times small can be cute, but not in this case).

The best bloom was on 94-HW-1 which put up 6 blooms in this, its 3rd year of bloom. It's essentially my favourite. I do quite like 96-BN-1 and 95 unknown, plus the snow white 96-DZ-1.

Of the yellows, my favourite is 97-AG-1. It maintains it's shape, has a nice mix of blue and yellow, and it's different from *danfordiae*. 96-SD-1 is more striking, but its too similar to *danfordiae*, plus it almost died out last year.

Of course the reality is *danfordiae*'s lemon yellow and blue, no matter what shade, don't really mix well. The result is largely something dull, which will never be an eye catcher. I would love to get away from *danfordiae*'s lemon yellow and work with other shades of yellow, but I'm not sure how. Hopefully that will just come. In a sense it is with 96-BN-1 and 95 unknown. I am still hopeful that *danfordiae*'s yellow is made up of several different carotenes which are simply difficult to separate out.



Surprisingly there weren't any blooms between *mcmurtriei* clones and other Retics. In 1996 almost 750 seeds, 12% of the total, were exactly from just such crosses. They are expected to be sterile, but could possibly produce some interesting patterns & colours. On the surface this suggests the seedlings fatal. Offhand I couldn't tell you whether this is true or not.

This year there were over 1000 F1 Iris x *mcmurtriei* blooms. This compares with only 300 last year. I didn't count all of this year's blooms, but I know for a fact I hybridized approx. 800 of them, and reasonable guess is there were 200 that I didn't get to. These were ones that bloomed at the same time as the majority of other Retics. I had covered

them with dishpans in the expectation that I would be hybridizing them. I did get to some of them, but there were many I couldn't.

There were _ F2 *mcmurtriei* blooms. As you will see on the hybridizing statistics page, from a pod perspective most of these were intercrossed with each other. I'm expecting this will give the most interesting results in the long term.

Unfortunately three of this year's new blooms were attacked by bugs. In most cases the base of the flower was eaten through, which at least meant I still had a chance to use the pollen for hybridizing.

An interesting challenge would be to eventually plant out various Retics and create a canvas; to paint a picture. That's where a lot different shades would come in handy. Of course a wider colour range would be helpful. Then the real trick would be to get the flowers all into bloom about the same time.

Of particular interest were the F2 *sophenensis* x *danfordiae* hybrids (I. x *mcmurtriei*). I now have ___ clones covering 1994 through 1997. The four from 1997 are 1 year ahead of the 5 year typical seed to blooming bulb. At this point they can be divided into 4 colour groups:

New2001 Iris x *mcmurtriei* blooms

95-unknown	? x <i>danfordiae</i> Atila
95-CS-1	89-AC-5 x 89-Q-7
94-HW-2	89-Q-1 x 89-AC-4
94-DS-2	89-F-1 x {self + 89-Q-2}
94-AT-2	89-Q-4 x 89-AC-4
94-DS-3	
95-F-2	89-AC-7 x 89-F-1
96-TN-1	89-AC-12 x 89-AC-17
96-FW-1	91-FC-1 x 91-FC-2
97-AG-1	91-FC-1 x <i>danfordiae</i> ANM _____
97-CC-1	89-F-2 x 91-FC-2
96-BN-2	89-AC-6 x <i>danfordiae</i> Atila
97-AG-2	
97-CC-2	

Returning

94-HW-1 6 flowers in its 3rd year of bloom; 15 flowers are expected next year; total bulb count is 55

95-F-1

96-BN-1

94-DS-1

94-AT-1

96-DZ-1 91-FC-3 x *danfordiae* I am doubtful the parentage is correct

Absent

94-GU-1 89-Q-5 x 89-Q-3

96-SD-1 89-F-2 x *danfordiae* Atila back cross

With the success that I'm getting with I. x mcmurtriei hybrids one might question the effort put into other clones don't want to put all of my eggs into one basket

After many years absence, 2001's Summer returned to a more "normal" hot and dry; with the grass turning brown from mid July until late August.

	<u>End 1994</u>	<u>End 1995</u>	<u>End 1996</u>	<u>End 1997</u>	<u>End 1998</u>	<u>End 1999</u>
Bloom-sized ¹	2	5	7	25 ²	21 ³	12 ⁴
1 year away	?	1	16	37	81	361
2 years away	?	8	27	82	309	801
3 years away ⁵	<u>8</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>807</u>	<u>1845</u>
Total:	?	50	117	393	1211	3019
If Doubling	2	4	8	16	32	64

	<u>End 2000</u>	<u>End 2001</u>		<u>End 2002</u>	<u>End 2003</u>	<u>End 2004</u>
		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Predicted</u>			
Bloom-sized	68		347	2,485	5,700	17,375
1 year away	279		2,138	3,215	11,675	35,225
2 years away	2,138		3,215	11,675	35,225	98,000
3 years away	<u>3,147</u>		<u>11,328</u>	<u>32,740</u>	<u>92,300</u>	<u>279,900</u>
Total:	5,632	est.	17,026 est.	50,115 est.	144,900 est.	430,500 est.
If Doubling	128		256	512	1024	2048

Figure 1: 89-Q-3 (*sophenensis* x *danfordiae*) Bulb Count

As you'll see on my separate 2001 Hybridizing Statistics page I again produced over 10,000 seeds. With all of the I. x mcmurtriei blooms, something over half of the hand pollinated seed involved *sophenensis* x *danfordiae* progeny.

Junos

visit www.IrisBloom.com

It's quite something to see all of the Juno hybrids that I now have. The only disappointment is the fact that the interspecies crosses are mostly sterile. It would be quite something to take some of the more interesting ones and go further with them. I did try a number of crosses and as expected most failed. The one pleasant surprise was ___ x self which on one of the plants yielded ___ seeds which look to be good. Now I can only hope that one or more will germinate. Time will tell – patience is a virtue in this business.

Several nicolai bloomed including one raised from seed.
Nicolai hybrid (red) also bloomed

Potpourri

- ¹ Bloom-sized are > 10 mm; 1 year away are > 7 mm; 2 years away are <= 7 mm; 3 years away are bulblets. Note: keep in mind that sizes may be different for other hybrids. Where appropriate, the actual number of blooms are shown, and the '1 year away' numbers were adjusted accordingly.
- ² 21 bloomed here in 1988, but 4 which were given out for testing should also have bloomed. I had predicted only 17 in total would bloom. This means that 8, which were about 10 mm in diameter, also bloomed.
- ³ Includes 10 sent to Berney that were potentially large enough to bloom in 1999. Originally I predicted only 4 would be left here to bloom. There were in fact 11 blooms.
- ⁴ I had been expecting 26 blooms, but there were only 14; 6 bulbs from Wim gave 8 blooms. Includes bulbs returned by Wim: 6, 15, 1, and 32 respectively. Several were 17 x 22 mm in diameter. My largest were only 10 mm in diameter, which I have found to be just large enough to bloom. There is a good chance that Wim's largest bulbs will produced up to three flowers per bulb, with the last being much smaller, and blooming quite late. So far I've only gotten single blooms on all of my sxd clones, but then I've never gotten the bulbs up to the size of Wim's.
- ⁵ In some clones, from time to time a few bulblets are quite small. By the following year they are only up to being considered large bulblets. On average bloom-size and 1 year away bulbs produce 8 and 4 bulblets respectively. Note: 91-FC-4 bloom-sized bulbs can have as high as 25 bulblets: all of reasonable size.

From November 2000 until June I was so busy at work that I essentially put in one hour of overtime for every normal hour worked (35 hour work week). By virtue of putting in all that time, plus keeping up other things such as being the Cub Akela (main leader) of a local Boy Scout group, etc., I didn't get many of the things done I would have liked to. In recent years overtime has been rare, so the idea initially was to take as much of it as possible. That of course was coupled with the fact that the work needed to be done within a reasonable timeline. It continually seemed like it would come to an end soon (the peaking need), but hindsight showed that belief was quite incorrect. As this tends to suggest, we're a little short staffed in some areas. As I indicated to one of my colleagues at the time: overtime is when you're able to get done most of the things you had planned to do, but couldn't because of all of the new things that came up during regular hours. It's funny how when you come in to work before most other people it's nice and quiet, then a dull roar develops and continues to build. You notice other people around and interact with them to get things done, then at a point you look up and it's nearly quiet once again, with only a few of the co-workers around who are there into the early evening. A while later you're virtually the only one left. It helps of course to 1) do this in Winter, and 2) have already planned to stay late so you don't get antsy and want to head home. Know clearly, the reason I'm doing the extra work is because I'm getting paid; otherwise I've got an unimaginable number of other things of my own to do.

I must say having the extra "play money" is nice (the government gets half in taxes). It meant I was able to get another computer (this time a Window one), as well as other "toys", such as more memory for my digital camera, etc. I bought a digital camcorder just to this year's canoe trip in Algonquin Park (last year's model). I am looking forward to making some of my flowers come alive for you next year. The only drawback is I don't believe the colours are as accurate as with a digital camera, and the resolution of the pictures is relatively low. However the addition of motion and sound will be a nice touch.

There were a number of things that I had hoped to get to over Winter, such as finishing my 2000 Bloom report, putting together a CD of Reticulata pictures and articles (not to mention one for Junos), and of course in Spring updating my web sites. As of September only a few of this year's pictures have been put onto www.Reticulatas.com. I did buy a CD burner just before Christmas, but there were problems when I went to use it in February. Since I was doing the overtime I didn't get a replacement until later in the year.

In the Spring I extended last year's new bed 15 inches closer to the road. I wanted to squeeze as much room into the bed as possible. That was the time to do it, since I hadn't yet planted anything around its edge. This means there's just under 4 feet left from the bed to the road. The extension also helped to use up some of the extra soil I have piled on the patio.

I now have the internet domains Bulbs.ca and Irises.ca along with a couple of others. I'm not sure what I'll do with them. Ideally I need to find an Internet Service provider that I can host them with for a low cost. Of course I also need to have a strategy of what I'm going to put on them.

Next year I'm hoping to do more with Quicktime VR.

-while on holidays at the rented cottage I modified my web software to produce pages with relative pages. This combined with my CD burner means I now have the capability to produce CDs that can be used either on Macintosh or Wintel computers.

So much to do, so limited time...

Key is to make the most effective use of one's time. However, after getting done the things you absolutely must, it's difficult

Quicktime Virtual Reality (Quicktime VR) tours. Expensive from the point-of-view of software. No one piece does everything you want it to.

Have software to stitch panoramic movies and object movies. Would like to also do cubics (explain)

Fall 2001 is the warmest on record. Up until late November I was still working in the garden. I managed to take a number of days off work to work in the garden. As a result I was able to replant 1995

More Retic hybrids sent to three Dutch bulb growers.