

N.A.L.S. Research Committee

Annual Report 1970/71

The activities of the research committee have again been quite varied, reflecting the diversification of interests within the N.A.L.S.

One of the more important steps has been the compilation of a list of agencies, private enterprises and individuals interested in lilies and lily research. This list seems to be fairly complete as far as the USA and Canada are concerned, but so far it includes only a few overseas names. The Long Range Planning committee had suggested that this list be published, but this committee feels that such publication would result in a flood of letters, often to the wrong address, from N.A.L.S. members looking for information. While some researchers do not mind such letters, others resent them, and have indicated in correspondence that they are not happy about this aspect of "closer contacts" with the N.A.L.S. membership. The committee will be happy to channel any requests from members to the right address.

A survey has been conducted of all people on the mailing list in order to determine 1.) what their specific field of interest is, 2.) in which way the N.A.L.S. research committee can help them, and 3.) whether they would be willing to send us their annual reports on a regular basis. The response has been slow, incomplete, interesting and in some respect encouraging: a.) most of those who answered were not in lily research as a main project, but worked with lilies as a tool for various aspects of basic research, or as a side-line of a major project. All were quite enthusiastic about this side-line and intend to continue. b.) The most urgent need is for a focal information point. At present, English-language articles on lily research appear in more than a dozen journals etc., and there is no publication (short of the Yearbook and the Quarterly Bulletin) which brings together this information c.) The response to the request for annual reports has been disappointingly low.

To cover some of the needs indicated in this survey, an informal abstracting service has been initiated: a large variety of North American and foreign journals are scanned for articles on lilies; citations and wherever possible an abstract are collected, mimeographed and periodically sent out to all of those who have indicated an interest in lily research. The first such list is being mailed right now. The committee would like the guidance of the N.A.L.S. directors regarding the form of publication. Three forms seem possible; their respective advantages and disadvantages are: 1. the present mimeographed sheet is cheap and fast, but does require an extra mailing effort and does not induce recipients to become members 2. publication in the Quarterly Bulletin would be slightly slower, possibly more expensive, but has the advantages that it may induce the recipients to become members, and that all members receive the service without extra mailing effort.

3. Publication in the Yearbook would give us the most permanent record, but would delay publication for up to a year, by which time most of the usefulness of the service to the research community may have ceased. It also would mean that we cannot mail our free copies to prospective researcher-members, as the cost of such free copies would be prohibitive.

The committee will continue its efforts to obtain copies of annual reports from the various lily workers; popular accounts could be prepared from these, for publication in either the Bulletin or the Yearbook.

The suggestions by the Long Range Planning Committee for a bulletin on lily genetics has been discussed informally, but not yet with all members of the committee. I personally feel that it should cover a wider field, such as "Lily breeding", because otherwise sales would be very small, and would likely not cover the printing cost. Also, genetics are of little relevance to the majority of our members, and surprisingly few hard and fast data are available. Breeding, on the other hand, is one of the main bonds that holds the N.A.L.S. together, and a bulletin along this line would meet a wider response. I would suggest contributions by several authors under one editor, covering more or less the following topics: 1. A short general chapter on wild species, their habitats and natural variation 2. A very short chapter on how to grow lilies from seed and scales; also strain vs. cultivar 3. An extensive chapter on a. basic genetics for civilians, b. genetics and breeding of species; compatibility groups c. genetics and breeding of the various classes, in detail d. incompatibility 4. A medium-sized chapter on the future of commercial and amateur breeding, outlook and possibilities in general terms, 5. A short chapter on the commercial rewards (or lack of) in lily breeding.

Our specific as to the usefulness and feasibility of lily research conferences or technical sessions met with varied replies. All indicated that such meetings would be useful, but only about half would have funds to attend. A few indicated that specific invitations by N.A.L.S. would help to obtain funds. We suggest that the concept of a technical meeting be given a trial, and that 3 sessions of 20 minutes each be set aside at an annual meeting for presentation and discussion of scientific topics. Response from scientists and from members will indicate whether this could become a regular feature at intervals of 3, 4 or 5 years. We definitely have to avoid doing this, as N.A.L.S. has to maintain its character as an amateur society.

One suggestion received was to follow more closely the development of lily work abroad. With the termination of the RHS Lily Yearbook, this will become even more important. We hope that the increased contact through the abstracting service will help to increase these connections. Beyond that, contact

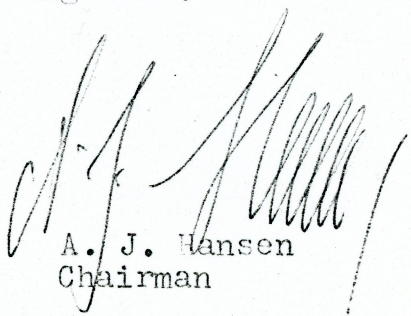
will have to depend on personal connections.

We have informally, and again not completely, discussed the suggestions that the research committee should be responsible for educational displays at the annual N.A.L.S. shows. We do not concur with the Long Range Planning Committee that this should be a task of the research committee. We feel that educational displays are mostly a matter of local arrangements, and should therefore be handled by a group with a local base—usually the show committee. We will be quite willing, though, to supply ideas and material, if needed.

One matter which should be discussed by the Directors is the role of Easter lily growers in the society. Several of our correspondents indicated that this was the most important (economically speaking) species, and they wondered whether we had any interests in it. Our impression was that we are not particularly interested, and that Easter lily growers do not participate actively in the society. On the other hand, we realize that more than half of all lily research is done with Easter lilies, and many of the results obtained from this work can be applied to other species and hybrids. We are therefore including Easter lilies in the abstracting service.

We regret that no further work has been done regarding the establishment of a Lily Research Fund. We suggest that N.A.L.S. follow closely the purpose and wording of the comparable fund organized by the American Orchid Soc., and we would like a decision by the Directors regarding the composition of the board of governors of the fund, and regarding the basic concept of administration, a permanent fund with interest to be spent on research, or a self-liquidating fund.

Summerland, B.C.
July 1, 1971



A. J. Hansen
Chairman