

# Canadian Iris Society

## cis newsletter

Autumn 2011 Volume 55 Issue 4



# Canadian Iris Society

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Cover Photo: **CIS Board of Directors**

Seated L–R: Ed Jowett, Bob Granatier, Nancy Kennedy

Standing L–R: Alan McMurtrie, Harold Crawford,

John Moons, Ann Granatier, Gloria McMillen

Missing: Chris Hollinshead, Eleanor Hutchison, Pat Loy

# President's Message

By Ed Jowett



First, I want to apologize to **Val Saari** and **Eleanor Hutchison** for the misprint of the photo on page 10 of our last issue. I don't know how the mix up came about as the photo was clearly marked. This was Val looking at her Iris that she had sent to the convention. Val likes to hybridize and does quite well at it in our great Niagara peninsula.

This bulletin is a bit late, partially because we wanted to get all the information for Siberians. (See special page.) We will also continue our regular July Sale. This is already in the making.

Our Fall Show was a no-show as Mother Nature did not co-operate; however the judging clinic was excellent, I am told. We would like to thank **Chuck** and **Heather** for the use of their home as the weather was wet and cold. We had our Region 2 RVP and Region 2 Chair for Judges Training in attendance. The show had two (2) exhibitors and four (4) stalks. The clinic had ten (10) I believe, with half of them making the long trip from the USA. Those in attendance were as follows: **Joanne Bassett** (NY State), **Ann Granatier** (Brantford), **Bob Granatier** (Brantford), **Nancy Kennedy** (Paris), **Donna Lowry** – Region 2 RVP (NY State), **Wendy Roller** – Region 2 Judges Training Chair (NY State), **Betty Schnellinger** (NY State), **Ken Viner** (London), **Judy Tucholski Zon** – President WNYIS. (NY State), and **Bob Zon** (NY State).

The other ten (10) of us sat around renewing friendships and old times. They were: **Heather Chapman** – Host, **Harold Crawford** (Guelph), **Bob Force** (Norwich), **Pat Loy** (Toronto), **Gloria McMillen** (Norwich), **Don McQueen** (London), **John Moons** (Brantford), **Jim Schnellinger** (NY State), **Katherine Viner** (London), and myself of course.

If I missed anyone, please accept my apology as this is strictly by memory.

I am surprised and a little disappointed that we did not receive any nominations for “The Walker Ross” award. These nominations can be submitted at any time even though the award is announced at the AGM.

We are in need of Directors in order to keep progressing. We can even discuss having pre-meetings by email. Your thoughts?

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**Editors Note:** The comments and statements in this bulletin are those of the writers and not necessary those of the board or society.

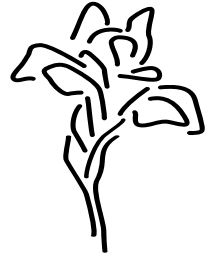
As a society, our web site is currently listed as a place for educational information by several teaching facilities.

We would urge members to send in suggestions for programs or criticism of what we are doing. We are here for the members.

I apologize for so much on Siberians in this issue but some of my regular writers were unable to contribute this time for various legitimate reasons.

As this is the last issue before the New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone the “Season’s Best” and have a good one...

*Ed Jowett*





# Do it Yourself Instructions

By Keith Keppel

*From Keith Keppel's 2006 catalogue*

*The following article has been re-printed (with permission) from Keith Keppel's 2006 catalogue. (Minor editing by Ann Granatier-Trails End Iris Gardens)*

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## Questioning Parentages...2006

We show parentages of varieties for two basic reasons. Since “like begets like” to a large degree, if you are familiar with the parents and the grandparents, you can have a hint of how the offered variety may do. If the parents grow well for you, then you can expect similar results from the child, but if the parents failed to grow well in your climate

and soil, you may want to be wary until you get reports from others in your area.



Keith Keppel in his iris garden

Especially for those who are interested in hybridizing, pedigrees give many clues as to what to expect if a particular variety is used in breeding. By checking its antecedents, you may be forewarned as to possible problems in the line... poor growth, indifferent branching, weak stalks, unattractive skimpy or disease-prone foliage, flowers with less than sterling substance, etc. ... and use the variety (if at all) with other varieties that excel in the quality-in-question.

Best results are most likely to happen when you use the best. But if the best are beyond your pocketbook, consider using what is directly behind

the best. (Studying the annual Iris Registration booklet during the winter months can be a very rewarding exercise!) You will see “trends”. Naturally a hybridizer is most likely to use his own originations more, and sooner, than does any other breeder. One of **Barry Blyth**’s best breeders is *Louisa’s Song*. For example in his 2006 catalogue 13 tall bearded have Louisa’s Song as a parent or grandparent, over 9% of the TB listings. Use its child *Decadence* if you can... but if you don’t have it handy and you do have access to Louisa’s Song, use it until you can connect up with Decadence. (*It doesn’t grow well for us in Southern Ontario.*)

In my line *Fogbound* is a rewarding parent, also it’s sibling *Suspicion*. For pastels, or tangerine colours and combinations in general, these irises have excellent potential as worthwhile parents. For tangerine bicolour, and especially bicolour in darker tones, consider derivatives of **Joe Ghio**’s *Romantic Evening*.

There are many, of course, outstanding parents. The trick is to put the right ones together. What are your aims in hybridizing? Colour is the most usual goal, but there are other factors you can breed for, such as “space age” horns and flounces, or rebloomers, or pleasing fragrance. Remember that some characteristics (such as plicata pattern, or tangerine beards) only occur when both parents carry the trait. Remember also that the trait may be carried in a too-low-to-show dosage, even for many generations, and resurface where you don’t expect it. Crossing wildly, generation after generation, is far less likely to allow desired recessive characteristics to show. Crossing wildly, then inbreeding the resultant seedlings for several generations is different, for that allows the recessive traits to show, often in unique combination with other (possibly recessive) desired characteristics. (Just remember to select for good growth and good plant habits in general as you go along).

How many seedlings should you grow from a cross? That depends. If you are crossing Blue X Blue and want to get blues, virtually ALL the seedlings will be. If you are crossing a plicata with a tangerine bearded iris, trying to get a tangerine bearded plicata (and neither parent carries “the other” factor) you will get NO tangerine-bearded plicatas in the first generation, but all the seedlings will carry both factors. Now, inter-cross these first-generation seedlings, and you will get approximately one plicata in thirty six seedlings, and one tangerine-bearded seedling in each thirty six. The chances of being both plicata and tangerine-bearded will be in the neighbourhood of  $1/36 \times 1/36$  or one in 1296. It doesn’t work out exactly that way, but close ... and it tells you that if you are working with simple things like blues, you may not need many seedlings to get what you want, but if you are working with recessives, and especially trying for more than one recessive at the same time, you had better plough up a big plot of ground for that seedling patch! And that’s not even taking into consideration that when you get what you’re after, it won’t necessarily have flower form, branching, good substance, and all the other good attributes that we want. But those of us with a gambling addiction, what better pastime for playing the odds?



# Special Offer

We have selected 24 cultivars and made arrangements with Schafer-Sacks for an April shipment. These were chosen from the seventy five selected in our survey, and after looking at colour and price of the submitted list, these 24 were chosen. We cannot offer a discount as we are paying full price for these. We will have limited quantities on all varieties. We will sell on a first-in-first-out basis. If you order something that is already sold out; we will notify you and give you a second chance. If you will accept substitution, mark order form "Y". Payment must be received by February 29, 2012 in order for us to guarantee an April shipment. You can order by slow mail or email to the following addresses. Please include your phone number with area code.

## Slow Mail:

Canadian Iris Society  
c/o Ed Jowett  
1960 Side Rd 15 R.R. 2  
Tottenham, ON L0G 1W0

## Email:

[jowettfarm@copper.net](mailto:jowettfarm@copper.net)

Make cheque payable to:

**Canadian Iris Society**



Siberian "Here Be Dragons"

We are paying for the Phytosanitary Certificate<sup>1</sup> and taxes to get them into Canada.

Another member and I took it upon ourselves to place an order this fall to see what the rhizomes and fans were like, etc. We were amazed that these Siberians are individually planted and raised as single plants for shipping purposes. Shipment is quoted as at least 3 fans.

All plants shipped had four (4) rhizomes and were as large around as my finger, well packed and survived an extra week sitting in my house awaiting planting. All are doing well at time of this bulletin. I believe they will survive the winter well.





We will still have our TB's and medians in July.




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<sup>1</sup> A Phytosanitary Certificate is an official document issued by the plant protection organization of the exporting country to the plant protection organization of the importing country. It certifies that the plants or plant products covered by the certificate have been inspected according to appropriate procedures and are considered to be free from quarantine pests and practically free from other injurious pests, and that they are considered to conform with the current phytosanitary regulations of the importing country. The Phytosanitary Certificate facilitates trade but it is not a trade document.








## Special Order Siberians

Cultivar	Description	Colour	Price
<b>Book of Secrets</b> 	00, M-L, 28". A subtle interplay of textured white with hints of yellow and lavender–pink. Wonderful form. Very vigorous. Upright foliage. HM'05.	White	\$6.00
<b>Cold Frosty Morning</b> 	00, L, 27". A sparkling white self. Exquisite full form. Elegant style arms are upright with ornate ruffles and curls and a green flush.	White	9.00
<b>Fond Kiss</b> 	99, M & RE, 33". A big extravagant flower and an even more extravagant display. Warm white with a large pink flush on the falls. Three buds open in slow succession followed by repeat. Morgan–Wood Medal 08.	White	10.50
<b>Sandy River Belle</b> 	11, EM, 36". A big plant and great display. It starts with a forest of bloomstalks, each spathe with rose. The flowers open a warm tannish pink, created by all over speckles of red–violet on a pale yellow ground. As the speckles lighten the colour moves to a sandy pink. The paler standards and styles are a touch more purple. Large flowers with flaring form and a few nice ruffles. The plant is full and wide, many stalks presented in succession of bloom with two branches and up to five buds.	Pink	22.50

Cultivar	Description	Colour	Price
<b>Jacks Health</b> 	00, E, 30". Soft rosy pink flowers. White lines on each standard echo narrow pearly white styles which gleam in the sun. Quiet signal with rose veining. Four to five buds per stalk with upright blue–green foliage.	Pink	6.00
<b>Pretty Polly</b> 	07, EM, 30". Soft! A pale pink self with yellow signals and flashes of blue in the styles. Flaring form with large and small ruffles. Five or more buds per stalk with nice separation between flowers and foliage. Extremely robust.	Pink	10.50
<b>Sound &amp; Spirit</b> 	07, M, 35". A statuesque plant with strongly vertical foliage. Standards are white, styles are soft yellow with darker tips, and falls have an orchid pink center with a diffused band of pale yellow around the edges. Yellow signals with deep golden hafts. Tailored form. 6 to 7 buds.	Pink	9.00
<b>So Van Gogh</b> 	05, E, 30". The first bi-colour Siberian. Standards are blue–purple with darker veining. Falls are yellow, lighter at the edges and darker at the center, with purple veining. Styles are blue–purple with darker highlights. Small flowers with big clump performance. 5 buds. AM10.	Yellow / Bi-tone	16.25
<b>Here Be Dragons</b> 	03, EM, 28". Unusual yellow bi-tone overlaid with blue–violet wash and veining. Standard pale yellow with highlights, yellow rims and blue–violet veins in the heart. Falls are deeper yellow with muted blue–violet wash toward the edge and blue–violet veins at the throat. Styles are pale yellow and blue–violet. Two branches carry 5 to 6 buds. Morgan–woof Medal'10'.	Yellow	9.00

Cultivar	Description	Colour	Price
<b>Just Cruising</b> 	01, EM, 33">. Generously ruffled light yellow bi-tone. Large decorated pearly styles have darker yellow curls and midribs. Sweet fragrance. A impressive clump, 4 buds per stalk. HM'04'.	Yellow	6.00
<b>Tree of Songs</b> 	06, M, 31". Great garden plant with tall stems and a profusion of smallish bright bi-tone yellow flowers. The shape is charming and simple with a touch of ruffling. Franklin Cook Cup'10' and HM'10.	Yellow	13.50
<b>Harmony Hill</b> 	04, EM, 36". A sweet flower and a great plant. Red-violet standards, lavender-blue falls, and dark violet style arms. Upright form with full, round and lightly ruffled parts. Tall, branched stalks with upright dark green foliage.	Blue	6.00
<b>Fresh Notes</b> 	04, E-L, 23". Dark blue ruffled falls with pale edges are decorated with bright yellow signals, widely veined in navy blue. Standards are medium blue, veined darker; styles are light blue with blue-green midribs. Round, neat form. Five buds per stalk with 2 branches. HM'09'.	Blue	9.00
<b>Sun Comes Up</b> 	04, M, 25">. A blending of soft blue and pale yellow with a warm sunrise signal. Full and round arching flowers on a full and round clump. Good grower, 1 to 2 branches, 4 flowers per stalk. HM03'.	Blue	7.25

Cultivar	Description	Colour	Price
<b>Ships are Sailing</b> 	98, M, 35">. Nicely ruffled flowers in shades of blue. Pale blue standards and styles are matched by light rims on darker blue–violet falls. Handsome clump, lots of bloom. Morgan-Wood Medal '07'.	Blue	9.00
<b>Riverdance</b> 	97, M, 40 – 45". Stunning rich blue flowers with large rolling ruffles, a sprinkling of white on the falls, and white wire edges on the falls and styles. Plenty of stalks with 4 to 5 buds each. Morgan-Woods Medal '06'.	Blue	7.25
<b>Bells &amp; Whistles</b> 	06, EM, 28", Big ruffled purple flowers have reddish purple styles with blue midribs and dark red-violet edges and curls. Excellent substance and vigor and 4 well timed buds per stalk – makes a great clump.	Violet	10.50
<b>Plum Frolic</b> 	1, 0 M, 27". Red–violet, violet and blue–violet dappling and shading on a light blue ground. Decorative pale blue dappled styles are ruffled, curled and nearly upright. A powder blue flash illuminates the signal. Strong grower, 3 to 4 buds with repeat. HM'05'.	Violet	6.00
<b>Charming Billy</b> 	04, M, 25". Strong, bold colours deep red–violet falls and bright yellow signals with dark purple veining. Standards are dappled red–violet. Upright, wide, light blue styles. A very strong grower, with 3 to 4 blooms per stalk. HM'07'.	Violet	10.50

Cultivar	Description	Colour	Price
<b>Devils Dream</b> 	90' L & RE, 33". Highly saturated wine-red standards and falls are complemented by lighter styles and a purple blaze surrounding a hidden signal. Large flower, excellent substance, 4 buds. Good repeat.	Violet	6.00
<b>Miss Apple</b> 	09, M, 30". Like its siblings <i>Sugar Rush</i> and <i>Hot Sketch</i> , Miss Apple is a colour pioneer – getting several shades closer to red than any red-violet Siberian. The warm yellow signal enhances the glow. Standards and styles retain hints of violet. Very cute, small round flowers. One to two branches with 4 buds, very vigorous.	Violet	22.50
<b>Sugar Rush</b> 	08, M, 27". Yumm! A watermelon pink amoena with cheery yellow signals, and yellow highlights on the pearly standards. Blue and purple wash on the styles. The colour of the falls can open several shades darker or lighter depending on the weather. The clump is compact, blooming just above the foliage, 3 buds per stalk.	Watermelon	17.25
<b>New Mown Hay</b> 	08, M, 30". Bright pearly white standards and styles with turquoise trim set off the greyed-green falls. Clean yellow signals with green veins. Lovely form. Makes a gorgeous shining clump with 2 branches and 4 to 5 buds carried nicely above the foliage.	Beige	22.50
<b>Uncorked</b> 	02, E, 25". Not on the colour wheel. Falls are yellow overlaid with blue and large, round deep yellow signals. Standards are paler blue over yellow. Pale blue styles have yellow tips. Depending on conditions, flowers open in a range of tones. The vigorous clump has smallish flowers, 4 blooms per stalk, many stalks per clump. AM'09'.	Grey	10.50



# Siberian Iris Order Form

Cultivar	INT	Season	H	Colour	Price	SUB
Book of Secrets	00	M	28"	White	\$ 6.00	
Cold Frosty Morning	00	L	27"	White	9.00	
Fond Kiss	99	M & RE	33"	White	10.50	
Sandy River Belle	11	E M	36"	Pink	22.50	
Jacks Health	00	E	30"	Pink	6.00	
Pretty Polly	07	E M	30"	Pink	10.50	
Sound & Spirit	07	M	35"	Pink	9.00	
So Van Gogh	05	E	30"	Yellow/Bi-tone	16.25	
Here Be Dragons	03	E M	28"	Yellow	9.00	
Just Cruising	01	E M	33"	Yellow	6.00	
Tree of Songs	06	M	31"	Yellow	13.50	
Harmony Hill	04	E M	36"	Blue	6.00	
Fresh Notes	04	E M L	23"	Blue	9.00	
Sun Comes Up	04	M	25"	Blue	7.25	
Ships are Sailing	98	M	35"	Blue	9.00	
Riverdance	97	M	45"	Blue	7.25	
Bells & Whistles	06	E M	28"	Violet	10.50	
Plum Frolic	01	M	27"	Violet	6.00	
Charming Billy	04	M	25"	Violet	10.50	
Devils Dream	90	L & RE	33"	Violet	6.00	
Miss Apple	09	M	30"	Violet	22.50	
Sugar Rush	08	M	27"	Watermelon	18.00	
New Mown Hay	08	M	30"	Beige	22.50	
Uncorked	02	E	25"	Grey	10.50	

## Symbols:

INT - Year of Introduction, E - Early season, M - Mid Season, L - Late Season, RE - Rebloom, H - Plant Height, SUB - Substitution (Y, N)

## Shipping charges extra

Shipping Costs	Ontario	Other
Special Packaging plus	\$4.00	\$4.00
Shipping Cost 1 – 7 Rhizome's	\$9.00	\$13.00
8 – 14 Rhizome's	\$13.00	\$17.00
15 & up Rhizome's	\$17.00	\$21.00

For more information about these Siberian irises, visit Joe Pye Weed's Garden at [www.jpwflowers.com](http://www.jpwflowers.com).

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# Musings From Manitoba

Autumn 2011

By Barbara-Jean Jackson

E-mail: [jacksonb@mts.net](mailto:jacksonb@mts.net)



**Y**ou might recall from last time, my lament was excessive moisture and flooding. It took all of the beds that were under water most of May and June until late July to fully dry out to the point that I could actually get in there without sinking in the mud up to my ankles, and clean it up. Not a single weed pulled up until this point in 2011! It certainly doesn't take long for weeds to take over....



Flooded bed - before clean up



### Flooded bed - clean up in progress

What a difference a couple of months can make though. Now the weather has gone in a completely different direction—drought. I can count on one hand the number of significant rainfall events (over 10 mm) in South Western Manitoba since July 20th (when 37 mm were received). August saw just 5.6 mm, when the normal average is 70, and September just 29 (normal 51 mm), most of which fell on the first day of the month. And it was hot! Nothing like the humidity that Southern Ontario experiences, I'm told; but for us, way too hot.

And now we are into October and nothing has changed. It is still too dry. The temperatures, however, have been amazing and we even hit 30 degrees (a new record) on October 5th. I still have not experienced a killing frost in any of my gardens and it is mid-October. I can't remember the last time that happened.

But the wind! The last wind event recently saw three days where you could hardly stand up without being blown over. Winnipeg fared the worst on this one, with the winds wrecking havoc at speeds of between 90 and 100 kph, downing trees and power lines and doing significant damage to property. It has been pretty much constant in my corner of MB with less than 30 kph the oddity rather than the norm. Political pundits were often quoted that if not for the high water table, it would definitely have been another "dirty 30s" dust bowl.

Surprisingly, the irises have not suffered as much as I had expected from the severe weather fluctuations. Because the water table had been so high in the spring, rot was high on my list to watch for, but it has not materialized. Several of the irises in the nursery bed that was constantly flooded in June are bouncing back and as the temperatures began to cool, new increases have been sighted on even the most stressed iris. I think I did lose 3 or 4 but I have left everything alone, just weeding around. Already *Twilight Symphony* which I thought was gone completely has sent out a new increase. We shall see if any others defy the odds.





Flooded bed - all cleaned up

As for rebloom—none for me again this year. But several others have experienced it from Alberta (Edmonton and area as well as Bon Accord), Saskatchewan (Regina) and South Eastern Manitoba with *Blueberry Tart* being the most reliable, closely followed by *Forever Blue*. And for the first time ever, we have word of MDB *Forever Violet* reblooming in Winnipeg as well as TB *Red Revival* in bloom in **El Hutchison's** garden. If the weather holds, it just may get to rebloom in **Sandy Eggertson's** garden, too. Red Revival has now gone to the top of many wish lists on the prairies. El's garden is just south and Sandy's is just north of the city of Winnipeg. The first bloom on El's was damaged by a frost a few weeks ago but it is blooming! So, despite the wind, the rain, and the drought; once again we are showing folks just what iris can do on the prairies!



Because I was unable to do any hybridizing this spring, my seed starting will be confined mostly to the seed I plan on purchasing from the Species Iris Group of North America in the coming months. It seems rather odd not to have a drawer full of seed from my crosses in the small fridge. I can't remember the last time it was so empty. But, I will survive, and spend the winter planning new gardens, dreaming of the bloom season to come, and planning for the 5th annual Can-West Iris Society Show next June. That is what winter is for, planning for things to come!







In CWIS news, the summer sale was a huge success due to the generosity of our suppliers. Our members have told us that they absolutely adore historic iris and a selection of Dykes Medal winners was obtained from OnRussell Gardens. We also had the support of the BCIS who supplied us with a quantity of medians from the Victoria convention gardens. Our thanks to **Dave Jewell** from OnRussell and **Ted Baker** of BCIS for helping to make our 2011 sale the best ever.

The Spuria Iris Society allowed CWIS to participate in their distribution scheme this summer and several varieties of new and recent introductions were acquired by our group to grow on, and offer to our members at a future club sale. The Organizing Committee is now looking at conducting a "beardless only" sale some time in the future. Several of our members have suggested we do this so it is in the planning stages at present. We have been fortunate to have several Siberians made available to us to grow on as well from an Alberta member; so when it happens, the beardless aficionados will be happy. We were very pleased to be included.

CWIS members report garden clubs are already seeking them out to provide presentations on iris and I am already booked for one in April in rural Manitoba. The interest is definitely out there and we are fulfilling our mission which is to promote growing iris in cold climates and provide the vehicle to educate the public so they have the knowledge they need to grow iris successfully in cold climates.

So that's it from Manitoba for this time. Think Spring!



### **Canadian Iris Society:**

You are invited to join the Canadian Iris Society. Membership in the CIS is open to all persons interested in irises regardless of skills or experience. New members are welcome. Join us at our next regular event, the annual iris rhizome sale on Sunday, August 14, 2011 at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Plains Road West, Burlington, ON. Visitors (non-members) are very welcome at this sale/auction event. This is an opportunity to obtain some of the same beautiful iris on display here today for your own garden. We look forward to seeing you again. Official membership applications and other information will be available at the show or on the official CIS website: [www.cdn-iris.ca](http://www.cdn-iris.ca).

**CIS Officers:** President: **Ed Jowett** 905-936-9941 <[jowettfarm@copper.net](mailto:jowettfarm@copper.net)>

Membership: **Chris Hollinshead** 905-567-8545

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# Things Do Change

Copied from Schafer/Sacks

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## *Iris X NORRISII (formerly XPARDANCANDA)*

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The changes we have been expecting in the taxonomy of Pardancandas have been made—they are now 100% Irises! The new name is *Iris xnorrisii*. These are hybrids between *Iris dichotoma* (formerly *Pardanthopsis dichotoma* or *The Vesper Iris*) and *Iris domestica* (formerly *Belamcanda chinensis* or *The Blackberry Lily*). **Sam Norris** of Kentucky was the first to make this cross.

The cultivars we offer are all from the breeding program of **Darrell Probst**. All of his plants have been selected for hardiness (zone 5), colour, form of flower, branching and bud count, and for being outstanding garden plants. These are not seed strains.

These plants are quite different in appearance from most irises. Nevertheless, they have rhizomes and leaf fans and flowers in three parts. They are drought tolerant and do not mind the extreme heat of the south. Their growing needs are very similar to bearded irises.

Pardancandas bloom from July through August in Massachusetts, each variety for about three to four weeks. The flowers are small, open for only one day, and they are produced in profusion. The tall strong stalks can have as many as 45 spathes (bud placements), with 6 to 10 buds in each of these.

Some characteristics to take note of in the descriptions are form and time of day when the flowers open. If you feel you are interested or curious, and to find out more, you can contact Marty or Jan by email or by snail mail. Their address is:

[jpwflowers@aol.com](mailto:jpwflowers@aol.com)

**Joe Pye Weed's Garden**

337 Acton St

Carlisle, MA 01741-1432 USA

Phone: 978-371-0173



*Iris X NORRISII* - Photo by Laetitia Munro

# Variegated Plants

By John Moons

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We choose plants for our gardens for a variety of reasons. It can be because we like the flowers or the fruit or ground covering qualities but a big reason can also be the leaves and then we look at the form, the texture or the colour. It gets more interesting when the leaves have unusual colours and that means colours other than green. It is sometimes hard to define what a variegated leaf is. Plants that show deficiencies of nutrients may look variegated but I would not call them by that name. Is a blue-green hosta leaf variegated or not? Some people call everything that is not green variegated. Fact is that there are many colours other than green. We all have seen plants with yellow, orange, red, pink, or purple leaves. Leaves can also be bi-coloured, tri-coloured, or multi-coloured. This is what a lot of people think of as variegated leaves. We all know the plants with leaves that have yellow or white margins, stripes or spots. Plants like *Lamium* or *Sansevieria* always have variegation. For many plants, variegation seems to happen by accident. All of a sudden we see a few leaves or branches that are variegated. The rest of the plant is green but this variegation will stand out. If we want a variegated plant from this mutation, we will have to propagate it vegetatively. We will have to split the plant or graft the variegated branch onto a green rootstock.

In *Abutilon* and *Tulips*, variegation is caused by a harmless virus. In plants that are red or purple like purple beech or Japanese maples, the green pigment that is responsible for photosynthesis is masked by other pigments, the anthocyanins.

If cells have no chlorophyll then we see yellow or white variegations. In a white or yellow-edged leaf, the outer layer of cells does not have chlorophyll in it. If the margin is white then the chlorophyll is completely absent. If the margin is yellow then the cells have only preliminary version of chlorophyll called protochlorophyll. Leaves that have green edges and variegated centres have a defective inner layer of leaf cells. In most cases the variegation is on the outside of the leaves.

Some plants have attractive pink or red flushes in the spring that disappear later in the season. In these cases anthocyanins protect the tender new cells from harsh UV light. Variegation sometimes does not develop until the plant is mature or late in the growing season. A number of trees have nicely coloured leaves early in the season but later on turn green. Variegated plants are usually less hardy than their green counterparts. In Vancouver BC, or Great Britain there are a good number of variegated plants that will not survive here in Southern Ontario. Variegated plants, such as *Syringa reticulata*, *Chantilly Lace*, and Japanese Tree Lilac, sometimes need protection from the sun and the wind. Without protection, the white or yellow margins of variegated leaves become brown as the summer progresses. Variegation can be more visible for some plants when they are grown in the shade, but others need the full sun to expose the full colours.

Variegation can happen by accident, but reversion is also very common. We have all seen Harlequin Maples or variegated Euonymus with green branches. Because a variegated leaf has less chlorophyll than a green leaf, it will grow less vigorously. It is quite possible that green branches will eventually overwhelm the variegated branches and the plant will be almost all green. It is important to cut out any green branches in a variegated plant to preserve the variegation.



*Iris pseudacorus* is able to grow in average to moist soil, even in shallow standing water. Seeds spread it around to roadside ditches, so it has the reputation as invasive. This pretty cultivar, 'Variegata' has creamy, golden yellow variegated leaves in the spring.

Variegation can be found in almost any plant, but its frequency is very different. Hostas are one of the best known variegated plants but variegated daylilies are rare. There are a good number of grasses that are variegated but you will find it very seldom in your lawn. Euonymus and Cornus have many variegated cultivars, but did you ever see variegated apples, pears or roses? And these are propagated by the millions every year. I have found variegated dandelions but [sadly] I still have not found a variegated sunflower.

As Iris lovers we also have our variegated plants. A few names are:

- *Iris ensata* "Variegata", the Japanese flag. (They look best in spring.)
- *Iris foetidissima* "Variegata"
- *Iris japonica* "Variegata"

*Iris pallida* has two variegated forms. *Argentea Variegata* has leaves with white stripes. The *Aurea Variegata* or *Aurea* is a bit taller and has yellow stripes. Both forms keep their variegation throughout the growing season. Here in Southern Ontario they are completely winter hardy and have a reasonable number of flowers.

*Iris pseudocorus* "*Variegatus*" has light yellow stripes in the spring. Over the summer the plant turns green and the stripes are not visible. It is hardy here in Southern Ontario. It is obvious that the cell or leaf structure of the *pseudocorus* is different from, for example, the *Iris pallida*. In spite of the huge numbers of *Iris pseudocorus* plants that grow all over, there is very little variegation happening.





# Breaking the Siberian Colour Barrier

By Marty Schafer and Jan Sacks of Joe Pye Weed's Garden, Carlisle, Massachusetts

*Taken from BCIS Winter Newsletter*

Planting out and watching several thousand Siberian Iris seedlings develop is perilous at first. During their first year you have to protect them from being chewed up by cutworms and rabbits, undermined by moles, and stomped down by deer. After the first year, the plants are pretty much able to take care of themselves, and the fun begins.



*sibirica Butter and Sugar* – white butter-yellow blooms. Re-bloomer. Award winner. 28" Mid-summer

We have been watching this transformation from a single blade at infancy to it the full flowering of maturity for about 25 years. We have also watched the rows of flowers change from predominantly blue-violet and white to a much broader range of colours. The challenge in Siberians when we started breeding was yellow. **Currier McEwen** had given us "*Butter and Sugar*" (1997). The next step was to make yellow flowers in stronger colours, on stronger plants, with more flower variation. Marty's idea was to cross yellow flowers with blues ones.

The blues had a lot of experience behind them, were stronger, and had better form and branching. Many breeders chose to search for better yellow by crossing yellows with whites. Marty has always had a tendency to go in the other direction—in this case has made a world of difference.

It turns out that blue and yellow pigments in Siberian Irises do not have a simple dominant-recessive relationship—where one colour completely masks the other. Sometimes in our seedlings the yellow genes line up and a beautiful yellow seedling is born. However, in other seedlings both blue and yellow appear together in the same flower resulting in some unusual looking flowers. When they first appeared, our descriptions were "spooky", "conflicting", "blue and grey," not to mention "ugly." We eventually settled on a neutral description – "overlay pattern" – because we felt (or hoped) that eventually this combination of pigments would be important and productive.

After several generations, our field of seedlings has proven this is to be correct. Blues are getting bluer, yellows deeper, reds redder, and new colours and new patterns are appearing.

There are so many new and exciting seedlings every year. Some shine on their own merits and are evaluated for possible introduction. Some are clearly flawed or unfinished but have qualities that demand moving their genes into future generations. Some are saved or bred on a whim. We thought we'd share with you a few of the seedlings that are coming along that excite us.

Brand new and seen for the first time in 2009 is S05-43A-53. We call the colour "new red" as opposed to the wine-red that is typical of Siberians. We have been seeing new red in seedlings for several years but never this bright. The flower was small and narrow, though it had some ruffling and was attractive in many ways. Its stems and leaves were the shortest in the cross, which might be a positive quality (we are always looking for dwarf Siberians) or they might have been stunted by vigorous siblings. One of its parents was a velvety plum purple, which came from a background of red and yellow overlays. The other parent was an exceptional but flawed seedling from pink and yellow overlays which had a fabulous apricot ground with a bright cherry spot around the signal. Unfortunately these colours were fickle and only appeared in certain weather conditions we have yet to understand, in this seedling, S05-43A-53, the colour seems quite stable. What makes it stable is an important question still to be answered for this and many other seedlings.

The "fickle" parent, mentioned above, with the apricot ground and cherry spot, showed so much potential that Marty crossed it with many other seedlings. One of these was a cream with cherry shoulders and large yellow style arms. Its colouring was also somewhat unstable. There were a number of seedlings from this cross which opened with apricot to yellow falls and large bright cherry spots. Most of them faded badly. One, S05-47-2, stood out. Its fall colour is not as apricot as its parent, but its cherry spot is lovely. The colour does fade somewhat, but not unattractively, and it has good shape and abundant bloom. We will continue to watch it, and breed for more stable colour. The apricot in there really charms us. On the top of our wish list for Siberians is to create orange flowers.

While pink and yellow overlays may someday produce orange Siberians, they are certainly producing truer pinks right now. For many years "pink" in Siberians was more of a lavender or cool orchid pink. S04-33B-50 is one of the best pinky pinks. It is a child of two pale pink and yellow overlays; one of the parents is "*Pretty Polly*", introduced in 2007. All the seedlings in this cross had lovely colour and we have saved five of them for further evaluation. All showed great vigor and have made fine large clumps. One of them has decorative spathes brushed with red which makes the clump beautiful as it is coming into bloom. S04-33B-50 has the most vibrant pink colouring, even though the intensity varies. We're not sure if we will ever see flamingo pink in Siberians, but we can work toward it.



Perhaps not as high on everyone's list for Siberian colours is brown. Our first brownish Siberian was "*Humors of Whiskey*" (2007). It is actually a pink and yellow overlay, with enough violet mixed in to create golden brown. The colouring of "*Humors of Whiskey*" is pretty smooth, though not as smooth as S03-28-3, a cocoa brown amoena we are considering for introduction. Sometimes these pink, yellow and violet combinations produce more of a speckled pattern. S02-9-10 is one of these. Its standards open speckled violet and fade to almost white; the falls are yellow with heavy speckling



*Humors of Whiskey* (Marty Schafer/Jan Sacks, registered 2007). Seedling S00-25-3. SIB, height 29" (74 cm), mid season bloom.

in pinkish brown. Its flower is small and somewhat narrow, rather species like, yet very nicely shaped. Its vigor is unparalleled and it produces an incredible number of well-branched stalks which are held well above the foliage. And it has one other quality that we love. Its flowers smell sweet! While a few Siberians are fragrant when you stick your nose into the flower, this is the first Siberian we have ever noticed from afar—wondering where the scent was coming from. This seedling will definitely be introduced.

Also emerging from these blends of brown, pink, violet and yellow is a different kind of

yellow Siberian. Yellow Siberians have always been...well...yellow, with white or pale yellow standards, very clean—no other colouring. Now we are seeing yellow flowers with reddish brown around the sides of the signals, such as S04-7A-11, or with purple in the heart of the styles and reddish brown speckles on the falls, such as S04-22c-10. We have been seeing this colour pattern for several years, but these flowers have nice form, good size, and substance.

As is clear in previous paragraphs, we do not shy away from small-flowered Siberians. We love both large and small flowers and are glad that Siberian Section embraces a great variety of size and form. One of our littlest flowered seedlings, S03-28B-10, is also one of our favorites, its parents are "*Tree of Songs*" (2006). A tall vigorous, small-flowered bright yellow; and "*So Van Gogh*" (2005). A true bicolor with blue-violet standards and yellow falls veined blue-violet, also small flowered. Our garden name for 28B-10 is "*Paint Spot*" because it looks like someone went around with a paint brush and dabbed a spot of blue paint on the tip of each fall. The colouring is softer than "*So Van Gogh*" with light blue standards, the paint spot, and lighter yellow falls. The plant is tall than a dwarf, but its whole appearance is delicate.

With all this overlay stuff going on, most of the new seedlings in our field have some interplay of yellow with other colours, but sometimes we see blends where the yellow influence is not apparent. S05-25-16 is one of these blends. It is a large flower with wide, overlapping falls which are dappled blue-violet with deep red-violet rims. If that isn't enough, it has nicely curled pearly style arms with bright blue mid-ribs. It is a grand flower—it will be several years before we decide if the whole package is worth introducing. In 2009 we introduced *Dance Party*,



<http://www.jpwflowers.com>

*So Van Gogh* (Marty Schafer/Jan Sacks, registered 2005) unusual bi-color 28-chromosome Siberian with purple standards and yellow falls

a Siberian with a rim that is a cousin, one generation back from S05-25-16. Its number is S01-25-10. It is a medium sized flower, has a dark violet rim on violet falls, pale violet standards, and white styles with aqua mid-ribs. The contrast of the light top and darker bottom, with the glow of aqua is striking. The plant makes a beautiful clump and blooms for a long time. A very different seedling, S04-20B-50, also had a lot of blue on the styles. They were less aqua and more of an antique blue. This flower was very poor in other ways, and has already been discarded, but not before Marty used its pollen on several other seedlings with blue styles and other good qualities.

Style arms are one of our favorite decorative features in Siberians. Their colouring, size, shape, position in the flower, and ornamentations provide many creative possibilities, though perhaps we had better leave this subject for another time. We hope you have enjoyed this brief look into our seedlings of the future.



## CIS Membership Message

Not sure of your Canadian Iris Society (CIS) membership term? Check your mailing label of the CIS newsletter for your current CIS membership term dates. If you receive the electronic version of the CIS Newsletter and you wish to know this information please e-mail the CIS membership chairman at [cdn-iris@rogers.com](mailto:cdn-iris@rogers.com) and we will be pleased to advise you.

Early renewals are always appreciated.

# Join the American Iris Society

\$25.00 one year, \$60 for three years

Send payment to:

**Tom Gormley**—AIS Membership Secretary  
**205 Catalonia Avenue**  
**P.O. Box 177**  
**DeLeon Springs, FL 32130**

Phone and Fax: 386-277-2057

Email: [aismemsec@irises.org](mailto:aismemsec@irises.org)

or visit: [www.irises.org](http://www.irises.org) for more details



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## Your new AIS RVP's for the regions aligned with Canada:

**Region 1** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, **Newfoundland/Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island**

Norine Veal [nsveal@aol.com](mailto:nsveal@aol.com)

30 Franklin Park East, Rockville, CT 06066

**Region 2** New York, **Ontario, Quebec**

Donna Lowry [donnadonlowry@aol.com](mailto:donnadonlowry@aol.com)

9660 Ridge Road, Brockport, NY 14420

**Region 13** Washington, Oregon, Alaska, **British Columbia, Yukon**

Alan Brooks [ebb1012@aol.com](mailto:ebb1012@aol.com)

**Region 21** Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, **NWT, Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba**

Ron Cosner [keighley15@msn.com](mailto:keighley15@msn.com)

328 Central Ave SE, Lemars, IA 51031

AIS newly updated web site: [www.irises.org](http://www.irises.org)



# Coming Events and Dates to Remember

## 2012 Meeting Dates

<b>Sunday Jan 15</b>	Library "RBG" 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
<b>Sunday Apr 15</b>	Library "RBG" 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
<b>Sunday Jul 15</b>	Library "RBG" 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
<b>Sunday Jan 06, 2013</b>	Library "RBG" 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

## 2012 Event Dates

### **Sunday June 10**

Annual Show & Picnic 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
Trails End Iris Gardens  
3674 Indian Trail Rd  
Lynden, ON (R.R. 8 Brantford)

### **Sunday August 19th**

Annual Sale & AGM 1:00 pm  
RBG Gardens Room 3&4  
680 Plains Rd West  
Burlington, ON

### **Sunday September 30th**

Late Season Show & Judges Training  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm  
RBG Rooms 3&4  
680 Plains Rd West  
Burlington, ON  
(not yet confirmed)

## 2012 Publication Dates

February 2012	Vol56 No1 Winter Issue
May 2012	Vol56 No2 Spring Issue
August 2012	Vol56 No3 Summer Issue
November 2012	Vol56 No4 Fall Issue

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## **Walker Ross Award:**

This is an annual award presented to a person who has given outstanding effort and performance to the Canadian Iris Society. If you know of someone you feel is deserving of this award; please send in your nomination to our secretary.

# Canadian Sources for Irises

We provide this listing as a resource for our members and readers. This listing does not necessarily imply endorsement of the businesses by Canadian Iris Society (CIS). The sources listed have paid donations/contributions to help support the society. If you know of someone who should be added to the list please send the information to the editor. The listings in BOLD are members of the CIS

## **Chapman Iris**

RR #1 8790 Wellington Road 124,  
Guelph, ON N1H 6H7  
Phone: (519) 856-4424  
Email: [chuck@chapmaniris.com](mailto:chuck@chapmaniris.com)  
Website: [www.chapmaniris.com](http://www.chapmaniris.com)  
On-line catalogue: \$3.00

## **McMillen's Iris Garden**

RR1 285112 Pleasant Valley Rd.  
Norwich ON N0J 1P0  
Phone 1-866-468-6508  
Email: [info@mcmillensirsgarden.ca](mailto:info@mcmillensirsgarden.ca)  
e-mail or call for Price List

## **Tara Perennial Farm**

123 Concession # 6, RR2  
Tara, ON N0H 2N0  
Call for availability/price list  
Marion Kuhl 519-934-3447  
Website: [www.taraperennialfarm.com](http://www.taraperennialfarm.com)

## **The Plant Farm**

177 Vesuvius Bay Road  
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1K3  
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## Liaisons and Regions



### **British Columbia Iris Society (BCIS)**

Ted Baker, 185 Furness Rd.,  
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1Z7  
ph: 250-653-4430 [www.bc-iris.org](http://www.bc-iris.org)

### **Can-West Iris Society**

B.J. Jackson, 2421 McDonald Avenue, Brandon, MB R7B 0A6,  
ph: 204-725-4696 email: [jacksonb@mts.net](mailto:jacksonb@mts.net)

### **Halton/Peel Iris Society (HAPEIS)**

Chris Hollinshead, 3070 Windwood Drive,  
Mississauga, ON L5N 2K3  
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### **London Region Iris Society**

Gloria McMillen, RR#1 Norwich, ON N0J 1P0  
ph: 519 468-3279 email: [gmcmlen@execulink.com](mailto:gmcmlen@execulink.com)  
Please inquire for membership and group activities.

### **Ottawa River Iris Society (ORrIS)**

Maureen Mark, 1077 Guertin Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1H 8B3  
ph: (613) 521-4597 e-mail: [mmark@rogers.com](mailto:mmark@rogers.com)

**cis website**  
**[www.cdn-iris.ca](http://www.cdn-iris.ca)**

up-to-date information on CIS activities and many useful links to other iris sites and information

**Canadian Iris Society**  
**1960 Sideroad 15, RR#2**  
**Tottenham, ON L0G 1W0**



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