

## Burpee prepares

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increased vigor of the plants, and disease resistance. A number of methods are utilized to develop these hybrids which provide many advantages for the gardener.

"Until recently, specialists relied a great deal on finding natural mutations in their vast fields as a source of new material. These so-called "sports" were selected and eventually pure lines developed from them," states a Burpee publication.

Recently, geneticists have developed several new scientific methods to produce different and better varieties.

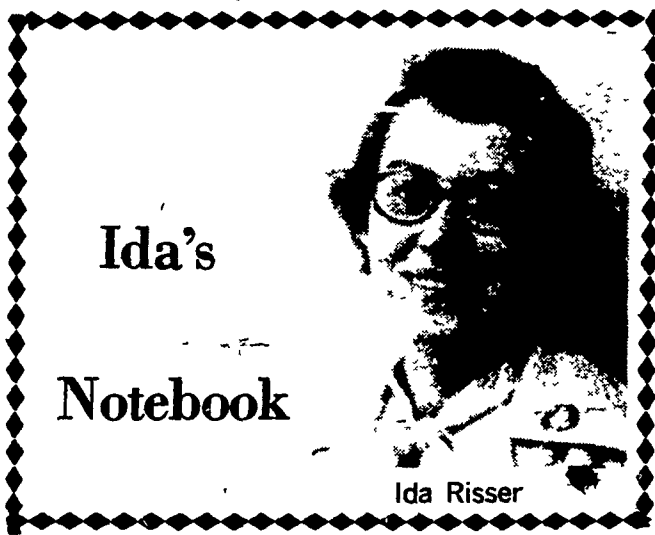
The first generation F1 Hybrid is produced by the controlled crossing of two distinct but very uniform parent lines. "This process combines and intensifies all the best features of each of the parents in the resulting F1 Hybrid. For example, a cross between a big American Marigold "Mamma" and a dwarf French "Papa" results in a dwarf-sized plant with a big flower. These resulting triploids or "mules" cannot produce viable seeds.

Another method of developing hybrids outlined by information from Miss Lower is the use of the drug Colchicine extracted from the corm of the Fall crocus. Once used as a remedy for gout, this drug proved to be very effective in doubling the chromosome number in plants. "The chromosomes are tiny particles found in all living tissue which carry the hereditary characteristics. When the number of chromosomes is doubled, frequently desirable changes occur, perhaps stronger stems, darker green foliage, larger flowers, richer colors," states this horticulturist. These hybrids are known as tetraploids.

Crossing and re-selecting is yet another method for developing hybrids. Crossing two plants, each with some especially desirable but different features, growing the resulting crosses, self-pollinating these, and raising the second generation seed often is a slow but sure start to new varieties. In the second generation the features united in the crosses break up into new combinations. The best plants are selected and self-pollinated season after season until new types are purified and increased.

"Literally millions of plants are grown, studied, and evaluated, with only about 5 per cent of the very best selected to become future stars in 10 to 15 years," states Burpee information. In 1954, Burpee made an offer of \$10,000 to the first person sending seeds producing White Marigolds. After 20 years of selecting paler and paler yellow marigolds, a housewife from Iowa received payment. These seeds must be increased and will not be available for several years.

Whether the gardener sees the exhibits at the Philadelphia Flower and Garden Show or in her daydreams of Summer bounty and beauty, he or she will probably not realize the scientific complexity and many hours of hand labor which go into seeds and their resulting plants, flowers, and produce.



## Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser

On a dismal gray day in February or even early March, it is difficult to force myself to pick up the seed catalog and place my order. When I really get into gardening I love it, but just anticipating all that work makes me tired.

It is so much nicer to read through several books on colonial cooking, which I've gotten from different libraries, and then try some of the recipes. It is interesting to note that the Indians grew pumpkins and squash among their corn.

They also ate Jerusalem artichokes. Their succotash was made of corn and kidney beans and cooked in bear grease.

It is so much nicer to sit down and write a letter to an elderly relative and send along poems you think they will enjoy. On a cloudy, rainy day, I'd rather embroider a pillow case than plod around in the mud outside. But, the inventory of seeds I have on hand must be taken and maybe this is just the day to do it.

xxx

The other week a few ladies from our church went

to the Lancaster General Hospital to sew. I usually ask for mending, but since I arrived a bit late, my job was to sew new aprons. They were already cut out but even so, I was surprised to find that I'd made a dozen by mid-afternoon.

We worked next to the laundry and it was entertaining to watch the various women employees fold enormous containers of clothes and bed sheets. They didn't all speak English and so I don't know what they

talked about on their lunch and coffee breaks. However, I saw one young girl hold up an evening gown amidst many oh's and ah's from her friends. It took the place of words.

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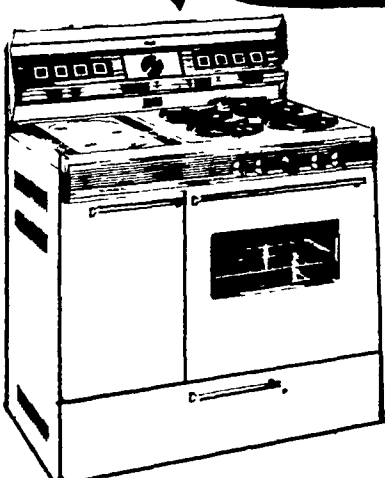
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