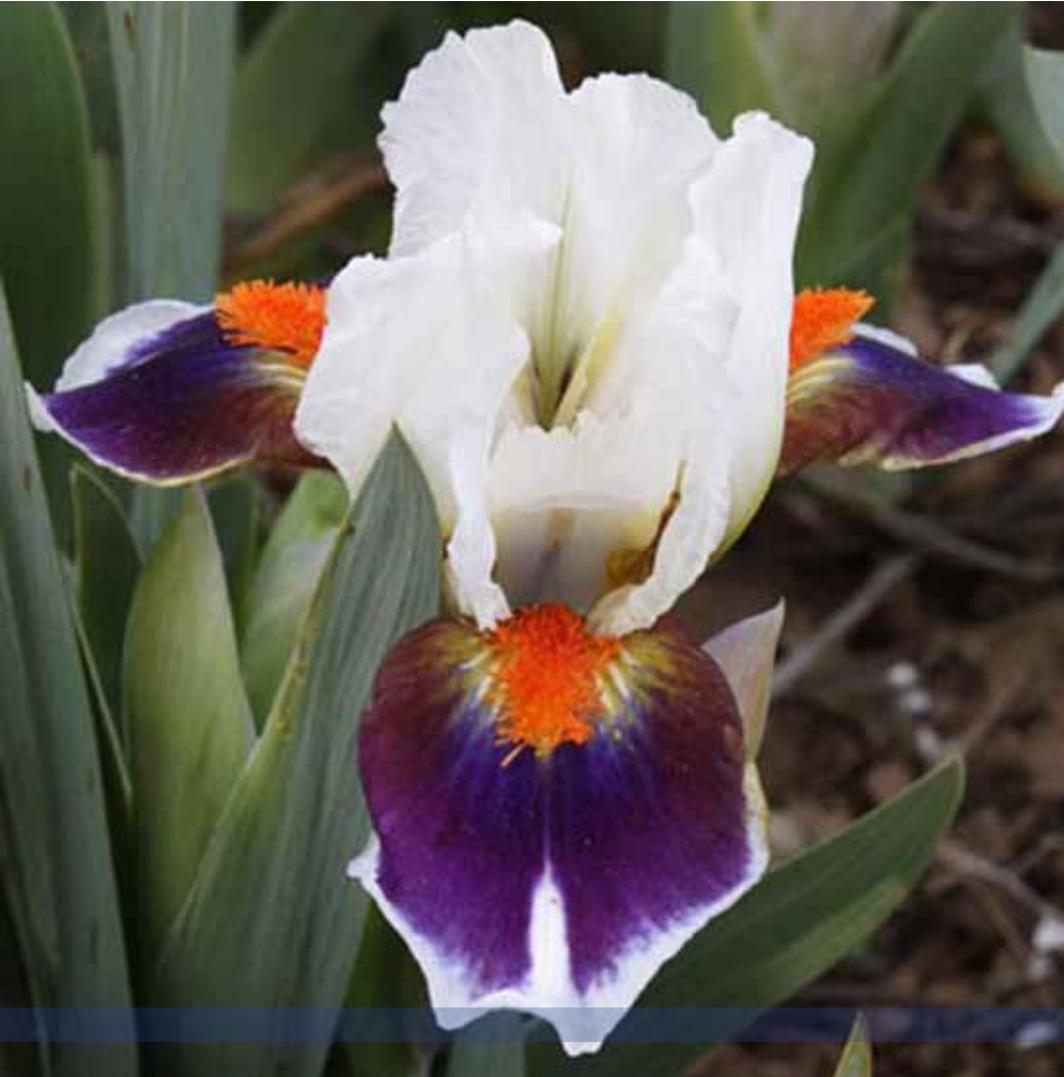


# Canadian Iris Society

## cis newsletter

Winter 2013 Volume 57 Issue 1



# Canadian Iris Society

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# Table of Contents

President's Report	2
Congratulations Chuck!	3
Musings From Manitoba (B. J. Jackson)	4
Hybridizing Tall Bearded Pt. 2 (Dave Niswonger)	8
Relationships Within Genus Iris (Tony Hall)	10
Eclipse Design Studio (ad)	23
Iris pseudacorus or Yellow Flag (John Moons)	24
Ontario Hosta Society – Forum (ad)	27
Iris Purchase Form (pullout section)	28
Terra Greenhouses (ad)	30
Winter 2013 Garden Diggings (C. Hollinshead)	31
I HATE My Tiller (Richard C. Richards)	38
AIS Regional News	40
AIS Convention 2013 (Christopher Hollinshead)	41
A New Canadian Hybridizer - John McMillen	44
Iris in March? (Alan McMurtrie)	48
Siberian Iris Convention Information	51
American Iris Society (ad)	54
Coming Events and Dates to Remember	55
Canadian Sources for Irises	56
Liaisons and Regions	57

**Cover Photo: *Tiny Beacon***

Introduced by Terry Aitken

Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden

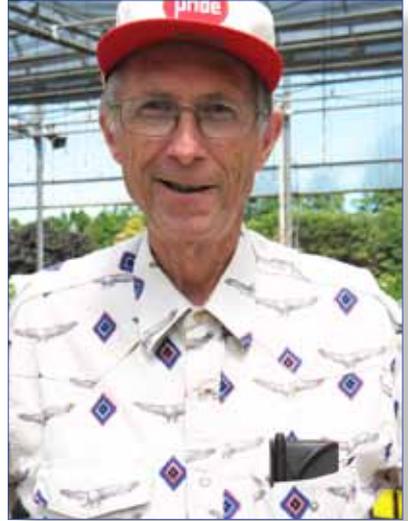
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Sibling to Boink and Here Come The Clowns, 2011.

# President's Report

By Ed Jowett

I am finding the doldrums of winter making it difficult to get started. We are hoping to offer a grouping of reblooming irises this year. If I do not have the cultivars in time for this news magazine; I will send out a special news flash. I had an observation from one grower who does not believe the winter conditions have a big difference on the bloom but it is the rebloom period if frost is possible. This grower is in a pretty good zone but cannot get any California raised rebloomers to rebloom because they do get early frost but not severe winters. (Food for thought). Most Californian's rebloom October, November, and even December. The one's we are looking at I am told are July/August rebloom time.



We have written a number of articles past and present on hybridizing as our goal is to promote our wonderful flower. We would like to hear from our members about their experiences; good or bad. Tell us what you were expecting or trying for. If you have pictures send them along. If you would like pictures of your product but don't feel you have the camera or photography skills let us know and maybe we can arrange one of our photographers to take some. If you would like step-by-step instructions we could publish "Hybridizing 101" in lay man's terms. Please let us know. This helps us know what you like to see and read. Do drop us a line by snail mail or e-mail. (The address is on the inside front cover of this newsletter.)

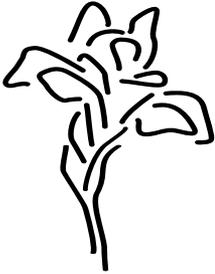
I read in the British Iris Society newsletter that some of our North American hybridizers made some hits at the International Iris Competition in Florence, 2012 Tall bearded. Best red variety: "*Rio Rojo*" Schreiner's Garden; Most Original Colour "*Sordid Lives*" T. Johnson; Best Scented Variety "*Stolen Sweet*" Paul Black; and Best Blue Variety "*All About Blue*" Schreiner's Garden. Congratulations to our American friends. It is their great delegation that we get these wonderful new varieties.

I was at a hort meeting where a garden center and landscaping owner was talking basically on new perennials; but suggested we not cut the dead stalks and leaves in the fall but early spring. This he said helps protect young leaves and shoots from the frost and a lot of freeze thaw conditions; which is what kills a lot of our plants. If you are lazy like me this is what usually happens to my plants.

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

Our publication is getting around the world. The Australian Iris society asked if one of our articles written by Don McQueen could be reprinted. Hats off to Don for a job well done.



I would like to thank those members who answered my questionnaire and their fast response. From this I think our decisions on our Iris offerings this year may appeal to a few more. We will have more varieties but limited quantity of the rebloomers and normal quantity of the newer cultivars. I have delayed this publication in order to get the Iris available into this printing. Orders will be accepted after April 1st on a first come first served bases. Check our web sight to see these Iris.

Please note we have changed our e-mail address it is now [cdniris@gmail.com](mailto:cdniris@gmail.com) our website remains the same: [www.cdn-iris.ca](http://www.cdn-iris.ca).

*Ed Jowett*

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## Ontario's hybridizer Chuck Chapman does it again!

Chuck won first place in the "Russian Iris Society Trials for 2012" with *Eramosa Ridge*.

Congratulations Chuck!



Eramosa Ridge



Front of Chuck's medal



Back of Chuck's medal

# Musings From Manitoba



By: B. J. Jackson

(jacksonb@mts.net)

It is always a challenge to find something to write about in the “dead of winter” but it hasn’t been that much trouble for me this year. I have been preparing for a presentation on Medians for the Manitoba Horticultural Society’s annual meeting this month in Brandon and updating my slide show. As I was reviewing my pictures from the last few years, it dawned on me that my iris garden has changed markedly just in the last five years. The last time I did a presentation for this group in 2007, fully 80 per cent of my iris collection was from the Standard Dwarf Bearded class. From 2012 I see that although they remain a major part of my collection, I have branched out somewhat and now they represent just about 50 per cent of the iris.



Hoar frost evergreen

So what changed in that time? The first thing I noticed was that the number of IBs and MTBs has increased dramatically. The second is that the number of TBs has decreased just as dramatically. It is easy to denote the reason for the decrease in TBs; several years of wild weather would account for it. But why the increase in IBs and MTBs? Upon reflection, I would have to say the main reason comes from a Median convention I attended in 2006 in Lincoln, Nebraska. At that meeting which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Median Iris Society, I was exposed to the people and the plants, many I had only a cursory

**Editors Note:** The editor would appreciate contributions to the newsletter from the general membership. If you have news of an Iris event; or looking for a particular variety or type of Iris; growing or cultivation advice. If you have plants to sell or anything you would like to share. Send them to the editor for submission. This way we can make our newsletter bigger and of more interest to our readers. (For address see inside front cover)

knowledge of and my horizons expanded significantly in that one short weekend. Add that to a newbie iris auction experience and the result was—that summer I had sent to me several of the newest and most beautiful IB and MTB iris on the market thanks to an iris friend who was able to ship them to me directly along with an order from the Historic Iris Preservation Society. I refuse to tell you how much that first auction experience cost me, but in hindsight, it was well worth it!

In 2007 each and every one of them bloomed and I was “majorly” hooked. I wanted (no, *needed*) more of these beauties. Enter the CIS purchase program. At that time I sent in my money with no idea what I would receive. The only stipulation was that I wanted Medians only. No TBs. For two years I was surprised with what I received and I think it was the greatest way to do it, for me anyhow. The anticipation of what I would receive, the first blooms, the amazement at seeing blooms every year in more colors, forms and sizes than I could have imagined. Those two purchase programs also expanded my knowledge about other classes.

Another change is the number of species, Siberians, and spurias I now grow. This I credit to the 2011 AIS convention in Victoria BC. There were few TBs but the siberians and assorted Medians were outstanding. So, it is my opinion that exposure to what we don't grow can inspire us to grow more of them. Does that make sense? The people who attend these conventions tell us about what they have seen which leads to our wanting to have more of them. Whether or not that is always a good thing, I don't know, but I do know that it has expanded my knowledge and experience with these hitherto little known to me classes. ▶



More and more hoar frost



Even more hoar frost

knows what next year might bring, right?

What is the moral of my story? I guess it would be that if you have a chance to go to an AIS convention or a mini convention of one of the sections, go! You will learn something and be inspired to try something different. You will meet people and make friendships that last and who knows what it might lead to. Change happens in the garden and this iris grower is very happy to see a more diverse and one might say more eclectic iris collection.

In other Manitoba news, winter so far this year has been much better than last. We actually have a good snow cover at the moment. There would probably be another foot of the white mulch if not for the roller coaster temperatures in November and December. In one 48 hour period the temperature went from -43 to +1. One could almost watch the snow melting. And so it has been cold for a week or so, then warm for a few days, then



Manitoba's heavy hoar frost

back to cold. Right now as I write this piece, we are digging out from yet another winter storm that brought to Southern Manitoba variously rain, freezing rain, snow, blowing snow and high winds. This time, the southeastern part of the province bore the brunt of the system with some reporting driveway drifts of more than four feet and extremely treacherous driving conditions, particularly on the highways. And it is back to cold and I hope we have seen the last of the up and down roller coaster.

It has had one effect which I have enjoyed immensely though. The hoar frost events have been more numerous and more spectacular than I have ever seen before. This early part of winter 2012/2013 will probably be known in future years as the year of the hoar frost. For many days I woke up to thick coatings on trees that made for some beautiful photos. In some it is so thick it looks like snow but it is actually hoar frost. I have included a couple here for you all to see. I hope you enjoy them.

The sun has been mostly and noticeably absent, with the exception of a handful of days when it was so bright and so cold it literally took your breath away. For the most part it has been cloudy and overcast which does absolutely nothing for the disposition of sun-starved prairie folk.

In CWIS news, plans are well underway for our 2013 events. We are very pleased that **Chuck Chapman** has agreed to come out and visit us in the spring. He will be conducting judge's training as well as giving presentations to our members. Details are still in the works, but the hall has been booked and we are good to go! As one of our members who is unable to attend other AIS events and conventions told me, "It's like a mini iris convention coming to me!" She is very excited. We have also had indications from several CWIS members outside Manitoba that they may just have to drive out to participate in this event along with the local members. It is the first time we have done anything like this so it should be a great learning experience for us.

So I think that's all for this time from me. Spring can't come too soon for this iris gardener. And with luck, Mother Nature will be more benevolent in 2013 than she has been the last couple of years. I look forward to the season with increasing anticipation.



Hoar frost makes a Winter Wonderland

# Hybridizing Tall Bearded Irises — Part II

By Dave Niswonger, Missouri

(Reprinted from the AIS bulletin of July 2003. Some detailed explanations in the article have been shortened.)

*We have re-printed several articles on hybridizing that have been written by acknowledged and accomplished hybridizers. Each of them has been helpful in gaining a basic understanding of this mysterious process. The following article by Dave Niswonger is quite a bit more in depth, but I thought perhaps you and I were ready to absorb some more of the details. You can then set about planning your hybridizing goals for next season.*

— Ann Granatier

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## There are certain traits or conditions that hybridizers need to keep in mind:

1. Pinks are recessive. If you cross a pink with a yellow none of the seedlings will be pink. Pink was achieved by segregating a converting factor into each of the four groups of chromosomes where carotene existed; the yellow pigment was converted to lycopene, which is the red pigment of tomatoes but appears pink in irises.
2. There is another yellow pigment besides gamma carotene, which is XANTHOPHYLL, and it cannot be converted to pink. Carotene and Xanthophyll can occur together and part of it can be converted to give apricots or yellows with pink blushes.
3. Plicatas are recessive. The plicata stitching seen around white or yellow falls is anthocyanin pigment which is the sap *around* the cells (unlike the yellow pigment which is *inside* the cells) There are several forms of anthocyanin but most of it is delphinidin. Flavones may affect the colour of the stitching. With lots of flavones it is blue, with some it is purple; or rose.
4. White, or I should say dominant whites are, genetically speaking, not really white but blue. It just happens that an inhibitor is present which represses the anthocyanin pigment. So you can cross whites and blues with each other and get both. If the inhibitor is present in the four groups, you get white; otherwise, you may get various shades of blue.

5. Greens usually have no pollen but will set seed. If green is obtained from pumillas, it is usually lost in the first backcross to Talls.
6. If you want to change the colour of the beard on a certain colour, you must first outcross to those that have the beard colour you want. Then inbreeding and maybe outcross again with a certain trait that isn't showing up, then inbreed again and keep doing this.
7. Pinks with blue beards are another challenge. Here we are dealing with two recessives. The interesting thing about pursuing a goal such as this is that you do come up with some very unusual introducible cultivars along the way.
8. The "halo" pattern is not the same mechanism as with the plicatas. The iris petal has 3 layers of cells and if the outer layer has a layer of flavescens on it, the color underneath is blocked out. And if the flavescens layer doesn't quite cover the petal, then the other color shows up and you have a rim or "halo" on the falls. This layer of flavescens can vary in colour from white to light violet.
9. Pigments are of three main types: Chlorophylls, Flavonoids and Carotenoids. **Chlorophylls** are the green colour in plants that make photosynthesis possible and thus the growth and development of the plant. **Flavonoids** are made up of Flavones, which are essentially colorless and provide no color but affect color. **Anthocyanins** are water soluble and exist in the sap around the cell. Anthocyanins are water soluble and exist the sap around the cell and provide , depending on the dosage, blue to violet to maroon (our so-called reds) In 1950 there were approximately seventy flavonoids identified. **Carotenoids** are made up of carotenes, a plastid body inside the cell (that can be converted to lycopene) providing various shades of yellow and pink, and **Xanthophylls** (which cannot be converted) providing bright yellow. There are approximately eighty carotenoids that have been identified. The many combinations of these give us the wonderful range of colors we have in irises.
10. Mutations may give us new avenues to another set of explosion of colors such as we now enjoy. But mutations in irises are very rare. **Dr. Norlan Henderson** of Kansas City MO feels that on the average a mutation may take place about once in 50,000 replications of the DNA cell. He states that he doesn't know how many mutations have taken place in the hybridization of irises but doubts that there have been more than a half dozen. In considering genetic engineering to produce mutations, this might be used in other ways such as making a borer-proof plant – or increasing vigor or hardiness, making plants more resistant to bacterial or fungal infections, etc.

In summary, new colors and combinations are only limited by our imagination. So if you are presently hybridizing, keep up the good work. If you are not, Why not join us? You may never win a Dykes Medal but I assure you that you will reap great pleasure in creating something of your own.





More detailed molecular work is required before some of these relationships are fully understood and before discussing at what rank the revised groupings should be placed.

Both section Lophiris and series Vernae are better removed from subgenus Limniris and placed in that major, more natural assemblage of irises (plants with either a beard or crest, sometimes merely a raised ridge), which is itself further divided into 2 subgroups. The second major assemblage of irises (plants with neither a beard, crest nor a raised ridge) is also divided into 2 subgroups – one consisting of those series from section Limniris that should be considered core Limniris, and a second subgroup that includes 4 of the series once part of section Limniris.

Series Unguiculares, however, is highly divergent and appears as sister to the remainder of genus *Iris* – i.e. both of those major assemblages referred to above. It is worth noting that the 3 bulbous subgenera have arisen independently: subgenus Scorpiris, the ‘junos’, are strongly linked to the core ‘bamboo’ irises of section Lophiris, along with subgenus Nepalensis – a small group of winter-dormant species with a curious compressed rhizome and finger-like tuberous roots; subgenus Hermodactyloides is associated with series Syriacae and series Tenuifoliae; and subgenus Xiphium has evolved from series Spuriae.

## The Woodland Garden at Kew

This is located near the Cumberland Gate, between the Mound (with its stone Temple of Aeolus), the Systematic Order Beds and the Rock Garden. This is very much a plantsman’s area, especially rich in herbaceous plants and woodlanders from Liliaceae s.l. (e.g. erythroniums, trilliums and relatives of Solomon’s seal).

## Partial shade and, for the smaller species, peat-bed or even pot culture

In fairly dry shade, *Iris foetidissima* ‘*Chinese Yellow*’ and *I. douglasiana* (series Californicae) do well. *Iris foetidissima*, the single species of series Foetidissimae, is best considered a divergent member of series Spuriae; in DNA results it is paired with *I. graminea*. Where there is more moisture, *Iris lazica*, the only shade-loving member of the highly isolated Unguiculares, is thriving. These conditions also suit core members of section Lophiris, such as *Iris confusa* and *I. japonica* (*I. wattii* and *I. formosana* being too tender), along with a pair of more divergent members of the same group: *I. tectorum* and the tall, branching *I. milesii*. The latter may be ancestral to the Scorpiris and Nepalensis subgenera. *Iris tectorum* and *I. milesii* are recommended for a warm wall; the latter certainly does well under such conditions at Kew.

*Iris cristata* exhibits characters that should place it with the bearded/crested alliance (it is traditionally a member of section Lophiris), yet preliminary DNA results position it, with its close relative *I. lacustris*, as sister to the whole beardless, uncrested alliance, ▶



*I. cristata*  
(Media Resources, Kew)



*I. rossii* (Media Resources, Kew)

base and completely encircling the ovary. This highly divergent species, with a nose-like raised ridge to its falls, rather than a crest, has been associated with both the Lophiris and the Chinenses, but appears to be a highly isolated member of the beardless/uncrested alliance. *Iris rossii* is another dwarf species, tufted, with single small flowers and a slightly raised ridge to its falls. It fares best in a sandy-peaty mix, despite coming from dry scrubby places and grassy banks in the wild (newly acquired material has settled nicely in a cool nook on Kew's Rock Garden). This is another uneasy bed-fellow to the Chinenses group; leaf anatomy suggests it might belong to section Lophiris – but it is likely to be another ancestral species. *Iris odaesanensis*, on the other hand, is a true member of series Chinenses and related to the yellow-flowered *I. koreana*; it is a slightly stoloniferous plant with long-stalked white flowers, from deciduous montane woodland and acid scrub. Especially challenging to maintain is tiny *Iris verna*, a woodlander with a microscopic beard to its falls; this species was definitely happier on the peat bed behind the Alpine House and in containers. It is the only member of series Vernae, currently placed in section Linniris, but DNA results, leaf anatomy and gross morphology position this highly unusual ancestral species firmly within the crested/bearded alliance (so the only New World iris in this major assemblage), as sister to a subgroup consisting of subgenus *Iris* (all 6 sections of the bearded irises),

despite having 3 parallel crest-like ridges to its falls. *Iris tenuis*, on the other hand, has a barely raised ridge, and is indicated in DNA results as sister to series Longipetalae, within the core Linniris subgroup of the beardless, uncrested alliance – which makes sense geographically. Its precise relationship within *Iris* has always puzzled taxonomists and it is undoubtedly an ancestral species. Both of these problematic taxa survived for a few years in the Woodland Garden at Kew, but fared better on a raised peat bed behind the pyramidal Alpine House (1981-2003) and in pans plunged in a shady frame; Kew's almost pure-white form of *Iris tenuis* is particularly dwarf – a super pot subject.

*Iris gracilipes*, a dainty little plant for woodland or peat-bed, forms easily divided clumps; its slender stalks bear flowers less than 3 cm across, their single bract fused towards the



*I. verna* (B. Mathew)

*Iris domestica* and *I. dichotoma*. *Iris verna* has been crossed with *I. pallida* (of section *Iris*) in captivity, which adds support to its new placement.

### Light shade and plenty of moisture in the growing season, or sunny/moist

Most members of the *Sibiricae* and *Laevigatae* – series within the core *Limniris* subgroup (*Limniris* itself meaning ‘swamp iris’) – will tolerate dappled shade, given adequate moisture at the roots during the growing season, and all species in this subgroup benefit from well-rotted manure/leaf mould in the soil and as a top-dressing in autumn. *Iris sanguinea*, *I. sibirica* and its neater, more narrow-leaved counterpart, *I. typhifolia*, are happy in such conditions; these three form a distinct subclade within the *Sibiricae*. In the *Laevigatae*, I particularly like *Iris ensata*, once known as *I. kaempferi*, in its unadulterated, reddish-purple wild form, and the pale creamy-yellow phase of *I. maackii*, from N.E. China, which is little more than a more dwarf, better-behaved race of our own flag iris, *I. pseudacorus*, also with rich yellow and pale forms. However, *Iris maackii* is not an accepted name at Kew, as type material is said to be a fruiting specimen of *Iris laevigata*, but currently there is no other name we can use for this Chinese plant. Of course, *Iris pseudacorus* itself is a robust, invasive species and candidate for an ASBO – it should not be tolerated anywhere except around a very large lake, or in a hefty container for the water garden, even in any of its variegated forms.

Although one does not generally consider bulbous irises as being suitable for shade and moisture, *Iris latifolia* produces its foliage in spring and hails from damp grassy montane places, so makes an attractive woodlander, but it is equally at home in a moist sunny spot. Subgenus *Xiphium*, to which it belongs, has probably evolved from the rhizomatous series *Spuriae*, a theory strongly supported by flower morphology and molecular studies.

### Rock Garden: sunny but moist

The advantage of Kew’s extensive Rock Garden is that, with the addition of man-made streams, waterfalls and ponds, the area contains a wealth of micro-habitats for a whole range of species. Many of the above-mentioned members of the *Sibiricae* and *Laevigatae* do as well if not better here in full sun, at the margins of these water-courses, e.g. *Iris forrestii* – an anorexic, fragrant little cousin of *I. wilsonii*, but with more erect standards. In less boggy conditions we have been growing an undescribed species from Arunachal Pradesh, N.E. India, probably related to *Iris clarkei* in the *Sibiricae* – a ground-hugging plant, 15-18 cm tall, with horizontal, slightly flattened stems clothed in papery bracts, ascending terminal fans of deciduous leaves and single, short-lived small flowers. It was discovered by Magnus Ramsay a few years ago. Two of the more robust taxa of series *Spuriae* do particularly well here: *Iris xanthosporia*, described from swampy places in S. & C. Turkey by Mathew and Baytop, in 1982, is over 1 m tall and has large deep



*Iris aff. clarkei* (species nova)  
(Media Resources, Kew)



*Iris xanthospuria*  
(Richard Wilford)

An important group for any rock garden will be section *Iris* (of subgenus *Iris*), with multicellular hairs on the falls and non-arillate seeds – the true ‘bearded irises’. This section is well represented at Kew, from the diminutive *Iris pumila* to tall, branching *I. pallida* subsp. *pallida*. Some real favourites are: *Iris aphylla*, up to 30 cm tall, with low-branching, leafless flower stems; *I. marsica*, a slightly taller species of natural-hybrid origin, described in 1974 by Ricci & Colasante from the Cent. Apennines, Italy; a particularly handsome bright yellow form of the dwarf *I. reichenbachii*, which is often rather dull-coloured; the rare *I. sabina*, presented to me, for Kew, by Prof. Marett Colasante at the 1998 Rome International Iridaceae Conference, on an excursion we all made to Mt. Gennaro, and which is now very happy on the Rock Garden; finally, an elegant, powdery-blue form of *I. mesopotamica* from Mt. Hermon, 1 m tall, with long side-branches and somewhat atypical bracts that are papery only towards their tips. This particular collection made a fine show when it was planted in the old pyramidal Alpine House.

yellow flowers, while *I. spuria* subsp. *notha*, a slightly smaller plant with 3-5 blue flowers per stem, is from dryish foothills in the Caucasus; both will tolerate dry as well as damp conditions in gardens.

### Well-drained sunny slope

*Iris cycloglossa*, described by the late Per Wendelbo in 1959, and firmly established in specialist collections from a gathering made by Wendelbo, Hedge & Eckberg a decade later, is considered a primitive and divergent member of subgenus *Scorpiris*. It is an outstanding species outside, increasing well from offsets and, on Kew’s Rock Garden, about 70 cm tall with up to 9 carnation-scented flowers, 10 cm across; when pot grown it is not so vigorous, producing at most 5 flowers per stem.

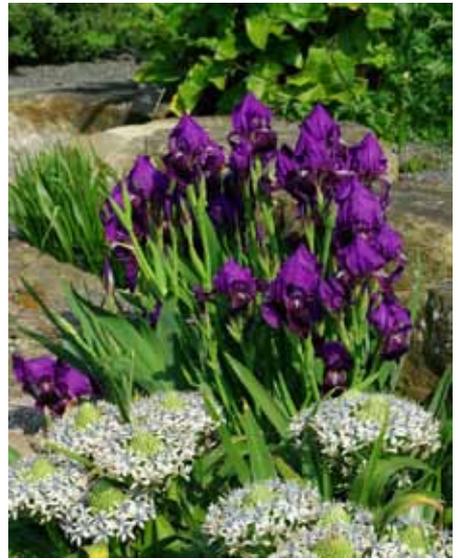


*Iris cycloglossa*  
(Media Resources, Kew)

The more compact species of series *Spuriae* make especially good rockery subjects: *Iris kerneriana* is barely 30 cm tall, with large, creamy-yellow/deep yellow flowers; the tuft-forming *I. pontica*, much rarer in cultivation, carries flowers at soil-level, overtopped by grassy foliage; and at Kew we grow 2 forms of the variable *I. sintenisii*: a very dwarf form, barely 10 cm tall, with arching leaves/stems, and a more clump-forming, erect race.

### Hot/dry slope with exceptional drainage (or a raised bed)

*Iris tuberosa* is just a divergent member of the ‘*reticulatas*’, its placement strongly supported by bulb and leaf anatomy, morphology and DNA results. Its closest relative appears to be *Iris pamphylica*; both species carry a pendant seed capsule high up on the stem, although the unilocular ovary of *I. tuberosa* is unique within genus *Iris*. This is a species which relishes the restricted root-run of a large pan or crevices between rocks outside. Among the handful of ‘*junos*’ that perform well outside, the variable *Iris aucheri* is equally at home in a pot. Depending on clone and vigour, specimens may be from 15 to 40 cm in height, with 3 to 9 flowers per stem, ranging in colour from white, greyish, pale yellow, pale blue, lilac, mauve, violet, dark purple or even bicoloured; unfortunately, the scent – especially of the more dark-flowered forms – is a combination of almond-blossom and cats’ pee.



*I. sabina* (Richard Wilford)

The small section *Psammiris* (subgenus *Iris*) contains mostly yellow-flowered species – plants with branching stems, a beard of unicellular hairs on the falls and seeds bearing an aril. *Iris humilis* is a tiny member of these ‘sand irises’, from stony or sandy habitats at quite low altitudes, so good drainage is essential. It will form neat little patches, only a few centimetres tall, on rock ledges and in crevices, and is also suitable for pot or trough culture, but it does not want to be baked in summer; the addition of a little leaf-mould is advisable. The xerophytic species of series *Tenuifoliae*, on the other hand, with their generally tufted habit and tough narrow leaves, require a hot dry spot, and one of the more amenable species in a difficult-to-please group is *Iris ventricosa*. We grew this on a dry rocky slope outside the pyramidal Alpine House, where it survived and bloomed for a few years before the site had to be cleared; alas, it did not survive transplanting. The species epithet means ‘pot-bellied’ – a reference to its inflated bracts, although in our material this feature was not well expressed. *Iris anguifuga* (the name suggesting its use as a snake-bite cure) was only described in 1980 by Zhao & Xue, and section *Ophioiris* (meaning ‘snake iris’) was created by Zhao for this species. However, Brian Mathew had noted that this species was most likely an atypical member of the *Tenuifoliae*, later confirmed by our molecular results. *Iris anguifuga* has a comparatively thick, horizontal rhizome, summer-deciduous foliage and a single long-pointed bract; its spidery-looking flowers are some 10 cm across. Although unlikely to set the horticultural world ablaze, such a divergent species is of great scientific interest. ▶

## Protected cultivation: cold house or bulb frame with protection from winter & summer rain

The majority of subgenus *Scorpiris* (the ‘junos’) will not survive life in the open garden in the U.K., and are pot-grown, with overhead protection from rain, in Kew’s open-sided All-weather frame (built in 1987). The main aim of this revolutionary structure was to provide a combination of high light intensity with good air movement – necessary to ‘junos’ and sections *Oncocyclus* and *Regelia*. But to maintain and regularly flower such plant groups successfully, especially given the restricted root-growth provided by pots, regular doses of high-potash liquid feeds are absolutely essential during the growing season.

Cultivated since the 16th Century and relatively easy to maintain, *Iris planifolia*, the only European/N. African member of subgenus *Scorpiris*, is rarely seen in collections. As a winter bloomer (approximately November to February) with large, delicately scented flowers, it is a worthy addition to any alpine house; our oldest clone, which increased and flowered spectacularly, planted on a ledge in the old Alpine House, is now almost 40 years old. Usually the colour spectrum is in the blue-violet range, but we have grown very pale blue, albino, and even rose-pink forms. Two of our most recent ‘juno’ acquisitions, and flowering for the first time thanks to Kit Strange, are the poorly known *Iris atropatana*, from S. Armenia, a compact species producing broad-lanceolate leaves and 2 to 3 greenish-yellow to bluish-yellow flowers, 2.9 to 4.3 cm across; the second species is perhaps even more exciting, *Iris stocksii*, from Afghanistan and W. Pakistan, pale lavender, with some electric-blue veining and a dark reddish-violet blade to the falls. One of the few ‘pogon’ irises (section *Iris*) that warrants the same pampering as the above is the Asian *Iris scariosa* (our E. Kazakhstan plant might be more correctly called *Iris glaucescens*). In the past I have tried growing this species in a trough, but it sulked and never flowered. It is only 13 cm tall, with arching grey leaves and 3 flowers of a beautiful chocolate-brown, lavender and white combination, although this xerophyte’s flower colour is variable in nature.

Much has been written about the cultivation of species from section *Oncocyclus* (subgenus *Iris*) – single flowered plants with a beard of unicellular hairs on their falls and a conspicuous aril to the seeds. They require overhead protection and, until a couple of years ago, I grew a large collection alongside the ‘junos’ and species of section *Regelia*, in clay ‘long-toms’; of course, all would produce stronger plants given a free root-run denied by pot culture (one solution to this is the use of up-ended, half-plunged, clay drain-pipes). With the Middle Eastern species, particularly, it is important to try and keep plants as cold and well-ventilated as possible in our damp, dark winter months, to discourage them from producing excessive early top growth. *Oncocyclus* irises are martyr to all manner of bacterial/fungal diseases, especially prevalent during



*Iris atropatana* (Richard Wilford)

adverse conditions; virus infections are equally destructive. Some of these more susceptible species may even require glasshouse protection in colder areas of the U.K. Before the advent of 'mad-cow' disease, I used to line the base of each iris pot with processed cow manure, as well as giving the plants regular high-potash feeds during the growing season; this certainly encouraged regular flowering. Currently, all the *Oncocyclus* and *Regelia* species are coddled in a glasshouse... unnecessarily, in my view.

Long ago, when my passion for all these demanding irises was in its infancy and the collection still relatively small (long before I conceived the idea for a giant open-sided frame), we constructed 2 raised beds covered by access frames, one planted with 'juno' bulbs and the other with species and hybrids of the *Oncocyclus* and *Regelia* groups – mostly gifts from the late Michael Hoog. Some species of the latter 2 rhizomatous groups bear stolons; *Iris nectarifera*, a rarely seen *Oncocyclus* from S. Turkey and N.E. Syria, described by Adil Güner in 1980, was especially stoloniferous and flowered 60 cm away from where it had been planted some 30 months before! Curiously, although this material (Güner 1975) was from the type locality of *Iris nectarifera* – Mardin Province, Turkey – it had a pale lavender, white-tipped beard; the species is said to have a yellow beard.

My best attempt at growing *Regelia* irises (subgenus *Iris*) – arillate species with usually 2, rarely 3, flowers per stem and a beard on both falls and standards – was in a deep railway-sleeper bed, abutting a warm south-facing wall in the Alpine Nursery area; a hinged rigid-plastic roof came into play only in heavy rain, rhizomes were planted in an exceptionally sandy mix and the collection was fed/watered from below via a 'leaky-hose' system. Vigorous and spreading species, such as *Iris hoogiana* and the aptly named *I. stolonifera*, along with *Regelio-cyclus* hybrids, increased and bloomed particularly well...until parts of the old nursery, including this ad hoc frame, were demolished during redevelopment. We still grow those species, along with *Iris korolkowii*, *I. lineata* and *I. afghanica*, but in deep pots which, although satisfactory for the more compact species, just don't do the stoloniferous ones justice. It is worth trying tall, stately *Iris hoogiana* in the open, especially near a warm wall, in a sheltered garden on sandy soil.



*Iris nectarifera*  
(Media Resources, Kew)

Of the other sections within subgenus *Iris*, possibly none is more intractable than section *Hexapogon*. Its two xerophytic species have seeds with an aril, unbranched stems, and 3-5 flowers, with unicellular hairs on all 6 segments – as in section *Regelia*. But initial DNA studies place this small group closer to section *Oncocyclus* than to section *Regelia*, which does make some sense, as the *Hexapogon* and *Oncocyclus* sections are geographical neighbours, whilst *Regelia* irises are from a little further east. Having said that, it is clear that despite phytogeographical, morphological ►

and cytological differences between the *Oncocyclus* and *Regelia* groups, from the molecular point of view they are very close indeed. We grew, flowered and then immediately lost *Iris longiscapa*, only a couple of years ago. This rare member of the *Hexapogon*, housed with the ‘junos’ beneath the All-weather frame, was feeble and only 12 cm tall, with a tiny nub-like rhizome, a single small flower and thread-like, more-or-less erect foliage, 1 mm wide. I thought this plant was *Iris falcifolia*, initially, and discussed it in a recent *Species Group Bulletin* under that name; in some respects it appears intermediate between the two species.

*Iris bloudowii*, of section *Psammiris*, is not quite so successful outside as its more diminutive cousin, *I. humilis*, although it survived and flowered well for a number of seasons on a slightly shaded but free-draining slope outside the pyramidal Alpine House. Nowadays it is pan-grown and plunged under the All-weather frame, a little leaf-mould incorporated into its sandy mix but, unlike the ‘junos’, it does not require a baking in summer, which would tend to desiccate its pale, rather slender and vulnerable rhizomes. Another member of the *Psammiris*, *Iris potaninii*, is a more recent acquisition at Kew, and we are still learning how to treat this little gem, currently growing alongside the ‘junos’ and other dryland plants, but not given quite such a dry resting period in summer. Ours is the yellow-flowered phase, but there is the blue-violet phase (var. *ionantha*), and a very desirable white form in cultivation somewhere.

The final section within subgenus *Iris* is section *Pseudoregelia*, characterised by arillate seeds, an unbranched stem and prominently blotched flowers with a beard on the falls only. These are primarily dwarf mountain plants, and although one or two species can be grown in the open, most require overhead protection from the wet. I grew *Iris tigridia* happily for many years alongside the ‘junos’; it requires exceptionally deep pots, or planting in a bulb frame, but needs to be kept dry in winter, after an initial watering in mid to late September, and fairly dry in summer once foliage has started to wither. This species is geographically a little isolated, and as it comes from a more arid habitat than others of the group, sharp drainage is de rigueur, with high potash feeds to encourage flowering.

Another subject for ‘long-tom’ clays and high potash feeding under the All-weather frame is *Iris masia*, of series *Syriacae*, although in sheltered areas this species and its more robust relative *I. grant-duffii* will survive and flower outside – planted against a south-facing wall on well-drained soil. DNA studies suggests that this small group, with stout, vertical rhizomes and terminal bulb-like buds, has evolved from that other Asian dryland rhizomatous group, series *Tenuifoliae*. We have just flowered *Iris tenuifolia* itself here at Kew for the first time and I observed that, as with *I. anguifuga* of the same series, and also members of the *Syriacae*, it has stamens with distinctive broad filaments much shorter than



*Iris tigridia*  
(Media Resources, Kew)

the anthers. There is also a strong evolutionary link between the 2-3 species of the Syriacae and the bulbous ‘reticulata’ irises, especially with divergent *Iris pamphylica*, overwhelmingly supported by pollen similarities and rootstock morphology. Seedlings of both *Iris masia* and *I. grant-duffii* initially form a small bulb with reticulate tunics; later, the base-plate thickens and elongates to form a rhizome, sometimes branching, with fat terminal buds encircled by vicious ‘spines’ – remains of the previous season’s leaf-veins. The Syriacae bear unbranched stems with single terminal flowers.

*Iris pamphylica*, of subgenus *Hermodactyloides*, was described by Ian Hedge in 1961. We grew this divergent ‘reticulata’ on a steep rocky slope outside the pyramidal Alpine House, where it regularly flowered and slowly increased. When, eventually, it had to be dug up, not only were collars of ‘spines’ observed around the bulbs, but we also noted that base-plates of some of these bulbs had elongated, forming near-vertical branches with terminal bulbs, almost like the Syriacae. So it is entirely feasible that the ‘reticulatas’ have evolved from the Syriacae, with *Iris pamphylica* and *I. tuberosa* as the link between the rhizomatous Syriacae and the bulbous ‘reticulatas’. *Iris pamphylica* and *I. tuberosa* have structurally similar rootstocks despite outward appearances, foliage identical in cross-section, and also flowers and seed pods held high up on the stem. The Syriacae, of course, have the typical unifacial, sword-like leaves of rhizomatous irises. Most of the ‘reticulata’ species perform well planted in a bulb frame; cultivation in pots is seldom as satisfactory long-term, although positioning the bulbs deeply to discourage the formation of ‘rice-grains’ (tiny offsets), regular potash feeding and the avoidance of a real baking in summer, should all contribute towards stronger stocks. *Iris reticulata*, *I. histrioides* and *I. tuberosa* are happy on the rock garden given good drainage and a sunny spot, whilst *I. winogradowii* relishes slightly cooler conditions.

At Kew we are not skilled at cultivating *Iris kolpakowskiana*. This choice little species and its close relatives, *Iris winkleri* and the recently described *I. pskemensis*, are all snow-melt plants from the foothill to alpine zones of the Tien-Shan, and possibly easier to tame in more northern or continental climes. Rodionenko created genus *Alatavia* for *Iris kolpakowskiana* and *I. winkleri*. They are traditionally treated as part of the ‘reticulata’ group and, like that group, have bulbs consisting of a single fleshy scale and sometimes even netted bulb tunics, but the molecular data strongly suggests that this trio of Central Asian species is much more closely allied to subgenus *Xiphium* and that these two groups, both with channelled leaves, are (notwithstanding a marked geographical disjunction) descended from a common ancestor, probably related to the Spuriae. The only suggestion I can make regarding growing *Iris kolpakowskiana* and its 2 cousins is to treat them like true ‘reticulatas’: keep relatively dry in winter, feed regularly but do not bake in summer.

### Cold house: summer dry

As discussed above, some of the desert *Oncocyclus* irises may require a little more protection in colder areas – plants such as *Iris susiana*, from the Lebanon, a species cultivated since the late 16th century and under which



*I. susiana* (syn. *I. sofarana* subsp. *kasruwana*)  
(Media Resources, Kew)

*I. sofarana* and its subspecies have been placed in synonymy. In my view, the diminutive *Iris vartanii*, a winter-flowering 'reticulata', also justifies extra protection, even at Kew, and its wonderful almond fragrance the better enjoyed.

### Frost-free: slightly tender evergreen species

*Iris speculatrix*, whose epithet refers to the signal patch on its falls that resembles a looking-glass, has been associated with both the 'crested' irises, the *Chinenses* group and even *I. ruthenica* of series *Ruthenicae*. However, *Iris speculatrix* is another divergent species, in this instance as sister and probably ancestral to that beardless/uncrested subgroup consisting of the *Spuriae*, *Xiphium*, *Tenuifoliae*, *Syriacae* and *Hermodactyloides* ('reticulata') alliance. Although the species in this subgroup are primarily xerophytic, and *Iris speculatrix* is from a more mesic environment, the morphological and anatomical support for its placement here is strong. This is a plant which requires a cool, free-draining, leafy/peaty acid soil and light shade



*Iris speculatrix*  
(Media Resources, Kew)



*Iris vartanii* (Media Resources, Kew)

in summer. At Kew it flourished on a peat-bed in the pyramidal Alpine House, even when temperatures occasionally fell well below 0° C, although it is not hardy outside in the U.K. Today this evergreen iris is grown in the new Davies Alpine House, as well as in large pots in a frost-free greenhouse.

Another evergreen requiring protection is *Iris munzii*, a member of series *Californicae* (the 'Pacific Coast' irises) and restricted to Tulare County, California. This species also excelled when planted in the old Alpine House, forming an imposing display over 70 cm tall, with 3-4 flowers per stem, each powdery-blue flower 10-12 cm across....this is one of the most beautiful species of its series but, alas, too tender for the open garden, even in Kew's banana belt. It prefers a gritty soil with a little added leaf mould or peat. Nowadays it languishes in the Davies Alpine House, screaming for more leg room.

## Bulb frame or cold house (with light shade): winter dry/summer active

Although the species of rhizomatous section *Pseudoregelia* are repotted in autumn and given an initial watering, generally their pots are then best kept dry during the winter months or until the new season's leaves have developed. Molecular work has shown that the Chinese *Iris narcissiflora* is a member of this group, but we have been spectacularly unsuccessful in attempting to grow that rare species beyond the seedling stage. The most commonly encountered member of the section and the easiest to grow is *Iris kemaonensis*, widely distributed in the Himalaya. It is happy outside in a free-draining peat bed, as well as in pots plunged in a cool frame, lightly shaded in summer – rather different treatment to that afforded *Iris tigridia*. We grew *Iris hookeriana*, from the W. Himalaya, in containers plunged in a cool bulb frame with protection from winter wet, but it did not survive more than a few years. The same applied to *Iris goniocarpa*, almost as widespread as *I. kemaonensis*, and the more restricted *I. leptophylla*, from Sichuan and Gansu in W. China. We used a peaty/leafy, free-draining compost for these three Himalayan/Chinese species. There is



*I. leptophylla*  
(Media Resources, Kew)

following a drop in temperature and autumn precipitation; if their bulbs or rhizomes require a resting period, this will invariably coincide with a certain amount of dryness in summer). So this particular group, from summer monsoon regions, must be repotted or planted between early and late March, in a free-draining but fairly rich compost; if planted in the open garden, then rootstocks must be lifted and stored in dry sand or peat for the winter months. DNA studies have indicated that the *Nepalensis* are related to the bulbous *Scorpiris* (the 'junos'), strongly supported by pollen studies which show both subgenera exhibiting 2 pollen types found nowhere else within genus *Iris*. It is likely that these two subgenera have arisen from a common Asian ancestor – the 'junos' adapted to a summer-dry Mediterranean climate, whilst the *Nepalensis* irises evolved to cope with summer-wet conditions. *Iris barbatula*, described by Noltie & Guan in 1995, from N.W. Yunnan, ▶

evidence of parallel evolution between some of the *Pseudoregelia* irises and certain species of subgenus *Nepalensis*. *Iris leptophylla* has been confused with *I. decora* (subgenus *Nepalensis*), although the former has a rounded, bunion-like rhizome and a true beard, while the latter has a dissected raised crest and the usual *Nepalensis* rootstock: a reduced nose-like rhizome and *roscoea*-like swollen roots. *Iris dolichosiphon* (section *Pseudoregelia*) is similar in bloom to the recently described *I. barbatula* (subgenus *Nepalensis*): both have similarly shaped flowers, and the raised, finely dissected crest of *I. barbatula* superficially resembles the beard found in species of section *Pseudoregelia*; *Iris dolichosiphon* and *I. barbatula* are both more-or-less stemless, but with a very long flower-tube, and both occur in Yunnan although the distribution of *I. dolichosiphon* is wider.

Unlike most other irises, species of subgenus *Nepalensis* have a winter-dormant period, not producing new roots until early spring. (Iris generally begin root growth in autumn, often

has up to 3 long-tubed flowers, about 5 cm across, and a short subterranean stem. Unusually, this member of the *Nepalensis* has a fimbriate, almost beard-like crest (as do some ‘junos’, e.g. *Iris orchioides* and *I. kuschakewiczii*), giving its species name.

*Iris collettii* var. *collettii*, *I. collettii* var. *acaulis* and *I. decora* are often cultivated. *Iris decora* is a widespread species which urgently requires further study: plants can be 15-100 cm tall, branched or unbranched, and palynological studies have shown that specimens under this species name can have markedly different pollen architecture. *Iris staintonii*, described by Hara in 1974, was introduced from Nepal by an Oxford University team, in 1992, when they also collected the geranium-red variants of *Roscoea purpurea* and a new *Roscoea* species, later described as *R. ganeshensis*. *Iris staintonii* is extremely dwarf, bearing a single stemless flower, about 3 cm across, with only a slightly raised ridge rather than a crest, and one narrow leaf which elongates later. Although this is a divergent member of subgenus *Nepalensis*, it has the swollen roots and reduced rhizome typical of the group. It only survived a few years in cultivation, but at Kew it flowered, so we were able to study its morphology, take photographs and process a tissue sample for Kew’s DNA Bank.



*Iris barbatula*  
(Media Resources, Kew)

When asked about his work, Tony replied,

“I became Manager of the Alpine/Bulb Unit at Kew in 1976, whilst still a Kew student, and remained in this post, developing and maintaining the collections, until my retirement in 2004. My interest in irises grew whilst at Kew (inspired by the likes of Brian Mathew, Per Wendelbo, Michael Hoog, etc.), especially for the more challenging ‘arillate pogons’ and ‘juno’ irises. I devised ways of growing them fairly successfully and, in 1987, designed the open-sided All-weather frame at Kew where many of our dryland geophytes are grown. I continue to study and expand the iris collection at Kew as an Honorary Research Associate.”

This is by no means the full picture.

“Tony is the unrecognised British expert in species iris, having devoted years to watching how they grow and noting their every requirement. He knows all the secrets to achieving outstanding success in their cultivation.”



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## **Walker Ross Award:**

This is an annual award given for performing outstanding effort for the promotion of the gene iris or the Canadian Iris Society. If you know of any member/group deserving of this award; give a written account of their doings and send or give to any of our directors for consideration.

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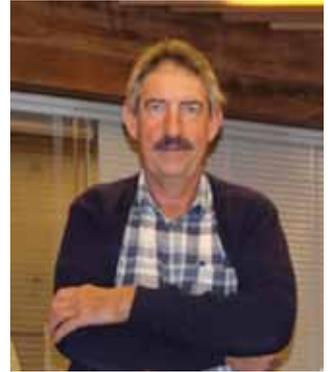
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# Iris pseudacorus or Yellow Flag

By John Moons

This is an Iris that got its name from a plant that is not even an Iris. The sweet flag with the botanical name of *Acorus calamus* gave this Iris its name, because the leaves of this Iris and the *Acorus* look alike. The *Acorus* grows in the same area as the *Iris pseudacorus*.



Botanically the genus *Iris* has a subgenus called *Limniris* and this subgenus has a section with the name *Limniris*. This is further divided into 16 series and the one we need is *Laevigatae*. The plants in this series all grow in moist or wet conditions. They originate from Asia, Europe and North America. The most important names in this series are: *Iris ensata* (Japanese Iris), *I. laevigata*, *I. pseudacorus*, *I. versicolor* and *I. virginica*.

The *pseudacorus* originates in Europe, Western Asia and Northern Africa. You will find the plants in wet spots, in swamps, along waterways and around ponds. Here in North America it was introduced from Europe. I have not been able to find out when that happened. Most likely more than one immigrant took seeds or plants from Europe and made them grow in the New World. Immigrants like to see familiar plants from their old country. I myself have memories of these Irises growing along the canals in The Netherlands. Here in the New World the *pseudacorus* has been quite invasive. In some U.S. states it is even banned from being sold or propagated. Here in Ontario we see flyers from the conservation authorities warning about this invasive plant. This Iris makes one of the largest clumps of any Irises. It will grow in all kinds of soils and on our own very bad clay, where we cannot grow a lot more than grass, the *pseudacorus* just thrives. The plants make a lot of seeds and they float on water. They can survive many months just floating around. In order to stem the spread of these plants some growers will only sell this Iris to customers who have a pond that has not a waterway leading out of the pond, so that the seeds do not end up being spread further downstream.



*pseudacorus* - Year 1

The *Iris pseudacorus* grows very well in swampy soils, but it will also grow in an ordinary border. Quite often you will see that if you take a piece from a *pseudacorus* in a swamp and plant that in a dry area, the plant in the dry spot will only grow to half the size of the mother plant.

The rhizomes are very large and pink on the inside. If you ever try to remove a *pseudacorus* from its spot on the edge of your pond, you will find that you really have to work at it. These Irises are not recommended for small ponds. They will simply take over your water feature.

Do not try to grow them in a container with other water plants, because they probably will not survive. The plants can be submerged year round. It is hardy to USDA zone 4. In a fertile damp spot the leaves will reach a height of 100 to 120 cm., but on a dry spot the height will be lower. The leaves are from 15 to 30 mm. wide.

The flower stems can reach up to 2 m. high, but usually it will be from 125 to 150 cm. Again on a dry spot it will be less. The flower stalks are branched. The flowers are bright yellow. The falls have often purplish veins. The flowers can be up to 10 cm. across. The fruit is a dry capsule 4-7 cm. long. It is made of 3 segments that fold open when it ripens. The seeds are brown, flat, round and about 5-7 mm. across.

There are a number of cultivars around. The gene pool of *pseudacorus* seem to be very stable. Most cultivars are still yellow. There are millions of *Pseudacorus* plants and mutations seem to be rare. Most cultivars are still yellow. It is like dandelions. There are millions of plants, but they all look alike and they are all yellow. Plants like the *Hibiscus rosa-chinensis* or the *chrysanthemum* have a large choice of colours and shapes, but this is not the case with the *pseudacorus*. ▶



Vaughn Dragland

*pseudacorus* - Year 2 (trying to take over a small pond)

### Some of the cultivars are:

- *Alba*—creamy white –*bastardii*—( Spach 1846) creamy yellow, close to white
- *Flore Pleno*—double yellow. As a double flower I find this a disappointment for a double flower
- *Gigantea*—large flowers that are medium yellow
- *Golden Queen*—dark golden yellow
- *Ivory*—cream coloured flowers with deep purplish-maroon signals
- *Krill*—(Copeland 1997) creamy yellow with reddish veins around the vein area
- *Mandshurica*—burnished yellow
- *Phil Edinger* (Hager 1991)—yellow flowers with strongly veined chocolate markings on the falls
- *Primrose Monarch*—pale cream
- *Roy Davidson* (Hager 1987)—yellow with deep brown patterns at the signals
- *Iris pseudacorus variegata*—in the spring the leaves have yellow stripes. It looks quite spectacular, but the yellow colour disappears in the summer. This plant does not do well in heavy clay soil.

One of the hybrids is: *Holden Clough*—a chance hybrid between *I. chrysographes* and *I. pseudacorus*. The veins are brownish purple. From a distance this *Iris* looks brown. Transplant time here in Ontario is September. The plants have then time to get established before the winter.

Propagation is by splitting the rhizomes or by seeding. The seeds seem to germinate easily. Pests and diseases: the *pseudacorus* does not seem to have any diseases that I have read about. I have never seen any damage done by the *Iris* borer. In Europe is the *iris* sawfly. This insect can cause damage to the leaves of the *pseudacorus* plants that are growing close to water.

Uses for the plant and its parts: the plants are used for erosion control. The roots will also trap heavy metals and so clean up a site. The seeds can make for a coffee substitute as long as they are well roasted. Caution must taken, because they can be poisonous.

A yellow dye can be obtained from the flowers and a black dye from the roots if it is mixed with iron sulphate. The root can also be a source of tannin and has been used as a source of ink.



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### Books used for this article:

*The Gardener's Iris Book* by William Shear - The Taunton Press  
*Perennials* by Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix - Random House  
*The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises* by Geoff Stebbings - Timber Press  
*Hortus Third* by L.H.Bailey - Hortorium Cornell University  
*MACMILLAN Irises* by Pamela McGeorge and Alison Nicoll Firefly



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Sunday, April 7th, 2013 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Cost: Non-members: \$60.00 Members: \$55.00,**

Includes 3 fabulous speakers, Panel to answer questions, Silent and Live Auctions, Lunch featuring a Championship Sandwich Board Buffet and Chef's Fresh Harvest Salad & the OHS's famous home baking! Gift Hosta! Prizes! Great Friends!

8:30 am - 9:00 am	<b>H O S T A F O R U M</b>	Registration & Coffee/Tea/Refreshments
9:00 am - 9:15 am		Welcome & Opening Announcements
9:15 am - 10:15 pm		<p><b>"One Path Taken ... Not Unlike Many" with Don Dean</b></p> <p>A winner of the Alex J. Summers Distinguished Merit Award, the highest award bestowed by the American Hosta Society, Don comes to us all the way from Minneapolis. His presentation traces his journey as a gardener and takes us through the seasons of his garden and his hybridizing – the plants and resulting registered Hosta with a sneak peak of what is coming in the near future and beyond.</p>
10:15 am - 10:45 am		Break & Prize Draw
10:45 am - 11:45 am		<p><b>"Trees for the Garden" with Darren Heimbecker</b></p> <p>Discover the perfect woody plants to complement your Hosta and other plantings regardless of the size of your garden. Darren is the founder of Whistling Gardens, home to the largest public collection of conifers in the world with over 2,200 species, hybrids and cultivars on site as well as an ornamental tree collection that focuses on uncommon species and new varieties.</p>
11:45 am - 1:00 pm		Lunch Break & Prize Draw
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm		<p><b>"Tissue Culture for Dummies ... Like Me" with Rob Mortko</b></p> <p>Rob is owner of Shades of Green in Kansas and originator of the unusual <i>Hosta</i> "Stitch in Time." His background in chemistry and engineering coupled with his interest in <i>Hosta</i> kindled Rob's longtime curiosity in tissue culture and his recent retirement has afforded him the opportunity to start his own lab. Rob's presentation, a sometimes humorous, often times humbling behind the scenes look at what goes on in a <i>Hosta</i> TC lab, will answer what is tissue culture, how does it work and why do we care.</p>
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm		<p><b>Q &amp; A Panel</b> - Bring all your <i>Hosta</i> related questions for our panel to answer! Questions can also be submitted in advance to <a href="mailto:cindydeutekom@netscape.ca">cindydeutekom@netscape.ca</a></p>
3:00 pm - 3:15 pm		Break/Silent Auction Winners Announced
3:15 pm - 4:00 pm		<b>Live Auction</b> – Featuring newly introduced <i>Hosta</i> . (cash or cheque only)
4:00 pm	Closing Remarks/Evaluations	

**TICKETS:** Send your cheque, payable to Ontario Hosta Society, to:  
 OHS c/o Heinke Thiessen, 2460 Council Ring Rd., Mississauga, On. L5L 1E6  
 Please include your mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.  
 (Tickets will be mailed.)

Visit [www.ontariohostasociety.com](http://www.ontariohostasociety.com) or email [heinkehosta@gmail.com](mailto:heinkehosta@gmail.com) for more information.

# CIS - 2013 Iris Order Purchase Form

Page 1

CULTIVAR	Rebloom	Year	Selling	Quantity	Amount
Tall Bearded	(R)	Introduced	Price		
Advanced Features		2012	26.25		
Afterlife		2012	26.25		
Again And Again	R	1999	4.50		
Blush Of Pink		2010	11.25		
Casual Elegance	R	2004	5.25		
Chianti Classic		2010	11.25		
Cornhusker	R	2005	5.25		
Cruise To Autumn	R	2001	5.25		
Delightful Woman		2012	26.25		
English Charm	R	1989	4.50		
Fall Rerun	R	2012	5.25		
Frost Echo	R	1995	4.50		
Geode		2012	37.50		
Jennifer Rebecca	R	1985	5.25		
Lunar Whitewash	R	2003	5.25		
Miss Fluffy		2012	26.25		
Mother Earth	R	1987	5.25		
My Generation	R	2009	7.50		
Over And Over	R	2001	4.50		
Pink Attraction	R	1988	5.25		
Purdue Pete		2010	11.25		
Pure As Gold	R	1993	5.25		
Renascent	R	2005	5.25		
Rosalie Figge	R	1993	4.50		
Sky King Returns	R	2003	5.25		
Snow Melt	R	2004	5.25		
Summer Sunburst	R	2010	7.50		
Swoosh		2012	26.25		
Total Recall	R	1992	5.25		

Intermediate Bearded					
Champagne Encore	R	1997	3.75		
Double Your Fun	R	2000	3.75		
I'll Be Back	R	2004	4.50		
Many Mahalos	R	2003	4.50		
<b>Sub Total:</b>					

CULTIVAR MTB's	Rebloom (R)	Year Introduced	Selling Price	Quantity	Amount
Maui Mango	R	2005	4.50		
Merit	R	1996	4.50		
Pretty Pony	R	2012	11.25		
Sun Spirit	R	2007	6.00		

SDB's					
Autumn Surge	R	2005	3.75		
Bad Boys		2011	6.00		
Blend Of Blue		2012	9.00		
Brilliant Bauble		2012	9.00		
Bumpkin		2012	9.00		
Coconino		2012	9.00		
Flirting Again	R	2002	3.75		
Forever Blue	R	1997	3.75		
Here Come The Clowns		2011	3.75		
Maui Sunrise		2008	3.75		
Perpetual Indulgence	R	2005	3.75		
Purple Zinger		2012	9.00		
Quarter Moon		2011	6.00		
Raindance Returns	R	2004	3.75		
Slow Burn		2009	3.75		

Total from page 1:		
Total this page:		
Total Shipping:		
<b>Grand Total:</b>		

Shipping	Ontario	Other		
1 to 10 rhizomes		14.00		
11 to 20 rhizomes	14.00	19.00		
21 to 30 rhizomes	19.00	24.00		
31 & more rhizomes Price of 30	19.00+	24.00+		
Plus .50 cents per rhizome over 30				

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# Winter 2013 Garden Diggings:

by Christopher Hollinshead

*“Garden Diggings” is a regular column in the CIS Newsletter. Chris Hollinshead lives in Mississauga, Ontario with his family, an ever-evolving garden and lots of irises. He may be reached by e-mail at: [cdniris@gmail.com](mailto:cdniris@gmail.com). (Please note that this is a new e-mail address as of 2013.)*



**A**t this point we are well launched into another year. Hopefully you will be able to take a little time to recharge and rest up. The Christmas rush season is past and I hope that the past gardening season one was a good one that allowed you to enjoy some great irises blooming in your garden. Take time to reflect on what was great in the garden and also maybe what was not! There are always things that you can change and try.

It is late January 2013 as I write this and the winter for many parts of North America has been again quite mild, similar to last year. I really hope that we do not have the same super early spring weather as last year. The problem with this is the plant damaging freezes occurring as the tender new plant growth emerges. The 2012 iris bloom here in southern Ontario was definitely diminished as a result. However, ever optimistic, I do remain hopeful that a repeat scenario is not pending.

## **Speaking of Springtime, let's move on to Spring plans.**

I will repeat here some of what I wrote last year because it's good, timely and useful advice. At this time you may consider putting together a request list of catalogues to order. Iris catalogues will soon become available from the various providers of such things. Order some iris catalogues today for some serious armchair gardening.

Late January or February is a good time to request the catalogs. Order them any time now. Most commercial sources are compiling their catalogs now for the season. The bulk of them show up in March/April with a few more trickling in later. Some commercial suppliers provide internet on-line versions available for download or on-line viewing. A mixture of the two catalogue types, printed and electronic, could be the correct combination for you. I still find it nice to sit in an easy chair and take pleasure in marking up a printed catalogue with check marks of potential purchases. Do what works the best for you.

For specialty iris commercial suppliers please check our Canadian source listings that occur at the back of the CIS (Canadian Iris Society) Newsletter each issue. You may also wish to consult the AIS (American Iris Society) Bulletin and the extensive commercial listing in the back of that publication. Just be well aware of the import restrictions and ▶

extra costs associated with ordering and shipping to Canada from USA sources. The CIS also runs fund raiser sales events each year to provide a source of newer iris introductions to our members. Watch for the CIS Purchase Offer Program to hopefully return again for 2013, there you will find an excellent selection of choice newer irises at excellent prices. Details will be published in the CIS Newsletter and also on the CIS website. (This is a CIS members only opportunity and a benefit of CIS membership.)

From whatever source you choose, to have the best selection of the offerings you should order as soon as possible and the rhizomes will arrive at the proper planting time for your area (July/August here in our northern climate). As in most cases these are newer iris varieties with limited availability, if you really want to obtain something specific or special, the suggestion is to place your order as sooner than later to avoid possible disappointment.

If you need a little guidance selecting from the huge number of iris varieties that you find in the catalogues then consulting the American Iris Society (AIS) Awards listing that is published each year can be helpful. We published the 2012 AIS Award listing in the Autumn 2012 CIS Newsletter, it was attached to my column. Check the HM Awards for newer up-and-comers and the AM awards for ones that are new but a little older and have progressed further through the awards system identifying them as extra high quality irises. (Newer irises could be described as irises that have been introduced to commerce in the last ten years or so.)

Have fun with your catalog reading, selecting and ordering. Prepare your own special “want list”. The extra time available in the off-season is perfect for planning those new iris variety acquisitions and how they will fit into your garden layout.

What’s new on the iris front for 2013? As always there is plenty. Just to mention a few items:

The venerable hybridizer **Keith Keppel** looks like he has some nice new



Fancy Ideas; Keppel 2013, a TB iris in the luminata pattern style

introductions. Keppel says he is cutting back so there are perhaps not quite as many as in past years but these are some first quality irises none the less. A couple of his new cultivars are in the photographs here, the first a 2013 and the second a 2012 introduction:

*Fancy Ideas* is so new that as of this writing (mid-January) the description is not yet available! Keith Keppel is one of the most organized iris hybridizers and will usually have his new introductions and the associated info available well before anyone else. I will post the info for this one on the CIS website when it’s available. Looks like it could be a keeper.

**Description:** *Volcanic Glow*, Keith Keppel 2012, 34 inches height, midseason bloom. All that's missing is the smell of brimstone! Smoky, smoldering hot luminata, with aureolin. yellow standards flushed brownish red in the centre portion. Zanzibar red falls, with velvety wash overall, carry a narrow aureolin edge, while the white hot heart is edged bright golden lemon. Beards are also golden lemon. Ruffled, with terminal and three branches up to eight buds. (Montmartre X Lip Service)



Volcanic Glow; Keppel 2012, a TB iris, again a luminata color pattern

So you can see from my picks that I sort of like the luminata color pattern style! What's a luminata pattern you ask? Some may already know this iris term but for the others here it is; Luminata: (a bloom color category) pale yellow or near white base color flower with a darker color washed over the falls and standards in varied degrees of intensity. ...Or how about flowers that glow! ...as in luminous. The luminata term is a very appropriate and good descriptive term for these irises. Need a little more? ...a luminata is a white or yellow flower with color washed over it. The lighter shade bleeds through, which makes the flower look as though it is lit from within. Hopefully you are now fully informed on the luminata term? For sure it's a great look!

Schreiners of Oregon did not have their 2013 iris introduction listings info available as of this writing but an item of interest to me from 2012 was the TB iris *Alsea Falls*.

**Description:** *Alsea Falls*, Schreiners 2012, 36 inches in height, mid to late season bloom, named after one of Western Oregon's most striking rivers, this iris was the cover iris on their 2012 annual iris catalogue. *Alsea Falls* has clean, contrasting white flaring standards atop blue-violet falls, splashed with a large, white starburst, echoing the purity of the standards. *Alsea Falls*, as shown is a real show-stopper with its substantial 4 1/2" x 7" flowers, each producing 6 to 8 buds. ▶



Alsea Falls, TB iris, a Schreiner 2012 introduction



**Earthstar, a Siberian iris,  
2012 Schafer/Sacks introduction**

flowers have great form with ruffles in all parts. Falls open a hard-to-describe but lovely blend of red-violet and soft yellow. At the signals and edges the yellow stands alone. Standards are cream, and pearly styles have yellow midribs and tips. Flowers vary in intensity and composition depending on weather conditions - all variations are beautiful. Many strong upright stalks with four to six buds each. Seedlings going back to Jack's Health and Strawberry Social, Dandy's Hornpipe, a sib to Book of Secrets, Riverdance and a sib to Salamander Crossing.

Regarding Siberian irises, I know that last year when the CIS had their Spring 2012 sale offer of Siberians many people were excited and placed orders for the very nice Siberian cultivars on offer. I was one of those people. However the feedback from the participants is that many of them experienced varied degrees of difficulty with the survivability of these plants. Please know that the plants you received were packaged and shipped to you properly and in a timely fashion. Normally there should not be any difficulty in getting the majority of the plants set and growing nicely.

Just to let you know that I too experienced a low survival rate as only approximately 50% of them survived planting for me. That would not be considered normal. Now as you know I am no novice at setting these type of plants out and I did plant mine within the week from the date that they were initially dug and shipped. There should have been good results but there are always variables, both controllable and uncontrollable. I have thought long and hard regarding what the problem was last year. Difficult to say overall what the problem was as I don't know everyone's growing conditions at the time and how the plants were set out. I can however give my perspective on this relative to my own experience.

On to Siberian irises ...there is a Siberian iris that I liked last year but did not obtain. That is *Earthstar*, a Schafer/Sacks 2012 introduction. One very nice bonus aspect of Siberian irises is the exceptionally nice landscape effect of the plantings once they grow into a nice clump. This would normally require approximately 3 years of growing (see the clump photo of *Earthstar*).

**Plant description:**

*Earthstar*, 2012 Schafer/Sacks, 35" height, early to mid season bloom. Wonderful display and a grand clump! Medium to small

The plants I received were decent divisions of the various Siberian varieties that I ordered. Now these are springtime divisions so they were not quite as substantial and mature as those from a fall division with a whole growing season on them. This observation is based on the fact that I have previously received both types of Siberian deliveries, spring and fall. Possibly this is a factor that may have made the plants a little more fragile to transplant/manage. Spring division and transplanting of Siberians is considered normally optimal so the plants can grow and develop the whole growing season. Autumn delivery and planting is another option, the downside of Autumn planting is that the plants may not have enough time to become established properly to survive the winter and that subsequent springtime heaving of the plants from the ground is very likely.



...a beautiful clump of the Siberian iris *Earthstar*.

Soil is another factor; I know my soil is optimal for Siberians, so that was not likely the issue for me. Watering is another consideration, Siberians like a little more water than the bearded irises and these Siberians received the extra water. I was careful to make sure these new plantings did not dry out completely with a combination of natural rainfall and artificial watering. Next factor to examine; too much intense sunlight after the initial transplant. In retrospect, I feel that this may have been my issue; mine did receive perhaps too much sun and heat from the beautiful spring days immediately following the planting. The young plants may have in fact been baked/fried from that situation. Hard to control other than planting into pots initially so that you can move the plants around and out of the intense sun if that condition occurs. This intense sun and heat is a condition that usually does not occur in the fall planting of Siberians, where I have never had an issue. Everything considered, I come to the conclusion that this may have been the one specific problem for me. Siberian hybridizers Schafer-Sacks actually do recommend potting the newly received plants to establish them, then later set them into the garden. So another general influence, whether potted or transplanted directly into the garden is the local weather conditions. The season here in southern Ontario was an unusual one with the season being incredibly advanced by as much as 3 weeks in many cases. ▶

## From the \*Society for Siberian Irises, here is their official information on:

**Transplanting and dividing:** Two to four fan divisions are recommended for transplanting, and the roots must be kept moist while the plants are out of the ground. Plant the rhizomes one inch deep (slightly deeper in sandy soils). Siberian clumps can grow undisturbed for several years, dividing being necessary when either the clumps become crowded or when vigor declines and blooms get smaller.

**\*\*Cold climates:** Spring is the best time to plant or divide, with August as second choice. This gives the plant a chance to establish a good root system before winter rolls in.

**Warm climates:** Avoid the hot weather periods; many prefer the cooler fall period.

If unable to obtain plants at the best time for your area, you may pot them up and put in a protected area. If wintering over in cold areas in pots, be sure to set the pots in the ground, with the tops at soil level. Use of gallon size pots is best for this procedure. In any situation, keep newly transplanted plants well watered at all times, with one inch per week a minimum, and mulch for their first winter.

**A further few short cultural notes on Siberians:** Siberians should have at least half a day of sun and will perform at their best in full sun. This will help to ensure the most bloom and vigorous healthy growth.

**Soil/moisture/fertilization:** Siberian irises, once established, can handle a range of soil conditions. Siberians like a little extra water but do not like to grow immersed in standing water or where there is constant freezing and thawing over winter. These irises appreciate a light application of general or organic fertilizer, such as 5-10-10 in the spring. However, in good garden soil they will bloom several years with no fertilizer.

**General maintenance:** Keep your Siberian irises free of weeds. Mulching is extremely beneficial practice, providing for water retention, weed control, and nutrition. If your area is subject to iris borer, you will need to take some steps to control them. Bloom stalks should be cut out shortly after blooming to prevent seed pod formation. The foliage of most irises should be cut to the ground in the Autumn. Waiting until Spring for this task may increase the possibility that voles and mice could have damaged your beautiful irises over the winter.

## Noted Siberian iris hybridizers Schafer-Sacks make some suggestions for newly received plants;

Your irises need attention as soon as they arrive. Plant the rhizomes one to two inches below the soil surface. We suggest two options - plant them in the garden immediately or pot them up and plant later. Regardless of how you choose to handle them, DO NOT fertilize these irises until they are well rooted in the ground or in a pot. It would be better to wait until next year to fertilize them than to fertilize before they are ready. (Fall planted irises do not need to be fertilized until spring.)

**Option 1. PLANT IMMEDIATELY** - Unwrap iris. If the roots are drying out, soak (just the roots) in water for a short time only - no more than one hour. Plant where they are to grow and keep moist (but not too wet) until active growth begins. When they are firmly attached to the ground by their roots, you can ease up on the watering; though do not allow long periods of drought in the first year.

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\* The Society for Siberian Irises website: [www.socsib.org](http://www.socsib.org)

\*\* In this regard, Canada would be considered a "cold climate"

**Option 2. POT UP** - Some people prefer to pot up their irises to keep them moist until a strong root system develops. It is important, however, that they not be kept too wet. Do not use a large a pot-- a pot in which the roots just barely fit is best. Use a well drained soil. We use a soilless mix and add 1/6 granite grit to ensure good drainage. (Our Agway has granite grit for adding to poultry feed. Do not use calcium crystals because they have the wrong pH.) If you can't get granite grit then add a really coarse sand or perlite. Keep pots moist, but not too wet, until active growth begins. If weather becomes hot (80+) before new roots are established take care that potted plants don't "cook". Dark pots in the hot sun can be a real problem for newly potted irises. Put them in the shade for the hottest part of the day. When the root growth reaches the bottom of the pot - plant in the ground.

**For either option:** The first winter in the ground after planting, it is a good idea to put down a mulch to avoid frost heaves. However, care must be taken not to create the perfect environment for mice and voles. If you are particularly prone to these critters you might want to use a brick or rock for winter mulch.

**Good luck. These irises can be a bit tricky to get established, but once they are in, they are one of the easiest of perennials to grow.**

If you experienced some sort of difficulty with the Siberians that you have acquired and planted I hope that this will give a little insight regarding possible problems that can occur and we can learn from it. Our apologies for Mother Nature, sometimes she provides conditions and situations that are beyond our control. Definitely disappointing when things do not work out but as ever optimistic gardeners I encourage you to try again to succeed in growing some of the new wonderful varieties of Siberian irises. At present I do have approximately 60 varieties of Siberians that are well established but there are always new interesting ones to obtain and enjoy. Growing them is part of the experience and pleasure.

Now that all the above acquisition planning and thinking are in motion, let's move along to your garden; ...nothing to do? ...maybe no, maybe yes. If you are experiencing heavy snow cover in your area then there is nothing to really do but observe from the window. The heavy snow layer will actually insulate the plants from damaging alternating freeze thaw action. If you have little or no snow cover then I would definitely suggest the following. Get your winter coat on and source some straw or evergreen boughs to place on the garden. These will do much the same as a heavy snow layer to protect your garden plants. If necessary, it should not take too long to accomplish this task and if you have already done this, even better!

Iris friends, I wish you well in all regards for the coming new year. Keep a watchful lookout for signs of Spring in your area ...wherever you may be located. Spring-like weather will be coming sooner for some, later for others but it is coming! When it does eventually arrive it is always a welcome and wonderful time of year.

**Get set for your best ever iris gardening year!**

...and as always, happy garden digging. C.H



# I HATE my Tiller

By Richard C. Richards

I hate my tiller. We are not talking about mild dislike, but industrial-strength animosity. I hate every bolt of this mechanical monstrosity to the core of my being. Let me tell you how all this came about.

First, some background. The tiller came straight from the bowels of Hell. The Devil and his administration, looking for a way to torture mankind while we are still above the sod, invented it in his vilest mood. He is still delighted with his fiendish cleverness. Friends suggested that I buy one to avoid the backbreaking labor of spadework. I am reevaluating the question of who my friends really are.

Take my latest session with this spawn of Satan. It would not start. I tried every trick I knew. I tugged on the cord until my back was sore (just what I had bought a tiller to avoid, of course). The obvious solution was to consult the manual, and I usually follow manuals religiously, but I had lent the tiller to my grandson, along with the manual. Being a teen-ager, he was born knowing, in capsule form, every secret of the human race. Funny, I don't remember teaching them to him. So he had no need for the manual, and promptly misplaced it. He returned the tiller sans manual.

So I tugged and tugged on the cord, pulled the choke out, pushed the choke in, primed, tugged, and added a heavy sweat to my sore back. Suddenly the tiller sputtered to life...for an instant. This gave me renewed hope, exactly what Satan had planned for me. After several sessions of sputtering, the tiller came to life with a demonic bellow, and we were off. It soon became evident that the torture had just begun. The sweat flowing down



my forehead was running into my eyes, blurring my vision. I had nothing to wipe the sweat away, and I was also pursuing my galloping tiller with determination. I did not want to stop it for fear of another half hour session to get it started. So I charged on.

This bit of heroics on my part got me to thinking about the old country and western hit, "I've Got Tears in My Ears From Lying on My Back and Crying My Heart Out Over You." My version would be: "I've Got Tears from Using My Tiller," except that I had sweat in



my eyes, not tears. But tears are more picturesque. The torture continued. The sweat was now running down my nose, lubricating it, and causing my glasses to slide downward like an Olympic skier on the chute. Soon they would launch themselves skyward in a magnificent jump of probably sixty meters. I took my hand off one of the handles of the tiller long enough to take a wild swipe at my glasses. The attempt to push them back up smudged them, and also sent them lower on my nose, causing the nosepiece to shut off my nostrils. Now I could only breathe through my mouth, not terribly wise in the storm of fine dust particles the tiller was spewing behind it and all over me. But stopping was out of the question.

One thing would ultimately stop me, I knew. The tiller would run out of gas, and ideally it would be when I had tilled the whole bed. So I followed the tiller through a haze of sweat, smudge, and dust, occasionally glimpsing the level of gas in the translucent tank. Minutes went by, and it did not change. Then I realized that the tiller was probably manufacturing gas, and if I could just hook it up to my car, I would reduce my gasoline bill considerably. Maybe I could even open a filling station of my own. Then the tiller sputtered, gasped, and died. I had completed the tilling task two times over, wanting to run the tiller out of gas because I remembered the advice in the misplaced manual to run it out of gas before storing it for any length of time. So there I stood, sweating profusely, squinting through the glasses perched precariously on the end of my nose, back aching, arms aching, doing my own personal interpretation of the Abominable Dust Man. I thought about destroying the tiller in some sort of mystical rite, maybe calling up the Devil to take it back.

So now you know why I hate my tiller. But I'll keep on using it. I hate doing the work with a spade even more.

Item provided by Chris Hollinshead, reprinted from AIS Region 15 Newsletter, Fall 2010 edition. AIS Region 15 is comprised of the areas; southern California and Arizona. Photos with article circa 1958.



# AIS Regional News

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## **Region 1**

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

**RVP Norine Veal**

e-mail [nsveal@aol.com](mailto:nsveal@aol.com)

- No Report
- 

## **Region 2**

New York, Ontario, Quebec

**RVP Donna Lowry**

e-mail [donnadonlowry@aol.com](mailto:donnadonlowry@aol.com)

- No Report
- 

## **Region 13**

Washington, Oregon, Alaska, British Columbia, Yukon

**RVP Alan Brooks**

e-mail [ebb1012@aol.com](mailto:ebb1012@aol.com)

- No Report
- 

## **Region 21**

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

**RVP Ron Cosner**

e-mail [keighley15@msn.com](mailto:keighley15@msn.com)

- No Report
- 

Full current details of the various RVPs and affiliated local iris clubs/societies of the AIS Regions are available on the AIS website: [www.irises.org](http://www.irises.org).

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### **Chinese Proverb:**

Man who eats too many prunes get good run for his money.

— [www.gardenhumor.com](http://www.gardenhumor.com)



# AIS 2013 Convention

## Dallas, Texas | April 15-20 2013

Provided by Christopher Hollinshead

If you are looking for an adventure and would like to visit Dallas, Texas next spring then read on and make some plans to attend the annual AIS convention in 2013. The people there would make you feel very welcome and you will see some great irises!

The Iris Society of Dallas welcomes you to attend the 2013 AIS Convention - from April 15-20 2013. The convention will be featuring guest irises at eight fabulous official convention gardens located in the greater Dallas and northern Texas area. Additionally two private gardens will be on display; the McDowell Garden and Perry Garden.



### ...and a few details on the 2013 Convention Gardens:

- Addison Garden. Located just north and west (and within a 3-minute walking distance) of the Crowne Plaza Hotel & Resort, this Park features three new separate Iris Gardens (1,100 sq. ft.) containing some 540 of the newest Tall Bearded Irises.
- Brown Garden. Located at Lake Texoma, Annette has over 500 bearded, spuria, and Louisiana iris in the convention beds. In her personal garden, she has over 600 bearded, spuria, and Louisiana iris.
- Burseen Garden. Located in Grand Prairie, Texas, Tom (TB) grows more than 350 Tall Bearded Irises and features many of his own registered Tall Bearded Irises.
- Carver Garden. Iris Hill is a three-acre rocky hill in Weatherford, Texas. They have approximately 600 of their own iris and about 400 convention irises. Their tall bearded, median, and dwarf iris are planted independently, in alphabetical order.
- Clark Garden. Located west of Fort Worth, this Botanical Park showcases the grandeur of nature - Texas style. The 35-acre facility is home to 50 different gardens, including more than 1,000 Tall Bearded Irises.
- Dallas Arboretum. Located in Far East Dallas, the Arboretum features 66 acres of spectacular display gardens. Your visit will allow you to see a new garden featuring less known Texas Iris hybridizers. Enjoy lunch among incredible seasonal flowers, ornamental shrubs, trees, and plant collections in a serene setting on beautiful White Rock Lake.

- Nichols Garden. Nestled in southeast Dallas County in Mesquite, this is the commercial part of the gardens owned by Hooker & Bonnie J. Nichols. Attendees will see some 400 guest irises, first-year and re-selected seedlings, and 100s of the newest irises in full bloom.
- Thompson Garden. Located northeast of Dallas near Sherman/Dennison, Texas, Don and Janice have 12 acres, half of which is untouched and wooded. The garden features Historic Irises from the late 1800's to 1980's. Approximately one acre of irises.

### 2013 Convention Chairperson:

Bonnie Nichols,  
3365 Northaven Road, Dallas, TX 75229  
phone: (214) 352-2191 | e-mail: [bjnhtn@aol.com](mailto:bjnhtn@aol.com)

### Convention Hotel:

(2013 AIS National Convention  
Headquarters.)  
The Crowne Plaza Hotel and Resort-  
North Dallas-Addison  
14315 Midway Road, Addison, Texas  
75001 USA  
Tel. 972-980-8877; Fax 972-788-2758



### Hotel Website:

<http://www.cpgalleria-nr.crowneplaza.com/>

### Reservations:

1-800-377-9778 Room Rate: \$99.00 plus taxes (4 people/room)  
Ask for "IS3" Room Rate/Complimentary Parking  
Please note: hotel accommodations are not included in the registration fee.

### Convention Registration:

2013 Convention Registrar: Dell Perry, 800 Purcell Dr. Plano, TX 75025  
phone: 972-816-3418 | e-mail: [seandelirises@yahoo.com](mailto:seandelirises@yahoo.com)

### Convention Dates & Location:

**April 15-20, 2013 | Dallas, Texas**

### Full registration fee includes:

- Bus transportation to ten gardens
- AIS flower show
- Over 4,000 guest irises
- Judges Training and lunch at the gardens
- Dinner banquet and awards banquet
- Convention shoulder sling bag

Register by February 1, 2013 for discounted full registration rate of \$299 for adults and \$150 for youth. After February 1, 2013 and by March 1, 2013 full registration is \$349 for adults and \$200 for youth. After April 1, 2013 full registration is \$399 for adults and \$250 for youth.

## REGISTER EARLY!

Please note that Registration Fee does not include hotel accommodations. We have arranged a reduced rate for you at the Crowne Plaza Dallas Hotel and Resort (north Dallas near the Galleria), 14315 Midway Road, Addison, Texas 75001. (Hotel rate \$99.00 per night for up to four per room; please mention AIS Convention code "IS3")

## Extra Event

OPTIMIZE YOUR TRIP TO DALLAS!

### The 2013 SOCIETY FOR LOUISIANA IRISES NATIONAL CONVENTION

This event will follow the AIS Convention on April 21 through 23, 2013 at the same hotel, for the same room rates. Come see more gardens, eat more good food, get more training, learn about Louisiana irises, bid on more silent auction items and visit with lots more irisarians.



## AIS Convention Special Raffle-Iris Quilt

Tickets for a SPECIAL RAFFLE are available at \$5 each or 3 for \$10. Prizes include a beautiful king size quilt made by ISD member Annette Brown. Contact Bonnie Nichols at [bjnhtn@aol.com](mailto:bjnhtn@aol.com) to purchase before the convention. You do not need to be present to win.



For more details and info you could go to the American Iris Society website [www.irises.org](http://www.irises.org)

and follow the links to

the AIS 2013 Convention to get a convention registration form and the latest news on this event. The registration form is available at the following direct internet link: [www.irises.org/pdf/2013AISconventionregistrationform.pdf](http://www.irises.org/pdf/2013AISconventionregistrationform.pdf)

Perhaps we will see you there! ...and if you really like it you can do it all over again in 2014 as the same group will host the 2014 AIS Convention!



# A New Canadian Hybridizer - John McMillen

Text and photos by Don McQueen

Part 2

As noted in Part 1, John McMillen of Salford began making crosses in 2006. His goal was to produce cold-hardy, disease-resistant plants. Iris with attractive colours and ruffled flowers, blooming on sturdy well-branched stalks are obviously desirable, but only if they can thrive in the Canadian climate. Unfortunately not enough of these do well here, and John's aim is to attempt to improve that situation.

Beginning in 2006 and continuing for the next two years, John used FOGBOUND (Keppel 1997) for his first crosses. The decision to do so was influenced by Sylvain Ruaud's article '*The Fogbound Effect*' in the *AIS Bulletin* of April 2005, in which the author predicted:

"It will be many years before we see the true depth of this phenomenon.

The FOGBOUND effect has only just begun." (p.91)

FOGBOUND has proven very hardy and has thrived for John, unprotected in an open field on the farm and has shown to be somewhat resistant leaf spot. For him then, FOGBOUND was the variety to use to begin his search for new iris impervious to cold and disease.

However FOGBOUND does not set seed and thus John could only use it as a pollen parent. As a result of crosses, many of his seedlings have inherited desirable FOGBOUND traits. Two Border Bearded (BB) seedlings which have shown promise by their rapid increase, heavy bloom and clean foliage, have been registered as ANGEL DI (see Seedling #0711, on page 35 of the Autumn CIS *Newsletter* v56 n4) and SHOUT TO THE WORLD (Seedling #077209 *op.cit.* p.34).

Beginning in 2008 John began to make crosses using CROWNED HEADS, ALPEN VIEW, CRYSTAL GAZER and some of his own seedlings with FOGBOUND ancestry. These crosses with yellows, oranges and variegatas have produced some very interesting colour patterns for possible future introductions. To date, there is somewhere between 400 and 500 seedlings in his iris breeding gardens.

Weather in 2012 which prompted early late-winter growth and then exposure to late spring frosts created many aborted and damaged seedling stalks and flowers. But there were survivors. All John's 2006 and 2007 crosses are now at McMillen's Iris Garden as well as many crosses of 2008 and a few made in 2009. With good weather in 2013 there should a large percentage of the 2010 crosses blooming, and judging by the increase of 2011 crosses a good percentage of these should also bloom.

Since Part 1 was published in the *CIS Newsletter*, several seedlings illustrated in that article have been registered with the AIS, and will be introduced by McMillen's Iris Garden. They are

- BB seedling 077209 has been registered as SHOUT TO THE WORLD (p.34);
- BB seedling 0711 is now ANGEL DI (p.35);
- BB seedling 0777109 is FRAGILE DESIGN (p.35);
- TB seedling 061209 is RIVERS OF GOLD (p.36);
- TB seedling 062310 is HOLD AND BEHOLD (p.37);

On the following pages are illustrations of six more of John's seedlings, all but one of which are now registered with the AIS.

When next visiting McMillen's in Norwich, be sure to look for John's seedling bed. His garden in Salford will be open, but by appointment only. John can be contacted at [jmcmillen@xplornet.ca](mailto:jmcmillen@xplornet.ca).



(Left) FIERY CREATOR (seedling 085110) of 2008 is a colour reversal with rosy apricot standards and plicata-style falls of whitish apricot streaked and edged in a deeper shade of apricot. All this colour in this 37-inch variety with 7 to 9 buds, is complimented with fiery orange beards. [Don McQueen digital 13169]

(Right) GLOBE OF LIGHT (seedling 086110) with four to five blooms on a tall stalk is another colour reversal in light lemon yellow, accented with white centred falls. The deeper lemon shoulders are lighter than the lemon-tipped golden yellow beards. [Don McQueen digital 12935]

## CIS Membership

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 [cdniris@gmail.com](mailto:cdniris@gmail.com) and we will be pleased to advise you.

Early renewals are always appreciated.



LAVENDER TWIST (seedling 078309) has dark shading in the standards similar to that of parent FOGBOUND, but the twist is in the falls, with its shades of rosy lavender paling to a milky mauve and a hint of yellow. Soft umber veining surrounds a white-tipped light yellow beard. [Don McQueen digital 12911]



ETERNAL BLESSINGS (seedling 077510) within hours of blooming makes a strong statement with multiple shades of chartreuse and deep-toned velvety tan-yellow. Its form is reminiscent of FOGBOUND as is the deepening to violet in the base of the standards. Veined violet-brown shoulders surround golden beards with mustard tips. [Don McQueen digital 12870]



MARE'S TAILS (seedling 074109 STRE) struts its stuff with extensive white streaking radiating over light blue falls and shoulders of tan and yellow. The 'tails', reminiscent of a summer sky before a rain, its distinctive shoulders, and the clear, sky-blue standards with darker bases and ribs, produce a subtle contrast in appearance. [Don McQueen digital 9068]



Seedling 088210 of 2008 is definitely different. Its dark lavender-blue standards shift to soft yellow hues along the laced top edges. The paler bluish falls are rimmed in traditional plicata edging of chartreuse yellow. And check the chartreuse-tipped lavender beard ! [Don McQueen digital 12941]



# Iris in March?

By Alan McMurtrie

**R**eticulata Iris are one of the first Irises to bloom each year. Typically that's right at the end of March here in Toronto. Of course in recent years there has been a lot of variation in that start date. In 2008 the Retics were poking through the snow on April 1st (we had a lot of snow that year). Last year the first few were up, ready to open when I left for Paris and Holland on February 23. Fortunately slightly cooler weather came and held them back somewhat. But then the warm spell in the last half of March sped things up and they were finished by the end of the month.

Very, very unusual. Normally when bloom starts early, cool temperatures come along and keep things growing slowly, so you actually end up with a much longer bloom. For example in 2002, I had Retics in bud on February 23, with the first flower opening on the 25, and bloom finished sometime after April 17. Typically the last flower finishes about April 21, which means Reticulata Iris bloom for just over 3 weeks.

Back in 1985 and 1986 I went plant collecting in Turkey. One of my goals was to collect a diploid form of *Iris danfordiae* so that I could use it in hybridizing. *Danfordiae* is lemon yellow in colour, whereas most other Reticulatas are blues and purples. Over the years I made a lot of crosses and in the process, I opened up a whole new world. A world no one would have thought possible. It could easily be that I have only just started to scratch it's surface.



*Spot On* field

Would you believe I have introduced 40 Reticulatas so far?

Most have only been available through **Janis Ruksans** in Latvia. Last year Dugald Cameron at Garden Import, a mail order bulb retailer here in Toronto sold three varieties. He is planning to sell some again this year depending



*Spot On*

on what I have available. My interest though lies in hybridizing. The availability of the bulbs comes from my using a small bit of land at a farm near Lake Erie for propagating bloom-size bulbs for hybridizing.

For more than 15 years **Wim de Goede** and his son **Mark** have been building up stock

of some of my hybrids in Holland (I really should be saying The Netherlands). We are close to starting sales of *Spot On*, *Scent\*sational*, and *White Caucasus*. A very small number of bulbs of *White Caucasus* have been sold since 2010. It's possible that 10-25,000 bulbs each of *Spot On* and *Scent\*sational* will be sold starting in 2014.

Wim has been testing a number of my other hybrids and over the years has rejected quite a few. Several are ones I think should be introduced. Therein lies the Catch 22. If I was just creating more blues and purples I would understand, but I'm not. I'm creating some amazing never-before-seen colours and patterns. Yes, I can't really expect Wim to introduce all that I would like him to, but he's rejecting a number that I really think should be introduced. So far my tendency has been to hand many off to Janis, so at least a few people ▶



*Scent\*sational*



*White Caucasus*

his were different enough that we could work together. I couldn't say where I'd be 10 years from then (i.e. now), but I knew there was a reasonable chance I could create some wonderful thing that would be quite different from anything they might create.

### So what do you think?

Take a look at [www.Reticulatas.com](http://www.Reticulatas.com), and in particular *The Big Picture*. That webpage shows the current range of my hybrids. Some are being tested by Wim, but all are in need of growers to propagate them and get them to market. ...one day you will hopefully be able to buy my hybrids at your local nursery.



## Canadian Historical Iris

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We are trying to locate any Historical Canadian iris; but in particular we are looking for the following – *Toranda, Canadaway, Sultan's Glamour, W.J. Moffat, Okon, Kum-on, Centennial Gold, Point Petite, Judean Star, Richmond Gold, Richmond Pink, City of Stratford, Shah Jehan, Snow Glory*, and *Fancy Biscuit* or any other Historical Canadian Iris.

If you have any of these or know of anyone who has any of these would you please let the editor know at the following address:

### CIS Editor

1960 Side Rd 15 R.R. 2

Tottenham, ON LOG 1W0

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

# Lansing 2013 – ‘A Capital Idea’

Siberian & Species Iris Convention Information  
June 6 – 8 2013 | Lansing / Kalamazoo, Michigan



**Convention Headquarters:**

Best Western Plus Lansing  
6820 S. Cedar St., Lansing, MI 48911

Room rates: \$98.50 – for up to four persons per room

Reservation made by phone: 517.694.8123 or toll free: 800.333.8123



# Siberian & Species Iris Convention Information

June 6 – 8 2013 • Lansing / Kalamazoo, Michigan Convention

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## **Registration:**

\$125 postmarked by May 7, 2013

\$175 postmarked after May 7, 2013

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## **Registration includes:**

Thursday June 6 welcome snack; light snacks and beverages, slide show and information session

Sponsored by: Connoisseurs of Michigan

Friday and Saturday June 7-8 bus transport to gardens & in-garden lunches

Friday June 7 dinner

Saturday June 8 Awards Banquet

Make checks payable to: Iris Connoisseurs of Michigan (ICOM)

Mail form and payment to: Deb Diget, Registrar, 300 Silver St. Battle Creek, MI 49014

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## **Convention Gardens on tour:**

Ensata Gardens located in Galesburg, Michigan is home to more than 180 Siberian varieties, about 450 Japanese varieties, and a host of daylilies and hostas. After viewing the guest Siberians and Species enjoy a stroll through their relaxing gardens and be sure to check out the koi in their ponds.

Jim & Jill Copeland's garden is located in Lawton, Michigan. They have a beautiful winding ribbon of Siberian & Species iris waiting for you as you enter their garden. After viewing the guest iris, those who are adventurous should checkout their seedling garden on the backside of their property or a bit closer is Jill's restful shade garden.

John & Jean Kaufmann's garden located in the Lansing area houses the Tri County Iris Society's TB iris in addition to John's experimental herbicide plots. There should be plenty of bloom for all to enjoy.

Bob & Judy Hollingworth's gardens are also located in the Lansing area. The guest bed at the Hollingworth's home was originally laid out as a blockS for an MSU welcome, but more beds were added for greater ease of viewing and the block s has become hidden. The Hollingworth's will also have a good display of hostas and Japanese primroses for all to enjoy. In addition, we will be touring Bob & Judy's farm where Bob's seedlings are growing.

We are excited to host the 2013 Siberian & Species Convention and look forward to lots of bloom and sharing it with all of you! See you in June 2013.

There is a registration form available for the convention; please contact the convention organizers for this. They would e-mail it to you or you can easily pick up the form from within the Society for Siberian Irises (SSI) website:

[www.socsib.org](http://www.socsib.org)

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### ***The Society for Siberian Irises (SSI) Information:***

President: Harold Griffie, Box 315, Biglerville, PA 17307,

email: [hgriffie18@yahoo.com](mailto:hgriffie18@yahoo.com)

Membership: Susan Grigg, 105 Trotters Ridge Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614

email: [ssimemsec@nc.rr.com](mailto:ssimemsec@nc.rr.com)

SSI website: [www.socsib.org](http://www.socsib.org)

This article/item provided by SSI member Chris Hollinshead. You may also contact me at [cdniris@gmail.com](mailto:cdniris@gmail.com) to request the convention registration form.



Featured Siberian iris: ***Sugar Rush***

# 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 Dates to Remember

## 2013 Board Meeting Dates

(Held in the Library, Executive Meeting Room)

**Sunday Mar 17, 2013** 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

**Sunday Jul 27, 2013** 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

## 2013 Coming Events

### **Southern Ontario Iris Society (SOIS)**

#### **1st Annual Show and Picnic**

Sunday June 2, 2013

To be held at

McMillen's Iris Garden

285112 Pleasant Valley Rd

Norwich ON

All flowers to be set final on show benches by 11.00 am

Open to Public 1.00 P.M.

Picnic at end of judging.

### **Siberian & Species Iris Convention Information**

June 6 – 8 2013 | Lansing / Kalamazoo, Michigan

### **Southern Ontario Iris Society - Iris Sale,**

Sunday Aug. 11/13

Royal Botanical Gardens

Room 3 & 4

680 Plains Road West

Burlington, ON

## 2013 Publication Dates

May 2013

Vol 57 No 2 Spring Issue

August 2013

Vol 57 No 3 Summer Issue

November 2013

Vol 57 No 4 Fall Issue

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## **Gardeners' Tee Shirts (courtesy of David Hobson) . . .**

- Gardeners are green without envy.
- It may look like manure, but it's bread and butter to a gardener.
- Have you hugged a worm today?
- With fronds like us, who needs anemones?

— [www.gardenhumor.com](http://www.gardenhumor.com)

# 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: 519-856-0956  
Email: [chuck@chapmanirises.com](mailto:chuck@chapmanirises.com)  
Website: [www.chapmanirises.com](http://www.chapmanirises.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@mcmillensirisgarden.ca](mailto:info@mcmillensirisgarden.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  
Phone: 250-537-5995  
Email: [hello@theplantfarm.ca](mailto:hello@theplantfarm.ca)  
Website: [www.theplantfarm.ca](http://www.theplantfarm.ca)  
On-line catalogue

## **Trails End Iris Gardens**

3674 Indian Trail, RR#8  
Brantford, Ontario N3T 5M1  
Phone: 519-647-9746  
Email: [bob@trailsendiris.com](mailto:bob@trailsendiris.com)  
Website: [www.trailsendiris.com](http://www.trailsendiris.com)  
On-line catalogue

## 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)

### **Southern Ontario Iris Society (SOIS)**

#### **CIS Affiliate**

Chris Hollinshead, 3070 Windwood Drive,  
Mississauga, ON L5N 2K3  
ph: 905-567-8545 e-mail: [cdniris@gmail.com](mailto:cdniris@gmail.com)

### **London Region Iris Society**

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

**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**



Walker Ross

**CIS Newsletter**

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