

Balsam Fir is about as nearly worthless for any other purpose as any of our native trees, and therefore the waste of cutting so much young timber is not serious. A few Black Spruces come among the Firs, and Hemlock boughs, which, oddly enough, are made to do duty as Palm branches in some church services [and] are in growing demand every year. Trees from Maine are shipped as far south as Baltimore; and of late years large quantities of Holly branches, mostly from Maryland, since the limited supply in New Jersey is nearly exhausted, are sent as far north as Boston. Within two or three years the Mistletoe has been sold here in a few shops and even on the streets, but in spite of its association with Christmas festivities in Old World traditions, it has filled but a small place here in the regular market of Christmas green. And yet this parasite is common on the Gum trees of southern New Jersey, and it is never so beautiful as at this season with its transparent berries clustered among its evergreen leaves.

[Editorial. *Garden and Forest* 1(1888): 505-506]

PLANT NOTES.

JAPANESE IRIS.

ONE of the most attractive features in Mr. John L. Gardner's beautiful garden in Brookline, Massachusetts, is the bed of Japanese Iris (*Iris laevigata* or *Kaempferi*), which forms the subject of our illustration. The plants, which were selected in Japan with great care by Mrs. Gardner, represent the best named Japanese varieties. They are arranged according to color, in the Japanese fashion; each



A Bed of Japanese Iris.

row across the bed consisting of one variety, those with white flowers at one end, and then all the intermediate shades to the dark blues and purples at the other end. The bed is sunk eight or ten inches below the surface of the surrounding lawn, and is furnished on one side with a perforated water-pipe so that the plants can be irrigated during the growing season. It is eighteen inches deep and consists of a rich compost of loam and thoroughly rotten cow-manure, and every year it gets a good top dressing of manure. Every pleasant morning after the middle of May the water is turned on at nine o'clock and allowed to run till three or four o'clock in the afternoon; by that time the bed is thoroughly saturated and covered to a depth of two or three inches with water; the supply is then shut off until the next morning. Some of the varieties, under this generous treatment, grow to a height of five or six feet, and have produced flowers fully ten inches across, and surprising in their profusion and beauty. While irrigation is doubtless necessary to develop the greatest perfection of the Japanese Iris, it can be successfully grown in this country in ordinary seasons in any good garden soil and without artificial watering. Very fine flowers have been produced without special treatment by Mr. [Francis] Parkman and other American growers, who have raised good seedling varieties of this plant without giving to it more care than is required by other Irises . . . The flowers are hardly surpassed in delicacy of texture or in beauty of color, but they do not appear here until July, and the hot sun soon fades them. The blooming season may be prolonged by the use of an awning placed over the beds during the day, but it cannot be denied that this plant flowers too late here, and that its period of beauty is too short in this climate ever to make it a great popular favorite . . .

[*Garden and Forest* 1 (1888): 259-260]

NEW OR LITTLE-KNOWN PLANTS.

XANTHOCERAS SORBIFOLIA.

TO Mr. Paul Dana we are indebted for the opportunity of publishing in this issue the portrait of a remarkably fine specimen of the rare *Xanthoceras sorbifolia* in Mr. Dana's collection at Dosoris [Long Island, New York].

Xanthoceras sorbifolia is a small tree of northern China, related to the Bladder-nuts [*Staphlea*] and Horse-chestnuts, and interesting as the only representation of the genus to which it belongs, and which owes its name to the presence between the petals of curious yellow horn-shaped glands. It is one of the most attractive of the hardy plants which our gardens owe to northern China, the region from which many of the most beautiful trees and shrubs in cultivation have been brought. It is a leafy, glabrous or puberulous plant with opposite pinnate leaves eight to twelve inches in length; the leaflets are alternate, linear-oblong, acute, coarsely serrate, dark green and glossy on the upper surface and pale on the lower. The flowers are white, handsomely marked with red streaks at the base of the petals, and are produced in great profusion in lateral racemes eight or twelve inches long, appearing as the leaves are unfolding. The fruit, which is a globose or pear-shaped capsule, not unlike that of some of the smooth-fruited Horse-chestnuts in general appearance, finally splits into three valves, and contains a number of globose, nearly black, shining seeds half an inch in diameter.



2000. "Plant Notes. Japanese Iris (1888)." *Arnoldia* 60(3), 39–40.

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