Clarence Mahan is an internationally recognized authority on irises. A past president, honorary life member and emeritus judge of the American Iris Society, he has written many articles and papers on irises. He has given many programs and lectures on irises to horticultural societies, garden clubs, and iris groups. He is the past president of the Historic Iris Preservation Society, the Society for Japanese Irises and the Reblooming Iris Society. He was president of the panel of judges at the International Iris Competition in Florence, Italy in 1999. The American Iris Society honored Mr. Mahan with it’s Distinguished Service Medal in 2004. He is also an honorary life member of the Society for Japanese Irises and a recipient of the Historic Iris Preservation Society’s Distinguished Service Award.

Iris are one of the world’s most popular garden plants. That was not always so. The story of how several men and women transformed relatively unimpressive iris species into the plants with flowers of diverse forms and colors so beloved by today’s gardeners has never been told until now. This book represents years of research in French, British and American primary and secondary sources. It challenges taxonomists’ designation of Iris germanica as the type species for genus Iris and the generally accepted status of Iris albicans. It is also the first book containing extensive information on the native iris species of Florida and the deplorable state of taxonomy of these species. This scholarly work was written to appeal to the lay reader as well as to the specialist. Many beautiful and original pictures of irises are included along with pictures of some of those whose stories are told.

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“If you, too, are curious about your irises, welcome Clarence Mahan’s Classic Irises and the Men and Women who Created Them; it fills gaps in our knowledge with surprising technical and fascinating personal detail, much of it gathered from primary sources and worldwide correspondence assembled over several years of patient study.”—American Iris Society Bulletin

“Floridian flower-enthusiasts might be interested to learn that this book is also the first to offer extensive information on the native iris species, The white Ghost Iris, discovered in the 1920s.”—Florida Today

“Mahan is well-respected for both his iris knowledge and work with irises and this very well-researched book is a truly original piece of work. Information is drawn from 122 different sources, which are mentioned in the back of the book…If like me, you are interested in history and you are a gardener you will find this a fascinating book.”—British Iris Society Year Book

“The language is precise and easy to read, making it enjoyable to dip in and out of. The reader doesn’t need to be an iris expert to enjoy this book as Mahan helpfully explains any iris term.”—Gardens Illustrated

“Unlike roses and tulips, irises have seen very few historical accounts. Mahan (independent scholar) comprehensively fills the void with this “early history” of the Americans, Europeans, and Japanese responsible for the myriad cultivated forms of garden irises….Based on numerous primary and secondary sources, this engaging account is lovingly illustrated with 61 color paintings and photographs and 9 black-and-white portraits.”—CHOICE

“…this book is highly recommended to iris lovers everywhere for its historical content from a world authority.”—National Garden Clubs, Inc.

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