

The Story Behind 'Fairy Fingers'

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edited by Harriet Robinson)



'Fairy Fingers' from the on line American Iris Society encyclopedia.

Many people at the June show were amazed by the very small Siberian iris "**Fairy Fingers**" that Jeff Dunlop grows. He has shared the story behind it.

'Fairy Fingers' is also known as *I. Sanguinea Kobana*. This species was obtained from Japan in 1968 by Jean Witt, a beardless iris pioneer. This diploid iris is white and the name may refer to the fact that it has no blades in the falls.

The "**2004 Cumulative Check List of Siberian Irises**" is one of the last paper check lists printed for Siberians. *I. sanguinea*, in the parentage of modern Siberians (Siberian is a hybrid designation and not the species *I sibirica*) is listed in the check list as "U.S.O.", "1615", "1616", "Alba", "Kamayama", "Kobana", and "var. Violacca," each truly the same species, but exhibiting slightly different characteristics.

Currently, the digital Iris Encyclopedia from the American Iris Society only lists 'Fairy Fingers' as a Siberian iris (almost verbatim from page 22 of the 2004 list) and does not list *I. Sanguinea Kobana* at all. 'Fairy Fingers' is registered as a seedling of 'Snow Prince' X unknown, which it looks nothing like. It was registered in 1990 by Anthony and Dorothy Willot.

At any rate, this is the smallest Siberian iris Jeff knows and the only one with two "official" AIS names. You might be able to grow it, too, if you bid on the plants Jeff is bringing to our July auction.