Chapter 4A

A VIRTUAL IRIS SHOW: Organizing & Presenting
Approved by the AIS Board of Directors, February 28, 2024

Definition: A virtual show is one in which specimens are not taken to a physical location for exhibit. Instead, they are exhibited and judged via photographs.

A virtual iris show sanctioned by The American Iris Society (AIS) has its beginning when a group of interested people decides to sponsor a show under the auspices of the AIS. There are no requirements concerning the identity of such a group or organization. It may be an AIS region, section, local society, or garden club. The important qualification is that they are willing to be governed by the official show rules and regulations of The AIS.

Why A Virtual Iris Show?

Virtual iris shows have many benefits. People who are unable to travel to an in-person exhibition can enter their iris in a virtual show. Clubs that do not have the personnel or resources to put on an in-person show may find a virtual show more feasible. Entries in the virtual iris show are photographs, meaning that stalks of iris remain in gardens, transportation of flowers to the show is unnecessary, and exhibition containers are not required. Exhibitors are not rushed to groom all their flower stalks in just a few hours before an exhibition is judged. Exhibitors can avoid inclement weather and shadows, leisurely choosing the perfect time and angle for taking their photographs. Youth members and novice exhibitors might find the virtual iris show less intimidating than a full-on, in-person exhibition. If the entry period of a virtual show extends for several months, many classes of irises are likely to be entered in the virtual show, including early and late blooming classes of iris. Because virtual shows require no rented show space, no printed materials, and no purchased ribbons and rosettes, clubs will find a virtual show less expensive to sponsor than an in-person show.

A virtual iris show may be organized, presented, and completed by several committees or just a few people. Although not required, the people who work on the virtual iris show should have computer skills and be able to attend online meetings. This chapter suggests a process for organizing, presenting, and completing a virtual iris show.

I. ORGANIZING THE SHOW

1. Select a show chair.
2. Select a name or theme for the virtual iris show. (optional)
3. Choose a date or range of dates for the virtual iris show that includes the times. For example, Jan 1, 2023 (noon) until July 1, 2023 (11:59 pm). Be clear about the deadline.
4. Choose which divisions, sections, or groups to offer in the virtual iris show.
5. Establish the quantity and type of picture images required for an entry in each division, section, group, or category. **Suggestions to include:**

> Picture quantity (e.g., 4)
> Picture format (e.g., 4X6, square, unrestricted, etc.)
> Views of the iris (e.g., four photos: one FRONT with a standard in center, one SIDE view with a fall in center, one TOP DOWN view of flower stalk, one best view of CLUMP.)
> File type (e.g., JPG, PNG, HEIC, PDF, etc.)
> File size (e.g., unrestricted size, less than 5 MB, smaller than 2 MB, etc.)

6. Determine which AIS and affiliate awards will be offered. Examples of virtual awards might be virtual rosettes, ribbons, and certificates. (Note: After the virtual show schedule has been approved, the exhibition schedules chair will include in the approval packet templates for the virtual show ribbons, rosettes, and certificates.)
7. Examples of real awards might be medals, iris cultivars, gift cards, etc. AIS will provide medals: one Open and one Youth Horticultural Silver medal, and one Open and one Youth Bronze medal for each AIS sanctioned show that has met the minimum requirements of exhibitors and entries. (Note: After the show report has been accepted, the exhibition reports chair will send any appropriate Exhibition Certificates and sweepstakes medals.) Winning exhibitors with an address outside of North America will receive only virtual awards.
8. Investigate the cost of procuring, creating, and distributing the awards.
9. Establish a budget that includes the expenses of awards and other potential costs.
10. Select a registrar who will check registration forms and cultivar names for correctness and completeness and sort entries into appropriate folders.

11. Select a publicity chair to be responsible for designing and. distributing information about the virtual show. A timeline for notices and a list of outlets would be helpful.

12. Select an awards chair to be responsible for organizing and sending awards to winners.

13. (optional) If a video of show winners is planned, select a videographer to create and produce a program of show winners that can be made available to other clubs, local news centers and/or YouTube.

14. Draft a show schedule and submit it to the AIS exhibition schedules chair at least four weeks before the show begins. Carefully read the chapter "A Virtual Iris Show: Rules and Regulations." **See the Appendix: Virtual Iris Show Schedule template.**

15. Tasks such as staging, clerks, hospitality, properties, and cleanup are unnecessary for a virtual iris show.

II. FINALIZING THE DETAILS

After the show schedule has been approved, the AIS exhibition schedules chair will send an approval packet which will contain an approval letter, show report form, Exhibition Certificate ballots, and templates for the virtual awards. Now it's time for the virtual show committee to finalize the show details.

16. Design the registration form for entries.

17. Develop a detailed instruction sheet for the registration form entry submission process.

18. Establish a naming protocol for the photographs. In some cases, abbreviations might be required. Descriptors such as, but not limited to, might be: the complete AIS registered name of the iris, spelled correctly. Division, class, section, or group in which the photograph will be judged.

19. Establish the format and content of the email that contains the registration form and photo entries that will be sent to the registrar. Include the required wording in the subject bar of the email (e.g., name of iris, category, section).

20. Create a system of folders in the computer to hold the entries. One system might be to have folders for each section that contains one folder for each exhibitor.

21. Establish a judging panel with the name of the head judge. Confirm that each judge is able to work in a virtual iris show.

22. The publicity chair begins a campaign to promote the virtual show.

23. As requests are received, registration numbers are emailed by the registrar to participants, as well as unique registration forms, instructions for completing the registration forms, and a copy of the virtual iris show schedule that includes all the rules and a list of the divisions.

24. The email system is checked daily by the registrar and questions are answered promptly.

25. Entries, as they are received, are placed in their appropriate folder by the registrar.

26. To make judging more efficient, the photos of one entry should be combined onto one page.

III. AFTER THE ENTRY SUBMISSION DEADLINE

27. The registrar creates a TOTAL registration spreadsheet of all the entries that includes entry numbers, sections, cultivar names, seedling numbers, etc.

28. Instructions on how to view the entries are emailed by the registrar or show chair to the head judge. Alternatively, the registrar or show chair may invite the judges to a Zoom meeting to go over instructions.

29. Exhibition Certificate (E.C.) ballots are distributed to the judges.

30. The judge or judging panel should meet within a week of the entry submission deadline to decide how to evaluate entries. They might choose to judge as a group while on ZOOM or they may judge individually recording their votes on a total registration sheet. If judging is done by ZOOM, the show chair(s) could act as clerk(s).

31. After judging is completed, the judge or judges return the file or files to the registrar with the ribbons and awards listed.

32. The registrar should create files for ribbons by section and cultivar, entry number with ribbons and awards listed, and one file of all 1st-place ribbon winners by section by cultivar.

33. For choosing the Best Entry in Show and Best Entries of Section, ask the judge or judges if they would like to use the file of 1st place ribbon winners by section and cultivar to assist in their final judging.

IV. AFTER SELECTION OF WINNERS

34. After receiving the file of winners, the awards chair uses the template to craft each virtual certificate award and sends them to the appropriate person.

35. The awards chair attaches virtual rosettes and ribbons to each appropriate entry/photograph.

36.The show chair collects the E.C. ballots and completes all necessary show forms and submits them to the AIS exhibition reports chair.

37. (optional) The volunteer videographer produces a video of picture entries and uploads it to YouTube.

38. (optional) The publicity chair writes an article for the club newsletter, local newspaper, and/or club's AIS region that includes the pictures of some of the section winners and best of show.

39. (optional) The show chair along with members of the Virtual Show Committee meet to evaluate the show, discussing things that went well and things that need improvement.