

The Iris Standard

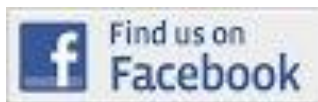
Newsletter of the
Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the
American Iris Society

Volume 21 Issue 2 - Spring 2026

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Join the Ontario Iris Society
on Facebook

[Ontario Iris Society | Facebook](#)

It's your posts that make it an adventure!

ONIS E-Membership Fees

1-year single: \$10 1-year family: \$15
3-year single: \$25 3-year family: \$40

Check the ONIS website for details,
[Ontario Iris Society \(google.com\)](#)

Visit the AIS WIKI

Use this link to access the American Iris
Society's Iris Encyclopedia,
[WebHome < Main < Iris Wiki \(irises.org\)](#).

Find information about irises,
hybridizers, iris societies and more.

Editor's Message

Given the snowfall records that were broken this winter, I think we can all agree that we've seen enough of 'the white stuff' for one year. Despite its importance as a 'mulch' for our gardens during the winter, there are limits!

In February, ONIS attended 'Get The Jump On Spring' at the Toronto Botanical Garden while in March we joined the Seedy Saturday at Evergreen Brick Works. Both days were packed with eager gardeners. Enjoy some photographs from both events on pages 3 and 4.

As temperatures increased during the first week of March, our reticulatas started blooming. Most days I could be found on my knees in the garden, leaning on my elbows, trying to capture pictures of these wee beauties for Facebook. Here's 'Sea Breeze', taken on March 11, before the snow returned!



In [President's Pointers](#), Terry outlines some gardening tasks to help prepare your irises for spring. He also provides information on yet another new invasive species.

Our annual flower show and sale is on June 7th at the Toronto Botanical Garden. You'll find the show schedule beginning on page 6. If you've never entered a show maybe this is the year to join in the fun!

We look forward to seeing you at our events in 2026!

Kate

President's Pointers

by Terry Laurin

I'd like to start by welcoming our new members who joined ONIS at one of the two horticultural events we attended this winter; 'Get The Jump On Spring' and Seedy Saturday at the Brick Works. If you have any questions about your irises or you would like to see an article on an iris-related topic, please contact me and we'll see what we can do.

Otherwise, here is my usual list of spring chores which can help prepare your irises for the season.

1. Once the irises start to grow, check rhizomes for soft rot. If found, cut back the rhizome to where it's white and firm. Do this on a sunny day to allow cuts to callous over.
2. Replant any heaved irises by either pushing them in the ground or, if the ground is still frozen, covering the roots with some soil.
3. Clean up garden debris and dead foliage from around the iris rhizomes.
4. Fertilize with 10-10-10 once new growth appears.

Starting in May, keep an eye out for iris borer activity. Tell-tale signs are notched leaves, wet streaks on leaves and yellow middle leaves. See the information sheet on how to deal with the borer, posted on the ONIS website, [Dealing with the Iris Borer.pdf - Google Drive](#).

New Invasive Species

There's a new invasion species in parts of Ontario. It's called a [hammerhead worm](#).

These flatworms are hard to miss with their long, ribbon-like bodies and their shovel-shaped head. Originally from Asia, they have slowly spread beyond greenhouses/nursery stock into outdoor soils.

An important fact: some hammerhead worms produce tetrodotoxin — the same neurotoxin

found in pufferfish. The amount present isn't enough to seriously harm humans or pets, though handling them can cause mild skin irritation. Garden gloves are wise!



Hammerhead worm (Bipalium adventitium)

Another concern is their appetite. Hammerhead worms are generalist predators. They feed on earthworms, but also slugs, snails, insect larvae, woodlice, and even other flatworms. This broad diet allows them to establish quickly once introduced.

And while many earthworms in Canada are themselves European introductions that have altered forest soils, adding another predator into an already disrupted soil system doesn't "fix" imbalance — it adds another layer to it.

Be on the watch while you garden this summer. If you see one: do not cut it. They can regenerate through a process called binary fission, where a worm splits and regrows into two. Instead, submerge it in rubbing alcohol or vinegar to kill it.

As always, feel free to email me with questions about your irises, tlaurin@rogers.com.





Get The Jump On Spring

A day to celebrate why we love our gardens!

Garden Shop

FREE HONEY TASTING

9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

FEATURING:

- Toronto Botanical Garden Honey
- Coneybear Wildflower Honey
- Honey & Q Creamed Honey
- Cedarwood Blueberry Honey
- Pure Honey Dark Buckwheat

TORONTO



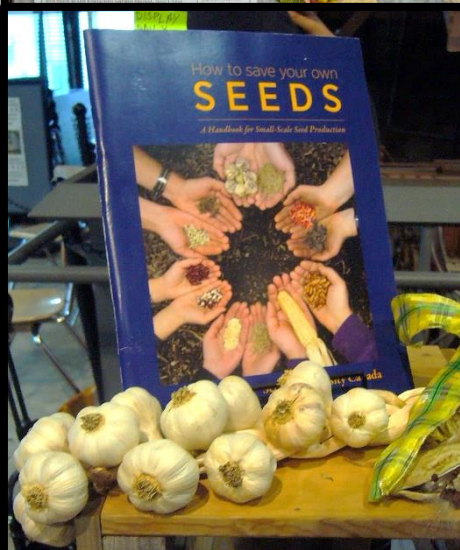
Seedy Saturday at Evergreen Brick Works



Activities & Demonstrations

Activity	Location & Time
Seed Swap Bring seeds, take home some seedlings and share all your extra seeds! Seedlings are available until 10am. Tables to display your seeds and plants for your garden.	4000 9am to 2pm
Soil Test Demonstration We will test a core of soil, looking for pH and nutrient levels, and then discuss the results and how to use the information to improve your soil for your garden.	4000 9am to 2pm
Planting Native Plants Learn about the benefits of native plants for your garden. We will be planting native plants and discussing the benefits of native plants for your garden.	4000 9am to 2pm
Local Produce Tasting Taste some of the best local produce from the area. We will be discussing the benefits of local produce and how to use it in your garden.	4000 9am to 2pm
Plant & Seed with Professionals Meet a local professional and learn about the latest in plant and seed production. We will be discussing the benefits of local produce and how to use it in your garden.	4000 9am to 2pm
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Share your visit with us!
@evergreen_brick_works
#seedsaturday



What? Irises Come From Seeds!

by Kate Brewitt, editor

Sometimes at an ONIS event, we will sell iris seeds. Visitors to our table are frequently surprised to see them, saying “I didn’t know irises grew from seeds!” Here’s a brief explanation.

We usually propagate irises by division: digging up a large clump, breaking apart the individual rhizomes, and replanting. This method is easy, and because most irises increase rapidly, within a few years you will have plenty of them. But that plant originally came from a seed.



Seed pods

When two different irises are cross-pollinated, the result is a pod of seeds. Each of the seeds will grow into a new individual iris. Propagating by division creates an exact copy of the original plant, whereas propagation from seed creates brand-new plants, different from either parent. The element of surprise is what makes raising irises from seed fun and interesting.

What’s a Bee Cross?

When a bee transfers pollen from one iris flower to another, the resulting seed pod is referred to as a ‘bee cross’. That’s why seed packets are labeled something like ‘Reprise’ X bee—the first name indicates the pod parent (the cultivar where the pod formed), while ‘bee’ means the pollen was transferred to the plant by a bee. Once these seed pods ripen, they produce dozens of seeds, each

unique from one another and from their parent plants.



(Note: there are times when seed pods are empty at maturity. This can be due to a number of factors such as high temperatures, nutritional deficiencies, and lack of water during the growing season.)



Mature seed pod and seeds

Why Grow Irises From Seed?

One of the advantages of growing irises from seeds is that you get a wide variety of different plants. You can select the ones that perform well in your climate or whose appearance you prefer. Also, growing any plant from seeds is a very satisfying experience. It connects you with the whole process of growth, from its very beginning to bloom.

Patience is a prerequisite.

Growing irises from seeds is not (usually) very difficult, but it does require patience. It can take 2 to 4 years before a new plant, or seedling, will produce a bloom.

I encourage everyone to try growing irises from seeds at least once. It’s an adventure, and seeing the first bloom on an iris you’ve raised from seed makes it all worth the wait!

It's Showtime, Folks!

Everyone is welcome to exhibit bloom stalks from their garden at this flower show. The show schedule is found on the next two pages. It outlines the rules and regulations plus the awards. If you have any questions, please contact the Show Chair, Terry Laurin.

Visitors are always welcome! Anyone who votes for their favourites from those on display will receive a coupon for a free iris rhizome redeemable at the Table Sales at the August Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale.

**ONTARIO IRIS SOCIETY
Annual Flower Show
at the
Toronto Botanical Garden
777 Lawrence Avenue E.
Toronto, ON**



Sunday, June 7, 2026

Show Setup: 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Judging: 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Public Viewing: 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Free Admission

Show Chair: Terry Laurin

905-841-9676

tlaurin@rogers.com

*Photo: 'Witty' IB (Black, 2012)
2025 R.D. Little Trophy Winner
Photo courtesy of K. Brewitt*

ONIS Awards

R. D. Little Trophy

Best specimen of show (Queen of the Show).

Toronto Region Award

Second best specimen (Princess of the Show).

F. W. Caulfield Trophy

Highest total points in the tall bearded classes.

Jean Sanderson Trophy

Best Canadian introduction.

W. J. Taylor Trophy - Best seedling.

Verna Laurin Plaque - Best historic iris.

AIS Awards

The Ruth V. Blenis Award (AIS Region. 2 Award)

Highest placed tall bearded iris in show.

AIS Best Specimen of Show Certificate

Recipient of the R. D. Little trophy.

AIS Silver Medal Certificate

Exhibitor with most 1st place stickers.

AIS Bronze Medal Certificate

Exhibitor with 2nd most 1st place stickers.

Best Specimen of Show Certificate - Youth

AIS Silver Medal Certificate (Youth)

Exhibitor with most 1st place stickers.

AIS Bronze Medal Certificate (Youth)

Exhibitor with 2nd most 1st place stickers.

AIS Section Medal Certificate

Most first place ribbons in qualifying sections. Must be at least three (3) exhibitors and five (5) cultivars in the section.

Exhibition Certificates are awarded to the outstanding seedling, plus any seedling that obtains at least five (5) votes from certified AIS judges.

Show Rules and Regulations

1. This accredited show is being held and judged under the rules and regulations of the American Iris Society (AIS). These rules and regulations may not be violated. Judges' decisions will be final.

2. All entries MUST be staged between 10:00 am and 11:30 am. Late and unnamed entries will be accepted for display purposes only.

3. Exhibition privileges are open to all, including judges. Judges may not judge their own entries however they may judge entries of immediate family members.

4. Only specifically authorized personnel will be allowed in the show area during judging.

5a. This is a cultivar show. All entries must have been grown and entered in person by the exhibitor whose name appears on the entry tag with the correct cultivar name and placed in the appropriate section. Members of a family may exhibit from the same garden.

b. Cultivars are to be arranged alphabetically in each section.

c. Each exhibitor is limited to one entry per cultivar; otherwise, the number of entries by an exhibitor is not restricted.

d. Containers are furnished by ONIS except in the Single Blossom section.

e. The Show Committee will aid the exhibitors to correctly identify the appropriate section.

f. Seedlings must be entered under seedling name or number and in the name of the originator.

g. Novices are those individuals who have never participated in an AIS sanctioned iris show.

h. Youth (persons under 19 years of age) may enter the Youth Division or the Adult Division but not both.

6. Judging will begin at approximately 11:30 am. The show opens to the public at 1:00 pm until 3:30 pm. Exhibitors may not remove entries prior to 3:30 pm. Unclaimed entries may be sold for the benefit of the Ontario Iris Society.

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

8. Sections for bulbous irises & single blossom entries are eligible to receive award stickers and section certificates. Award stickers for section for bulbous irises are included in the tally for silver and bronze medal certificates however single blossom are not eligible. Both these entries are not eligible for the 'Best Specimen of Show' award.

Show Schedule

DIVISION I – HORTICULTURE

SECTION A - Tall Bearded Iris (TB)

SECTION B - Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB)

SECTION C - Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB)

SECTION D - Intermediate Bearded (IB)

SECTION E - Border Bearded (BB)

SECTION F - Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB)

SECTION G - Siberian (SIB)

SECTION H - Spuria (SPU)

SECTION I - Louisiana (LA)

SECTION J - Any other Beardless

SECTION K - Any iris of Canadian origin

SECTION L - Historic Iris (Introduced in 1996 or earlier)

SECTION M - Bulbous Irises (not eligible for Best Specimen of Show)

SECTION N – Single Blossom (not eligible for Best Specimen of Show or silver and bronze medal count)

DIVISION II – SEEDLINGS

SECTION A - Tall Bearded

SECTION B - Other Bearded

SECTION C - Other Iris

DIVISION III – NOVICE

SECTION A - Tall Bearded

SECTION B - Other Bearded

SECTION C - Other Iris

DIVISION IV – YOUTH

SECTION A – Bearded

SECTION B – Beardless

EARNING POINTS

Exhibitors complete a point credit sheet during the show and have it approved by the Show Chair. **Each point is worth \$0.30.** The accumulated points may be redeemed at the ONIS Auction and Sale on August 9, 2026.

Major Trophy Awards: 10 pts

Court of Honour: 10 pts

Other Awards: 1st place 5 pts

2nd place 3 pts

3rd place 2 pts



ONIS Matters

In the Months Ahead

ONIS Annual Iris Show and Sale
June 7 – 10 am to 3:30 pm
Set-up starts at 10 am to 11:30 am
Open to the public at 1 pm



Toronto Botanical Garden,
 777 Lawrence Ave. E., Toronto.
 Upstairs in Studio One - Free Admission

The Show Schedule can be found on pages 6 and 7 of this newsletter and on the ONIS website, [Ontario Iris Society \(google.com\)](http://Ontario Iris Society (google.com)).

Upcoming ONIS Events

Watch *The Iris Standard*, Summer Edition for details.

July 20 – 25 - Online Rhizome Sale.

August 9 – ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale at the Toronto Botanical Garden.

Welcome New & Renewing Members!

P. Appleton/M. Poulin – Toronto, ON
 V. Domik – Toronto, ON
 P. Rana – Toronto, ON
 S. Rodrigues – Toronto, ON
 D. Rombough – Toronto, ON
 K. Rosen – Toronto, ON
 N. Sebok – North York, ON
 I. Smith – Aurora, ON
 M. Turner – Toronto, ON
 D. Wooster – Toronto, ON
 M. Z. – Toronto, ON

Renewal notices are emailed approximately one month before your membership expires. Questions can be directed to Kate at just1moreiris@gmail.com.

AIS Matters

2026 AIS Membership Drive

Any NEW member who buys any type of AIS membership (E, Print or Full) for one year, will get a second year FREE. This offer includes both International and Canadian members. Details on the AIS website, [AIS Members – American Iris Society](#). Offer runs until December 31, 2026.

News for AIS Region 2 Judges

The AIS Official Ballot for judges was mailed mid-March. If you haven't received it by April 1, email Linda Wilkie at lwilkie.gois@gmail.com.

A printable document that you can take into the garden will be available online. Details were published in the March 20 News & Notes.

Upcoming Conventions



2026 AIS National Convention
Newark, New Jersey
May 18 to 23, 2026

The American Iris Society is hosting the 2026 national convention. An outline of the week's activities can be found on the convention website, [AIS 2026 Convention](#). A printable registration form is provided. Register by April 15, 2026 before registration rates increase. There is also a link to the hotel website to easily book your room. The Newark Liberty International Airport Marriott is the convention hotel. Last day to book a room is May 1, 2026.

The Iris Standard is published four (4) times a year, Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn. Materials submitted must be received by December 1st (Winter), March 1st (Spring), June 1st (Summer) and September 1st (Autumn). Submissions may be edited for style and clarity. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission from the editor, oniseditor@gmail.com.

Title page: Siberian 'Cape Cod Boys' - Photo: K. Brewitt.