

Blanco White, A. *et al.*: **A Guide to Species Irises. Their Identification and Cultivation.** - Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997. Pp. 371 + 14 (27 figures, 27 maps). GBP 65.00. ISBN 0-521-44074-2.

The book is characterized truthfully by the text printed in the inside of the envelope: „This volume provides the first comprehensive, detailed and up-to-date survey of this beautiful group of plants since publication *The Genus Iris* by W.R. Dykes early this century. Following the pattern of the original Dykes' monograph, botanical details, cultivation suggestions, and general comments are supplied, and the work is generously illustrated with accurate line drawings, colour pictures of unusual species and distribution maps. This new survey includes all of the species that have been described so far this century and takes into account the many changes in classification that have taken place in the group. Information currently scattered in the literature is brought together in one volume to provide an authoritative reference for professional botanists and growers, and a mine of useful information for amateur gardeners and iris enthusiasts.“ This formulation sounds very ambitious but the readers belonging to any of these categories, searching for a solid, accurate information, must confirm that the aims were fulfilled. Any interested person really finds there answers to his questions, with no respect to the type of his interest. The authors are connecting both practical personal experience in highest possible degree with a critical summarisation of up-to-date published texts. This book can be characterized as a very consciously written result of a critical study of literature, synthesised with systematic, planned, long time collected personal experience and continuous mutual exchange of experience of authors belonging to a wide range of professions - from pure scientists to keen amateur gardeners. The special appeal of the book lies in its form of presentation of scientifically based knowledge put side by side with objective formulation of practical experience and knowledge, collected for many decades of the systematic work by the specialists of the British Iris Society (established 1922) and specialists from other English speaking countries, in a world-wide co-ordination. The "Guide to Species Irises" is very important manual for anybody who will work seriously with this genus and a resource of extremely valuable garden plants - one of basic perennials in the moderate climate of all parts of the world.

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