

Canadian Iris Society

cis newsletter

Winter 2016 Volume 61 Issue 1



Canadian Iris Society

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CIS Newsletter

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Cover Photo:

Iris innominata (Golden Iris) L.F.Henderson 1930. The most common colour is golden yellow, but there are many different colours.

President's Report

By Ed Jowett

I don't know if it is winter blues or what, but I have the urge to be outside. The weather being what it has been and seems to continue cold, mild, etc. One day in Mid January when the temperature reached +6 C I took to gardening. I removed the wet leaves from my Siberian bed because last year I was too late and lost 6 of my Siberians by being smothered out. Maybe this year with no snow covering and removing the leaves, I will lose more; only Mother Nature knows.

I am starting to work on this year's purchase program and expect to offer a great number of cold climate proven growers in our country. With the high cost of importing and the price of the Canadian \$ makes it impracticable to purchase outside of Canada.

By the time you receive this bulletin we should be on the downside of winter and on the upswing for spring and I am sure you are just waiting to get at those gardens once again. I am going to start my own organic garden for veggies this year. However raised garden beds are not cheap but have much lower maintenance.

For the members that receive their bulletin by mail I am highlighting the expiry date for memberships which expire prior to the next bulletin to be issued.

In this issue we have our hybridizers telling of their hard exciting works; be sure to read them. It is hard to believe the amount of time it took for flowers we like to purchase and plant that are proven as growers. This is not a business or a money-maker but a true love for the results.



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

I have thought of it many times, thinking of what kind of results would this crossed with that make. I do not have the patience to wait and maybe re-cross to get results. I guess working in an industry that wanted immediate results for many years made me this way.

This year we would like to see more exhibitors at the S.O.I.S. show and come to the BBQ after and enjoy great company. If you don't show come to the BBQ anyway.

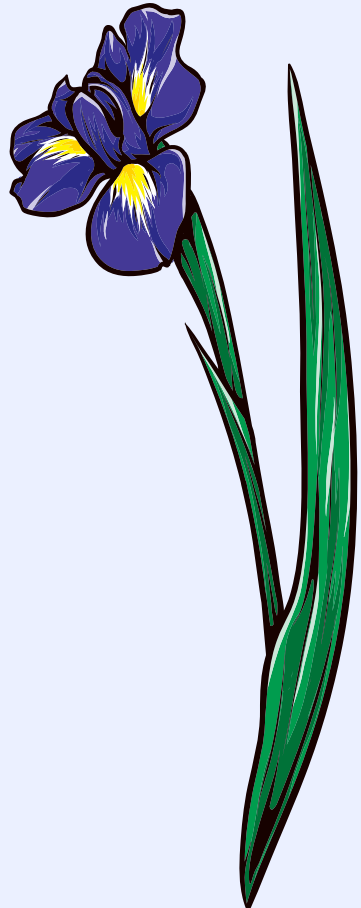
Hope the spring comes early and wishing every one good health and a wonderful growing season!



Ed Jowett

Send us your articles

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, let us know. If you have plants to sell or anything you would like to share, please do so. 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.)



Musings From Manitoba



By: B. J. Jackson

(jacksonb@mts.net)

Although winter just really arrived in SW Manitoba the first week of December, I have already had enough of it! Almost record snowfall amounts fell on the iris gardens during the month with roller coaster cold spells and warm ups following. I am of the opinion that if it is going to be cold, be cold for crying out loud. The increasingly frequent temperature swings just make for unhappy gardeners who watch the snow levels rise and fall making what will happen in spring a constant worry. Luckily, there is still more than 40 cms of snow cover on most of the gardens protecting the iris. Winnipeg gardeners received even more snow than we have, but I am told lost even more during the warm ups.



In my gardens, however, the seedling beds are mostly located near to the house and have not fared so well with most of the snow melted. With more than a week of temperatures on the plus side and two new record highs set in the month of January, I found myself almost daily shoveling snow onto them. Whether it works or not, I guess I will just have to wait and see. All I can see are seedlings encased in ice. (See photo) The bed I am most concerned with holds mostly MTB seedlings from the British Iris Society seed exchange. Two beauties had bloomed for the first time in 2016. I am hopeful several more will bloom in 2017 if, that is, they survive. On the other hand, if they do not that just means they aren't tough enough for Manitoba. Better to know that now.

Indoors, the 2016 seeds have been in the fridge for their cold treatment for a month following a 10 day soaking. Last season was not very good for crosses with only two planned crosses producing seed pods. The cross of SDBs Extraterrestrial x Zooboomafoo produced 7 seeds whereas the cross of Forever Blue x Extraterrestrial produced 9 seeds. The reverse of each cross was not successful. The bees, however, had more luck, and with those I haven't had pods on before. MTBs Garnet Jewellery, Aachen Elf, Easy and Panda produced seed (1 pod each) as did SDB Devoted (2 pods) and IB Interim (3 pods). The IB, however, even with three pods produced just 8 viable looking seeds. I'm starting

the seeds later than I have in the past in order to eliminate the need to have the seedlings growing inside where they become aphid and fungus gnat magnets. If all goes according to plan, they will germinate in late March or April and be able to be held outside protected until planting out in the seedling beds later on.

At the end of January I had the opportunity to talk about iris, medians specifically, at the Manitoba Horticulture Association's annual conference in Killarney. It was a great fit since about 80 per cent of the iris I grow encompass those classes. There is nothing like a roomful of 70+ winter starved gardeners to make for a lively hour and a half! Braving blowing snow and slick roads with the temperature just below zero was a challenge but it was worth it. I don't get to that part of the province very often these days.

Several commercial sources already have their catalogues updated for the new year and my main activity for the next few months will be reviewing these lists to see what new beauties can be added to the gardens as well as narrowing down suppliers for the CWIS summer rhizome sale.

In CWIS news, 2017 marks our 10th year of affiliation with the American Iris Society and our 10th annual show. Because of the unusually early bloom seasons and decreased number of entries in 2015 and 2016, the Organizing Committee decided to move up the show one week.





Frozen solid and encased in ice - first year MTB seedling exposed

This year's show will take place on Sunday, June 4th at Bourkevale Community Centre in Winnipeg. We are hoping to bring in guest judges and are awaiting confirmation. Once again we are including a design section although whether or not it will be judged has not yet been determined. In the past two years it has been a display only section.

The show is the only public event for the year and the only time local members actually get together. CWIS remains an online group with most activities and communication conducted via email. All four western provinces are represented in our membership. After 14 years, it is still working! And we have come a long way from a group of half a dozen iris enthusiasts gathered together in a Winnipeg Legion pub to talk about 'sometime' and 'maybe' forming a group.



Canadian Iris Society:

You are invited to join the Canadian Iris Society. Membership in the CIS is open to all persons interested in irises regardless of skills or experience. New members are welcome. Official membership applications and other information is available on the official CIS website: www.cdn-iris.ca. One-year membership is \$20, Three-year membership is \$50. (cheque or money orders accepted)

Send membership application or renewal to Canadian Iris Society/membership, 1960 Side Road 15, Tottenham, Ontario L0G1W0.



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IRIS TWINS

Part 1

Selected by Don McQueen

Ever had the occasion during an iris garden visit to recognise a bloom colouration and think ‘*A-ha ... there’s a wonderful bloom of ...*’ - and then find out it wasn’t? Had you been misled by a look-a-like? Not to fret, you’re not alone, particularly with so many varieties blooming, both historic and new introductions. Just for fun then, I’ll put together some look-a-like “Iris Twins” in this series, based on similar colouration, whether or not they be of the same type.



Don McQueen original

MTB **AMONG FRIENDS**: May 28, 2016



TB **WABASH**: May 27, 2010

Take for example the pair in Part 1 - one a historic TB, the other a recent MTB. Emma Williamson's **WABASH** of 1936 is one of the most recognizable historic Tall Bearded iris. **AMONG FRIENDS**, the Miniature Tall Bearded version, is Terry Varner's introduction of 1999. In most cases growing similar appearing iris in the same bed can be potentially confusing at a later date, but in this case both grow side by side in my patch without any concern because of type of iris and flower size.



The Pleasures (and disappointments) of Hybridizing Irises

By Bob Granatier

Trails End Iris Gardens – Brantford, Ontario



Let me start off by telling you how it all began. In 2003, my wife, Ann, and I were encouraged by our very good friends to harvest some irises that were growing on our 10 acres and take them to a giant garage sale at a local community college. We made some inexpensive signage, loaded our van with several hundred rhizomes and off we went! Lo and behold, some 6 hours later we were on our way home with about \$800 and very few irises: the birth of Trails End Iris Gardens.

A few years later I decided to enter a world totally foreign to me: hybridizing. It started with my young granddaughter telling me how much she liked the ruffles and lace on a Tall Bearded iris, *Lace Legacy*. So, I crossed it with an older yellow variety *Late Report*. It was exciting when we actually got a seed pod which matured and produced about 45 seeds. My assistant, (that would be Ann), meticulously washed the seeds several times in September and then we put them in an outdoor fridge for a few months. In May of the following year we planted the little seedlings. Almost all of them bloomed the next year but only a couple warranted saving. Eventually I dug and divided one; *Katy Girl*, my first new introduction. It is a tall, strong, lacy and ruffled light yellow.



At about the same time, my grandson had decided that it would be cool to create a Hallowe'en iris with orange and black petals. I humoured him and crossed *Good Vibrations* with *Secret Service*. He was quite disappointed when no such flower developed. His description was, and I quote, "they're all yuchy grandpa". Well, one caught the fancy of many of our garden visitors. It was introduced this year and is aptly named *Butter Almond Crunch*. One customer said it reminded him of his favourite chocolate; butter, almond crunch. Voila!



Now it was time to get serious. There were many, many crossings; most of which were duds. However, a crossing of *Stiletto*s with *Dancing Star* produced "*Mardi Gras Dancer*"; a bi-colour with pale yellow standards and plum falls washed with a lilac sheen. The cross of *For Lovers Only* with *Brazilian Holiday* gave us "*Lovers Holiday*"; a pink which is washed smoky-mauve. The best achievement came last summer when the Stratford Horticultural Society chose a cross of *High Chaparral* with *Class Clown* to be featured in a new iris flower bed. 2018 is their centennial and the iris is the symbol of their society. The name they chose for this introduction was *Believe In Tomorrow*; another bi-colour with light gold standards and plum falls that have a violet blush and terracotta rim.

As of this writing I have many more possibilities in the wings. If you are in the area during iris bloom in June, drop by for a look-see.



Book Review

The Genius Iris

By John Moons

Title: *The Genus Iris*

Author: William Rickatson Dykes

Publisher: Dover Publications Inc., New York



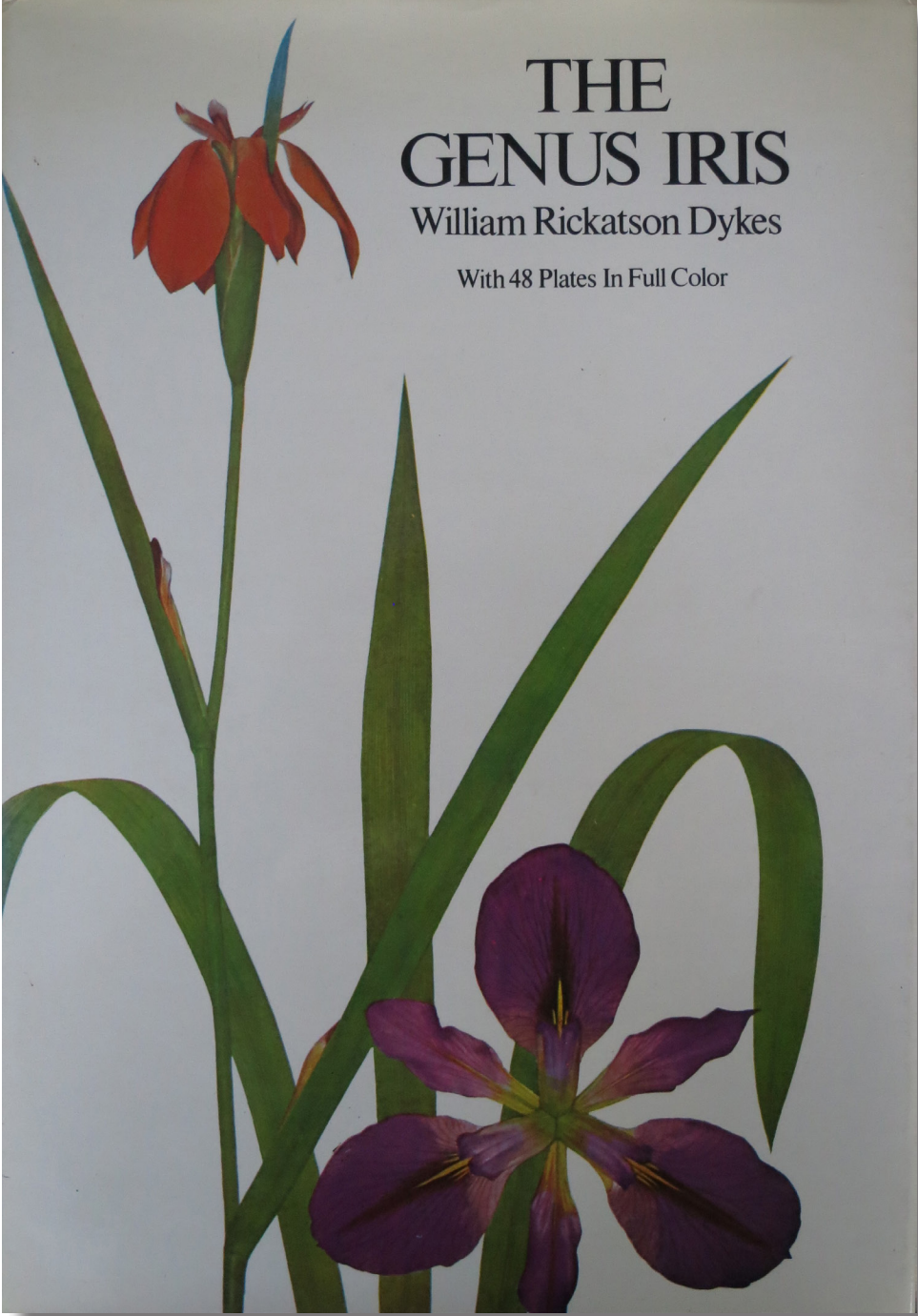
Year of publishing: This Dover edition first published in 1974 is an unabridged republication of the work originally published by the Cambridge University Press in 1913.

Size: Hardcover: 315 cm x 22 cm. In this reprint edition, the text and all the figures and plates are shown 20 per cent smaller than in the original work. The book has 245 pages of text, 48 full-colour plates and 31 other illustrations. The pages are big, but the print is very small.

Price: We got it used in excellent condition through Amazon for \$33.00.

William Dykes lived from 1877 to 1925. He studied at Wadham College in Oxford and at the Sorbonne in Paris. From 1903 to 1919 he was a school master. While he studied at Oxford he met **Sir Michael Foster** who had a huge collection of Irises and was doing a study on them. When Foster died in 1907 Dykes received all the notes from Foster's work on Irises. Dykes took over the study and completed it. His first book "*Irises*" came out in 1909. He wrote it as a gardening book but included a lot of scientific information in it. He went to France to look for wild Irises and visited several European Botanical Gardens and their libraries and looked at their herbaria. In 1913 with all the information he had found, he published his second book "*The Genus Iris*". In this book he classifies the Irises according to Linnaeus' botanical system.

When I went through the book I got a sense of the enormous amount of work the plants people had to go through to find all the information they needed. There were no photocopyers, photos were limited and you had to go to the library to look at notes yourself. I also hope they could read everything the authors had written. For every Iris he writes where it was found in the wild, when and by whom. He also mentions in which library or botanical garden he found the information. For the Iris xiphium for example he mentions the 23 locations in Spain and Portugal where it was found from 1837 to 1903. France had 5 locations and North Africa 4. Most Irises have a much shorter list but Dykes has gone to the trouble of mentioning everything.



THE GENUS IRIS

William Rickatson Dykes

With 48 Plates In Full Color

A big thing for the people who wrote about Irises 100 years ago was that they themselves wanted to grow as many different Irises as possible. Dykes uses a very simple system to let the reader know that a particular Iris had grown and bloomed in his garden. ►

In England with its moist climate this is not always easy for Irises that come from drier climates. Quite often Irises were grown in cold frames to control the moisture but how many does one want to grow?

Of course a very big problem in describing flowers is that you have to be there just when the plant is in bloom. In the beginning there were no cameras and you had to describe everything in detail. If you wanted to have seeds you had to come back later on and you hoped that you could find the exact location of your flower. But somehow a lot of the plant hunters managed to send herbarium specimens, seeds and rootstock to Europe.

Taxonomically, the book is now out of date. Even now the botanists do not always agree on what belongs to the genus *Iris* and what does not. The classification was improved by **George Lawrence** in 1953, by **Georgi Rodionenko** in 1961 and finally by **Brian Mathew** in 1981. Now botanists are using DNA to further clarify the classifications and they still have their disagreements.

What is really nice about this book are the 48 beautiful full colour plates in water colours by **F.H. Round**. These are pictures of Irises that Dykes grew in his own garden. Mr. Round worked at the same school where Dykes was a schoolmaster. Dykes would bring the fresh flowers before 06.00h to Mr. Round so that he could paint them. Most pictures you would like to take out of the book, frame them and hang them on the wall. You would have a nice collection of Iris pictures. Besides the colour pictures there are also 31 black and white illustrations of specific parts of certain Irises.

Along with detailed descriptions of all the different Irises, Dykes also describes how he has made several observations. He explains how certain Irises are different from the one he is writing about and also that more research needs to be done about certain species.

Dykes grew a lot of the Irises himself and he is very generous with tips on how to grow them. He admits that some Irises do not grow well in England not only because the climate is too damp but also in the summer there is not enough heat.

At the time that Dykes did his research the first hybrids were already on the market and he writes about them too. As he was growing all those Irises he made also lots of crossings and created a number of hybrids himself.

A few final words. You must really admire the work that has gone into making this book. It is a book with an incredible amount of information. Among the horticultural books this book was always one of the great classics. When it came out only botanical gardens, libraries and very wealthy people could afford it. It was apparently a very expensive book. This reprint was of course a lot cheaper. Even after 100 years, a lot of the information is still relevant and I am very happy to have this book.



Southern Ontario Iris Society Show



Free to public with admission to the Gardens

Southern Ontario Iris Society Annual Iris Show

Sunday, June 4, 2017 • 1 p.m. through 3:30 p.m.

Location: Royal Botanical Gardens

680 Plains Road West, Burlington, ON

Southern Ontario Iris Society

You are invited to join the Southern Ontario Iris Society (SOIS). New members are welcome.

The Southern Ontario Iris Society (SOIS) is an affiliate of the Canadian iris Society and also the American Iris Society.

Join us at our next regular event, the Annual Iris Rhizome sale on Sunday, August 9, 2015 at the Royal Botanical Gardens, 680 Plains Road West, Burlington, ON. Visitors (non-members) are very welcome at this sale/auction event. This is an opportunity to obtain some of the same beautiful iris on display here today for your own garden. We look forward to seeing you again.

Event and membership details are available on the SOIS website: www.cdn-iris.ca/sois

Canadian Iris Society

You are invited to join the Canadian Iris Society (CIS). New members are welcome. Membership is open to all persons interested in irises regardless of skills or experience.

Official membership applications and other information will be available at the show or on the CIS website: www.cdn-iris.ca

American Iris Society

You are invited to join the American Iris Society (AIS). New members are welcome. AIS Region 2 includes the province of Ontario.

Official membership applications and additional information will be available at the show or on the official AIS website: www.irises.org

CIS Awards

F.A. Garrity Trophy

-best iris stalk exhibited in the show

W.J. Moffat Trophy

-best stalk of an unnamed tall bearded iris seedling.

Les Richardson Award

-best stalk of an unnamed iris seedling other than tall bearded.

O.A. Kummer Cup

-best stalk of a named iris of Canadian origin.

Novice Cup

-awarded to exhibitor winning most points in novice section

Junior Trophy

-awarded to exhibitor winning most points in junior section.

AIS Awards

AIS Silver Medal and certificate

-Most red ribbons Division 1 Sections A-D & F-H

AIS Bronze Medal and certificate

-2nd most red ribbons Division 1 Sections A-D & F-H

The individual ribbons awarded to the entries are provided by the Southern Ontario

Iris Society: Red - First

Blue - Second

White - Third

Pink - Honorable Mention

Exhibition Certificates

-best seedling and any other seedling receiving five or more votes from qualified judges.

Contact:

Ed Jowett

e-mail: jowettfarm@copper.net

Show Rules

1. The judging standard will be that of the American Iris Society's Judge's Handbook and cannot be violated. The decision of the judges shall be final.

2. Exhibition privileges are open to all, including judges.

3. All horticultural exhibits must have been grown and entered in person by the exhibitor whose name appears on the entry tag.

4. All entries MUST be staged between 8am and 11am to allow judging to conclude by 1pm. Late entries will be accepted for display purposes only.

5. All entries must be entered under name and in class number specified in the show schedule.

- Containers are furnished by the Society.
- The number of entries by an exhibitor is not restricted, but they may enter only one specimen of each cultivar per division.
- The placement committee will aid the exhibitors correctly identify the appropriate section.
- Cultivars are to be arranged alphabetically in each class to facilitate staging and judging.

6. The show area is open to the public only upon completion of the judging (approx. 1pm). No one is allowed in the exhibit area excepting the judges, the clerks and the show chairman.

*Special arrangements can be made for photographers

before the show is open to the public, please contact the show chairman.

7. Exhibitors may not remove entries prior to 3:30 pm. Unclaimed entries will be disposed of.

8. The Show Committee will exercise all possible care but cannot be responsible for loss or damage to exhibits.

The major awards are perpetual and remain the property of the Canadian Iris Society (CIS).

All judges are asked to contact the show chairman in order to pick up seedling ballots.

Classification

Division One: Iris Species

Section A: An iris cultivar introduced by a Canadian hybridizer.

Class 1 Tall Bearded

Class 2 Other Bearded iris

Class 3 Other Iris

Section B: Historic Iris (introduced 30+ years ago)

Class 4 Tall Bearded

Class 5 other bearded Iris

Class 6 other Iris

Section C: Bearded Iris

Class 7 Tall Bearded

Class 8 MDB Miniature Dwarf Bearded

Class 9 SDB Standard Dwarf Bearded

Class 10 IB Intermediate Bearded

Class 11 BB Border Bearded

Class 12 MTB Miniature Tall Bearded

Class 13 other Bearded Iris

Section D: Beardless Iris

Class 14 Siberian iris

Class 15 Japanese iris

Class 16 other beardless iris

Section E: Seedlings

Class 17 Tall Bearded

Class 18 Other Bearded

Class 19 Other Iris

Section F: Novice Class

20 Tall Bearded Class

21 Other Bearded Class

22 Other Iris

Section G: Junior Class

23 Tall Bearded Class

24 Other Bearded Class

25 Other Iris

Division Two: Exhibitions

Section H: Collections

Class 26 Collection of three named Tall Bearded cultivars

Class 27 Collection of three named Siberian cultivars

Class 28 Three blooms or stalks as appropriate, all same species or cultivar. Not covered in classes 26/27

Section I:

Class 29 Herbaceous perennials and biennials as companions for iris.

Notes: Bulbous irises and collections entered in Class 16 and Class 29 are eligible to receive award ribbons and special section awards. (See judge's Handbook, p.37, first paragraph under "Horticultural Division").

To determine the Novice Cup and the Junior Trophy, decided by total points, points are awarded as follows:

- Major Trophy Awards 10 points
 - Court of Honour 10 points
 - 1st prize (red ribbon) 5 points
 - 2nd prize (blue ribbon) 3 points
 - 3rd prize (white ribbon) 2 points
- *points are not allocated for any other purpose.**

JOIN IN THE FUN

Bring along your best flower stems

The Southern Ontario Iris Society

...welcomes you to the 2017 iris show.

Enjoy the irises!

Editor's Note: For a pre-printed copy of the show schedule, contact Ed Jowett at jowettfarm@copper.net (--).

The Iris Family

A geography lesson.. Where do Irises come from?

By Clarke Cosgrove

Edited By Ann Granatier



“**T**here is no flower so universally adapted as the iris. It withstands equally the below-zero temperatures of the Canadian winters and the hot scorching winds and prolonged droughts of the summers south of the Mason- Dixon line. From New Brunswick to Florida we find it the mainstay of the hardy garden....within the narrow confines of a town garden (any gardener) can have a range of colour, a length of season and a wealth of beauty that cannot be surpassed by any other genus of plants”. **John Wister**, the first president of the AIS may have been a little biased but still true.

Of course, Irises are not limited to North America, but did you know they are generally limited to the northern hemisphere. That is, the native habitats of the genus iris are restricted to the northern temperate zone. However, the bigger horticultural family to which irises belong, the Iridaceae, has representatives on every continent and sub-continent. The endless diversification of Iris genus is composed of over 200 or more species, all with flowers characteristically composed of parts in sets of three, but differing in structure or degree sufficiently to be classified into different groups. Flowers may be bearded or beardless; they may differ in root structure – some bulbous, some rhizomatous and a few stoloniferous- but most reveal in their flowers the beauty and range of colors associated with the goddess of the rainbow, Iris, for who they were named.

Pogon - Bearded Iris

The homelands of the bearded (pogon) irises are Europe and Asia. The modern tall bearded irises trace their ancestry back to the cold-hardy species of central and southern Europe crossed by man with the species of central and southern Europe crossed by man with the species of the eastern Mediterranean countries. The parent species from the milder climates of the Mediterranean area increased the flower size and improved the branching, but also transmitted a tenderness that hybridizers in colder climates have had difficulty in overcoming.

In southern France and northern Italy, across the Balkans and into southern Russia the smaller bearded species are found. In areas where both the tall and dwarf sorts grow, natural intermediate hybrid forms have been produced in varied sizes, shapes and colours.

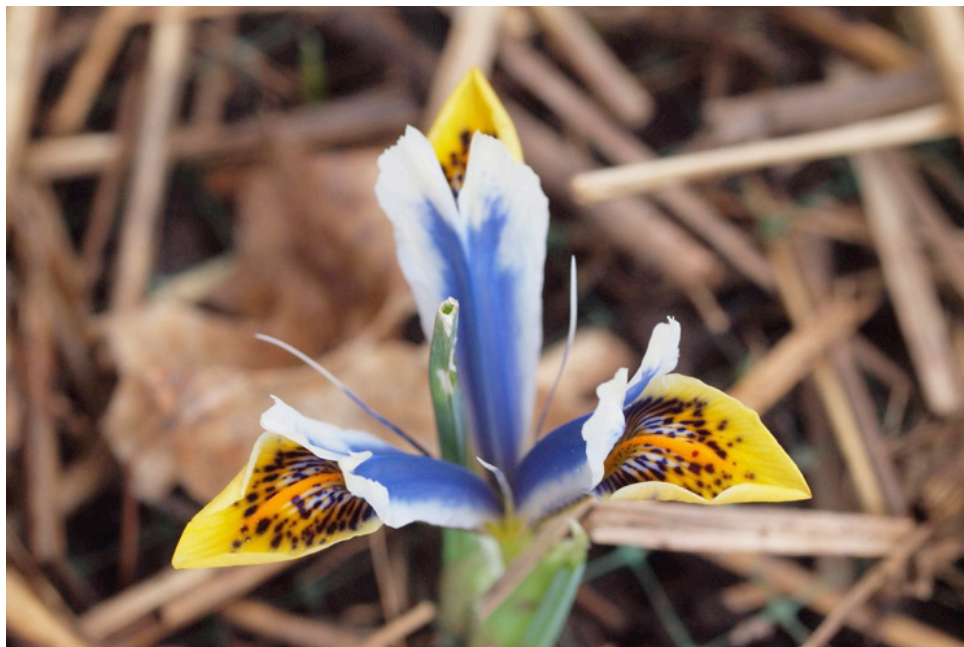
Arils

From the Middle East to the steppes of Central Asia come the most exotic bearded iris of the genus. These are the dramatic and colourful arils with their exacting cultural demands. Hybridizers have been working to produce cultivars that retain their vivid colours and floral characteristics but are easier to grow.

Apogon- Beardless varieties

Reticulatas

Among the beardless (apogon) irises are the bulbous species native to Spain, Portugal and North Africa that have been developed into the so-called Dutch and English irises. The tiny, earlier blooming bulbous irises, the reticulata group so useful for pot culture, come from the eastern Mediterranean countries northward into southern Russia.



Reticulata: *Tequila Sunrise*

Pseudocorus

Naturalizing so readily along the streams and in marshes, the bright yellow Iris pseudocorus is difficult to trace to its original sources, but it is found from the British Isles to Asia Minor and north into Siberia.

Spurias

Another series of beardless Irises, the spurias, are natives principally of central and Eastern Europe and include not only dwarf forms but probably the tallest specimens of the genus.

Siberians

Europe and Asia both have representatives in the Siberian series of irises whose flowers closely resemble the Pacific Coast natives and cross readily with these native North Americans.



Siberian: *Miss Apple*

Japanese (Ensata and Laevigata)

Two main groups of irises have been grown and developed in Japan for centuries. One of these, the so-called Japanese iris (properly *ensata* but still generally known as *kaempferi*) probably originated as a single species from the China mainland. All Japanese iris cultivars presently available are selected clones of this one species. These irises require ample moisture before and at flowering time. Iris *Laevigata*, the other Japanese group, is even more water dependent and is found only in marshy places. In cultivation it grows best in water.



Evansia (crested)

The evansia or crested irises are the only series with species distribution in both Asia and North America. The crest on the falls of these flowers superficially resembles a beard, but differs structurally. Hybrids from the crossing of bearded and crested irises have been introduced into commerce.



Evansia: Dwarf Crested Iris

Hezagonae (Louisiana and Pacific Coast)

In the past two decades (1950's and 1960's), the interest in growing the beardless species of North America has increased spectacularly in all parts of the world. From the Pacific Coast states the native irises (Californicae) have provided new garden plants that grow particularly well in England, Australia and New Zealand. The members of the series

Hezagonae, the Lousiana irises, have traveled far from their origins in the Mississippi watershed to the moister sections of gardens in the distant countries. Both of these beardless types are excellent garden subjects as well as the delight of flower arrangers.



Schreiner's Iris Gardens

Louisiana Iris: *Sinfionetta*.

Summary

As irises are native to practically every country of the northern hemisphere and grow in environments that range from dry to wet, from hot to cold, from coastal sea cliffs to alpine mountainsides, they offer limitless opportunities for gardening pleasure. Their endless variety and ease of hybridization and propagation also make them the delight of both amateur and professional hybridizers.

Excerpts from The World of Irises:- Introduction by **Clarke Cosgrove** originally printed 1978, Edited by Ann Granatier



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Breeding for cold climate

by Chuck Chapman

With bearded iris, specifically TB iris, I have a hard time getting cold hardy plants. Most of the new introductions, with their pretty catalogue faces, bubbles, ruffling etc. that present so well in catalogues, just don't do well in my agricultural zone 4 garden. A vast majority of them come from warm climates, like Oregon, California and Australia, from long lines of breeding and selection from areas that just can't test for cold hardiness. In these gardens, year after year, the fanciest plants are selected and bred to other fancy flowers. While selections are also made for plant habit, and good growth, you can't test for growing conditions you just don't have.



Choosing based on awards from American Iris Society (AIS) also doesn't work. The AIS is a distribution/popularity system. So the largest vendors sell more, and the greatest number of voting judges are in the warmer growing areas. So the iris winning awards often have preferred climates and don't do well in many other areas. (Not new information.) It has been known for some time. With the advent of chat groups on line, sharing information has shown that this is not just a problem for cold areas, but for many other areas as well. The British Iris Society and Australian Iris society pick winners based on performance in trial gardens, so their awards are more based on garden performance, not distribution and popularity.

So iris plants get a bit of a challenge here. Quite a while ago, I stopped taking any protective action with seedlings. I leave it to mother nature to weed out the weak. This means that only the tough go on for selection. Even with selection, some later succumb for various reasons. Many very nice iris have gone this route. There are many TB iris that will grow just south of me, (Hamilton, London etc.), that just don't do well here. And many that hang on, and may bloom every couple of years, but just don't flourish.

Each year I bring in many new TB iris plants into my garden. There is a gradual attrition rate. There are always some that don't make it over the first winter or rot out in spring. Of the survivors, they bloom well the first year if I had received a mature rhizome in the fall. The first year's bloom is always based on the climate in the garden of origin, where it reached maturity and had bud set. Over the next years I get a number that fade out and disappear for various reasons, and some that just hang on. There are some that do modestly well, and every now and then, one or two that do well. Over the years, the percentage that does well, is decreasing. By well, I mean grow well, has increases and blooms most years. The number that do well and bloom consistently year after year is a

small number. It should be noted, that I carefully choose which ones I purchase each year. New introductions are expensive. I check the pedigree, and select primarily on basis of there being a pod parent that is known to do well in colder climates. (More on genetics in a later article). And some are chosen based on what I suspect that they may be able to contribute to my breeding program.

As many of the ‘southern belles’ don’t do well in my garden, I plant them in a cold greenhouse, (**Figure 1**) along with proven cold hardy plants, mostly seedlings of mine that have proven to be cold hardy. This allows pod parent candidates to survive and be available for breeding. The cold hardy plants are chosen as the pod parent, as they have the plastids and mitochondria genes for cold hardiness.



Figure 1. Cold Greenhouse

Plants have three sets of genes. The nuclear genes, which are inherited equally from pod and pollen parents. The other two sets are the plastid genes (chlorophyll, among other functions) and mitochondria genes. These last two come only from the pod parent, and are involved in plant energy producing systems, consequently contributing more to hardiness in general, and cold hardiness, more specifically. So thus the importance to use hardy plants as pod parents.

Next step is to evaluate seedlings, for cold hardiness. For this, you need to let mother nature assist you. So no extra protection, and no treatment for diseases. Keep

only the strongest. It takes about 5 years in my garden to do a good evaluation. This allows for various challenges, as well as a couple of transplant tests. Some seedlings look well, but just can't handle a divide and replant. The seedling needs to bloom consistently and show resistance to cold wet springs, hot dry summers as well as wet summers, late frosts in spring, and early frosts in fall. One good sign of cold hardiness, is early development of increases. (**Figure #2**)

This indicates it has matured and had bud set, which are conditions for getting bloom and increases next year. Based on having reached maturity and then being able to have bud set based on weather conditions. All are good signs for cold hardiness.



Figure 2. Buckskin Babe-Increases in early fall

Having plants tested in other climates is also useful to show that it can adapt in other locations. The Loomis test garden in Colorado springs, Colorado is a test garden I use often. Plants are grown here for three years, in their cold climate, and point scored.



Figure 3. Garden Bride

Most of the big companies, like Schreiners and Mid America send their plants in for testing. Since 1996, I have won 19 Loomis awards (top three, more than 80 points) plus many others at the top of their class. When they do well in a test garden, as well as passing my criteria, they are introduced. One notable winner is TB Garden Bride, (**Figure 3**) in 2004, after enduring a very cold winter, with most of the trial garden plants not flowering. Getting 83 points, with runner up getting 63 points. ►

Before changes were made in regulations for shipping to Europe, iris were sent to international competitions. An example is Sargent Preston (**Figure 4**) with Gold Medal in 2006 in German Iris Competition.

Also Eramosa Ridge (**Figure 5**) won Gold Medal in 2012 Russian Iris Competition held in Moscow.



Figure 4. Sargent Preston



Figure 5. Eramosa Ridge

Two more notable cold hardy TB iris are Buckskin Babe (**Figure 6**) and Eramosa Peach Sorbet (**Figure 7**). Both of these are very cold hardy and have a long bloom season. Particularly are notable in that they have the tangerine factor (lycopene red pigment, which produce pink and orange iris) which are notoriously weak in cold climates.



Figure 6. Buckskin Babe



Figure 7. Eramosa Peach Serbet

Of course, good flower, branching and bloom sequence are also considered. Both of these have all that, plus long sequential bloom.

It is challenging selecting for all these traits, plus cold climate vigour. Lots have to be discarded as they don't make the grade. There are a lot of nice flowers that don't. The time between maiden bloom and introduction is longer, as it needs more years to fully evaluate vigour and hardiness.

Each year there are many discards. The ones that don't make the grade. Each year's seedlings are further evaluated, until the final decision is made.

Currently there are a number of plants lined up for introduction, but yet without official names.

Seedling 07-GrHs-1 (**Figure 8**) was a pilled seed, so I don't have parentage. Has been a great grower and performer here. The red beard makes it stand out.



Figure 8. 07-GrHs-1



Figure 9. 08-11-26-1

Seedling 08-11-26-1 (**Figure 9**) is one I watched carefully for several years. I have been trying for a cold hardy intense yellow for some time. There are not too many around. This one is a great performer with branching, bud count and the intense orange beard is a plus.

Seedling 06-555-1 (**Figure 10**) Came in third this year in Loomis trial with 90 points, competing with a total of 240 TB, including Schreiners and Mid America. It got a lot of attention and praise at 2016 AIS convention. Actually nicer than in the photo.



Figure 10. 06-555-1



Figure 11. 05-152-1

Seedling 08-766-4 (**Figure 12**) is a cold hardy Glaciata with long bloom season, and good branching and bud count. This is quite a break through, as there are no other glaciata TB that are cold hardy. Also promising breeding material for cold hardy luminantas, another type that are typically weak in northern gardens Use as pod parent to get cold hardy genes into seedlings. I have used this extensively in breeding. I expect great seedlings from it.

Seedling 05-152-1 (**Figure 11**) while not the form I would like, it is a breakthrough . This is a luminata-plicata, a stepping stone to cold hardy luminatas. In addition, it is a reblooming TB in cold climate. We don't have a lot of reliable rebloomers in our zone 4 area



Figure 12. 08-766-4



Figure 13. 07-524-1

Seedling 07-524-1 (**Figure 13**) is one that didn't make grade. Just not vigorous. This is unfortunate, as I could have sold lots , just by showing this photo. But you shouldn't buy only on picture. Nobody does that, right?

Breeding for cold hardiness is quite a challenge, especially when you have all the other factors you need to select for as well. I started off including some of the science behind breeding for cold hardiness. But was making article too long. So that will have to all be saved for a more technical article, to follow.



What's in an organization?

By Ed Jowett Editor, CIS President

This is just my opinion; to each their own, and what are you looking for. This leads to this organization Any organization I join I have to get involved or why did I join? I started at an early age, the cadet core first; for which I joined the Band core and played the snare drum, and then the marching Rifles core. So I was active at any function where the core was asked to play or march. I thoroughly enjoyed it.



Then came the Armed Service and very shortly after joining got married. My wife did not like military life so that was short lived. (The service that is...)I then joined a campers group which was family oriented. After a short time in this organization I joined the provincial group. At this point my wife was starting to baulk – she was not people oriented. But after a while she got right in there. We met many people through all walks of life and made many friends. We remained with this groups for 18 years for which we served as co-president for 9 years and past for 9 years. In this time we put on 4 National “campventions”. With as many as over 4 thousand families to start, growing to over 7 thousand.

In 1989 I was visiting the Royal Botanical Gardens when I overheard a conversation of a lady asking an employee of the gardens when the flower sale would be on. His remark was he did not know but call the office. This sparked a new look into. I called the gardens and found out there was a spring sale and an Iris sale.

As I always liked the iris which I called the poor man's orchid, I was off to the sale. Well at the sale they had 3 good sales ladies who convinced me join the C.I.S.. So after joining I got notice of a meeting, so I was off. They convinced me to take over membership as **Mrs. Fenner** wanted to retire and nobody wanted to do it. **John McMillen** was president at the time and asked if I would consider being a director. So I was nominated and duly elected at the annual meeting. When John decided to step down he asked if I would move up and I have been here ever since.

From here I joined the local Hort Society and became program director, from this position I met a number of our members who I only knew from the mailing list; but they are qualified great speakers on many subjects.

Some are also hybridizers of other plants and have given many interesting plants to parks; gardens, towns and more. So by joining an organization you can get great knowledge; great friends, and find how to correct mistakes you did not know you had. I will not mention names as I may miss someone and would not rest easy knowing I had done this. These people are not just local they are across this country of ours and travel many miles and hours.



Join the American Iris Society

\$30.00 one year, \$70 for three years

Send payment to:

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205 Catalonia Avenue
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AIS newly updated web site: www.irises.org

Coming Dates to Remember

2017 Board Meeting Dates

Sunday April 9, 2017	1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Sunday July 16, 2017	1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Sunday October 15, 2017	1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Sunday January 21, 2018	1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

2017 CIS Annual Meeting

Sunday October 15, 2017	2:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Royal Botanical Gardens Plains Road West, Burlington	

2017 Publication Dates

May 2017	Vol 61 No 2 Spring Issue
August 2017	Vol 61 No 3 Summer Issue
November 2017	Vol 61 No 4 Autumn Issue

Coming Events

SOIS Show:	
Sunday June 4, 2017	Set up: 9:00 am – 10:45 am
RBG	Judging: 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
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SOIS Rhizome Sale:	
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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

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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 jowettfarm@copper.net and we will be pleased to advise you. Early renewals are always appreciated.

Liaisons and Regions



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Ted Baker, 185 Furness Rd.,
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ph: 250-653-4430 www.bc-iris.org

Can-West Iris Society

B.J. Jackson, 2421 McDonald Avenue, Brandon, MB R7B 0A6,
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Southern Ontario Iris Society (SOIS)

CIS - AIS Affiliate

Chris Hollinshead, 3070 Windwood Drive,
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London Region Iris Society

Gloria McMillen, PO Box 385, Otterville, ON N0J 1R0
ph: 519 532-2364 email: gmcmlen@execulink.com
Please inquire for membership and group activities.

cis website
www.cdn-iris.ca

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

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