

# American Iris Society: William Mohr Medal-AB

**History:** 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 "MohrMitchell" 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)**

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 (A. & D. Cadd)  
 2006 Walker Ross W. Ross '96 (by Chuck Chapman)

2005 Desert Jubilee L. Flanagan '94  
2004 Desert Celebration L. Flanagan '94  
2003 She Devil P. Black '96  
2002 Omar's Gold C. Boswell '95  
2001 Kalifa's Horn R. Annand '95  
2000 Silent Tears L. Petersen by A. Kary  
1999 Patriot's Gem F. Gadd '93  
1998 Bozrah F. Gadd '90  
1997 Omar The Tentmaker C. Boswell '89  
1996 Solomon's Glory Nichols '87  
1995 Smoke With Wine Boswell '81  
1994 Omar's Torch Boswell '86  
1993 Jewel of Omar Boswell '86