

# The Iris Standard

## Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the  
American Iris Society

Volume 11 Issue 3 – Summer 2016

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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  
and ask questions. 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/>

### Visit the AIS TWIKI

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

Find information about irises, hybridizers  
and different iris societies.

### Editor's Message

As "El Niño passes the baton to La Niña", (as declared by The Weather Network), what does this mean? Apparently we can expect a hot, dry summer with more 30° days than the last two years. Better pull out your sunscreen and your sun hats...if you haven't already!

The American Iris Society (AIS) convention this year in Newark, New Jersey was a real joy. The best part was visiting Presby's Memorial Iris Garden, a memorial to Frank H. Presby, one of the founders of the AIS. There were rows and rows of irises, both new and old. A real iris lover's oasis!

*At right, Convention Goers at  
Presby's Memorial Iris Garden*



Inside this edition of The Iris Standard you will read about the AIS Convention Cups winners, the ONIS Annual Flower Show trophy recipients, the People's Choice selection from the flower show and the top five irises selected at the President's Open Garden. Maybe you'll find one or two 'must-haves' for your 'wish list'!

Terry and I had our annual sojourn to Tara Perennial Farm to get rhizomes for the annual auction and sale. Compared to last year's torrential rain, the near 30° temperatures were a blessing. We hope the selection that we got will appeal to everyone. Join us on Pinterest...pictures will be posted within the next few weeks.

Late July/August is the time of year to dig and divide your irises. If you would like to donate some of your leftovers to this year's rhizome sale you will find directions on how to prepare your rhizomes on page 3.

Stay cool! Kate

## President's Pointers

By Terry Laurin

### Dealing with the Iris Borer

If you have checked your iris fans and you have found water streaks, sawdust-like material around the rhizomes and/or a yellowing middle leaf you probably have the iris borer. Here are two ways to deal with them...for now.

1. Squish the larvae in the leaf. It is only about a ½ inch long at this stage so it is easy to squish. You will know you are successful when you feel a “pop” in the leaf.
2. Cut the entire fan down to the rhizome. This guarantees removal of the larvae. This will not hurt the plant. Dispose of the leaves in your yard waste bag. Do not compost as the larvae will continue to grow.

This will prevent the borers from continuing their feeding frenzy into the rhizome.



### Iris Borer Prevention



Have you bought your DynaTrap yet? I know I keep preaching about it but I have to say it works. Since purchasing one three years ago there has been a steady decline in the number of irises affected by the iris borer which means I am cutting out fewer fans (I prefer method 2 above for dealing with the borer). The result has been healthier plants with more bloom.

## Reblooming Irises

If you have reblooming irises this is the time of year to fertilize them with a 5-10-10 mixture to help with the development of roots and bloom. Also, do not let these irises dry out. If you do, they will go into dormancy which will reduce their chances of reblooming this fall.



Reblooming SDB 'Purple Joy' (Spoon, 2009)

## Yellow Tips

Some of our members commented on having the leaves on their irises develop yellow tips this year. The yellow tips occurred because of the late frost we had in April. Developing leaves were damaged by the frost. When they grew longer the damage showed up as yellow tips. Your irises will be fine next year...unless, of course, there is another late frost in April.

## Digging and Dividing

Are your irises not flowering as much? Perhaps they need dividing. Bearded irises should be divided every three to five years to maintain optimum bloom. See “Trimmed, Washed and Labelled” for more details.



*Editor's note: Terry working hard uploading images to the AIS TWIKI. Did you know Terry was the TWIKI Photo Manager?*



## Trimmed, Washed and Labelled Getting Ready for the ONIS Rhizome Sale

by Kate Brewitt

Late July/August is traditionally the time to dig and divide our irises. By this time the increases (new rhizomes growing from the 'mother') have set roots. Also, dividing during the summer months when weather tends to be drier will reduce the incidence of bacterial soft rot when irises are re-planted.

The process of dividing irises involves digging the clump, separating the new rhizomes (increases) from the old rhizomes and planting them back in the garden. I don't know about you but I always have more rhizomes than I know what to do with. My heart brakes as I toss them in the yard waste bag but my neighbours have all the irises they want without becoming an iris display garden!

That's where the ONIS Annual Rhizome Sale comes in. Members are encouraged to donate their 'extra' rhizomes to the sale to help raise funds for future events. Every year in the ONIS Matters section of the newsletter there is a 'call to action' that reads: "If you are donating rhizomes please arrive by 10:30 am with your rhizomes trimmed, washed and labelled. This will give the setup committee time to price and sort." But what does 'trimmed, washed and labelled' mean. Let me explain...

After digging the clump of irises you wish to divide, pull the rhizomes apart with your hands. Clumps that need dividing usually have rhizomes growing over each other. Another indication is your iris clumps are not blooming as well as they used to.



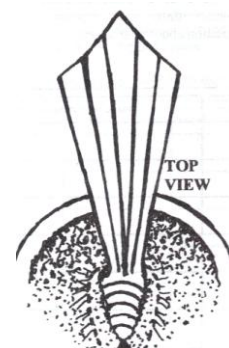
Once you have clusters of rhizomes separate the increases (new rhizomes) from the 'mother' (old rhizome). A good rhizome will be about as thick as your thumb, have healthy roots, and have one or

two leaf fans. Large, old rhizomes (the mothers) that have no leaf fans can be tossed.

Inspect each rhizome for

- the iris borer (a fat, white worm with a brown head). If you find one destroy it and the rhizome. You do not want to sell the borer with the rhizome. The new owner will not be happy.
- soft, smelly, or rotting areas. These rhizomes should also be destroyed. Also, discard any that feel lightweight or hollow, and appear dead.

**TRIM** the leaves, or fan, so that they are 4 to 6 inches long (see below). This reduces the stress that the plant goes through as it concentrates on re-growing new roots instead of trying to maintain long leaves. The roots may also be trimmed slightly if they are really long.



**WASH** the rhizomes in water to remove soil then dry them in the sun preferably so the end of the rhizome will callus over.



**LABEL** each rhizome. Using a marker or pen write its name and size on the leaves e.g. TB Thornbird or SDB Absolute Joy.

There you have it. Your rhizomes are ready for the ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome Sale. All that's left is for the setup committee to price them. Please arrive by 10:30 am so we have lots of time.

Hope to see you on August 7<sup>th</sup>!

## ONIS President's Open Garden

*By Kate Brewitt*

There hasn't been an official President's Open Garden in five years. The early years were plagued by rain and cool temperatures which limited the number of visitors so we changed the format to "by appointment only". Then last year, while admiring our garden, Terry and I decided it was time to share it again.

In the weeks leading up to the event the weather seemed to be cooperating. Night time temperatures were cool and, even though some nights got a bit too close to freezing for comfort, the irises seemed to hold their own. But the bloom was lagging by about a week from previous years. As I did my daily perusal of the garden I worried about the amount of bloom we'd have for the event.

In the end I had worried for nothing. As we flung open the garden gate on May 22 the median irises were putting on their best show. As Terry proudly announced to one visitor there were 110 clumps of irises in bloom. We couldn't have asked for anything better. Even the weather cooperated...the day was sunny and warm!

As always visitors were asked to select their five favourite cultivars from those in bloom. This year's top selection, by a landslide, was the SDB 'Cameo Queen' (Jones, 2001). As if knowing it was going to be making a royal appearance, the clump of this iris opened in full glory the day before. It still looked stunning as visitors showed up to the garden the next day. She truly was the 'queen of the show'!



*'Cameo Queen' (Jones, 2001)*

There was a tie for second choice between 'Can't Wait' (Black, 2000) and 'Flirting Again' (Aitken, 2002). Those who selected 'Can't Wait' commented on the eye-catching contrast between the dark purple flower and the bushy, bronze beard.



*'Can't Wait' (Black, 2000)*

Visitors who selected 'Flirting Again' were attracted to the deep rich colour of the dark rosy-pink falls which nicely complimented the blue-violet standards.



*'Flirting Again' (Aitken, 2002)*

Other irises in the top five included;

- SDB - 'Big Blue Eyes' (Black, 2006)
- SDB - 'Blueberry Tart' (Chapman, 2002)
- SDB - 'Butterscotch Carpet' (Chapman, 1994)
- SDB - 'Eye of the Tiger' (Black, 2008)

Visitors who participated in this selection had their names entered in a draw for a free 1-year membership to the Ontario Iris Society. This year's winner was K. Lockyear of Toronto. Congratulations and enjoy!



## ONIS Annual Flower Show at the TBG

Nine exhibitors entered over 60 bloom stalks in this year's annual flower show. Mother Nature behaved herself in the week leading up to the show. The weather was sunny, warm and dry. However, not to be taken for granted, Mother Nature opened up the heavens and dumped a load of rain on our irises the night before the show.

But as we always say, we were there to have fun...and fun we had! It was an extremely successful show with lots of visitors to the TBG dropping by. Thanks to everyone who brought their bloom stalks and to those who helped with the set up and take down. Congratulations to all our trophy winners!

### ONIS Awards

#### **R.D. Little Trophy Best Specimen (Queen of the Show)**



Exhibitor: Ron Walker  
Iris: MTB 'Stitched In Blue' (Fisher, 2006)

#### **Toronto Region Award Second Best Specimen (Princess of the Show)**



Exhibitor: Terry Laurin  
Iris: TB 'Stairway To Heaven' (Lauer, 1993)

### **Verna Laurin Plaque - Best Historic Iris**



Exhibitor: Kate Brewitt  
Iris: TB 'Damoze' (Morrison, 1922)

### **F.W. Caulfield Trophy -Highest total points in the Tall Bearded classes – Terry Laurin.**

**Youth Best Specimen of the Show – A. Missons**  
– TB 'Stairway To Heaven' (Lauer, 1993)

### AIS Awards

#### **AIS Silver Medal Certificate**

Exhibitor with highest number of 1st place ribbons –  
Terry Laurin

#### **AIS Bronze Medal Certificate**

Exhibitor with 2nd highest number of 1st place  
ribbons – Kate Brewitt



*Members Admiring the Historic Irises*

This year there were three seedlings entered in our seedling category. It's great to see members taking an interest in hybridizing. We look forward to your continued efforts!

### People's Choice Ballot from the ONIS Annual Flower Show

The results from this year's People's Choice ballot demonstrated that beauty is truly in the eye of the beholder. People's selections showed a wide variety of features; everything from broken colour and horned irises to the very simplistic bi-colours and selfs where the standards, style arms and falls are the same colour.

The most popular iris was a clear 'winner' from the start. People noticed the tall bloom stalk of the border bearded iris 'Batik' the moment they entered the room. Not only did visitors 'ooh' and 'ahh' over it but families grouped around it for picture taking sessions. This broken colour iris looks great on the show bench as well as in the garden. It was fascinating to see an iris draw such attention!



1<sup>st</sup> choice: BB – 'Batik'

The second placed iris, 'Sting Me', is considered a space-ager iris. It has a tiny horn appendage at the end of the tangerine beard; hard to see in a photograph but very apparent in the garden.



2<sup>nd</sup> choice: TB – 'Sting Me'

Two older Dykes Memorial Medal winners were also in the top five; 'Edith Wolford', a canary yellow and blue-violet bi-colour, and 'Titan's Glory', a "Bishop's" purple self. Their selection is proof that the older irises do stand the test of time.

The fourth choice, 'Ominous Stranger', is a combination of muted yellow and purple. The falls are dotted with tiny brown spots which blend nicely with the bronze beards. Definitely different!



3<sup>rd</sup> choice: TB – 'Edith Wolford'



4<sup>th</sup> choice: TB – 'Ominous Stranger'



5<sup>th</sup> choice: TB – 'Titan's Glory'

Thanks to all who participated. If you attend our August rhizome sale, don't forget to bring your coupon for a free rhizome!



## 2016 AIS National Convention Cup Winners

With irises in peak bloom at this year's convention it was a challenge to select candidates for the Convention Cups. Despite temperatures hovering between 32°C and 34°C the irises stood up to the heat...better than some of the convention goers who could be found making a bee-line for the nearest patch of shade after judging the irises.



*Relaxing in the shade at Presby's Memorial Iris Garden*

Once judging was complete and the ballots were submitted and tallied, the list of the winners was presented at the closing banquet.

### **President's Cup**

(Best iris from an In-Region hybridizer)



*'Put Another Nickel In'*  
TB (Howard Bushnell,  
2010)

**Franklin Cook Cup – two irises tied for this cup**  
(Best iris from a hybridizer NOT in Region)

*'Honky Tonk Rumble'* TB  
(Hooker Nichols, 2015)



*'Three Part Harmony'* TB (Black, 2014)

### **Ben Hager Cup**

(Best Median Iris) – the second year in a row for this MTB to win this Cup.



*'Moose Tracks'* MTB (Lynda Miller, 2015)

**Lloyd Zurbrigg-Clarence Mahan Seedling Cup**  
(Best iris seedling at the convention.)



*'2013-1'* (Bonnie J. Nichols, TB)

Congratulations to all the winners, and thanks to all the hybridizers for their dedication to creating these gorgeous flowers!



## ONIS Matters

### In the Months Ahead

**ONIS Annual Iris Rhizome Auction and Sale**  
**August 7 – 1 pm** – Toronto Botanical Garden  
 777 Lawrence Ave. E., Toronto.

A great opportunity to buy irises at unheard-of prices. Table sales will start at 12:00 pm for members only. This is a sale of rhizomes provided by ONIS members from their personal collections. If you attended our June flower show and received a coupon, don't forget to bring it.

The auction will start at 1 pm so arrive in time to get your bidder's number. To see pictures of some of the irises in this year's auction go to the ONIS website and click on the link to Pinterest. Please note, table sales will be suspended during the auction. Following the auction table sales will resume.

**ONIS Members:** If you are donating rhizomes please arrive by 10:30 am with your rhizomes trimmed, washed and labelled. This will give the setup committee time to price and sort.

**ONIS Annual Meeting**  
**October/November – Port Perry, ON**

Details to be announced.

**AIS Region 2 Annual Meeting**  
**October 14 – 15, 2016**  
**Fairfield Inn and Suites, Buffalo, NY**

Hosted by the Western New York Iris Society. Watch the AIS Region 2 website for details.  
[http://www.aisregion2.org/region2\\_013.htm](http://www.aisregion2.org/region2_013.htm)

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## Welcome New and Renewing

### ONIS Members!

F. Kershaw – Toronto, ON  
 A. Langhammer – Aurora, ON  
 G. Little – Aurora, ON  
 I. Shtephan – Toronto, ON  
 R. Walker – Toronto, ON

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## Reminder to All AIS Judges

For those ONIS members who are AIS Judges, just a reminder of some upcoming deadlines,

1. **August 1** – Deadline to vote your AIS official ballot. On-line voters should have received a UserID and password from Gerry Snyder, AIS Awards Chair. If not you can email him at [AISAwards@irises.org](mailto:AISAwards@irises.org)
2. **August 1** – Region 2 Judges' Training Activity reports must be submitted to Wendy Roller our Region 2 JT Chair. If you need assistance, please email her at [gwr67@frontier.com](mailto:gwr67@frontier.com).

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## Join the American Iris Society

\$30 US for one year  
 \$75 US for three years  
 (Includes a quarterly bulletin)



A one (1) year electronic membership, or e-membership, is also available for \$15 US.

Visit the AIS website for details:  
[http://www.irises.org/About\\_AIS/Membership\\_Info/AIS\\_Membership.html](http://www.irises.org/About_AIS/Membership_Info/AIS_Membership.html)

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## Youth Matters

For information about the ONIS Youth group, contact  
 Jinny Missons at  
[jojimiss@sympatico.ca](mailto:jojimiss@sympatico.ca)

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*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.

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