

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the American Iris Society

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The Ontario Iris Society has a Facebook page.

We hope you will 'like' us then upload your pictures, share your experiences and ask questions. It's the visitors to the page that make it a success!

ONIS 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/site/ontarioirissociety/>

Visit the AIS TWIKI

The IRIS ENCYCLOPEDIA of The American Iris Society, <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view>

Find information about irises, hybridizers and different iris societies.

Editor's Message

How was your iris season? The nightmare of the early Spring still haunts me. We lost many iris rhizomes to heaving and rot. I nearly cried as I tossed rhizome after rhizome in the yard waste bag. Then, as the season progressed, irises were late blooming or, in some cases, there was no bloom. The blooms themselves were smaller in size, much like Paul Black's small flowered TBs. The iris season was nothing short of bizarre! However, I saw the resulting 'holes' as an opportunity to bring in some newer irises. I grabbed my trusty Winterberry Iris Garden catalogue and marked the ones I wanted. Terry and I were planning to visit Winterberry on our way to the Siberian/Species convention. Dropping off an order would be easy. You can read about our visit to Winterberry starting on page 2.



'Blossom of Snow' (Spoon, 2018)

We opted out of the AIS National Convention this year and took in the Siberian/Species convention in Maryland. With just over 100 attendees it was a small convention which we prefer as it allows more time to visit with friends. The irises were amazing this year. It always impresses me when I see what hybridizers are working on. Read about the convention and see pictures starting on page 3.

Of course the ONIS Annual Flower Show was the first weekend in June. Given the 'bizarre' season we didn't know what to expect but, as always, we had an impressive show. And no flower show would be complete without the People's Choice ballot. Visitors are always so good-hearted about completing it. See all the results starting on page 5.

Otherwise, hope you enjoy your Canada Day!

Kate

Visiting Winterberry Iris Garden

By Kate Brewitt

As iris aficionados, Terry and I have a long list of commercial iris gardens we want to visit. We have been to many of the west coast gardens such as Schreiners', Aitken's and even Cooley's before it closed. But the east coast gardens have eluded us. We have talked about an 'iris tour de force' where we travel the eastern seaboard to visit Joe Pye Weed's Garden in Massachusetts, Borglum's Iris Garden in New York, Winterberry Iris Gardens in Virginia and Draycott Gardens in Maryland however, as they say, "the best laid plans of mice and men..."

This year, though, we were presented with an opportunity. The Siberian/Species convention was being held in Maryland. One of the host gardens was Draycott Gardens in Maryland. A quick search on Google informed us that with a bit of a detour we could work in a visit to Winterberry Iris Garden and still be at the convention in lots of time. We were off to CAA for our Triptik!

We arrived at Winterberry Iris Gardens in 30° weather, and it was only 10:30 am. Don met us at the door with Ginny following close behind...she was getting ready for the convention. The visit was our usual admire the iris/photo-op combination. Their bloom was a couple of weeks ahead of ours so lots of tall bearded irises were at peak. Ginny guided us through the gardens to irises that Terry wanted pictures of for the TWIKI while Don pointed out his favourite introductions. There were so many irises I didn't know which way to point my camera!

The best part of our visit, for me anyway, was hybridizing with Don. He announced he was going to do some hybridizing and I asked if I could tag along. I have always wanted to spend some time with an experienced hybridizer. So Don grabbed his seat, tray of utensils and a flower from the pollen parent. He already had an umbrella set up over the pod parent. As he sat under the umbrella he took all three stamens from the pollen parent and rubbed them across the three stigmas of the pod parent all the while talking about the attributes of both parents and what he hoped to achieve. He

made some notes about the cross then put his tray aside.



He then asked if I would take a picture with him and one of his 2018 introductions. I could tell by the way he spoke about it that he was very proud of his efforts. I eagerly complied. Below is Don Spoon and his 2018 introduction, 'Blossom of Snow', a beautifully ruffled tall white self that has a touch of lavender hidden at the base of the falls. (A close-up of this iris is also pictured in the Editor's Message.)



By this time Ginny was packing up in preparation for our trip to the convention. She had carefully placed in the rear of her vehicle numerous bloom stalks that she was entering in the convention flower show. Once loaded we waved good-bye to Winterberry and we were on our way. Our visit was short but well worth the detour, and it allowed us to cross this garden off our 'to do' list.

2018 Silver Siberian/Species Convention

By Kate Brewitt

From Winterberry Iris Gardens a group of us drove convoy-style to the Siberian/Species convention in Hunt Valley, Maryland. This year's convention celebrated the 25th anniversary of Siberian/Species conventions. First though, Ginny Spoon insisted we stop for lunch at Throx Market in Winchester, Virginia. As Ginny put it, it is Virginia's best kept secret and I must admit I thoroughly enjoyed my grilled panini. After we refilled our drinks for the trip we were back on the road.

Over the next two days we visited four gardens to evaluate Siberian and Species irises; one was a commercial grower, Draycott Gardens, and the remaining three were residential gardens. At each place we perused the rows of irises evaluating each clump on its merits; vigour, bud count, branching, foliage, proportion etc. Once our mission was accomplished we retreated to the shade for a cool drink...Mother Nature had decide to provide us with lots of sunshine and 35° temperatures.



Evaluating the Irises at Draycott Gardens

These conventions are a great opportunity to see what the hybridizers are working on. I've included pictures of some of the irises that I thought particularly interesting.

The first is a seedling from Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer. They are hybridizing for sunburst-like signals. Not only was the signal big and bold but the yellow rim around the fall matches the colour in the signal. Both contrast sharply against the deep purple colouring. The second picture is one of their

introductions from this same line of hybridizing, 'Fiddles on Fire'. Again, the signal is, as Jan put it, "big and loud but not too gaudy."



Schafer/Sacks Seedling S11-23-17B



'Fiddles on Fire' (Schafer/Sacks, 2017)

Another iris I found attractive was this big, ruffled Siberian call 'Hail to the Chief'. The soft colouring added to the mix creating an iris I would welcome in my garden.



'Hail to the Chief' (Hollingworth, 2012)

In contrast, 'Simply Brilliant' was one that I found attractive due to its simple form, one more in keeping with the form of the older diploid Siberians.



'Simply Brilliant' (Hollingworth, R. 2016)

On the final day we visited the Ladew Topiary Gardens. This was the home of socialite and huntsman Harvey Ladew. The 22 acres of gardens have two cross axes to allow for long vistas. Off of each axis are 'garden rooms'. The 'rooms' are devoted to a single colour, a single plant or a single theme. Ladew was among the first Americans to create this type of gardens. If you are ever in the neighbourhood of Monkton, Maryland I suggest you visit. Otherwise, you can read more about it at www.ladewgardens.com.



Example of Topiary in Hedgerow at Ladew

Like every convention after visiting all the gardens we voted for our favourite irises in numerous categories. Since this year's convention was combined with the AIS Region 4 Spring meeting there were three additional awards. The award winners are as follows,

Alice Bouldin Award

(Seedling of a Region 4 hybridizer)



Seedling 20150-26-2B Siberian (Mike Locketell)

Nearpass Award

(Introduced variety of Region 4 hybridizer)



'Angels of the Pond' Versicolor (Anita Moran, 2009)

B.Y. Morrison Award

(Introduced variety by out-of-region hybridizer)

Even though 'Swans In Flight' was not a convention guest iris, voters found it growing in other beds in the guest gardens and voted it worthy of this award!



'Swans In Flight' (Hollingworth, 2006)

Best Siberian Iris



'Purring Tiger' (Schafer/Sacks, 2017)

Best Species Iris



SpecX 'Happy Traveler' (Schafer/Sacks, 2015)

Best Iris Seedling



12S1A15 (Hollingworth)

ONIS Annual Flower Show

By Kate Brewitt

For the first time in many years the rain wasn't an issue for potential exhibitors at this year's flower show. Instead it was the unpredictability that comes with, what everyone is calling, a 'weird' season. While perusing our garden in search of bloom stalks for the show we discovered there was pretty much every iris class in bloom; everything from MDBs, (one had just opened that morning) to Siberians. The only irises not in bloom were the Spurias! For us, this is unusual.

Five exhibitors entered over 45 bloom stalks in this year's show. Also on display were two floral designs provide by one of our members, Annette Langhammer. These demonstrated how easily irises can be incorporated into arrangements along with other seasonal flowers and foliage. If you would like to see more of Annette's designs, go to @florena.king on Instagram.



TB 'Immortality' displayed with white columbine and different types of ranunculus.

ONIS also has a new AIS Judge. It was great to have Jinny Missons on hand to judge her first ONIS flower show.

Thanks to everyone who brought their bloom stalks and to those who helped with the set up and take down. Congratulations to all our trophy winners!

ONIS Awards

**R.D. Little Trophy
Best Specimen (Queen of the Show)**



Exhibitor: Kate Brewitt
Iris: Siberian 'Mabel Coday' (Helsley, 1985)

**Toronto Region Award
Second Best Specimen (Princess of the Show)**



Exhibitor: Kate Brewitt
Iris: TB 'Quantum Leap' (Sutton, 2004)

Verna Laurin Plaque - Best Historic Iris



Exhibitor: Lyn Hickey
Iris: TB 'Loreley' (Goos & Koenemann, 1909)

W.J. Taylor Trophy - Best Seedling



Exhibitor – Ron Walker
Seedling EWxSTH

**F.W. Caulfield Trophy - Highest total points in
the Tall Bearded classes – Lyn Hickey.**

AIS Awards

AIS Silver Medal Certificate

Exhibitor with highest number of 1st place ribbons –
Kate Brewitt

AIS Bronze Medal Certificate

Exhibitor with 2nd highest number of 1st place
ribbons – Terry Laurin

**Ethel Anson S. Peckham Award
(AIS Region 2 Award for Best Historic)**

TB 'Loreley' (Goos/Koenemann, 1909) exhibited by
Lyn Hickey

**People's Choice Ballot
from the ONIS Annual Flower Show**

The results from this year's People's Choice ballot proved that historic irises are still just as popular as newer introductions. Included in the top five irises were 'Damozel', a 1922 introduction, and 'Wabash' a 1936 introduction. It is nice to see that they have stood the test of time!

Back at the top was 'Mexican Holiday'. This iris was selected in 2014 as the most popular iris. The combination of yellow standards and rich red falls is what people liked. Also back in the top five was 'Quantum Leap'. The deep, rich purple colouring is what people commented on the most.

Additional details for all the top five irises can be found on the American Iris Society Iris Encyclopedia: <http://wiki.irises.org/>



1st choice: TB – ‘Mexican Holiday’



2nd choice: TB – ‘Quantum Leap’



3rd choice: TB – ‘Damozel’



4th choice: TB – ‘Autumn Thunder’



5th choice: TB – ‘Wabash’

Thanks to all who participated. If you want to know how your choices compare, email Kate at oniseditor@gmail.com and I will send you your list.

Some of these irises may be available at our August rhizome sale at the TBG. If you decide to join us, don't forget to bring your coupon for a free rhizome!



Youth Matters

Companion Plants for Iris

If you are thinking of planting other flowers with your iris there are a few things to consider. If you like a tall flower, like a delphinium or hollyhock, it should be planted behind your iris so it will not hide it. If you like a short flower, like a dianthus, ground cover plox or a shorter geranium, they can be planted in

front of your tall bearded and median sized iris but along side your miniature iris.

Another thing to think about is the texture of the petals and leaves of your new flowers. Plants that have different shaped leaves always work well and give a whole other look to your flower bed. A plant with spear-shaped leaves, like your iris, don't work as well. Of course flowers with leaves that are a different colour, like silver, red or gold, work well to accent the green of the iris leaves.

There are many things to think about before you make your choice so take your time and the results will be very rewarding.

For information about the ONIS Youth group, contact Jinny Missons at jojimiss@sympatico.ca

ONIS Matters

In the Months Ahead



ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome

Auction and Sale

August 12 – 1 pm – Toronto Botanical Garden
777 Lawrence Ave. E., Toronto.

This is a great opportunity to buy irises at unheard-of prices.

Table sales start at 12:00 pm for members only. This is a sale of rhizomes provided by ONIS members from their personal collections. If you attended our June flower show and received a coupon, don't forget to bring it.

The rhizome auction starts at 1 pm. Please arrive early to get your bidder's number. To see pictures of some of the irises in this year's auction go to the ONIS website and click on the link to Pinterest. Please note, table sales will be suspended during the auction and will resume following the auction.

ONIS Members: If you are donating rhizomes please email Terry at tlaurin@rogers.com with the cultivar names. He will get pictures. On the day of the sale, please arrive by 10:30 am with your rhizomes trimmed, washed and labelled. This will give the set-up committee time to price and sort.

ONIS Annual Meeting October/November – Port Perry, ON

The ONIS Board meets to discuss plans for the upcoming year. All are welcome. Details to be announced in the Autumn edition.

AIS Region 2 Annual Meeting October 19 - 20, 2018 Delmar Presbyterian Church 585 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, NY

Hosted by the Capital Hudson Iris Society, details will be provided in the Autumn edition of *The Iris Standard*. Or watch the AIS Region 2 website: http://www.aisregion2.org/region2_013.htm.

Welcome New and Renewing ONIS Members!

J. Lye – Toronto, ON

R. Walker – Toronto, ON

Reminder to All AIS Judges

For those ONIS members who are AIS Judges, just a reminder of upcoming deadlines,

1. **August 1** – Deadline to vote your AIS official ballot. Email Gerry Snyder if you have not received a UserID and password, AISAWards@irises.org
2. **August 8** – Region 2 Judges' Training Activity reports must be submitted to Wendy Roller our Region 2 JT Chair. Printable copies of the report can be found on the Region 2 website. If you need assistance, please email Wendy at gwr67@frontier.com.

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.

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