

Dietrich Brase
9 & Under Age Group
Region 21
1st Place

How to Grow the American Iris Society

If I were the president of the American Iris Society in 2070, I would be thinking of ways to get more people to grow and enjoy irises. I would record educational programs about irises, donate potted median irises for children to give to their moms for Mother's Day, and encourage school children to visit my garden.

The American Iris Society should record educational programs about the many kinds of irises, and how to take care of them. This would be really helpful to iris clubs for the programs at their monthly meetings to educate new members. It would also get experienced gardeners interested in growing other kinds of irises, if they knew how to take care of them. It might even inspire some kids to try hybridizing irises! A neat program idea would be a series of "Meet the Hybridizers" where people could see the hybridizers who developed the irises growing in their gardens. Iris clubs should record their educational programs to share with other clubs and schools.

A great way to get children interested in gardening, is to get their parents or grandparents involved. That is why I would like to give potted irises to schools around Mother's Day. The early median irises are usually overlooked because more people around here (in Nebraska) seem to plant Tall Bearded irises. But the medians would be blooming around this time. The children could paint or decorate the pots, and then given them to their moms. I would add a piece of paper with information about joining a local iris club, and the American Iris Society. I would not have known about irises, if it had not been for my Mom. I think it would be a great activity for children and their parents to do something together. They could always look forward to their special flower blooming each spring!

I would like to have an iris garden that schools can take students to visit and practice weeding and digging around in the dirt with hoes and smaller tools. I would give them each a free iris rhizome, with a picture of its flower and the name of the iris, as well as a sheet of planting instructions. My garden would have different kinds of irises, including some that can grow in swampy areas. I would dig a pond and grow those irises at the edge of it. Garden benches would be surrounding the pond, so people could take their time to stop and see the overall view of the garden. My garden would include very old irises as well as modern ones. In the future, I think we will see a lot more Space Age irises with larger, sturdier spoons that do not rip off with a little wind. They will make the iris blooms look thicker and fuller.

My recommendations for encouraging more people to join the American Iris Society are simple: develop more educational programs, donate irises to students and youth members, and encourage schools to take field trips to local iris gardens. Most people get started growing irises when someone gives them one. Once their own iris starts blooming, they are likely to be hooked!

Alexander Petrie
9 & Under Age Group
Region 14
2nd Place

If I Was President of the American Iris Society

Hello, my name is Alexander and I am 59 years old. I have been President of the American Iris Society for years now. I have been encouraging young people to join throughout the years with color by number book, sharing many rhizomes of iris with the children to plant at their school campus. I also invite them to my 10-acre garden of Iris in the Spring. I do this, in hopes, I can get more young people to enjoy and join the American Iris Society.

I first started a color by number book for all ages with 260-300 iris species and varieties to choose from. Iris come in many beautiful colors. Throughout the book I put a lot of fun facts, like the word iris comes from the Greek word meaning "rainbow," which suits because of all the colors they come in. It's also the birth month flower of February and the state flower for Tennessee. In the book I would show how to take care of iris and make it grow. Not only do the children learn about this amazing flower, but they do learn more of their number of varieties.

By getting the young people excited through coloring books. I can get them excited by sharing many donated rhizomes to the young people so they can grow them throughout their school campus. Not only are they learning, but they are making the campus beautiful and knowing that they had a hand in that makes them proud and me proud.

At the end of the year, the top 3 kids would get a \$100 and a field trip for them and a guest to my 10-acre Iris garden. Within my 10 acres there is a pond. Where they can paddle on a paddle boat while searching for iris and enjoying all the koi fish and turtles through the pond. They would be able to take a walk in my many little Iris gardens and enjoy the many animals and birds I have. They can also enjoy a small train ride that rides around the 10 acres. We would then have ourselves and old-fashioned outdoor B.B.Q with root beer floats, as we discuss the wonders of Iris. Finally, we would close the day with a swim in my iris shape pool.

To sum up, young people getting involved in the American Iris Society is much more than learning about the iris. It is about being involved in the learning of life and the deeper power of mother nature that exists on our earth.

Nathan Chien
9 & Under Age Group
Region 18
3rd Place Tie

Hello, I'm Nathan Chien, president of the AIS. It's 2070 and the 150th anniversary of the AIS. I'm throwing a big party because the 100th anniversary was canceled due to the coronavirus. At this party, there will be an iris drawing for anyone attending the party. Everyone has a chance to win a free iris!

I would like to start an iris school to encourage children of all ages to get into irises. At my school, I will teach kids how to hybridize irises, how to find out what irises grow well in their area, how to find what soil they need, and everything else they need to know to be successful iris growers.

I think that in the future, iris hybridizers will find a way to make amazing colors such as metallic gold, silver, green, and black and white. I also think that irises will mutate and glow. They will glow year-round, and always make your yard glow.

The American Iris Society has been going strong since 1920 and is still thriving even today. Master iris hybridizers like Paul Black and Thomas Johnson were alive in 2020, new hybridizers are continuing their work, and there are still thousands more to come in the future.

Mari Howell
9 & Under Age Group
Region 14
3rd Place Tie

Happy 150th Anniversary

Hello, I would like to introduce myself as the new President of the AIS for the term of 2070 to 2073. I am very excited that it is the 150th Anniversary for the American Iris Society! Mrs. Hoover was previously the President of the AIS, but now she is currently the President of the Manzanita Garden Club and the Vice President of the Yosemite Iris Society! Now here is a fun fact: John C. Wister was the first president of the AIS back in 1920.

Now do you want to know how easy it is to become a member of the great AIS in 2070? Well, here's how. Due to Covid-19 we had back in 2020 we learned that we will be doing everything through our website at: www.ais.org. This is how we will communicate with other AIS members and keep connected. Here are the steps to find the AIS web page.

Step 1. Go on our website which is www.ais.org

Step 2. Click on the link

Step 3. There will be different options but click on the sign up option

Step 4. It will say either youth or adult and if you are 19 and under then you are a youth member.

By joining the AIS that will help bring our community together! With everyone signing up this supports the AIS! When people support AIS that encourages people to join!

We are very happy that we can grow irises into the future! We will be having a get together before the 2070 AIS Convention. All of my fellow friends will be riding their Mustangs, Corvettes and even their horses to the get together. It will be held at my good friend, Doug's house.

If you are interested in joining this fun filled event you can easily find the address on our website! Some special guests will be joining us and they are: Lil Nas X, Bella and their brothers and some more awesome music artists! We will be giving some special featured irises away in our raffle on the day of the event, so sign up now on our website!

There are so many new types of irises like polka dots irises, rainbow irises, fruit scented irises and there is even a new one called...COLOR YOUR OWN but it's coming out in 2021! We are having a raffle to win one at the special event so sign up before all of the raffle tickets are sold out!

Well, I am so very happy that I am the new President of the American Iris Society and I am also very happy that everyone is supporting the AIS! Well please stay safe, wash your hands and be nice! See you later! Bye Bye!

The Awakening: Keeping Irises Alive

It is the year 2070, and it seems as though all the plants and animals are here, but where have all the irises gone? To many people, the loss of iris populations does not affect them one bit, but to us iris lovers and AIS members, the decline of irises makes us miss their beauty and the first blooms in spring. Working to preserve all living things are of great importance to our world and just like endangered animals and plants, the iris is now among those living things needing to stay alive.

So here I am, president of the AIS. I am confronted with the declining iris populations and how to preserve them. I will begin by telling you the steps that myself and AIS members took in order to keep the irises alive, safe, and bearing their new iris genus.

I asked myself, "How are animals and plants that are in danger protected?" Answer: zoos and greenhouses! So why not build iris sanctuaries that would protect them and yield to a growing population once again?

There are three different sanctuaries that house irises from all over the world. 'The Endangered Iris House Sanctuary' is located in Napa, California. Here irises were brought in from their original growing sites. AIS members dug the rhizomes up carefully and brought them to the sanctuary. These irises in this shrine were those of long-lasting irises from genus going back hundreds of years. Some include, Elderberry Wine, Broadband, Bess Streeter Aldrich, and many, many more. These are the forefathers of the iris, therefore, needing to stand tall for their iris families.

The next sanctuary called, 'The New Iris House Sanctuary' is located in Lincoln, Nebraska. Here, this houses newly hybridized irises. Among these, you will find rich new colors, such as gold, silver, turquoise, and dark magenta. Their falls will portray eye-like shapes, and spiky-like tips. We have the Lincoln Iris Society to thank for their hard work and creative minds, that will begin a new line of iris growing. Once these irises have made their clumps, and properly cared for and kept free of borers, and fungus, they will then move to the third and final Iris Sanctuary.

The last and final resting place for irises, is a place where the youth and educated iris lovers can come together and volunteer their time to protect, and care for the beloved iris. This is called 'The School Iris House'. The veteran iris caretakers teach the youth how to properly care for iris beds. They show kids how to gently clean the beds, to not break the leaves, or damage the rhizomes. They will also learn how to delicately get rid of the dead leaves from the gardens. Transferring and transplanting clumps is needed so the iris genus continues to grow and flourish. Teachings of how to hybridize irises is also shown and taught here. A veteran grower is teamed up with a younger grower to hybridize new irises. From these new blooms, they are transported and cared for at each of the three sanctuaries.

With all of the hard work from AIS members all over the world, the iris can, and will forever be cherished and thrive. It all had to start with protecting the irises that are still standing tall, creating new iris genus, and ensuring society is educated in preserving these ever-changing, everlasting works of art.

Jason Chien
Region 18
10-12 Age Group
2nd Place

If I were the president of the AIS in 2070, I would get people to join the association in a way that they couldn't resist. They'd just have to join. But for this operation, there could be different ways to go. In fact, there are two ways.

The first way to make people join is kind of weird, but it would work. Alas, it would be for naught because it is very much impossible now but could be entirely possible in 2070. The way is to hypnotize people into joining. An example is to go up to a person and hypnotize him, then say "You will join the American Iris Society when I stop hypnotizing you," then stop hypnotizing them and leave quickly. They would then join the AIS afterward, which means success!

The other way is a very dangerous form of bribery. That dangerous way is coupons! If people would join, they would get a set of coupons. The coupons would be for random things, like a bookstore or a newly opened steakhouse, or whatever kind of food they have in 2070. On the back, there would be a coupon for the best iris garden there ever was in 2070, with the craziest irises, too.

The irises of the future would be bold, striped, luminous and in every shade and color there is. In 2020, there were hybridizers like Don and Ginny Spoon. In 2070, their grandchildren, and perhaps even great grandchildren, would be hybridizing. There are also new hybridizers popping out of nowhere, like the prettiest iris in the ugliest place, introducing new irises. The hybridizers would get the perfect red, a black luminata and irises with orange on one fall and blue on the others. You imagine it, they have it.

In conclusion, the AIS has survived for many years and probably many more years to come. Because of iris people like you, they have thrived and given the love of irises to the next generations to come. With your help, the AIS can grow into tens of thousands of members. Their legacy will live on in you and other iris lovers.

Darby Redman
Region 4
13 & Over Age Group
1st Place

Darby's essay is "*so good and prophetic*" according to Jim Morris, Managing Editor of AIS 2020 Centennial Publication *100 Years Bold*, that he is going to publish it in the Supplement Four, AIS 2020 Centennial Publication *100 Years Bold*! Congratulations to Darby and everyone be on the lookout for her essay in your Supplement Four, AIS 2020 Centennial Publication *100 Years Bold*!

Katharina Brase
Region 21
13 & Over Age Group
2nd Place

Challenges of the Next Fifty Years for the AIS

The American Iris Society (AIS) has seen many changes in the last hundred years. How can we continue to encourage new members despite the coming challenges of the next 50 years? The AIS has survived and flourished through the Great Depression, World War II and many global changes. We are currently experiencing the effects of a world-wide crisis related to the Coronavirus: COVID-19. People are no longer able to gather together socially, and this has been a big part of AIS, through club meetings, tours, and conventions. The future presidents of AIS must be able to rise to unforeseen challenges to continue to promote the enjoyment of irises. One advantage we have, is that gardening can be done without large gatherings. People can still get out in their gardens to take care of them and enjoy the blooms. It is a great form of exercise and mental health therapy! Though COVID-19 will most likely have dissipated in 50 years, there will certainly be other obstacles like this in many ways. We will just have to find a way to use technology and creativity to overcome the obstacles of the future.

Hybridizers will continue to improve the quality and variety of irises over the next 50 years. Each hybridizer has different aspirations for what they want to produce. But often most of their introductions are a pleasant surprise of something new and beautiful that they did not expect. When the AIS started a hundred years ago, the hybridizers of that day, probably thought they were introducing the most remarkable specimens that people would ever see. And they were, for that day. But hybridizers have continued to improve the quality and variances of irises, so that now many of the old, historical irises look comparatively small, pale, and often flimsy. These characteristics have been improved with more vibrant colors, substantial petals and a variety of color patterns, such as bicolors, broken colors and plicatas. Even when it seems there could be nothing new to add to the world of irises, we will continue to see new and improved seedlings.

Over the next 50 years, the AIS will continue to attract members if it can meet the challenges of the future, and find a way to unite people with a common interest in irises. These flowers will continue to be improved in every way possible, which is almost limitless. (But if you want a true red, it might be easier to just grow a geranium!)

Andrew Chien
Region 18
13 & Over Age Group
3rd Place Tie

So if I were to be president of the American Iris Society 50 years from now, I would have and maintain my own garden, and hope there to be a true red iris, because a true red iris would be really cool. I would also do everything I could to support the AIS and encourage worldwide membership and involvement.

In 2070, I think the irises of the world would look just as beautiful as they do now. Why? Well, because who doesn't already like the irises' beautiful colors? I also think as I said earlier that there will be a true red iris there might even be a new type of iris. There would also be many advancements in form, novelty irises and extended bloom time.

I was just thinking, 50 years from now it would be the year 2070, right? In the year 2070, though, there would probably be not that many members. A way I would get members to join would be through commercials on the TV and radio. I would also have a blimp or airplane flying around advertising the Society.

A way I would get members to stay in the society would be every new member would get a *How To Grow Irises* kit. In the kit, there would be everything you would need to plant an iris, plus a free iris rhizome. When you join you would only have to pay \$28 a year which is \$6 less than it is now. Plus, if you pay \$5 extra you could get an AIS souvenir Cup. On the cup is the American Iris Society logo and you can get it in the color of your choice.

So, you know how I talked about a *How To Grow Irises* kit? Well, in the kit is an iris rhizome, obviously, and instructions on how to plant an iris. There will also be a trowel to dig the hole the iris goes in and a small sample bag of fertilizer. The kit will be sent to your house after you tell us your address.

I think that the year 2070 will be a good year for growing irises and we will all get many beautiful and interesting blooms.

Colvin Follis
Region 18
13 & Over
3rd Place Tie

If I were the President of the American Iris Society 50 years from now, the way I would celebrate the 150th Anniversary of AIS is to create a new iris and give out to our members. The members would get the new type of iris and the new members who joined within the next month, would get a rare but not new iris. Youth members would get the new 2070 iris as well.

Every ten years a new iris would be created and given out free to our members.

Irises in 2070 will be very different than they are now. They will be irises of many colors including turquoise, white, clear, multi-color, and neon glow. New types will include fuzzy, glow-in-the-dark, scented, color-changing, year-round blooming, and galaxy design. Some will be super tall, or crossbreeds with iris-daffodil, iris-tulip, and iris-sunflower. The iris that will be revealed at the 150th Anniversary Celebration is a year-round and season color-changing iris...blue for summer, orange for fall, white for winter, and pink for spring. My favorite one of all will be the fire iris. Imagine a red outline around the edge, orange detail next, and yellow to the center.

While our club is mostly elderly people, I have met many different types of people in our club. I didn't think I would have anything in common with people much older than me, but I have enjoyed sharing time and ideas with our fellow club members. All flowers remind you of someone or a time in your life and this connects us. It will also remind us in 2070 of a memory we have today. We have lots of community members that will just stop at our house to enjoy our flower gardens, many people we don't even know. Flowers definitely are a bond that connects people. In 2070 I will be sharing this message of why having flowers is a way to bring the community together.

Irises mean friends, family, and community, now and in the future. The American Iris Society has come this far, we cannot let it end today!