



My garden
 📷 DEBBIE STRAUSS

It's Winter!

The Perfect Time to Design your Iris Garden for your New Home

STORY AND PHOTO BY DEBBIE STRAUSS, AIS FOUNDATION ACKERMAN YOUTH ESSAY CHAIR, TEXAS

"Without irises, there would be no us."

—Debbie Strauss

You are moving into your new home this coming summer, but it is wintertime right now. It is the perfect time to review your new garden spaces, plan their designs, and dream about your new iris beds.

Soil that never grew iris is the best kind of soil. It is called virgin soil. When iris grow in a certain place for years, they leave behind a message for new iris being planted there . . . "This was my place and you can't grow well here, so go somewhere else!" This is why, when replanting an iris bed, it is best to

replace the soil or amend it with a lot of composed materials. So, since you will have a new garden area, your iris will thrive and grow beautifully.

The Ackerman Youth Essay Contest for 2023 is encouraging you to dream about planting virgin iris beds! You will get to invent a new garden where you plant only your favorite two colors of iris and mix different companion plants with them. Please be creative and full of detail when you write your essay. Write about the shape of your garden and where the plants will be in it. You might tell us where you would place some garden art that matches your iris or are just fun. Be very descriptive and elaborate on everything. Maybe even draw a map of your new garden. Get your mom, dad, sister, aunt, teacher, or

anyone to read it over after you write your first draft. They can help you think about how to add to it or give it more details. Here is the official theme:

You just moved into a new home that has no iris. You decide to plant an iris garden with iris that are only two colors. They can be blends or shades of these colors. What two colors would you choose? Why would you choose to plant these colors? Choose companion plants and/or garden art to go in your bed. List a few names of the iris you would like to plant and list some of the companion plants you would use. Maybe describe what design or shape the bed(s) would be.

Remember to get someone to check your grammar and spelling. Check out the other rules below and send it to me, Debbie Strauss, at debbie@loveirises.com or mail it to me at 2213 Hereford Blvd, Midland TX 79707 by the deadline, March 21, 2023.

There are three age group competition categories, thus awarding three first, three second, and three third place prizes: one in each age group! The age groups are **9 and under, 10 to 12, and 13 and over**. All three age groups will receive \$100 for first place, \$50 for second place, and \$25 for third place (courtesy of The American Iris Society Foundation). Winners will also receive a new 2023 iris from one of our wonderful hybridizers. And, of course, there are just a couple of other easy rules:

Essays should be **500 words or fewer**. The deadline for getting the essay finished and submitted to me is **March 21, 2023**.

Spend some quality time during your winter break imagining planting an iris garden complete with companion plants, garden art, and iris that make you happy. Have a good time writing.

"If you've never experienced the joy of accomplishing more than you can imagine, plant a garden."

—Robert Breault



The American Iris Society ANNOUNCES Iris of the Year 2023, 'Football Hero'

BY THE AIS PR & MARKETING COMMITTEE



'Football Hero' (Lynda Miller 2015, TB)

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The American Iris Society honors the winner of the Dykes Medal by proclaiming it Iris of the Year. The Dykes Medal winner, which is announced in August, becomes Iris of the Year for the following year. For 2023, this will be 'Football Hero' hybridized by Lynda Miller, registered in 2014 and introduced in 2015. 'Football Hero' has also won Honorable Mention 2017, Award of Merit 2019, John C. Wister Medal 2021, and the President's Cup 2015.

A press release with this information is being sent to media contacts and garden writers to publicize not only 'Football Hero' but also the beauty of irises and the dedicated work of hybridizers such as Lynda Miller.

