

For Iris Lovers in the Cold Zones



Aurora

Newsletter of the Can-West Iris Society

Spring, 2017

Volume 11, Issue 1

Update From the Organizing Committee

Spring has sprung! Despite the intermittent snow events of recent weeks all over the western provinces it really has arrived. And because this newsletter is late, there is even an iris blooming in April, albeit not a rhizomatous one. Valerie Denesiuk snapped this shot of her bulbous iris reticulata blooming last week in Winnipeg.



And now that the majority of the nastiness has gone (hopefully), our thoughts turn to the bloom season in our gardens. If the iris gods are smiling on us, it will be a season of class progression with not every class blooming at once which will be a welcome change.

First up by way of events for the year is the AIS National in Des Moines, Iowa. Last call information appears on page 2. Next up on June 4 is the 10th Annual CWIS Show. It is going to be a great day so check out the details on page 4.

An error of omission from the Autumn newsletter is corrected and a notice about the CWIS Librarian position appears on page 3 and finally, the feature article, a profile piece written by member Brenda Newton rounds out this issue.

As always, the Organizing Committee is at your service so feel free to send us a note with your iris activities and adventures. You can catch us at:

B. J. Jackson, jacksonb@mts.net
Deborah Petrie, petrie@mymts.net

Jennifer Bishop, Jennifer@dataways.com
Eleanor Hutchison, eleanore@mymts.net



Last call for “Rhythm of the Prairie” in Des Moines, Iowa, the American Iris Society’s National Convention. May 23-27, 2017.

The registration and hotel information is available online. Just follow the link for new and updated information:

<https://ais2017.wordpress.com/2016/12/05/registration-and-schedule-pages/>

The Des Moines Marriott Hotel is the designated convention hotel. The phone number is 515-245-5500 or use the link below. The absolute last day **to book** is **May 2nd!**

- **Des Moines Marriott Downtown** for \$135.00 USD per night
- Online booking at [Marriott Hotel AIS](#)

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Coming Event

Len Giesbrecht will be giving a presentation on growing iris at the Interlake Horticulture Society's meeting in June. The event is scheduled for June 14th at 7 pm at the South Interlake Regional Library, 419 Main Street in Stonewall. Stonewall is located just 25 kilometers north of the City of Winnipeg on highway 67. President Nancy McGowan says they would welcome any non-members who want to come out to hear Len's presentation for just \$5. They will also be serving goodies and tea!

Missing From the 2016 Top Performers List

The day after the Autumn Aurora was sent out to members, editor BJ Jackson realized that the submissions of one member had been missed. And because all member submissions are important, they are included here. Member Heather Smith of Alberta submitted the following for inclusion as her top performers. Photos courtesy of the Iris Encyclopedia.



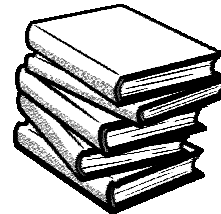
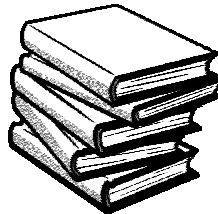
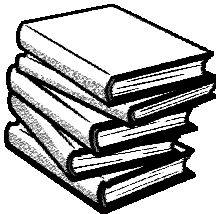
TB Florentine Silk



TB Edith Wolford

CWIS Librarian

After many years serving as the CWIS Librarian, Len Giesbrecht is looking for someone to take over the job from him. If you are interested, please contact BJ Jackson for further information.



Can-West Iris Society - 10th Annual Show

Sunday, June 4th, 2017

Bourkevale Community Centre

100 Ferry Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Admission is free and we are open to the public from 1 to 4 pm

Show Chair: B.J. Jackson, jacksonb@mts.net

Information is available in the show schedule in a file being sent along with this newsletter. It can also be downloaded from the website at: <http://cwis.webplus.net/>

Show tags are available, too, for those who wish to get a jump on the day by contacting the show chair. The tags will be sent out to you via Canada Post.

Once again, a display design division is included. Last year's designs were outstanding and I hope you will consider entering this very popular addition to the show.

A review of everything you need to know about cutting, transporting, grooming and entering stems can be found in the Spring 2008 newsletter at:

<http://cwis.webplus.net/CWIS%20spring%202008%20newsletter.pdf>

And we are always looking for volunteers! An hour or two or for the whole day, we will find a job for you. We cannot do what we do without your support. Just let us know when you are available.

The rhizome sale table can always use your donations, too, so please have a look and see if you have anything to donate. This sale has become a good fundraiser so please consider donating any extras you might have.



*Two confirmed
donations for the
sale table:*

Left:

Little Egypt

Right:

*Species Spuria
(Limited quantity)*



Member Profile - Brenda Newton

(<http://www.valleyringirl.com/>)

A Little about Me

If someone was to ask me what my favourite perennial was I would have a really hard time in answering. I love each perennial that is blooming at the time. The little pasque flowers and alliums in the spring along with the MDB irises, then, the SDB irises along with the primroses, then the MTB, BB and TB irises at the same time as the peonies, columbine, bellflowers and other perennials. My gardens are ever changing pictures throughout the spring and summer.



SDB Stitch Witch



SDB Lunar Frost

I grew up on a farm northeast of Brandon, Manitoba and every summer I helped my mom with her huge garden. The only flowers I remember mom having were petunias and of course the little Johnny jump-ups that self-seeded in the raspberry patch each year.

In the summer of 1981 I worked for four months at Patmore Nursery Sales in Brandon, potting and selling all kinds of plants from the annuals to the perennials, to the trees and shrubs. I learned so much that summer about plants, but I do not remember selling any irises there though.

About 25 years ago, I joined the Brandon Garden Club. About 16 years ago, BJ Jackson was the special speaker there, talking about daylilies. Well, I was hooked. A friendship soon developed, and many purchases and participating in group orders (along with BJ) came in following years.

In 1995 we moved to our acreage just north of Kemnay, Manitoba. Starting with landscaping a small flowerbed, on the south side of the house, the landscaping beds have grown to now encompass the original vegetable garden and many other large

beds under and between trees. Acquiring the various perennials for the beds has been fun!!!!

A new flowerbed means more unique perennials. One of the ways I have gotten new perennials, besides going to box stores or nurseries was trading with friends. Then, when there was nothing 'new' and unique at the stores or from friends, I took part in a group order to Italy for irises and organized a number of group orders to the US for irises, daylilies, hostas, peonies, etc. Another source of Siberian irises and hostas for me was Ensata irises. When the CWIS formed years ago, their bearded iris sales each summer began to be like Christmas to me!!! This summer, I am excited to see my all my new acquisitions of Siberian irises bloom.



Siberian How Audacious

Years ago, McFadyen's had a warehouse and a storefront in Brandon. One fall they had all sorts of irises on sale for \$1 each. Not knowing anything about irises I planted them into the garden. Of course, next spring, none of them had made it. I thought I had done something wrong in planting them. Later I found out that I had

planted them way to late into the fall. They had had no time to establish their root systems before the cold winter had set in. Now, if I acquire an iris in late fall, it gets planted up and grown in the house for the winter.

The highlight of summer 2011 was attending the American Iris Society convention in Victoria, BC. Seeing all the new varieties of tall bearded irises blooming was so enabling! Meeting old and making new friends while touring gardens is a great part of attending a conference!

I also paint. I love teaching Plexiglas ‘stained glass’ classes. These projects are placed outside, year round in the flowerbeds. The first painting I did was of irises (go figure!).



Hybridizing daylilies and irises is so much fun! My first seedlings bloomed four summers ago and I am quite excited to see what another ‘batch’ of new seedlings will look like when they bloom this summer.



Brenda's Seedling #1 out of SDB Clash

One thing I do enjoy is the selling of perennials at my Brandon Farmer's Market table. I love explaining to people how to grow the perennial, the location it can grow in, etc. As the perennials have multiplied in my yard I have been filling requests by others. What I can grow here on my acreage, anyone in a zone 2b or warmer garden should also be able to grow. Irises, when established, make wonderful clumps in the flowerbeds, and generally no insects or animals eat them. So they are a win-win perennial!



MDB Flea Circus



TB Boogie Woogie

Since 2010, I have done many public presentations on many different gardening topics. Doing so has taken me all over southern Manitoba as well as into Saskatchewan, Ontario and North Dakota. I have spoken at large gardening events, like Manitoba Horticultural Association conventions and Gardening Saturday. The current presentation I am working on includes the miniature bearded irises I grow, as I am going to be presenting on “Miniature Gardening” at the Westman Gardeners hort day.

Each June when the CWIS has their show and sale in Winnipeg I attend and bring whatever irises are able to be shown that day. A number of years ago I took the course to be an iris judge but did not complete the training. It was just too big of a commitment for me. I was busy enough already. I have, however, very much enjoyed being the head clerk at the CWIS shows instead. There I record the award that each iris being shown gets, as well as totaling the points for awarding the medals at the end of the day. I also will take all sorts of photos that day that are then used in making up the summer newsletter.

I enjoy all varieties of irises. But, give me the newer ones with the ruffles, unique colors and patterns, rather than the historical ones. I also love the irises with their beards that pop off the falls. Those appendages are so unique!



TB Thornbird

I really enjoy sharing my love of gardening and plants by giving garden tours, dividing and selling perennials and speaking at various events with my Power Point presentations. You can often find me at local gardening events if I am not at home in my yard working through a flowerbed or taking photos of the current blooming beauty.