

American Iris Society: William Mohr Medal-AB
History written by Clarence Mahan

This medal is restricted to irises of one-quarter or more aril content that do not meet the more restrictive requirements of the Clarence G. White Medal. It is named in honor of William A. Mohr (1871-1923).

William Mohr was born on a 400-acre ranch near Mount Eden, California. He lived and worked on the ranch all his life. Mohr's interest in plants began in his childhood, and he not only imported many plants but also grew different many plants from seed. He hybridized almost everything he grew. He developed hybrid strains of wheat and his neighbors bought their seed from Mohr. He developed new strains of polyanthus, tulips, clematis, lilies, and many bulbous plants.

About ten years before his death, Mohr began working with irises. He obtained the tetraploid Asiatic species, as well as regelia and oncocyclus irises, and communicated with other iris hybridizers such as Ellen Sturtevant and Samuel Stillman Berry. He grew thousands of seedlings, including reglio-cyclus, regalia, and oncocyclus crosses with pogonirises, and all classes of bearded irises. He also hybridized spuria irises and made crosses between Siberian irises and Pacific Coast native irises.

William Mohr and his wife were killed in 1923, when an express train hit their car. He never knew the fame his irises would ultimately achieve. His wonderful new irises could have been lost had it not been for his friend, Professor Sydney B. Mitchell, who saved his irises and continued his work. Only a few of Mohr's irises were registered at the time of his death, including 'Balboa' and the arilbreds 'Bollorio' and 'Carmelo.' After Mohr's death, Sydney Mitchell introduced a number of Mohr's most outstanding seedlings; these are shown in the 1939 Check List as "Mohr-Mitchell" introductions. Some of these outstanding cultivars are 'Purissima,' 'Santa Barbara,' 'Conquistador' and 'Marion Mohr.'

The two greatest achievements of William Mohr's hybridizing programs are probably his plicatas and his innovative and beautiful arilbreds. His great plicatas are 'Los Angeles' and the iris that won the first American Dykes Medal, 'San Francisco.' Mohr's most important arilbred iris is the magnificent 'William Mohr.'

From Aril Society International (ASI): Since 1993, the William Mohr Memorial Medal has been awarded to the best arilbred iris with less than 1/2 aril ancestry. (Before 1993, it was the William Mohr Award, equivalent to an award of merit. Arilbreds must now

earn an award of merit before they can qualify for the William Mohr medal.) The medal honors William Mohr, one of the first experimenters in arilbred breeding during the early decades of the 1900s.

Winners: WILLIAM MOHR MEDAL Aril-Bred (AB)

2019 DESERT SNOW (Paul Black)
2018 SRI LANKA (Thomas Johnson)
2017 EYE TO EYE (Keith Keppel)
2016 BRASH AND BOLD (Paul Black)
2015 PRINCE OF EGYPT (Perry Dyer)
2014 OCTAVE (Thomas Johnson)
2013 EGYPTIAN QUEEN (Thomas Johnson)
2012 SUSPECT (Thomas Johnson)
2011 PERSIAN SAPPHIRE (Lowell Baumunk)
2010 ULALENA (George Sutton)
2009 SUE BEE (Susie Kammer by Tim Stanek, selector)
2008 SHABAZA (George Sutton)
2007 HAKUNA MATATA (Anna and David Cadd)
2006 Walker Ross (Walker Ross by Chuck Chapman)
2005 Desert Jubilee (Lin Flanagan)
2004 Desert Celebration (Lin Flanagan)
2003 She Devil (Paul Black)
2002 Omar's Gold (Carl Boswell)
2001 Kalifa's Horn (Robert Annand)
2000 Silent Tears (Les Petersen by Ardi Kary)
1999 Patriot's Gem (Fred Gadd)
1998 Bozrah (Fred Gadd)
1997 Omar The Tentmaker (Carl Boswell)
1996 Solomon's Glory (Hooker Nichols)
1995 Smoke with Wine (Carl Boswell)
1994 Omar's Torch (Carl Boswell)
1993 Jewel of Omar (Carl Boswell)

Prior to 1993 it was called the William Mohr award and followed slightly different rules.

1992 'Omar's Torch' (Boswell)
1991 'Jewel of Omar' (Boswell)
1990 'Bold Sentry' (Peterson)

1989 'Green Eyed Sheba' (Boswell)
1988 'Humohr' (Hager)
1987 'Sultan's Jewelry' (Hager)
1986 'Smoke With Wine' (Boswell)
1985 'Dune' (Hager)
1984 'Cairo Love Song' (Nichols)
1983 'Sizzle' (Gadd)
1982 'Aril Lady' (H. Danielson)
1981 'Byzantine Beauty' (Nichols)
1980 'Genetic Burst' (H. Danielson)
1979 'Pogo Doll' (Christlieb)
1978 'Little Orchid Annie' (Foster)
1977 'Girl Watcher' (Street)
1976 'Stitchery' (Foster)
1975 'Mint Parfait' (Foster)
1974 'Sojourn' (Tate)
1973 'Fairy Goblin' (Foster)
1972 'Saletta' (Street)
1971 'Saffron Jewel' (Abell)
1970 'Aspen Country' (McClure)
1969 'Nineveh' (Keppel)