

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the
Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the
American Iris Society

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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

Happy New Year! Hope you had a happy holiday season!
Here's a look at what you'll find in this edition.

In the President's Pointers, Terry shares the results from a fertilizing experiment he's been working on for the last couple of years. He also outlines events ONIS will be either attending or hosting in 2026, plus some changes to Region 2. Finally, the AIS has a new membership drive.

After a disappointing reblooming iris season (only one iris rebloomed in my garden), I had to turn elsewhere for my reblooming iris fix. Thanks to ONIS member, Carol Edwards and the CanWest Iris Society, I was able to provide readers with a report for the 2025 season which includes a list of some irises that may rebloom in your garden...see the report starting on page 3.



'Northward Ho' (Zurbrigg, 1991)
photo © K. Brewitt

The American Iris Society has a new popularity poll. It is open to everyone regardless of membership status in the AIS, and it includes ALL cultivars i.e. it is not restricted to tall-bearded irises. Only caveat...you must see the iris growing in your area. Help make it a success by participating. It's easy! It's electronic! Details on page 5.

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

Kate

President's Pointers

by Terry Laurin

Hope you all had a great growing season.

Two years ago, when I noticed our bearded irises weren't performing like before, I changed the fertilizer I was using. Rather than a 10-10-10 fertilizer, I started using a 19-19-19 granular fertilizer at the first sign of growth. The results have been positive. The iris clumps are healthier; in fact we had some irises bloom for the first time in many years.

Our Siberian irises were also not performing well. Clumps were growing to only three-quarters or half of their registered height. I spoke with renowned Siberian iris hybridizer, Robert Hollingworth, and he said that he used a high nitrogen fertilizer, like urea which is 46-0-0. So I bought a bag and tossed it around when the Siberians started to grow. It worked wonders. They are now growing to their registered height with lots of bloom.

If you feel your irises aren't performing up to standard, think about adjusting your fertilizer as I have, and see what happens. If you do, I'd be interested in knowing your results.

ONIS Annual Meeting

After the ONIS annual meeting was cancelled twice due to inclement weather, the board planned 2026 events via email. In addition to *Get the Jump on Spring* in February, we will be returning to Evergreen Brick Works for their Seedy Saturday on March 7. Our flower show will be on June 7. The tall-bearded irises should be in bloom, enabling us to award the Ruth V. Blenis Award for the highest placed tall-bearded iris. Our August Auction and Sale will be August 9. Mark your calendars now and join us!

Your 2026 ONIS Board

Board members for 2026 remain the same, Terry Laurin, President; Jinny Missons, Vice

President; Lyn Hickey, Treasurer; Kate Brewitt, Secretary. Board members can be contacted by emailing just1moreiris@gmail.com.

Report from the 2025 AIS Region 2 General Meeting

The 2025 AIS Region 2 general meeting on October 18 was the first in-person meeting since 2019. Members also joined via Zoom making it Region 2's first hybrid meeting.

Debi Chowdhury, from Capital-Hudson Iris Society (CHIS), became the new Regional Vice President (RVP). Annette Kuhn, from Western New York Iris Society (WNYIS), will continue as Treasurer, and Kate Brewitt, from Ontario Iris Society (ONIS), will continue as Secretary. The position of Assistant RVP will remain open.

After the meeting Howie Dash, iris hybridizer, gave a presentation entitled "Picacho Mountain Iris – A Hybridizer's Journey". Howie provided us with a look at his hybridizing efforts over the last ten years.

2026 AIS Membership Drive

The AIS has a new membership drive. Starting January 1, 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 can be found on the members' page of the AIS website, [AIS Members – American Iris Society](#). The offer runs until December 31, 2026,

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



2025 Reblooming Iris Season A Retrospect

by Kate Brewitt, editor

After last year's spectacular rebloom season, I found this year rather disappointing. Granted we had to move some of our more reliable rebloomers to accommodate some house repairs, but those that were left untouched in other parts of the garden didn't bloom at all. In October, buds began to appear on some of the standard dwarfs such as 'Purple Joy' (SDB), 'Gold Lantern' (SDB), and 'Sky Willow' (SDB), but after three instances of frost, all hope for rebloom disappeared as buds, damaged by the cold, turned soft and mushy.

The only iris from our garden to rebloom was one of my seedlings which I had brought indoors after the third frost. As I was cutting it, I quietly said to myself, "You're a dreamer!" but this little iris ended up surprising me, and it bloomed about two weeks later. It's not the nicest looking iris but it has reliably rebloomed in late October for three years running! Gotta like that!



Seedling, 'Autumn Embers' X bee

Carol Edwards, one of our members, also lamented in an email that it was not a good year for rebloom in her garden. As she said, even her

two clumps of 'Immortality' didn't rebloom. She did, however, have rebloom for the first time on 'Starring Encore,' a plant she bought from the 2024 ONIS online rhizome sale.



'Starring Encore' taken on October 16, 2025
photo © C. Edwards

Another iris she found putting up bloom stalks in late October was 'Las Vegas'. This was a pleasant surprise for her because when she bought it, she didn't know it was a rebloomer. Thanks for sharing, Carol!



'Las Vegas' taken on October 25, 2025
photo © C. Edwards

Carol also passed along a good suggestion for those of us who enjoy our reblooming irises and miss them when they don't. Since dividing reblooming irises can interfere with the rebloom in the year the clump is divided, Carol suggested having two clumps of the same iris in different areas of your garden. This way, when it comes to dividing, one clump can be divided while the other is left to rebloom. The other clump can be divided the following year. Another suggestion, (from the president), for those with limited space, is to divide only a third of the clump at a time. This allows rebloom to continue on the undivided portion. Great ideas to enhance one's reblooming experience.

In an effort to provide ONIS members with a list of potential rebloomers in Ontario, I turned to the autumn edition of the CanWest Iris Society newsletter. Despite their shorter growing season they appear to have had a more floriferous reblooming iris season. Their members reside in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, so these irises are bound to rebloom in Ontario. Here's a list for you to try.

Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB)

Forever Violet (Chapman, 2002)



MDB 'Forever Violet'. Photo © K. Brewitt

Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB)

Autumn Jester (Chapman, 2000)
 Blueberry Tart (Chapman, 2002)
 Forever Blue (Chapman, 1997)
 Forever Royal (Chapman, 2015)

Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) – cont'd

Gingerbread Man (B. Jones, 1968)
 Grape Cordial (Aitken, 2000)
 Jillaroo (Ensminger, 1984)
 Ruby Eruption (Chapman, 1997)
 Ruby Locket (Niswonger, 1988)
 Trending Blue (Chapman, 2023, not registered with the AIS)

Intermediate Bearded (IB)

Returning Fancy (Chapman, 2020, not registered with the AIS)

Tall Bearded (TB)

Autumn Rose (G. Spoon, 2008)
 Betty Dunn (Niswonger, 1995)
 Beverly Sills (Hager, 1979)
 Breakers (Schreiner, 1986)
 Cantina (Byers, 1990)
 Champagne Elegance (Niswonger, 1987)
 Dorcas Lives Again (Miller, 1984)
 English Cottage (Zurbrigg, 1976)
 Florentine Silk (Keppel, 2005)
 Golden Apple (Plough, 1975)
 Immortality (Zurbrigg, 1982)
 Mary Geddes (Stahlman (deceased) by Washington, 1931)
 My Generation (Lauer, 2009)
 Northward Ho (Zurbrigg, 1991)
 Peggy Sue (Lauer, 2006)
 Rosalie Figge (McKnew, 1993)



TB 'Immortality'. Photo © K. Lockyear

Species Cross (SPX)

Eternal Summer (Chapman, 2012)

[AIS Popularity Poll,](#) [Have You Participated?](#)

It was announced in the November 1, 2025 AIS News & Notes, that the AIS Tall Bearded Symposium had been replaced by a new Popularity Poll. It is hoped that the changes made would encourage more participation from both AIS members and non-AIS members alike. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

What Has Changed?

1. You can choose from any iris class.

This AIS popularity poll allows you to select your favourite iris from ALL classes. To participate simply choose up to 25 favorite irises that you have seen growing well in your area. You will need to know the AIS registered name for each iris. If you don't know how to spell the name, there is a link to the AIS Iris Encyclopedia (a.k.a. WIKI) on the form.

2. It's electronic. No mailing forms or emailing answers! Follow these instructions to have your responses automatically submitted.

a) Use this [online form link](#) or use the QR code below to reach the AIS popularity poll.



- b) Enter an email address and the respondent's name.
- c) Select the appropriate province or territory from the drop-down list.
- d) Select your AIS region (if known) from the drop-down list. (*Ontario is AIS Region 2 - ed*)
- e) Select the 'Next' button to go to the next page where you will enter the name of the irises.

f) For each of the 25 favorite irises, type in the name registered with the AIS then select the classification (if known) from the drop-down list. If you are unsure, use the link to the AIS Iris Encyclopedia on the form.

g) If you want a copy of your choices, select the "Send me a copy of my responses" button.

h) Select the Submit button, and you're done!

3. Many respondents can use the same email address.

The results will be tabulated based on the respondent's name, not the email address. This means a number of respondents, e.g. a family, can use the same email address.

4. Results will be analyzed.

The results will be used to determine favorite irises by region and state/province. This in turn will show which irises do well in the frozen north, the humid southeast, the hot desert, and under other growing conditions. Once this information is published it may help growers discover irises suited to their conditions, encouraging them to try new varieties.

This poll is open to AIS members, ONIS members, your friends, your family, in short everyone who has an opinion about the irises they grow or have seen growing in their area during 2025. The popularity poll can be accessed between November 1, 2025 and January 31, 2026.



Siberian 'Pennywhistle'



ONIS Matters In the Months Ahead

Get the Jump on Spring
Toronto Botanical Garden (TBG)
777 Lawrence Ave. E., Toronto.
February 21, 2026 - 10 am to 4 pm



Shake off the winter blues and start the countdown to spring at the TBG's much-loved one-day garden extravaganza. Whether you are a seasoned gardener, a curious beginner, or simply dreaming of warmer days, this annual event brings together plant lovers, expert growers, and local artisans for a joyful, inspiration-packed kickoff to spring. ONIS will be there selling potted iris rhizomes and seeds.

For more information, visit the TBG website, [Home Page - Toronto Botanical Garden](#). Admission is free - \$2 donation is suggested.



Evergreen Brick Works
Seedy Saturday
550 Bayview Avenue, Toronto
March 7, 2026 - 9 am to 2 pm

Join us alongside Toronto's largest year-round farmers' market. This one-day celebration of seeds, gardening, and community will feature workshops, seed exchanges, expert talks, and more! Everyone is welcome to cultivate a shared passion for growing and sustainable living!!

For more information and directions on how to get there, visit the Brick Works website: [Brick Works \(Brick Works Homepage\) - Evergreen](#).

Upcoming ONIS Events

June 7 2026

Annual Iris Show and Sale – Toronto Botanical Garden, Toronto, ON.

August 9, 2026

Annual Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale – Toronto Botanical Garden, Toronto, ON.

Welcome New & Renewing Members!

B. Pollock – Stouffville, ON

G. Ware – Gabriola Island, BC

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



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

The American Iris Society is hosting the 2026 national convention.

Exploring the convention website, [AIS 2026 Convention](#), you will find an outline of the week's activities plus details of an optional tour to [New York Botanical Garden](#) along with some self-guided tours. A printable registration form is provided. Register by April 15, 2026 before registration rates increase. There is also a link to the hotel website where you can book your room. The Newark Liberty International Airport Marriott is the convention hotel. The 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.