

The Iris Standard

Newsletter of the Ontario Iris Society

An affiliate of the
American Iris Society

Volume 11 Issue 1 – Winter 2016

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Looking for something to do during the
long, cold Canadian winter?

Scroll through a list of Seedy Saturdays
and Sundays occurring throughout
Canada from January to April to find one
taking place close to you.

The Seeds of Diversity website:
www.seeds.ca/events

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

Happy 2016! Hope you had a happy holiday season!

Remember the 20° temperatures of early November? During that week we had two reblooming irises develop bloom stalks that never had before; 'Sky Willow' (D. Spoon, 2005) and 'Perpetual Indulgence' (Aitken, 2005). It was exciting. I caressed their fattening buds by day and Terry covered the clumps with empty pots by night. My birthday was approaching and it had been many a year since I had been able to brag about irises on my birthday dining table.

However with the snow on the evening of November 13 I figured my 'birthday present' was lost. But as the temperatures rose again in the days that followed, my hopes were renewed and the buds, which had softened up some, were again covered nightly. In the end, the best I could do was place two underdeveloped iris buds in a vase, but the frost had got to them and they simply withered away.

Our members had better success with their rebloomers this year. Some sent emails with pictures, others sent photographs. I have shared them in my article entitled 'Remontant Recap'.

This is the time of year when we dream of all the things we hope to do in our gardens once the weather warms up. Included in this edition are a couple of articles that may help you with your garden planning. The review on Kevin Vaughn's new book on beardless irises may inspire you to make room for more of these beardless beauties. An article on broken colour in irises may be another inspiration. We grow 'Loreley' 'Batik' and 'Bewilderbeast' and they do demand attention when they are in bloom.

And now that this El Nino winter has finally dumped a layer of insulating snow on our Aurora gardens, I am resting easier. I only hope it stays!

Wishing you a floriferous 2016!

Kate

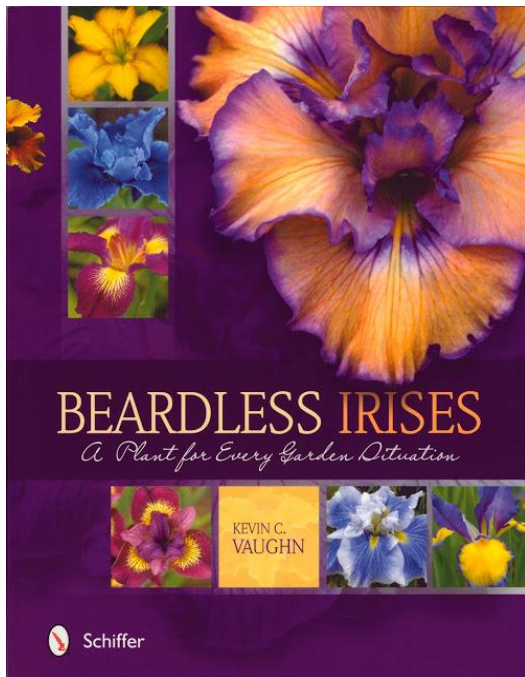
Newly Published: BEARDLESS IRISES, A Plant For Every Garden Situation

by Andi Rivarola

We iris lovers take for granted the huge amount of information that is available online, and because there are so many people sharing their love for iris with photographs, blogs, and plainly just posts on Facebook, we forget that there are those in the iris community that are real experts in the field.

I didn't know anything about Kevin Vaughn a few months ago, and didn't think of him as an expert when I first met him. In fact, I thought of him as another iris fan with an amazing taste for garden design, but after reading all the details in his book I realized that his love for irises runs deeper than that.

Today I believe that he has not only great advice to give on how to grow irises successfully, but also offers a multitude of information that makes reading his new book a joy.



Cover photo provided by Kevin Vaughn

During this year's National Convention of The American Iris Society, held in Portland, Oregon, attendees were able to experience the beauty of Kevin Vaughn's garden twice. Once during an optional pre-convention tour, and then again as part of the Siberian & Species Convention held after the regular convention. It was during these two sessions that I had the pleasure to meet Kevin

Vaughn and enjoy his friendly demeanour, and also his knowledge of irises.

One feature of the Portland convention that was different from other conventions is that many of the iris types were blooming at the same time. Call it "Global Warming," or simply, "the weather." Normally, one would not see this, but having all the different irises blooming at the same time made it an extraordinary experience. The Vaughn garden had a huge variety of iris types, Louisiana, Spuria, Siberian, median and other irises, several of which he is hybridizing. There was a particular combination towards the back of the property that really caught my attention: a fantastic display with a gorgeous bright yellow *Iris pseudacorus* next to a deep purple Siberian iris seedling. Both reaching five feet tall and blooming in full glory. What a sight!



*Pacific Coast iris 'Caught in the Wind'
(Joseph Ghio, R. 2012)*

Even though Kevin grows many bearded and non-bearded irises, this book focuses on everything that is fascinating about the latter.

So why write about beardless irises? Kevin says, "Compared to their bearded iris cousins, the beardless irises have remained a secret to many gardeners..."

With this gorgeous book, suddenly a wide variety of non-bearded iris types are introduced in a way that is easy to understand, with a multitude of photographs to tempt the unsuspecting reader to take a chance to grow a few of them.



Louisiana iris 'Aqua Velva' (Kevin Vaughn, R. 2014)

You will also find answers to the following questions:

"What are beardless irises?"

"What is the purpose of the beard on bearded irises, and how do beardless irises do without them?"



Pacific Coast Native iris 'Moderator' (Joseph Ghio, R. 2011)

If you don't grow beardless irises in your garden at this time, after reading this book you may just start doing so. Some of the sections on each chapter such as, "Garden Use and Culture," "Pests and Diseases," and Kevin's own "Favorites," will help you make decisions about where to start.

I hope you also start keeping an eye on Kevin Vaughn's work as I have, as many of the iris seedlings in his garden show much promise. I have started to add some of his Spuria irises to my wish list, and one of the first ones is a child of 'Adriatic

Blue' called 'Adriatic Memories,' that is just amazing. I can't wait to see it growing in my own little garden.



Vaughn Seedling 40-chromosome Siberian iris seedling



Vaughn wide-ruffled Spuria iris seedling

Enjoy this preview of pictures provided by the author, and let me assure you that there are many more in the book. Besides being a great writer, Kevin Vaughn is a great photographer and hybridizer. Here's the list of iris varieties covered in the book:

Siberian

Louisiana

Spuria

Species

Species-X

Pacific Coast Natives

"BEARDLESS IRISES, *A Plant For Every Garden Situation*" is available through Amazon.com.

Broken Colour: Iris Colour Terminology

*by Mike Unser by permission
from the WORLD OF IRISES, blog of the AIS*

Of the many colour patterns available in bearded irises perhaps none is as striking as that of the 'broken colour' varieties. In colour breaking, a genetic instability causes the colours and/or patterns of the iris to express irregularly giving a flower that is splish-splashed in a more or less haphazard fashion. No two blooms are ever alike, and they can create a very lively and exuberant effect in the flower garden. Visitors that are unfamiliar with them always exclaim over the novelty. I'd like to share with you some of the varieties I have enjoyed over the years.



First up is a very old French variety now called 'Victorine'. It was likely introduced by Lémon back in the 1840s under the name 'Victoire Lemon', named for his mother. The names were later confused and this iris is now grown in the US as 'Victorine'. A charming diploid variety

in the amoena pattern with rich purple falls edged white under clean, white standards which are splashed on the inside of the petal with the dark purple of the falls.

Another classic from the earliest days of iris hybridizing is one of the most widely known and grown: 'Loreley' by the German firm Goos & Koenemann, introduced in 1909. This is a very tough and hardy iris, and is widely grown as it can thrive just fine in neglected situations. Not the prettiest form, it is nevertheless treasured for its



beautiful colours. The falls are purple veined white and edged golden yellow, while the golden yellow standards are wide open and flecked with bits of the fall pattern - not just the purple, but the white striping too!

Next up are two varieties introduced by A.B. Katkamier. Both are sports in the 'Honorabile' family. This family of sports is widely known for its



breaking of colour and pattern. The novelty has made them very popular with collectors, who are always on the lookout for a new sport to appear in their beds. First up is 'Kaleidoscope' from 1929, a beguiling Miniature Tall Bearded flower

with deep golden standards over lighter yellow falls that are splashed with shards of red and white.

'Joseph's Coat Katkamier' is a merry madcap of colour with white, yellow, violet and red all appearing across the bloom in irregular profusion. This one was introduced in 1930, but was not officially registered until 1989. I think a clump of this in bloom adds a very whimsical note to the garden.



In 1956 Edward Watkins registered 'Corsage', his new variety that had been introduced the year before by Tell Muhlstein. A frothy confection of white and lemon yellow haphazardly arranged so that no two blooms are alike. It's lovely grown in a bed with pastel pinks

and blues.

Another variety in almost the same colour tones is 'Buttered Popcorn' (Palmer, 1970). This time the large ruffled blooms are creamy white drizzled with a soft, buttery yellow all about the standards and falls in a subtle drip-like pattern. The name could not be more perfect.



Buttered Popcorn

'Minnesota Mixed-up Kid' is a charming Border Bearded variety that has been known and grown since the early 1970's, though it was not officially registered until 2003. It always makes me think of birthday parties with its lively colouration. A cream toned bloom deepening to golden yellow at the heart and speckled liberally with fuchsia freckles. An excellent grower and reliable bloomer, it elicits attention from every visitor.



Minnesota Mixed-up Kid

In 1986 Allan Esminger introduced his new creation which went on to win award after award culminating in the Knowlton Medal in 1992. It is perhaps the best known broken colour iris around today and is extremely popular with the gardening public. Big ruffled flowers are grounded white and heavily lined with royal purple. An excellent grower and bloomer, it is also known to occasionally sport a plicata bloom or two. In this picture you can see one of the standards and part of a fall are showing white edged purple.



'Batik's' awards and acclaim inspired others to start hybridizing for this broken colour trait and in the 1990's Brad Kasperek began selling new varieties of his creation out of his aptly named Zebra Gardens, in Utah. Using a combination of eye catching flowers and creative names he really made a mark on the iris world and established this



Tiger Honey

pattern as a real presence in bearded irises. One of my favorites of Brad's is 1993's 'Tiger Honey'; a beautifully tailored flower of honey-gold striped lighter gold and cream white. I don't grow many modern irises but I'll always make room for

this and the following two Kasperek varieties.

The amusingly named 'Baboon Bottom' is an Intermediate Bearded iris of Brad's from 1994. An old rose pink striped and splashed light pink and white, it has not been the best grower for me in the cold and wet Pacific Northwest but it manages to show off for me every few years and is always welcome when it does. It won the Knowlton Medal in 2002.



Baboon Bottom



Bewilderbeast

I'll leave you with my favorite of all the broken colour irises, 'Bewilderbeast', from 1995. An extravagant flower with falls of cream white ground and yellow shoulders all heavily striped with a rich deep mauve; silvery white standards are striped lighter mauve. A reliable bloomer and excellent grower, a clump of this is easy to achieve

and stunning in full bloom. I would love to have seen this one win the Dyke's Medal.

I hope you've enjoyed this peek into a few of the varieties showing the unstable genes now known as the Broken Colour pattern. Maybe you'll add a few to your garden.

Remontant Recap

by Kate Brewitt

If you know me you know I'm a dreamer, especially when it comes to the reblooming irises in our garden. I often spend the early part of the iris season making predictions about the "reblooming" season ahead. Most of my predictions are simply a flight of fancy. In fact, the only prediction I can make with any confidence is that, in our garden, rebloom is unpredictable.



Despite the beautiful display of TB rebloom we have experienced the last two years, this year saw us with only one SDB rebloom, 'Purple Joy' (Spoon, 2009). At the time there were threats of frost during the night

so its survival was in question. When it did bloom the middle of October we enjoyed it for only a day. That night the frost turned it to mush.

So, how did our members fare? Karen was the first member to contact me in October with pictures of the September bloom on 'Immortality'. Her Toronto garden is considered zone 6b. Her pictures came with the following comments,

"I suppose it's not technically a rebloom since this is the first time this plant has bloomed at all (I've had it for two years), but it did bloom during the third week of September this year."



I also had an SDB rebloom; 'Blueberry Tart'. It was my favourite SDB this past spring and now I love it even more! There was only a single bloom, and the falls had a fair bit of violet on them - much more than they showed in the spring. It didn't open fully (the picture was taken at its most open point), but it was still very welcome!



Lyn, our Treasurer who also has a 6b Toronto garden, contacted me in early December. On November 19th she had taken pictures of some reblooming irises however she had lost their names. Since I love a mystery, I suggested she send the photos and perhaps we could figure it out.



The little MDB was quickly ID'd as 'Stripling'. The backdrop of yellowing sedum confirms that it was autumn at the time of the photograph. What is really surprising though is that this iris is NOT a registered reblooming iris. Lucky Lyn!

The second iris was not as easily ID'd...there are just too many purple irises. However, the picture deserves a spot in this article because, as noted by Karen, any rebloom is welcome, whether it comes with a name or not.

Thanks for all your photos!





In the Months Ahead

Get the Jump on Spring

February 20, 2016

10 am to 4 pm

**Toronto Botanical Garden,
777 Lawrence Ave. E.,
Toronto.**



Presented by the Toronto Botanical Garden (TBG) in partnership with OHA - District 5.

Admission is free.

Beat the winter blues at the TBG's annual open house for horticultural societies with live displays, free gardening advice, talks, demonstrations and a floral design competition. Enjoy lunch in the Jump Café and browse specialty vendors, artisans and the Garden Shop. ONIS will be there providing information and selling potted irises and seeds.

For more information, visit the TBG website www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca/enjoy/special-events/jump-on-spring or call 416-397-1341.

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 3 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/>

Register before February 1st to take advantage of the discounted registration rate of \$299 US. www.ais2016convention.com/registration.html.

Society for Louisiana Irises Shreveport/Bossier City, Louisiana April 21 – 23, 2016



Garden Tours to include: R. W. Norton Art Gallery and Garden, Briarwood: The Caroline Dorman Nature Preserve & Plantation Point Nursery - Mooringsport, LA

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

Garden Shows in Ontario

Stratford Garden Festival Stratford Rotary Complex 353 McCarthy Road, Stratford March 3 – 6, 2016

Presented by The Lung Association. Details at www.stratfordgardenfestival.com.

Canada Blooms Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto. March 11 – 20, 2016

Details at: <http://canadablooms.com>

Successful Gardening Toronto International Centre 6900 Airport Road, Mississauga. March 18 – 21, 2016

Peterborough Garden Show Evinrude Centre, 911 Monaghan Road, Peterborough. April 8 - 10, 2016

<http://peterboroughgardens.ca/S/howhome.html>



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*.

May 22 – President's Open Garden

June 5 – ONIS Annual Iris Show at the TBG.

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

ONIS Matters

Your 2015/2016 ONIS Board

The ONIS Board met at the Jester's Court in Port Perry for the annual meeting on November 1st. The current Board has agreed to sit for another year.

Terry Laurin, President
tlaurin@rogers.com

Jinny Missons, VP
jojimis@sympatico.ca

Lyn Hickey, Treasurer
lhickey94@hotmail.com

Kate Brewitt, Secretary/Membership
kbrewitt@rogers.com



Welcome New and Renewing

ONIS Members!

K. Lockyear, Toronto, ON

E. Slavens, Toronto, ON



Youth Matters!

Watch for a new activity in the Spring 2016 edition of *The Iris Standard*.

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!

Business Matters

ONTARIO IRIS SOCIETY (ONIS) INCOME AND EXPENSE STATEMENT

OCTOBER 1, 2014 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

ASSETS

Bank Balance 01Oct2014	\$ 3,806.64	
Petty Cash 01Oct2014	\$ 20.40	
TD Canada Trust GIC	\$ 5,093.20	
TOTAL ASSETS		\$8,920.24

INCOME

Memberships	\$ 150.00	
Plant Sales	\$ 1,081.25	
Other Income	\$ 159.19	
TOTAL INCOME		\$1,390.44

EXPENSES

AIS Insurance (\$25 US)	(\$ 38.05)	
TBG Horticulture Fee	(\$ 250.00)	
Region 2 Contribution	(\$ 125.80)	
AIS 100 th Ann. Fund	(\$ 115.15)	
Rental Fees	(\$ 355.44)	
Iris Acquisitions	(\$ 180.00)	
Supplies/Postage	(\$ 163.33)	
2014 Annual Meeting	(\$ 100.00)	
Show Credits	(\$ 55.50)	
Banking Fees	(\$ 87.81)	
Miscellaneous	(\$ 43.12)	
TOTAL EXPENSES		(\$1,514.20)
Annual Profit/Loss		(\$123.76)

Bank Balance 30Sept2015	\$3,572.64
Petty Cash 30Sept2015	\$43.45
TD Cda Trust GIC due 3Mar2016	\$1,021.28
TD Cda Trust GIC due 4Aug2016	\$4,159.11
Total Assets 30Sept2015	\$8,796.48

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.