

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the American Iris Society

Volume 18 Issue 2 – Spring 2023

Inside this Edition

President's Pointers	2
2023 ONIS Virtual Iris Photo Show On Facebook!	3
Forcing Reticulata Bulbs -Part 3.....	4
AIS Iris Encyclopedia Updates	5
ONIS Matters/In the Months Ahead ...	6



The Ontario Iris Society has a
Facebook page.

We hope you will join us then...

- upload your pictures,
- share your experiences
- ask questions.

It's your posts that make it a success!

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.

<https://sites.google.com/view/ontarioiris>

Visit the AIS WIKI

Use this link to access the Iris Encyclopedia
of the American Iris Society,

[WebHome < Main < Iris Wiki \(irises.org\).](#)

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

Editor's Message

Due to the unseasonably warm winter, our reticulatas started to poke their wee heads out of the ground in late January. When the snow finally fell in February, I knew these tough little bulbs could take it. But the snow didn't stick around for long and in February 'Sunshine' was in bloom in the garden...three weeks earlier than last year!



Iris reticulata 'Sunshine' in bloom on February 20, 2023.

However, the foot of snow that fell in early March slowed things down. Our reticulatas were back on track by the middle of the month when we enjoyed the blooms of 'Spot On' and 'Eyecatcher'. Now that the snow cover has completely receded, we await the rest! Spring is on its way!

It's time to get your cameras ready! Our Virtual Iris Show has moved to Facebook as a photo show which means everyone can enter. Details are on page 3.

My experiment with forcing reticulatas bulbs is complete! Read about what I learned starting on page 4.

Otherwise, we'll soon be back in our gardens, mucking about! I can hardly wait!

Kate

President's Pointers

By Terry Laurin

I will start with my usual list of spring chores which can help prepare your irises for the season.

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

Starting in May, keep an eye out for iris borer activity. Here are some tell-tale signs.

Notched leaves (pictured below) – this is where the larvae have entered the leaf. They will feed on the inside of the leaf, and each other, until one reaches the rhizome.

Wet streaks (pictured below) – areas where the larvae are feeding. Notice it continues down the edge of the leaf.



These two signs indicate the iris borer is in the leaf. You can squish the larvae by running your fingers down the leaf. It is only about a ½ inch long at this stage, so it is easy to squish. You

will know you are successful when you feel a “pop” in the leaf.

Yellow middle leaf (pictured below) – if tugged upon, this leaf will remove easily from the fan.



If you see this, cut the entire fan down to the rhizome. This guarantees removal of the larvae. It will not hurt the plant. Dispose of the leaves in your yard waste bag. Do not compost as the larvae will continue to grow.

If you see a hole in the rhizome this means the iris borer has eaten its way in it. In this case, dig up the clump, look for borer and destroy. Replant undamaged rhizomes.

2023 ONIS Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale

We hope to have an in-person rhizome auction and sale at the TBG in August. We will keep you up to date as the plans develop.

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



2023 ONIS Virtual Iris Photo Show **On Facebook!**

We are trying something different in 2023. We are having a Virtual Iris Photo Show which will be conducted on the ONIS Facebook page. Who doesn't like to see beautiful pictures of beautiful flowers?

Entering the contest is easy! All you need to do is take pictures of the irises in your garden as they bloom, then post your photos to the appropriate album on the ONIS Facebook page.

Albums have been created for each of the classes. To upload your photos, go to 'Media', click on 'Albums' then select the appropriate class. After the album opens, click on 'Add photos' and follow the directions. Entries must have been taken during the 2023 flowering season and must include the name of the iris cultivar. Please do not use Photoshop, but cropping of a photo is allowed.

Maximum of three entries per person per class.

The classes are:

- A. Bulbous iris in bloom, clump shot [I. reticulata, I. danfordiae, I. bucharia (Juno) or other.]
- B. Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB) - Individual Bloom
- C. Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) - Individual Bloom
- D. Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB) - Individual Bloom
- E. Intermediate Bearded (IB) - Individual Bloom
- F. Border Bearded (BB) - Individual Bloom
- G. Tall Bearded (TB) - Individual Bloom
- H. Siberian - Individual Bloom
- I. Spuria - Individual Bloom
- J. Species and Species-X - Individual Bloom
- K. Multiple blooms, clump shot - bearded or non-bearded, identified.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES

Entries will be accepted until Saturday, July 8, 2023. Photos can be submitted any time up until this date, but comments will be turned off until the voting period starts.

PRIZES

The owner of the photo which receives the most votes in each class will receive a 1-year e-membership to the Ontario Iris Society.

PHOTO SHOW VOTING

Starting July 9, 2023, comments will be opened for six (6) days. During this time everyone can vote for their favourite in each class by simply placing a heart emoji, ❤️, in the comment section for that post.

Votes will be tallied after July 14, 2023. Winners will be announced on Facebook and listed in the Autumn 2023 edition of 'The Iris Standard'.

We hope you will take this opportunity to participate. Our Virtual Iris Photo show is open to anyone who wants to enter, ONIS member or not. Simply find an iris, take a picture, and post it to the correct album on the ONIS Facebook page.

If you have any questions, email Kate at just1moreiris@gmail.com.



TB 'Plum Pretty Whiskers' © K. Brewitt

Forcing Iris Reticulata Bulbs

Part 3

by Kate Brewitt

If you follow ONIS on Facebook, you will know that my experiment with reticulatas bulbs was a success! I will admit I was shocked. Past attempts at forcing reticulata bulbs have resulted in nothing more than mushy bulbs. This was a pleasant surprise!

By February 1st the three pots of bulbs had completed their eight weeks of cold treatment. Since the instructions said to put them in a warmish room (60°F/16°C), they were put in a north facing window in the basement. The instructions also indicated that by this time I'd see 2" of green growth. Mine hadn't started to sprout so I immediately anticipated the worst...but crossed my fingers anyway!

Within six days little shoots of green were poking through the soil in two of the pots. I was ecstatic! One cultivar, 'Katharine's Gold', wasn't showing any signs of life. This didn't surprise me as the bulbs were fairly dried out when they were planted. But I still had two pots that showed promise!



Squint, and you can see 'Alida' and 'J.S. Dyt' sprouting!

Another six days later there was a call from the basement. It was Terry asking if I'd looked at the reticulatas lately? I was supposed to be giving

them a quarter turn every day however it was more like every three days. Anyway, I dashed down the stairs to find 'Katharine's Gold' in full bloom! It seems she was just a slow starter. At this point she was well ahead of the other two pots which were still developing.



'Katharine's Gold' in bloom!

In the days that followed our dining room table was graced with colourful blooms of reticulatas. Just as 'Katharine's Gold' started to fade, 'J.S. Dyt' came into bloom. A few days after that 'Alida' bloomed. This resulted in about two weeks of bloom...and I admired those blooms each and every day!



'J.S. Dyt' and 'Alida' in bloom.

Would I do it again?

You bet! In fact I've already started planning for next winter...with some modifications. Here are just a few ideas...

1. Plant more bulbs in one pot. This would result in a fuller look, like the way they grow in the garden.
2. Plant different cultivars in one pot. Now that I know these three cultivars bloom in succession, I'd plant them all in one pot for a staggered bloom.
3. Try a combination of bulbs. One website suggested a combination of iris, crocus and muscari. Sounds lovely!
4. Find a prettier pot. The plastic garden centre variety just doesn't compliment the flowers.
5. After they bloom, throw a few glass pebbles or decorative stones on the soil surface to pretty it up.



Iris reticulata 'Katharine Hodgkin', Crocus chrysanthus 'Romance', Muscari armeniacum and Anemone blanda 'Charmer' © Jason Ingram

What's Next?

Now that the blooms have faded the pots are sitting in a sunny window while the foliage continues to grow. Once it has died back naturally, the stems will be cut off, and the bulbs will be stored in a cool, dry place...probably the basement. Come the fall, the bulbs will be planted in a sunny location in well-drained soil. Then I'll wait for them to bloom in the garden next spring!

AIS Iris Encyclopedia Updates

Have you checked out the AIS Iris Encyclopedia (a.k.a. WIKI) recently?

[WebHome](#) < [Main](#) < [Iris Wiki \(irises.org\)](#)

The WIKI elves have been busy this winter adding cultivar galleries for WIKI users' enjoyment. What's a 'Cultivar Gallery', you ask?

It's a place where you can see pictures of the different cultivars that were registered in any one year for that cultivar size. Let's look at the SDBs as an example.

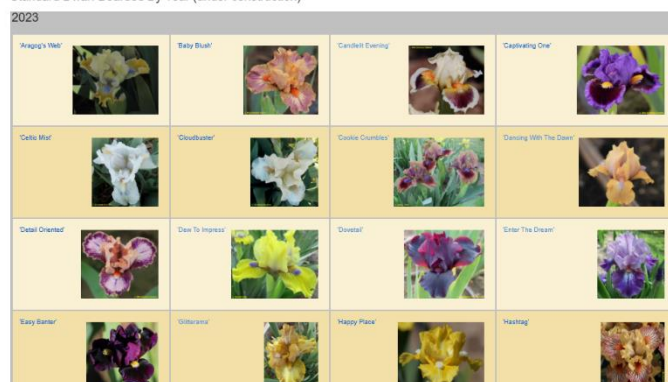
1. From the left-hand side bar, under '*Iris Groups*' (area with green background), select '*Standard Dwarf Bd*'. This will take you to the '*(SDB) Standard Dwarf Bearded Iris*' web page.

2. Scroll down to '*Standard Dwarf Bearded Iris Web Contents/Links*' box (grey background).

3. Click on the first link '*Irises By Year (under construction)*'. This will take you to '*Standard Dwarf Bearded By Year (under construction)*'

You are now in the cultivar gallery. Here you will find pictures of the different SDB cultivars registered, starting with 2023. Click on the name to view cultivar details such as hybridizer, height, growing season, etc.

Standard Dwarf Bearded By Year (under construction)



Because this is a work in progress, different sized cultivars have a different number of pictures in its gallery. So check out each cultivar. It's a great place to discover what's new, and old, in the world of iris!



ONIS Matters **In the Months Ahead**

Richmond Hill Garden and Horticultural Society – ONIS Presentation

June 6 starting at 7:30 pm

**McConaghy Centre, 10100 Yonge Street,
Richmond Hill, ON.**

'Irises, Four Months of Bloom and Beyond' –
presentation by Terry Laurin and Kate Brewitt

Contact Terry at tlaurin@rogers.com for details
or visit their website, [Richmond Hill Garden &
Horticultural Society - Home](http://Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society - Home)
(richmondhillgardensociety.org)



Trip to the Royal Botanical Garden (RBG) June 2023 – Details pending.

Meet up with members from the Western New York Iris Society (WNYIS) in the Laking Garden at the RBG. Judges' Training may be offered. Details are in the planning stages. If you are interested, please email Kate at kbrewitt@rogers.com.

Online Rhizome Sale

July 14 – 16 – ONIS Members ONLY

July 17 – July 23 – ONIS Members and non-members

Back by popular demand! Details will be published in the summer edition of *The Iris Standard*, due out July 1, 2023.

The list of available irises will be posted on the ONIS website, Ontario Iris Society - Auctions

and Sales (google.com). Or email the Sale Coordinator at kbrewitt@rogers.com for a copy of the list.

ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale August - Toronto Botanical Garden

This annual event is in the planning stages. Details will be posted on the website, on Facebook and in the summer edition of *The Iris Standard*.

2023 AIS Region 2 Annual Meeting October - Date to be Announced.

There is a rumour that this year's Region 2 Annual meeting will be held in Honeoye Falls, NY. Details will be communicated to members when they become available.

Upcoming Conventions



2023 AIS National Convention Courtyard By Marriott, Grapevine, Texas April 12 – 16, 2023

Watch the AIS Facebook page for up-to-date reports from convention attendees, [The American Iris Society | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanIrisSociety).

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: SDB 'Mikey Likes It' Photo: K.Brewitt.