

KATRINA AND LOUISIANA IRISES IN MID-CITY NEW ORLEANS



The lovely Faubourg-St. John Community Garden after Katrina.



Seedlings in Kiddie Pools

2004 seedlings in kiddie pools. There is some new green showing, but it looks like all the foliage up at the time of the storm is brown.



Left: This close up shows the seedlings in the kiddie pools starting to come back. There are no drain holes in the pools, but they are shallow and the irises were probably not sitting in brackish water for long after the flood ended. Right: This plot contains seedlings grown the ground, not containers. The old foliage was completely gone but new growth is starting to appear in a few places.

Salt



The smaller pots had no drain holes. The nasty black water is visible in the first row. Only the few pots toward the back left had any surviving plants. Those pots were on higher ground and might not have been submerged for as long. Otherwise, I can think of no reason to account for the difference in the condition of the irises. The water line on the house in the background went up to the about the bottom of the siding and I gather it was several weeks before the water drained completely.

There is little doubt that the water was brackish. Look at the residue on the black pot in the picture above right. Looks like salt to me.



If there is any question about the corrosive qualities of salty water, look at the copper crossbar beneath the faucets in the garden. Note the metal handle on the faucet in the upper right and the absence of one in the lower left. It was there when I got back to the garden, but it crumbled in my hand when I tried to turn it. As if it were made of salt itself. Lot's wife is probably in the neighborhood somewhere.



Half barrels in the Community Visions garden. At the back left, note the several barrels with healthy green foliage. They were in a relatively high spot and in barrels slightly taller than the others. They took no flood water. The building in the background is an old ice house.



Mary Dunn's 'Mississippi Gambler' having gone bust.



The two barrels above were on lower ground and near the street but were not water tight and drained. The contrast below is between plants in one barrel that did not get flooded and others that did.



A banana tree fell onto these barrels but the foliage can still be seen. Some of it is new growth and some is old foliage that has not yet died completely. I think it would die if the plants are not removed.



The Barrels

Before . . .



These shots were taken in the Community Visions garden in Spring 2005. All these irises are growing in half barrels, most with no drain holes. They seemed to be happy campers. Little did they know.

The yellow iris in the lower left is 'Lightening Quick', a very vigorous cultivar. I can also see 'Bayou Fountain', 'Poverty Point', 'Andouille', 'Hurricane Party', 'Sunshine Bridge', 'Brazos Abundance', 'Prytania', and 'Sea Knight'. But where's Waldo?



The light purple in the middle is 'Bayou Fountain', which loves to grow in water. To the left is 'Southdowns' and to the right Dorman Haymon's 'Chuck Begnaud'.