

# 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.

*Upload your pictures and share your  
experiences with other iris lovers.  
It's your posts that make it a success!*

**Ontario Iris Society | Facebook**

#### 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 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

I don't ever remember being this happy to see the end of summer! I'm not a big fan of the heat and humidity. However, the critters in our backyard seemed to take it all in stride. Mrs. Bunny, as we call her, could be found snoozing amongst the irises in the shadier spots. The sparrows loved our parched gardens and were often seen taking a dirt bath before flying over to the bird bath for a dip. Even the hummingbirds were not deterred by the heat, and we saw, for the first time, two fighting for territory over the bee balm and phlox. If I was to take a lesson from nature, I'm thinking Mrs. Bunny has the right idea!



In this edition's President's Pointers, Terry shares some information about how he prepares our irises for winter.

Starting on page 3, read about Ontario's newest invasive species, the jumping worm. As with all invasive species it is important to learn about them and find out what we can do, as gardeners, to control them.

As I've always wanted to try forcing Iris reticulata bulbs, I did some internet searching and found some instructions on how to do just that. I've shared what I found in case you would like to experiment for yourself.

Otherwise, don't forget to email your lists of rebloom! Kate



## President's Pointers

*By Terry Laurin*

Now is the time to start preparing your irises for the winter months. Here are a few measures you can take to help maintain the health of your irises during the long winter ahead.

### **Dead/Diseased Foliage**

I like to remove all dead foliage from around the irises. This is where the iris borer moth will lay its eggs for overwintering. It also helps to prevent soft rot caused by moisture building up underneath the foliage lying on top of the rhizome.



*Before Clean-up*



*After Clean-up*

I also like to cut back the foliage where there are signs of leaf spot. Since leaf spot can overwinter on foliage, it is recommended that all affected leaves be removed and destroyed. Throw foliage out with your yard waste and do not compost.



*Leaf Spot on Iris Foliage*

### **Soft Rot**

Once the iris clumps have been tidied, I took for rhizomes that are soft to the touch. This is an indication that the rhizome has soft rot.

If any soft rhizomes are found, I will cut them back to where it is firm to the touch. Do this on a sunny day with no precipitation in the forecast for 24 hours. This gives the rhizome time to callous over.

### **Iris Borer**

The iris borer moth is still active at this time of year as evidenced by the few we continue to catch in our DynaTrap®. For those of you dealing with an infestation, I would highly recommend purchasing a DynaTrap®. We have been using one since 2015 and have reduced our borer infestation by over 90%.

If you have any questions about what I've covered here, or relating to iris, please feel free to email me at [tlaurin@rogers.com](mailto:tlaurin@rogers.com).



## Jumping Worms

*Information taken from the Canadian Invasive Species Centre website – ed.*

In the weeks prior to the publication of this newsletter I kept seeing headlines about jumping worms. Various experts were giving presentations and/or webinars about this new invasive species. I thought I'd better find out about this little feller to determine what type of threat he/she poses to my garden. As a result, I've jumped (no pun intended) on the band wagon, and thought I'd share what I found.

Found in 2021 near Windsor, Hamilton and Toronto, the 'invasion' of this introduced species is still relatively recent. However, as with all invasive species, controlling the spread is important.

### **What's Wrong With Them?**

These invasive worms outcompete other earthworms. They are voracious eaters and quickly consume the top layer of organic material, making it difficult for plants to remain rooted and allowing nutrients to be washed away by rain. Their castings degrade soil quality, leaving it inhospitable to many native plant species and susceptible to increased erosion.



### **What Do They Look Like?**

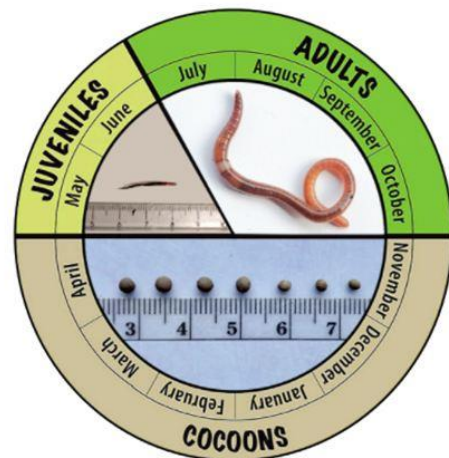
Jumping worms can be distinguished from earthworms by the collar-like band around their bodies (clitellum). The band of a jumping worm is cloudy white to grey in colour and flush with their skin, located only 14-16 segments away from their

head. When threatened, jumping worms thrash wildly from side to side (giving them their nicknames the 'crazy worm'). If their frenzied thrashing isn't enough to deter a predator, they can resort to breaking off segments of their tail to escape.

### **Disposing Of Them**

Any jumping worm discovered should be killed before being disposed of. The most humane method to euthanize jumping worms is by using isopropyl alcohol, which will kill them within seconds.

Another effective method is to seal them in a clear plastic bag and leave them in direct sunlight. If you discover jumping worms in horticultural material such as soil, dispose of the contaminated material in a plastic bag, which can be left out in the sun or frozen to kill any jumping worms it may contain.



### **Early Detection and Rapid Response**

Given their relatively recent spread into Ontario, early detection, and rapid response (EDRR) is critical to managing the jumping worm population. Citizen science has been shown to be an effective tool in the detection, monitoring and research of jumping worms in Canada.

So, if you see a jumping worm, report it! Uploading a photograph along with observations will help in confirming species identity. There is a link on the Invasive Species website where this can be done, [Jumping Worms – Invasive Species Centre](#)

More information about the life cycle, habitat, and control of the jumping worm can also be found on this website or at [Jumping Worms - Canadian Council on Invasive Species \(canadainvasives.ca\)](#).



## **Forcing Iris Reticulata Bulbs**

*Compiled by Kate Brewitt*

*During our cold winter months, do you ever find yourself admiring the pots of Iris reticulatas in bloom in the grocery stores? I sure do. Then I ask myself, why don't you force bulbs yourself? I never do, but I'm hoping to change that this year.*

*That said, I headed to the internet to see what I could find. I have not tested this method yet so I can't comment on 'success rate' however, I will certainly report back in a future edition of The Iris Standard...hopefully while admiring a potted clump of gorgeous Iris reticulatas in bloom!*

*Taken from the Guide To Houseplants website,  
[www.guide-to-houseplants.com](http://www.guide-to-houseplants.com)*

Imagine growing iris reticulata plants on your sunny windowsill in the middle of winter. These petite flowers grow from bulbs, not rhizomes as many irises do, and are easy to force in a container.



*Iris reticulata 'Harmony'*

*Iris reticulata 'Harmony' (shown above) is one of the most popular Iris reticulata varieties. It is one of the most captivating flowers you can grow indoors -- or out. And there is more. Those richly colored blooms are also sweetly scented.*

### **Buying Tips**

Buy iris bulbs that are firm -- not soft or mushy or shrivelled and dry. Don't buy any that are sprouting.

You will find good-quality iris bulbs for sale at garden centres and online nurseries that specialize in flower bulbs. There are many varieties available, 'Harmony' is brilliant blue with a golden-yellow lip, 'J.S. Dijit' is dark purple, and 'Alida' is a newer cultivar with large flowers and a mid-blue hue. (And, if you can find them, try any of Alan McMurtrie's hybrids, 'Eyecatcher' is my favourite, not just for its beautiful colouring but it multiplies profusely.)



*Iris reticulata 'Eyecatcher'*

*A note of caution. Having done this myself, make sure you are buying Iris reticulata bulbs. Vendors sell Dutch iris bulbs at the same time and if the packaging isn't clearly marked or the printing is small, you may find yourself buying Dutch bulbs, which isn't a bad thing but speaking from experience, they last only a season or two in our Ontario climate.*

### **How to Force Reticulata Iris Bulbs**

#### **Step by Step**

These early spring irises need a cold treatment for eight (8) weeks. Start the process in October or November for mid-winter blooms.

1. Choose a shallow pot (about 6 in/15 cm deep) with drainage holes in the bottom. Plant iris bulbs 2-3 inches (5-7.5 cm) deep in an all-purpose potting mix. Go ahead and crowd the bulbs, placing them side by side with pointed end up.

Cover with soil and place pot in a drainage saucer.

2. Water thoroughly and empty drainage saucer.
3. Move pot to a dark, cool, but not freezing (35-45°F/2-7°C) location such as a basement, unheated garage, or refrigerator. Avoid storing bulbs near ripening fruit or vegetables because the ethylene gas they produce can damage the bulbs. Keep them in cold storage for about eight (8) weeks. Keep the medium barely moist.
4. When shoots reach about 2 in (5 cm) tall, bring the pot out of cold storage and place it in a warmer (60°F/16°C) location that gets at least four (4) hours of sunlight per day. Give the pot a quarter turn every day for even growth. When in full bloom, keep irises in a sunny location.

Your beautiful iris plants should burst into bloom in about two weeks. Make them last longer by keeping the flowers as cool as possible -- no warmer than 60°F/16°C. Even with cool temps, your flowers will only last about 5-10 days.

Iris bulbs cannot be forced a second time indoors. If you want to keep them, allow the foliage to die back naturally, cut off the stems, then store the bulbs in a cool, dry place. Plant the bulbs in a sunny location with well-drained soil in the fall. Iris *reticulata* are hardy to Zone 5 and naturally bloom in early spring.



*Iris reticulata 'Katharine Hodgins'*

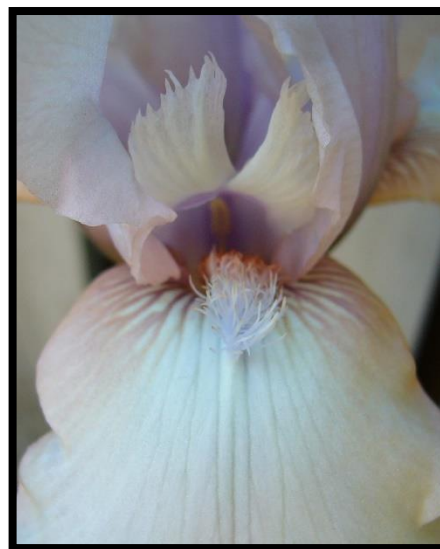
## Rebloom in Ontario

*By Kate Brewitt*

Have you started to compile your reblooming iris list?

So far there has been only one iris rebloom in our garden, the ever reliable 'Precious Little Pink'. It rebloomed in one part of the garden on August 10, and then in another part of the garden on August 29. Despite its near historic status, (introduced in 1995, an iris attains historic status after 30 years) I'm always thrilled by its late blooming flowers.

I continue to patrol our garden daily, looking for bulging leaves while pinching the base of the fans to see if I can detect a bloom stalk forming. So far, the same clump of 'Precious Little Pink' has developed two more bloom stalks. Fingers crossed there will be rebloom on other varieties!



*Detail of 'Precious Little Pink' – August 10, 2022*

Just a reminder to record the following when your irises start to rebloom this fall,

1. Name of the cultivar.
2. Date it started to rebloom.
3. Date it finished reblooming (optional).

When your irises have finished reblooming send an email with this information to me at [kbrewitt@rogers.com](mailto:kbrewitt@rogers.com). If you have any pictures, send them along as well. They will nicely compliment the resulting report which will appear in a future edition of *The Iris Standard*.



### Do You Know the Name of This Iris?

This was a tough challenge, to which I can attest! When I misplaced the answer key, I found myself having to match names to pictures. Fortunately, with the help of the AIS WIKI I was able to do just that. Phew...that would have been embarrassing! If you want to know more about each of the irises, a link to the AIS WIKI has been attached to the name. Thanks to all who submitted guesses!

The correct names are,

A. TB 'Classic Look',

B. IB 'Bold Print',

C. TB 'Earl Of Essex',

D. IB 'Rare Edition',

E. TB 'Ink Patterns',

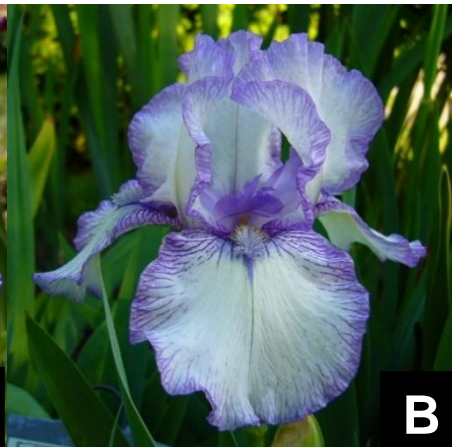
F. TB 'Charleston',

G. TB 'Presby's Crown Jewel',

H. TB 'Rumor Has It',

I. TB 'American Classic',

Extra Name: TB 'Common Thread'.





## ONIS Matters

### In the Months Ahead

#### **2022 AIS Region 2 Annual Board Meeting Wednesday, October 12 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom.**

At this meeting the Region 2 Board will discuss business matters in advance of the General Meeting. Everyone is welcome. AIS members will receive a pre-registration email. Not an AIS member but would like to attend? Email Kate at [kbrewitt@rogers.com](mailto:kbrewitt@rogers.com) to receive registration details.

#### **2022 AIS Region 2 Annual General Meeting Saturday, October 22 at 10:30 am ET via Zoom.**

At the General meeting, the Treasurer and Committee Chairs will give their annual reports. AIS Region 2 members will also vote on the nominations for the Board. Following the meeting, at 12:00 pm, there will be a presentation on the Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative, [Home | LICI Save irises](#).

All AIS members will receive a pre-registration email. If you are not an AIS member but would like to attend either the meeting or presentation, email Kate at [kbrewitt@rogers.com](mailto:kbrewitt@rogers.com) to receive pre-registration details.

#### **ONIS Annual Meeting October/November**

The ONIS Board is reviewing its options for this year's meeting. Details to be announced. Everyone is welcome to attend.

### Welcome New and Renewing Members!

S. Colpitts – Saskatoon, SK

B. Pollock – Stouffville, ON

*The Iris Standard* is published four (4) times a year, Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn. Materials submitted must be received by December 1<sup>st</sup> (Winter), March 1<sup>st</sup> (Spring), June 1<sup>st</sup> (Summer) and September 1<sup>st</sup> (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](mailto:oniseditor@gmail.com).

Title page: TB 'My Generation' Photo: K.Brewitt.

## AIS Matters

### Upcoming Conventions

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

The Iris Society of Dallas is hosting the 2023 AIS National Convention in Grapevine, Texas. For information go to [2023 AIS CONVENTION - Iris Society of Dallas \(irises-dallas.org\)](https://www.irises-dallas.org).

[Click here](#) to access a printable information flyer.



### Join the American Iris Society



Full Membership (printed Bulletin + on-line access)

Annual: \$45 US – Single / \$50 US – Dual

Triennial: \$115 US – Single / \$130 US - Dual

Basic Membership (printed Bulletin only)

Annual: \$30 US – Single / \$35 US - Dual

Triennial: \$70 US – Single / \$85 US - Dual

E-Membership: One-year on-line access \$15 US.

Annual Youth Rates (under age 19)

\$8 US without a Bulletin / \$12 US with a Bulletin

[Click here](#) to go to the American Iris Society website and a list of additional membership types.