

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the American Iris Society

Volume 20 Issue 2 - Spring 2025

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Join the Ontario Iris Society
on Facebook

[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 American Iris
Society's Iris Encyclopedia,
[WebHome < Main < Iris Wiki \(irises.org\)](#).
Find information about irises, & more.

Editor's Message

Our first two events of 2025 were well attended. They are a sign for eager gardeners that spring is around the corner. Every year more people ask for advice on container gardening. At Brick Works, one woman, who grew plants in containers on her balcony, shared with us her struggles to find information. For this reason, we've put together some material on growing iris in containers. See page 6. Of note, this same woman said the foliage on her bearded irises was already up six inches!

If you were unable to attend these events, there are pictures from 'Get the Jump on Spring' and 'Evergreen Brick Works Seedy Weekend' on page 7. Thanks to those of you who dropped by the table at both events. It was great to see you!

Of course it's also showtime, folks (cue the 'jazz hands'). Our annual show schedule is published on pages 3 and 4. Please note, the date has changed. **The new date is June 1.** Hope to see you there!



BLOOM WATCH

Our reticulatas have been in bloom for three weeks. The first, 'Spot On', bloomed March 11. Much to my surprise, this was eleven days later than last year. I wonder what this says for the season ahead. Whatever it may say, I'm looking forward to it!

Kate

President's Pointers

by Terry Laurin

After the last few winters of very little snow, the snow that fell this winter was a welcome sight. Admittedly, I was probably one of few people to express this opinion, but snow is a blanket of protection for our irises.



Speaking of snow, once the snow melts in your area, (if it hasn't already), watch your iris clumps for heaved rhizomes (see left). If you find any, replant them as soon as possible. I like to put a stone

on any that I've replanted to reduce the chances of them heaving again. However, if they do, replant them again. Keep watching until the threat of frost has passed. Also check for soft rot. If you find any, cut the rhizome back to where it's firm. Best to do this on a sunny day.

As your irises start to bloom, think about entering our annual show. It isn't as complicated as it looks. Sure, there are attributes to look for in a potential show stalk, but the real goal of this show is to have fun. This year why not bring in a bloom stalk and see what happens...just for the fun of it! You may be surprised.

On the Hunt for 4" Plastic Pots

I would like to thank everyone who answered our plea for 4" square hard plastic pots last year. They have already been put to good use i.e. used to pot the remaining rhizomes from last year's Table Sales at the August Auction & Sale. This means we're looking for more!

If any ONIS member (or anyone you know) has 4" square plastic pots they would be willing to donate to the club, it would be greatly

appreciated. You can email me if you have any questions.



4" square plastic pots

Please note, only pots, as pictured above, will be accepted. Pots other than 4" square plastic pots can be recycled or contact your local nursery. Many have recycling programs.

2025 AIS Membership Drive

This year's membership drive is a tremendous deal. If you are interested, details are outlined on the American Iris Society website, [AIS Members – American Iris Society](#)

**2025 AIS Membership Special
\$10 (US) for Print or Full single membership**

Regularly priced at
\$30 US (Print) and \$45 US (Full)
Runs from March 1 to November 1, 2025.
For new members, and those whose membership lapsed over a year ago.

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



3. Exhibition privileges are open to all, including judges. Judges may not judge their own entries however they may judge entries of immediate family members.

4. Only specifically authorized personnel will be allowed in the show area during judging.

5a. This is a cultivar show. All entries must have been grown and entered in person by the exhibitor whose name appears on the entry tag with the correct cultivar name and placed in the appropriate section. Members of a family may exhibit from the same garden.

b. Cultivars are to be arranged alphabetically in each section.

c. Each exhibitor is limited to one entry per cultivar; otherwise, the number of entries by an exhibitor is not restricted.

d. Containers are furnished by ONIS except in the Single Blossom section.

e. The Show Committee will aid the exhibitors to correctly identify the appropriate section.

f. Seedlings must be entered under seedling name or number and in the name of the originator.

g. Novices are those individuals who have never participated in an AIS sanctioned iris show.

h. Youth (persons under 19 years of age) may enter the Youth Division or the Adult Division but not both.

6. Judging will begin at approximately 11:30 am. The show opens to the public at 1:00 pm until 3:30 pm. Exhibitors may not remove entries prior to 3:30 pm. Unclaimed entries may be sold for the benefit of the Ontario Iris Society.

7. The Show Committee will exercise all possible care but cannot be responsible for loss or damage to exhibits.

8. Sections for bulbous irises & single blossom entries are eligible to receive award stickers and section certificates. Award stickers for section for bulbous irises are included in the tally for silver and bronze medal certificates however single blossom are not eligible. Both these entries are not eligible for the 'Best Specimen of Show' award.

Show Schedule

DIVISION I – HORTICULTURE

SECTION A - Tall Bearded Iris (TB)

SECTION B - Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB)

SECTION C - Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB)

SECTION D - Intermediate Bearded (IB)

SECTION E - Border Bearded (BB)

SECTION F - Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB)

SECTION G - Siberian (SIB)

SECTION H - Spuria (SPU)

SECTION I - Louisiana (LA)

SECTION J - Any other Beardless

SECTION K - Any iris of Canadian origin

SECTION L - Historic Iris (Introduced in 1995 or earlier)

SECTION M - Bulbous Irises (not eligible for Best Specimen of Show)

SECTION N – Single Blossom (not eligible for Best Specimen of Show or silver and bronze medal count)

DIVISION II – SEEDLINGS

SECTION A - Tall Bearded

SECTION B - Other Bearded

SECTION C - Other Iris

DIVISION III – NOVICE

SECTION A - Tall Bearded

SECTION B - Other Bearded

SECTION C - Other Iris

DIVISION IV – YOUTH

SECTION A – Bearded

SECTION B – Beardless

EARNING POINTS

Exhibitors complete a point credit sheet during the show and have it approved by the Show Chair. **Each point is worth \$0.30.** The accumulated points may be redeemed at the ONIS Auction and Sale on August 10, 2025.

Major Trophy Awards: 10 pts

Court of Honour: 10 pts

Other Awards: 1st place 5 pts

2nd place 3 pts

3rd place 2 pts

Growing Iris in Containers

By Kate Brewitt

Many are surprised to learn that irises can be grown in containers. The miniature dwarf (MDB) cultivars, which grow no higher than 8 inches, and the standard dwarf (SDB) cultivars, which grow between 8 inches and 16 inches, lend themselves perfectly to container growing. This is good news for those who garden on balconies or have limited garden space. There are other reasons for growing irises in containers, as I will explain.



If you live in a condo or apartment and want to garden on your balcony, irises are fairly drought tolerant so require less watering than other perennials. A small pot of irises can bloom for up to two weeks.

If your home garden has limited space, growing irises in containers allow you to put a plant in a small space that may not otherwise accommodate a full-sized perennial. If the space ends up being too shady, it is easily moved.

If you like change, containers are moveable, making it easy to change the look of your garden from year to year. Containers also allow you to fill holes in your garden display. If there is no bloom in an area where you want bloom, put a container of irises. Once the irises have finished blooming, replace the container with something else. You can also plant irises in a decorative planter to place on a deck or patio. While smaller

planters can be used as centerpieces for outdoor tables.

What do I do in winter?

Overwinter your containers indoors or in a garage, if you have one. If you choose to leave your containers outdoors, place them in a shady area so the plant stays dormant throughout the winter. It also prevents the soil from experiencing a freeze/thaw cycle. If you have a garden, you could bury smaller pots in the ground.

Dividing container grown irises

You will know when your container grown irises need dividing as the rhizomes will start pushing against the sides of the container. In the garden, these smaller irises should be divided every three to five years, depending upon the cultivar, so expect a similar timeline. Wait six to eight weeks after flowering before dividing.

Watch the American Iris Society (AIS) Webinar on "Growing Iris in Containers"

Webinar #23 "Growing Iris in Containers" by Doug Chyz



Learn...

1. How pot size affects your display.
2. What type of soil to use.
3. How to care for container grown irises.
4. Pros and cons of growing in containers.

NOTE: This webinar mentions the use of pesticides. Check your local bylaws before you use any treatment as most pesticides are banned in Canada.

Get The Jump On Spring

An enjoyable day celebrating people and plants.

Seedy Weekend at Evergreen Brick Works

“That’s right. It’s all about plants.” (a mother walking with her son at Brick Works).

Spring Bulbs



ONIS Booth



Terry at the booth



Jinny looking at native seeds



Jinny at the booth



Where Can I Buy Irises?

This is a common lament for Canadian iris lovers these days. Many of the large iris nurseries have closed in recent years, so finding a place to buy irises is becoming increasingly difficult. One can always check the big box stores or a local nursery, but stock tends to be limited, and ordering from one of the US iris growers is very expensive. Shipping rates have increased dramatically, and the required phytosanitary certificate can cost upwards of \$75 US. Before you've selected any irises, you've spent over \$100 CDN given the current exchange rate.

Hearing your pleas, we have put together a small list of Canadian iris sources. This is certainly not a complete list but it's some place to start.

Please note, this list should not be considered an endorsement by the Ontario Iris Society. As always, do your research before you buy!

Nurseries And Iris Gardens

***Val's Garden**

RR#1, Williamsford, ON

Bearded iris, Siberians (Siberian Display Garden), species iris. Email for catalogue, Vals.Garden@hotmail.com. Gardens open by appointment.

Arbour Gardens

3962 Hwy 2, Newcastle, ON

300 varieties of bearded and beardless irises. Also on Facebook: [Arbour Gardens - Facebook](#)

Chapman Iris

8790 Wellington Road 124, Guelph, ON.

Various sizes of bearded iris. See website for details: [Chapman Iris](#).

David's Garden, Millbrook, ON

673 Country Road 28, RR#1 Millbrook, ON.

Tall and intermediate bearded iris. Email for a list of available irises, david.retallick@bell.net.

David's Garden – cont'd

More details on website: [David's Garden](#). Also posts on Canadian Iris Buy, Sell and Trade.

Northland Nursery

722 Concession 5 W, Waterdown, ON

Tall bearded, Japanese, Siberians. Online ordering is available. See website for details: [Northland Nursery | Ontario](#)

Online Shopping

Blossom Hill Gardens, Lamont County, AB

[Irises For Sale - Blossom Hill Gardens](#)

Botanus, Lanley, BC

[Online Plants in Canada - Botanus: Care~Inspire~Grow](#) – Siberians, Iris reticulatas, Dutch bulbs.

Harbour Breezes Daylilies and Japanese Irises, Head of Jeddore, NS

[Harbour Breezes Daylilies and Japanese Iris at Jeddore](#) – Japanese iris.

Hillside Irises, Cawston, BC

[Hillside Irises - Home](#) – all sizes of bearded iris. Also posts on Canadian Iris Buy, Sell, and Trade.

Iris Obsession, Falkland, BC

[Iris Obsession](#) – all sizes of bearded iris plus other perennials.

Email: mp_unruh@hotmail.com

Phoenix Perennials, Richmond, BC

[Nursery & Garden Centre, Richmond, BC | Phoenix Perennials and Specialty Plants](#) – most sizes of bearded iris. Also beardless iris, bulbs and more.

Facebook Sales

Canadian Iris Buy, Sell and Trade

This private Facebook group is for iris lovers across Canada who want to sell and/or trade irises from their home gardens. A word of caution for this type of platform, sales are final and there are no guarantees.

**denotes ONIS member*



ONIS Matters In the Months Ahead

ONIS Annual Iris Show and Sale
June 1 – 10 am to 3:30 pm
Set-up starts at 10 am to 11:30 am
Open to the public at 1 pm



Toronto Botanical Garden,
777 Lawrence Ave. E., Toronto.
Upstairs in Studio One - Free Admission

Everyone is welcome to display bloom stalks from their garden at this flower show. Visitors who vote for their favourites will receive a coupon for a free iris rhizome redeemable at the August Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale.

The Show Schedule can be found on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter and on the ONIS website, [Ontario Iris Society \(google.com\)](http://Ontario Iris Society (google.com)).

Upcoming Events

Details in *The Iris Standard*, Summer Edition.

July 26 – 31 - Online Rhizome Sale.

August 10 - ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale - Toronto Botanical Garden

Welcome New & Renewing Members!

- V. Ames – Williamsford, ON
- S. Bent – Toronto, ON
- L. Cain – Toronto, ON
- J. Cook – Selwyn, ON
- M. Curry – Whitby, ON
- V. Gysel – Toronto, ON
- P. Irwin – Toronto, ON
- J. Krehm – Toronto, ON
- H. McNamee – Ajax, ON
- M. Seto – Toronto, ON
- G. Ware – Gabriola Island, BC
- J. Weber – Toronto, ON

More On Isabella Preston

After reading in our winter edition about Katie Deneiko's project to preserve Isabella Preston's irises, one of our readers asked for a list. As she said, "Good to know what to watch for when I'm shopping for plants."

That said, here is a link to Miss Preston's hybridizer page on the AIS WIKI where irises she registered with the AIS are listed: HybridizerPrestonMissIsabella < Main/Bio < Iris Wiki

Upcoming Conventions



'Aim for Ames for Irises'
2025 Siberian and Species Iris Convention.
Ames, Iowa
May 23 – 24, 2025

For details on activities, registration, and hotel reservations, click here, convention2025.pdf



'Iris Under the Big Sky'
2025 AIS National Convention
Billings, Montana
June 2 to 7, 2025

Due to overwhelming demand, the organizers of this convention are happy to announce they are 'sold out' and are no longer accepting registrations. Watch the AIS Facebook page for pictures in real time.

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Title page: IB 'Bold Stroke' Photo: K. Brewitt.