

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the
American Iris Society

Volume 11 Issue 2 – Spring 2016

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*Time to renew your
Sheridan Nurseries discount card.*

*If you don't have one but would like to
receive one,
see ONIS Matters for details.*

Sheridan website link:

<http://www.sheridannurseries.com/>

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

Snow or No Snow...our winter was like a game show this year as El Niño weather patterns provided us with fluctuating temperatures all winter! One day our irises would be nestled beneath a beautiful blanket of fluffy, white snow, the next they would be naked and exposed to the elements. It will be interesting to see how they perform this year!

The day of 'Get the Jump on Spring' was one of those 'no snow' days...the total opposite of last year when there were near blizzard conditions. The warm temperatures brought out the visitors as the TBG was a-buzz with people talking gardening and expressing their desire to 'get their hands dirty.' Pictures from the day can be found on page 3 and 6.

Our annual American Iris Society (AIS) Sanctioned Flower Show at the TBG is on Sunday, June 5; only two months away! If you have never entered your irises in the show maybe this is the year you do! This year's show schedule starts on page 4. Included is a link to an information sheet on how to show irises should you decide to join us.

Other signs of Spring are starting to emerge. We've had inquiries into our events as eager iris lovers look for new cultivars to add to their flower beds. Terry even received a phone call mid-March from one enthusiastic member who



announced that his Iris reticulatas were in bloom. In our own garden we found one of our reticulatas in bloom on March 21 (seen left). Even the Spuria irises are showing about 2" of leaf growth. Everything is pointing to an early iris season this year. I can hardly wait!

Kate

Above: Iris reticulata 'Eyecatcher' from hybridizer Alan McMurtrie.

Why Irises Won't Bloom **What to do for Iris Plants Not Flowering**

By Bonnie L. Grant

Printed from Gardening Know How:

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com>

The most common question we get at the ONIS booth when we attend garden shows is why aren't my irises flowering? If you have asked yourself this question, perhaps this article will help.

Irises are one of the easiest flowers to grow. They stem from rhizomes, which quickly multiply over the years, producing bigger, wider clumps of these appealing blooms. When you notice iris plants not flowering, the cause can stem from a variety of issues including weather, soil fertility, overcrowding, unhealthy rhizomes, insect or disease attack, planting depth and even site conditions. If you are wondering, "why are my irises not blooming," take a good look at these issues. Usually, we will find iris plants not flowering due to one of these easily corrected conditions.



Why are My Irises Not Blooming?

Bearded or beardless irises are a pleasure to have in the garden. They provide a long term display of tall, glorious sword-like leaves and boldly featured blooms. Most irises have a wide hardiness range from United States Department of Agriculture zone 4 to 9 (Canadian zones 2 to 9). When iris do not bloom, you still have beautiful foliage but the long waited for flowers refuse to appear. Frustrating as this is, it is generally something that can be fixed and flowers will appear the following year.

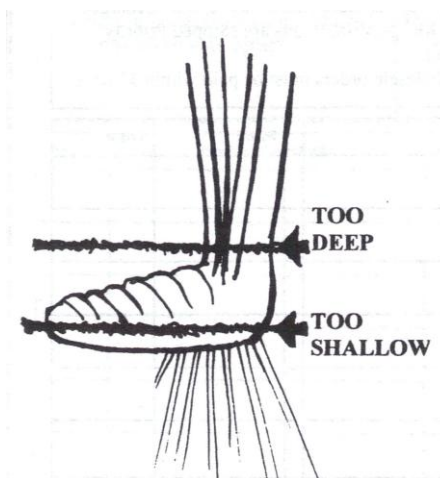
There are many reasons for irises not blooming well, but what about why irises won't bloom at all?

Most species of iris spring from rhizomes, although a few come from bulbs. Both these are underground storage structures that contain a reserve of carbohydrates and embryonic plants. When temperatures and lighting are right, they sprout stems and leaves and eventually produce flowers.

Poor rhizomes or bulbs are often the cause of no flowers. If these are mushy, rotten, small and under formed, then the result is stunted plants with few or no blooms.

Also, the plant needs well-drained soil in full sun for flowers to be produced. Irises in shady locations may fail to form blooms.

Depth of planting can also cause iris plants not flowering. Rhizomes should be near the soil surface, ideally with the tops at or slightly below the soil surface.



Other Reasons for Why Irises Won't Bloom

If plants are correctly installed, have well-draining soil and good light exposure, it may be a soil fertility problem. Conduct a soil test to see if the pH and fertility are consistent with good iris growth. Ideal iris soil pH is 6.8 and soil should have average levels of nitrogen, but sufficient amounts of phosphorus too, the nutrient that helps plants form flowers. An amendment of superphosphate, colloidal phosphate or bone meal applied in early spring can help plants develop blooms.

Another reason for iris plants not flowering is overcrowding. The rhizomes will increase over time and plants become too packed in their site. Dig up the clump and divide it, planting each rhizome

individually in other areas of the garden. Retain just half the rhizomes in the existing area and water all transplanted rhizomes frequently.



Over competition from other plants and weeds, which shade the iris bed and insufficient water, are other causes for why irises won't bloom. Irises are extremely drought tolerant but in the absence of any water, they will respond by refusing to bloom.

Another commonplace reason is a late freeze. Although irises tolerate freezing conditions well when not sprouted as long as the area is well draining, early leaves and stems can succumb to a freeze. When there are no leafy greens to draw in solar energy, flower production can screech to a halt. Also, a freeze can kill any new buds that are just forming. Freezes experienced by plants 6 to 8 weeks before bloom can simply abort the buds and prevent iris plants from blooming for a season.



Iris flower bud damaged by late frost.

Insects and disease are seldom a problem, but if plant health is compromised, buds will rarely form.

Signs of Spring from 'Get the Jump on Spring'

Some of the 'fun' signs seen at this year's event.



It's Show Time, Folks!

For those members who like to exhibit irises from their gardens at the ONIS flower show, here is this year's show schedule.

For tips on how to show your irises, [click here](#) to access an article which previously appeared in *The Iris Standard*.

If you have any questions, please contact the Show Chair, Terry Laurin, at 905-841-9676 or by email at tlaurin@rogers.com.

ONTARIO IRIS SOCIETY Annual Flower Show at the Toronto Botanical Garden 777 Lawrence Avenue E. Toronto, ON



Sunday, June 5, 2016
Show Setup: 10:00 am to 11:30 am
Judging: 11:30 to 1:00 pm
Public Viewing: 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Free Admission

Show Chair: Terry Laurin 905-841-9676
tlaurin@rogers.com

*Photo: "Paul Black" TB (Johnson, 2003)
 2015 R.D. Little Trophy Winner
 Courtesy of K. Brewitt*

ONIS Awards

R.D. Little Trophy

Best Specimen (Queen of the Show)

Toronto Region Award

Second Best Specimen (Princess of the Show)

F.W. Caulfield Trophy

Highest total points in the Tall Bearded classes

Jean Sanderson Trophy

Best Canadian Introduction

W.J. Taylor Trophy - Best Seedling

Verna Laurin Plaque - Best Historic Iris

AIS Awards

AIS Silver Medal Certificate

Exhibitor with highest number of 1st place ribbons.

AIS Bronze Medal Certificate

Exhibitor with next highest number of 1st place ribbons.

AIS Section Medal Certificate

Most 1st place ribbons in qualifying sections provided minimum requirements are met.

Best Specimen of Show Certificate - Youth

Exhibition Certificates are awarded to the outstanding seedling, plus any seedling that obtains at least five (5) votes from certified AIS judges. All AIS judges are asked to contact the Show Chair in order to pick up seedling ballots.

Show Rules and Regulations

1. This accredited show is being held and judged under the rules and regulations of the American Iris Society (AIS). These rules and regulations may not be violated. Judges' decisions will be final.
2. All entries **MUST** be staged between 10:00 am and 11:30 am. Late and unnamed entries will be accepted for display purposes only.
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.

5. 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.

Cultivars are to be arranged alphabetically in each section.

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

Containers are furnished by the Society except where noted.

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

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

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

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

For Tall Bearded specimens, the stem length shall not exceed 25 cm (10") from the top of the container to where the first branch originates on the stem. It may be less if the stem is not of sufficient length.

6. Judging will begin at approx. 11:30 am. The show is open to the public from 1:00 pm to 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 or groups for bulbous irises and collections are eligible to receive award stickers and special section awards. Award stickers are included in the tally for Silver and Bronze Medal Certificates although these entries are not eligible for the 'Best Specimen of Show' award.

Show Schedule

DIVISION I – HORTICULTURE

SECTION A - Tall Bearded Iris

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 1986 or earlier)

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

SECTION N - Collections (not eligible for Best Specimen of Show)

Class 1 - 3 stalks/one variety

Class 2 - 3 stalks/all different

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

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 2016 ONIS August Auction/Sale.

Major Trophy Awards: 10 pts

Court of Honour: 10 pts

Other Awards: 1st place 5 pts
2nd place 3 pts
3rd place 2 pts

'Get the Jump on Spring' Inside and Out

by Kate Brewitt

It was a beautifully warm and sunny day for this year's *Get the Jump on Spring*. Visitors were definitely thinking 'Spring' with many claiming an eagerness to get out in their gardens. Thanks to all the ONIS members who stopped by to say 'hello'!



Busy at the ONIS Table



Good friends and good food.



Beautiful Arrangements by the Sunnybrook Volunteer Association Greenthumbs



TBG Beekeepers Association



Iris Flower Display Wins Best in Show!



Sure looks like Spring!



In the Months Ahead

Scarborough Seedy Saturday and Green Fair

April 2 - 11 am to 4 pm

**Blessed Cardinal Newman High School
100 Brimley Road South (south of Kingston Rd),
Toronto.**

Over 65 tables to delight gardeners and nature lovers with a seed exchange, seed vendors, parks and nature groups, kids' activities and more.

President's Open Garden

May 22 – 10 am to 2 pm

**Aurora Borealis Iris Garden
120 Glass Drive, Aurora, ON L4G 2E8**

Drop in and see miniature dwarf and median irises in bloom. Please email ahead tlaurin@rogers.com.

ONIS Annual Iris Show

June 7 – 10 am to 3:30 pm

Set-up starts at 10 am

Judging starts at 11:30 am

Open to the Public at 1 pm

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



Everyone is welcome to display bloom stalks from their garden at this American Iris Society sanctioned flower show. All visitors who vote for their favourite bloom stalk will receive a coupon for a free iris rhizome from the table sales at the 2016 August Annual Rhizome Auction and Sale.

The Show Schedule, found on page 4, outlines the criteria upon which the bloom stalks are judged. It is also available from the ONIS website: <https://sites.google.com/site/ontarioirissociety/annual-show>

ONIS In Brief

Mark your calendars now so you don't miss these upcoming ONIS events. Details to follow in future editions of *The Iris Standard*.

August 7 – ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale at the TBG.

Things to do in Ontario

Peterborough Garden Show

**Evinrude Centre,
911 Monaghan Road,
Peterborough.**

**April 8 – 10 – times vary with
day attended.**

For details visit their website at
<http://peterboroughgardens.ca/Showhome.html>



**The Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Super
Plant Sale at the TBG**

777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto.

May 1 - 11 am to 3 pm

For details visit their website at
www.onrockgarden.com

Toronto Botanical Garden Plant Sale

777 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto.

May 13 – 15; 10 am to 5 pm

Choose from top-quality perennials, annuals, natives, herbs and vegetables, succulents, shrubs, vines, and small trees. Plus gardening advice from the Toronto Master Gardeners.

Iris Conventions

Louisiana's Other Side

Society for Louisiana Irises

Shreveport/Bossier City,

Louisiana

April 20 – 24, 2016

Garden Tours to include: R. W. Norton Art Gallery and Garden, Briarwood: The Caroline Dorman Nature Preserve, The Newton/Taylor Garden and Plantation Point Nursery, both in Mooringsport, LA.

Details and the registration form will be posted soon on the SLI website <http://www.louisianas.org/>.



Visit the AIS WIKI

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

Going East in 2016



**American Iris Society
National Convention
Newark, New Jersey
May 23 – 28, 2016**

Hosted by The American Iris Society, Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, and Essex County, New Jersey.

Attendees will have the opportunity to tour three beautiful gardens for three days. Presby Memorial Iris Gardens plus two beautiful gardens in Eastern Pennsylvania: Glenara Gardens in Palmerton and Hildenbrant Garden in Slatington. The 2016 Guest Plant Committee has received 1800+ guest plants, 888 varieties, sent by 99 hybridizers.

Details can be found on the convention website, <http://ais2016convention.com/>



Youth Matters!

The Role of the Rhizome

The rhizome is a very important part of the iris plant. It is not only a place for food storage that lets the iris plant get off to a quick start every spring, but it is also the main way that irises can multiply. Rhizomes are active only until they produce a bloom stalk, usually a year. After the stalk is finished flowering that rhizome becomes inactive. Buds (or increases) along its length begin to grow and branch out to form new rhizomes that will produce future bloom stalks. All the rhizomes in a clump of irises may be joined to each other, but each rhizome is capable of surviving and making a new plant when it is separated from the others. That is how gardeners can multiply their iris and have some to share with their friends.



ONIS Matters

2016 Member Benefit!

SHERIDAN NURSERIES has agreed to extend their 10% discount offer to ONIS members!

To take advantage of this program for 2016, you must be an ONIS member in good standing as of April 1, 2016.

To apply for this discount send your name, address and telephone number to Terry Laurin at tlaurin@rogers.com. Indicate "Sheridan Offer" in the subject line. Deadline is **April 15, 2016**.

Discount applies to most regularly priced merchandise and cannot be applied to discounted merchandise, Gift Card purchases, Landscape Design services, Tele-flora services, labour, Bulk Soil and Mulch delivery or other delivery charges. Discount card will be valid for one year.



Welcome New and Renewing

ONIS Members!

A. Hill, Queensville, ON

V. Lo, Oshawa, ON



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!

Look forward to hearing from you!

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: Aurora, ON. Photo: K. Brewitt, Editor.