

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the
American Iris Society

Volume 15 Issue 4 – Autumn 2020

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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

*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>

Editor's Message

This edition of *The Iris Standard* reads more like a graphic novel than a newsletter. The 1st Annual ONIS Virtual Iris Show was one of two ONIS events held during the Spring/Summer season so I thought it important to share with our members as many of the submissions as possible. The photographers did a wonderful job of capturing irises grown in a garden setting. The pictures were lovely to look at and, for me, acted as a substitute for the lack of bloom in my own garden. I hope you enjoy the pictures as much as I did!



Precious Little Pink' (Byers, 1995)

In fact pictures are an important way of communicating. During the last week of August a member emailed to share the fact that 'Precious Little Pink' was reblooming in her garden. Aside from the usual 're bloom envy', the photo made me smile. We had recently dug and divided our clump of this iris so I knew this would be my substitute. Thanks Karen!

Don McQueen's Iris Fix is another photo-sharing platform. Don's photographs are beautiful and, at a time such as this, are a welcome distraction. I look forward to receiving them.

Of course, there is always Facebook. The ONIS Facebook page continues to grow in popularity with the number of friends tripling since March. Thanks to everyone who posted their pictures and took part in the conversations!

As always, stay safe and keep your social distance! Kate

President's Pointers...

by Terry Laurin

Special Announcement

Twenty-twenty saw most of our regular events cancelled. The ONIS Board has agreed to give our existing members a free one-year extension on their memberships. If you were a member of ONIS as of September 15, 2020 this will affect you. If you want to know when your ONIS membership expires, let me know and I will have our membership chair send you an email.

The Saga Continues

In the Summer 2020 edition of *The Iris Standard* I outlined the challenges encountered during the spring season. As you can imagine, challenges continued throughout the summer and into the fall. In fact, in the thirty years that I have been growing irises, never have I come up against a growing year like the one experienced in 2020.

Most of us in Ontario experienced a very hot and dry summer. When it did rain, it poured. Because the soil was already hard baked by the sun, the heavy rain that fell bounced off the soil which in turn splashed up on the iris foliage. This resulted in an outbreak of leaf spot.



Leaf spot on Spuria iris foliage.

Leaf spot is caused by a fungus in the soil. The fungus lives through the winter on garden debris that has been infected the previous summer. During warm weather masses of spores are produced on this debris so that when a heavy rain occurs the spores will splash up onto the iris foliage to start the disease again.

At the first signs of leaf spot I cut any diseased iris leaves to just below the infected areas. By doing this it reduces the chance of the leaf spot spreading. Do not compost foliage showing signs of leaf spot as the fungus will live in the composter. Instead, discard it with your yard waste for curb side pickup.

To reduce the occurrence of leaf spot next year, clear your garden debris before the winter.

DynaTrap Update

Last year I replaced the light bulb in one of our DynaTraps. Even though it gave off light, apparently the iris moth could no longer see it. I'm happy to report that this action resulted in a reduction of iris borer damage in that part of the garden. I can't say enough good things about these traps as a borer control. They have reduced our infestation by over 90%. Our spring bloom has never looked so good.

ONIS Annual Meeting

In keeping with the changing times, our annual meeting will be conducted through a series of emails this year. If you are interested in being included in the conversations please email me and your name will be added to the list of recipients.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at tlaurin@rogers.com.



2020 ONIS Virtual Iris Show

By Kate Brewitt

When a provincial state of emergency was declared in March, the ONIS Board decided to plan some activities that would keep ONIS members engaged while under self-isolating and social distancing restrictions. This resulted in the 1st Annual ONIS Virtual Iris Show. We knew there were a few photographers in our midst however it was hoped that others would pick up their cameras or cell phones and venture into the garden to take a photograph or two.

We quickly put together a show schedule that had sections for all classes of bearded and beardless iris, and included divisions for seedlings, youth, and floral arrangements. The 'show' was open to

anyone willing to submit pictures. It ran from early May until July 10 hoping this would give everyone time to capture their best looking irises in a picture. In the end four people submitted over 60 pictures. One zealous photographer sent over 40 submissions!

After the pictures were sorted and ready for evaluation it was decided that choosing a 'winner' in each section was too difficult. They were all eye-catching examples of irises grown in a garden setting! Instead it was decided to reward all the photographers with a \$10 Tim Hortons card as a thank-you for engaging in an iris activity during these difficult times.

Below are just some of the over 60 entries.

Division I –Horticulture



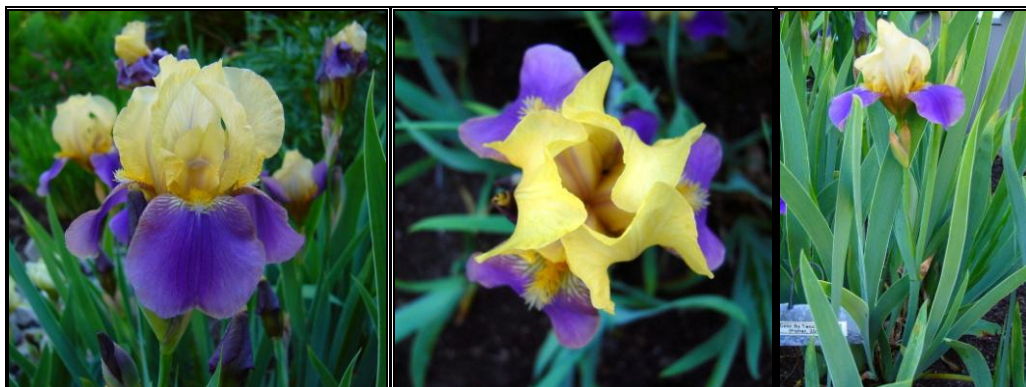
Section A – Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB) – 'Stripling' submitted by Lyn Hickey



Section B – Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) – 'Gold Lantern' submitted by Kate Brewitt



Section C – Intermediate Bearded (IB) – ‘Indian Doll’ submitted by Kate Brewitt



Section D – Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB) – ‘Color By Twos’ submitted by Kate Brewitt



Section E – Border Bearded (BB) – ‘Raspberry Silk’ submitted by Kate Brewitt



Section E – Border Bearded (BB) – ‘Orinoco Flow submitted by Karen Lockyear



Section F – Tall Bearded (TB) – ‘Kleberg Maid’ submitted by Lyn Hickey



Section F – Tall Bearded (TB) – ‘Half Dollar’ submitted by Karen Lockyear



Section F – Tall Bearded (TB) – ‘Hemstitched’ submitted Teri Morris



Section F – Tall Bearded (TB) – ‘Respect’ submitted Karen Lockyear



Section G – Siberian (SIB) – ‘Ginger Twist’ submitted by Kate Brewitt



Section G – Siberian (SIB) – ‘Strawberry Fair’ submitted by Teri Morris



Section G – Siberian (SIB) – ‘Riverdance’ submitted by Lyn Hickey

Division II - Seedlings



MDB Seedling - ‘Forever Violet’ X ‘Royal Bee’ submitted by Kate Brewitt

There is a good chance that there will be a 2nd Annual ONIS Virtual Iris Show in 2021. Watch for details in *The Iris Standard* – Spring 2021 Edition. It is a great way to get members who live at a distances involved in the group. Hopefully next year we will be able to award more prizes!

History Repeats Itself...Kinda

by Kate Brewitt – from ‘The Verna Files’

While continuing on my self-isolating, social distancing, cleaning frenzy I came across a letter that Terry's Aunt Verna had written to Keith Keppel in June of 1988. In fact, we have an entire box of copies of correspondence that she had sent to various hybridizers thanking them for her iris orders. Verna was like that. But I found this letter particularly interesting because she could have been speaking about the 2020 iris season.

After a chatty introduction she discusses the weather...

“You are not the only one to have STRANGE weather. All of 1988 has been weird. No snow in January. The back garden was deep mud one day and a few days later it was hard as a rock. That continued all of January and then in February we had a few heavy snowfalls. Mid Feb. it rained very heavy and after it had soaked into the snow it froze hard and made a 3 inch crust of ice over most of the garden. It stayed cold enough that it lasted over 3 weeks in some places. It was well into March when it finally melted. I expected trouble and got it. Spring was crazy, too.

The small Iris were pretty good but the TB had only the odd bloom stalk. Some disappeared completely and others showed the start of a bloom stalk but the weather had damaged it. I'm sure less than one in ten of the TB's had even one bloom stalk. Several others had the same problem but other gardens in between were almost normal.

The Siberians did well with many bloomstalks but for the last 10 days or so it has been about 95 and dry but very humid. The bloom was over quickly. The spurias are just starting and look pretty good. They keep telling us to expect thunder storms but so far only a sprinkle. It is hot and dry enough that

both water and electricity are short just outside the city and they ask all of us to conserve.”



IB 'Doll' (Keppel, 1987) – one of the irises Keith offered as a substitution.

The letter concluded with Verna offering these poignant words,

Hope your weather settles down. It's bad when it confuses the plants.

Verna, I could not agree more!

Needless to say, I could not bring myself to discard this or any of the other letters that Verna had written over the years to various iris friends and hybridizers. They tell a story and are part of our iris history.



IB 'Butterpat' (Schreiner, 1986) – another of Keith's substitution offerings.



In the Months Ahead

ONIS Matters

AIS Region 2 Annual Meeting Saturday, October 24 – 10:30 am In the comfort of your own home!

AIS Region 2 is holding its Annual General Membership meeting via Zoom on Saturday, October 24th starting at 10:30 am. Starting at 12 noon, there will be a presentation on Siberian Iris given by Bob Hollingworth. Send your email address to tlaurin@rogers.com to receive the zoom log-in instructions closer to the date.

ONIS Annual Meeting October/November – Via Email

The ONIS Board will hold its meeting through an exchange of emails. Email tlaurin@rogers.com before October 7th to be included in the exchange.

Welcome New and Renewing ONIS Members!

M. Benz – Cobourg, ON
A. Plugina – Toronto, ON
R. Pollock – Stouffville, ON
R. Walker – Thornhill, ON
M. Weber-Blatz – Okotoks, AB



Upcoming Conventions

Check the respective convention websites for up-to-date information.

“VISIONS 2020”

2020 Median Iris Convention in 2021
April 8-10, 2021 - Oklahoma City, OK

<https://medianvisions2020.weebly.com>.

“IRIS ENCHANTMENT 2021

101st AIS National Convention
April 12 – 17, 2021 - Las Cruces, NM.

<http://aisregion23.com/2021-national-convention/>

Join the American Iris Society

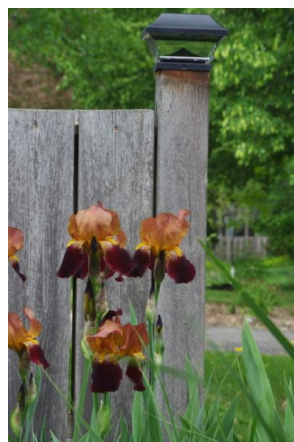


Annual Single: \$30US / Dual: \$35US
Triennial Single: \$70US / Dual: \$85US
(Includes a quarterly bulletin)

A one-year electronic membership, or e-membership, is also available for \$15US.

To view a list of additional membership types, visit the American Iris Society website (www.irises.org).

IRIS FIX



Don McQueen's 'IRIS FIX' began in 2004 as a daily (usually) e-mail with an iris photograph from his patch (containing historic and newbies) in London, Ontario.

The daily FIX begins with bloom season in late April to early May and continues into the late summer or early fall. It is then sent weekly during the winter months. The name of the iris and the date of the photograph are always in the title of the digital image.

If you would like to be put on the 'IRIS FIX list', e-mail Don at ddmcqueen@rogers.com.

If and when you have had enough doses, all you need do is send Don an e-mail saying "Thanks but no thanks", and he will remove you from the e-list.

Indulge yourself! Don takes a beautiful photograph that will make you smile!

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: 'Ginger Twist' (Schafer/Sacks, 2009) taken at Aurora Borealis Iris Garden, Aurora, ON. Photo: K. Brewitt, Editor.