

AIS Tall Bearded Iris Symposium

BY RILEY PROBST, AIS SYMPOSIUM CHAIRMAN, CALIFORNIA

Enclosed with this issue of *IRISES*, one will find a separate ballot. It is for the 2023 AIS Tall Bearded Iris Symposium. Anyone may vote in the Symposium. However, please only vote for TBs you grow or have seen in bloom in person. To vote, mark up to 25 irises on the ballot (no write-ins) and send the entire ballot to your regional vice president (RVP). Alternatively, you can make a list of the numbers in front of your chosen irises and email that list to your RVP. See list of RVPs on the directory page near the end of this publication.

The Iris Symposium was created in 1941 by Kenneth Smith of Staten Island, NY. He conducted it annually for several years. By 1946, the AIS Board had endorsed it and it was an annual AIS happening still conducted by Mr. Smith. At that time, only the AIS Judges voted in the Symposium. By 1957, it had been changed by the AIS board so that all AIS members could vote on the Symposium. It has been that way ever since, and the Symposium is published with the *AIS Bulletin* each spring. The mechanics of the Symposium have not changed too much since that time.

Today, it is known as the AIS Tall Bearded Iris Symposium. It has also been known as the Symposium, the Top 100, and maybe other names along the way. It is completely separate from the symposiums run by some of the AIS Sections including the Median Iris Society, the Society for Japanese Irises, the Society for Siberian Irises, the Spuria Iris Society, and others. These symposiums are each specific to

the irises of the AIS Section endorsing it.

The current criteria for an iris to be on the TB Symposium ballot are:

- The top 100 varieties in the most recent TB Symposium
- Tall bearded irises eligible for 2023 Dykes Medal
- Tall bearded irises eligible for 2023 Wister Medal
- Tall bearded irises eligible for 2023 Award of Merit
- Tall bearded irises that won 2022 Award of Merit
- Tall bearded irises that won 2022 Honorable Mention

This year the above criteria list placed 480 TBs on the ballot.

The 2023 AIS Tall Bearded Iris Symposium is the eighty-third annual. It speaks well for the Symposium that it has lasted 83 years with few changes. Eighty-three years ago, there was no Super Bowl, no NBA Playoffs (no NBA), no NASCAR, no Emmy Awards, no Grammy Awards, no United Nations. These are all things that have started more recently. It is remarkable that the AIS Symposium is older than the previously mentioned entities. Help keep up the tradition by voting for your favorite 25 irises.



Sutton's Iris Gardens iris field

📷 MIKE SUTTON