

The 2024 “Iris of the Year”



‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’
Photo by Andi Rivarola

The American Iris Society (AIS) is pleased to announce the 2024 “Iris of the Year”: tall bearded iris ‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’. This outstanding iris is the result of work conducted by plant hybridizer Tom Burseen of Grand Prairie, Texas. He introduced ‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’ to the public through his commercial iris garden in 2015. Tom named this iris for a friend’s grandson who rides bulls. Tom is known for his tall bearded iris hybrids with unusual names. He also received the AIS Hybridizer Award in 2022.

About ‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’

The Iris Encyclopedia [describes](#) this iris as having early to late bloom; its standards (top petals) pure white with random red-purple splattering; style arms (center of flower) white, washed gold; falls (bottom petals) pure white, yellow-gold washed hafts (top portions of falls), random dark purple splatters; beards poppy orange with tattered and feathered white horns; flared and ruffled; slight sweet fragrance.

When asked to describe his iris, Tom Burseen said ‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’ grows and blooms profusely, and is not only a color breaker (describing the unusual splatters of a different color on the solid color background) but a space ager also.” A “space ager” normally has a horn, spoon, or flounce appendage at the end of the “beard”. These are uncommon additions to a bearded iris flower. The combination of broken color and a horn appendage is highly unusual and ‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’ is the first American Dykes Medal winner to display both.

Additional AIS Garden Awards

Tall bearded irises are judged chiefly on their qualities as perennial garden plants, with more emphasis on strong growth characteristics and disease resistance than on mere beauty and distinctiveness of the flower. AIS-accredited judges cast votes that resulted in ‘Don’t Doubt Dalton’ earning an Honorable Mention in 2017, an Award of Merit in 2019, a Wister Medal in 2021, and AIS’s highest award, the American Dykes Medal, in 2023.

About The American Iris Society

The mission of the AIS is to organize and disseminate knowledge of the genus *Iris* and to foster its preservation, enjoyment, and continued development. The Society welcomes all people, regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnic background, gender or sexual orientation. Members collaborate locally, regionally, and nationally to encourage the cultivation, enjoyment, and preservation of all irises. Activities often include educational programs, judges’ training, exhibitions, and garden observation of irises in 15 horticultural iris classifications. The AIS also maintains the official world registry for non-bulbous irises. Visit the AIS website for more information, including a commercial directory of iris growers and hybridizers.

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