

For Iris Lovers in the Cold Zones



Aurora

Newsletter of the Can-West Iris Society

Autumn, 2018

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Update From the Organizing Committee

The 2018 bloom season is now a memory and the iris are sleeping covered with their white blanket. Our 15th anniversary year had a great show with guest judges Sandy Ives and Maureen Mark. In conjunction with the show, judge's training was provided to several members. And if that wasn't enough for our mostly online group, the 2018 summer sale provided new and exciting irises for our gardens from both our commercial supplier of the year, Aitken's Salmon Creek Gardens as well as CWIS members and friends. Our thanks to all who participated in our 2018 events in whatever fashion. We could not do what we do without the support of our members and friends.

Plans are already underway for the 2019 season which includes our 12th annual show at Bourkevale Community Centre on Sunday, June 9th. In conjunction with the show, the sale table will be the site of some excitement following a substantial donation to the club of some amazing beardless iris. Stay tuned for more information to be found in the spring newsletter due out next April. So mark the show date on your calendars!

Since I forgot to ask members for their top performers, this issue is a bit lighter than the usual fall edition. You will, however, find some good reading in the following pages with the rebloom report beginning on page 2. There is also a piece about the iris bud fly on page 6 and the AIS annual awards start on page 7. Lastly, on page 12, the case for cutting back iris in autumn.

Time to sit back and avail yourself of the appropriate beverage, kick back and relax as you read. We hope you enjoy it.

As always, if you have article ideas, questions or need to contact the Organizing Committee, just send us an email. We can be contacted at:

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Rebloom Report

(Compiled By BJ Jackson)

In order to be considered a rebloomer (also called remontant), an iris variety must produce more than one flush of bloom stalks in a single growing season.

Any given variety, even registered as a rebloomer, does NOT guarantee that it will, in fact, rebloom. It is often dependent on geographic location, climate conditions and cultural practices. It can vary from year to year, as well.

With the number of frost free days at just over 100 days, there are not many that make it on the prairies. Case in point, Donna Reble's SDB Forever Blue in SK pictured below. It did, however, make it and rebloom for Allison Day in MB. It is the most often reported by CWIS members over the years.



And then there is the one that is so close to opening but with frost predicted it just had to be cut and brought inside. This is the second rebloom stalk for Donna Reble's BB Autumn Wine blooming the morning after cutting.



Beardless iris, Siberians and Japanese, are usually considered repeaters, rather than true rebloomers. Unlike a bearded iris that blooms in the spring and then again in the fall, this is uncommon for SIBs and JIs. They normally have their repeat bloom within a short period of time after the main flush.

So what hardy individual varieties showed off for a second time in 2018? Here is the list of what was reported by CWIS members:

SDB

- Autumn Jester (Chuck Chapman, R. 2000) - Donna Reble SK
- Blueberry Tart (Chuck Chapman, R. 2002) - Andrea Karpinski BC
- Forever Blue (Chuck Chapman, R. 1996) - Allison Day MB
- Forever Royal (Chuck Chapman, R. 2014) - Donna Reble SK
- Senorita Frog (Donald Spoon, R. 2002) - Marianne Unruh BC



SDBs Blueberry Tart and ↑↑↑
Forever Royal
SDB Senorita Frog →→→



IB

- Many Mahalos (J. Terry Aitken, R. 2003) - Marianne Unruh BC/Donna Reble SK



BB

- Autumn Wine (Vincent Christopherson, R. 2003) - Donna Reble SK

MTB

- Maui Mango (J. Terry Aitken, R. 2005) - Marianne Unruh BC



TB

- Betty Dunn (O. David Niswonger, R. 1995) - Andra Forsyth BC

- Immortality (Lloyd Zurbrigg, R. 1982) - Marianne Unruh BC

- Pink Attraction (Earl Hall, R. 1987) - Marianne Unruh BC

TB Betty Dunn



SP-X

- Eternal Summer (Chuck Chapman, R. 2012) - Jodi Lockyer AB



**Word has been received that long time Canadian Iris
Society President and Newsletter Editor
Ed Jowett of Tottenham Ontario
passed away recently at the age of 87**



Iris Bud Fly

(By BJ Jackson)

A recent conversation with iris friends found us talking about damage to iris buds which has been observed over the last few years with no known culprit identified. Indeed, the late Ed Czarnecki had been looking into it but was unable to identify what it was that was causing the damage iris growers were seeing. We now know it was most probably the pest known as either *Neorthacheta* or *Orthacheta dissimilis* (I found it spelled both ways on numerous websites) but more commonly referred to as the Iris Bud Fly.

Information on this critter is hard to find, but I was able to find the following from the webpage of the Iris Society of Massachusetts. So far, its range has not been defined.

"The larva of *Orthochaeta dissimilis* is a white maggot approximately 0.10 inch (3 millimeters) long, cone-shaped, smooth and white, with a small black dot at the pointed end and the larger end rather flat. Presence of the iris bud fly is first evident when an apparently normal bud opens to reveal ragged, chewed standards and styles. A careful search conducted just after the flower opens may turn up the larva, hidden under the damaged styles. Only a few hours later the larva will be gone, having crawled or dropped into the spathes. Rarely it may invade the ovary before settling in the spathes, where it pupates and remains over winter; the adult fly emerges the next spring."



From right: Bloom damage, larva (maggot) and exit hole

Did you know???

- Writing the variety name on the inside of the fan instead of on the outer leaves when planting iris divisions can save a lot of grief later? The outer leaves are the first to brown off and be discarded. But, if you do have the name written on the outside foliage and it is still attached but unreadable in spring, soaking it may make the name legible again. Markers can and do disappear over winter!

American Iris Society's 2018 Awards

(For a full listing see http://www.irises.org/About_Irises/Awards_Surveys/AIS_Awards.html)

**THE DYKES MEDAL (All classes, originated in US or Canada)
- HAUNTED HEART - *TB iris* - (Keith Keppel)**



**THE HANS AND JACOB SASS MEDAL (Intermediate Bearded irises)
- CAT IN THE HAT (Paul Black)**



**THE WILLIAMSON-WHITE MEDAL (Miniature Tall Bearded)
- HOLIDAY IN MEXICO (Riley Probst)**



**THE COOK-DOUGLAS MEDAL (Standard Dwarf Bearded)
- MY CHER (Paul Black)**



**THE CAPARNE-WELCH MEDAL (Miniature Dwarf Bearded)
- KAYLA'S SONG (Donald Spoon)**



**THE RANDOLPH PERRY MEDAL (Inter-species hybrid) (SPEC-X)
- TAKE NO SATO (Hiroshi Shimizu by Carol Warner)**



**THE MORGAN-WOOD MEDAL (Siberian)
- MISS APPLE (Marty Schafer/Jan Sacks)**



And a few AM and HMs

**IB AWARD OF MERIT
CODE OF HONOR (Thomas Johnson)**



**MTB AWARD OF MERIT
BREAKFAST IN BED (Charles Bunnell)**



**SDB AWARD OF MERIT
BECKONING (Thomas Johnson)**



**MTB HONORABLE MENTION
BLACK CHERRY SORBET (Chad Harris)**



The Case for Cutting Back

Iris in Autumn

(By BJ Jackson)

Every year there is a discussion amongst irisarians about whether or not to cut back irises as part of the autumn garden cleanup. Many growers do, many don't. There is no right or wrong. It basically comes down to personal preference.

I cut back the iris in my gardens routinely, usually in an inverted V or fan (although the fan shape isn't necessary, it looks nice). The primary reasons I do so are to avoid a dead foliage mess that can harbour disease. As well, doing it in the autumn makes the spring clean-up faster and easier.

Another reason I do it is that the cutting of the leaves and the pulling off of the dead ones just makes a garden look better, particularly at the end of the season when the foliage looks ratty and in some cases just plain nasty. It also allows the gardener to get a good look at each clump individually. I have found the beginnings of rot, heaving and other problems in the process and am able to treat or fix the problems appropriately right then and there.

If the spent bloom stalk was not previously cut or snapped off, I do it (unless you are waiting for seeds to ripen). Leaf spot and other fungal diseases can attack the foliage and many growers contain these problems by cutting off the diseased portions of leaves. This is probably the best for the plants, preserving all the green leaves possible while containing disease. Leaves that are completely brown on the outside of fans are easily pulled off. How much to cut off? My standard is to cut them back about one-half. This amount still allows trapping of snow to help insulate them through the winter.

Foliage of beardless iris turn brown in the fall, usually after the first killing frost, and can be cut back by half or more depending on your personal preference.

During the division process you should cut them back, too. New roots can only support a reduced leaf mass and smaller fans are less likely to blow over in winds. Leave enough foliage to continue the photosynthesis process.

*Happy
Christmas
to All*

CWIS

*Members
and
Friends*