

# Handbook For Judges and Show Officials

## Ch 22 Historic Iris



Edition 8.0  
July 2021

ISBN# 978-1-892400-07-9

Note: This chapter and others from the *Handbook for Judges* are available online. It is recommended that judges and other readers scan over the Introduction and Table of Contents in the full version of the *Handbook* in order to know the full list of available resources, e.g., Glossary, essays, Judge's Activity Record, etc.

## Chapter 22

### HISTORIC IRIS

Approved by the AIS Board of Directors, March 30, 2021

**Definition:** HIPS (Historic Iris Preservation Society) defines “historic” iris as those introduced 30 or more years ago. If no introduction date is available, the date of registration should be used.

Historic iris are eligible for show awards but not for AIS garden awards. That time is in the past, therefore they are only judged in exhibitions, not in the garden. Exception: Board of Directors Award.

### EXHIBITION JUDGING

#### Historic Iris

The show schedule should clearly state the years of eligibility for the Historic Section. For example, a show schedule written in 2021 would state that iris introduced in or before 1991 are eligible for the Historic Section. Exhibitors should have the choice of entering the historic iris in the historic or other appropriate section (e.g., TB, MTB, Louisiana, novelty, etc.)

Entry tags for iris exhibited in the historic section must clearly state the cultivar’s year of introduction. If no introduction date can be found, the year of registration may be used. Any type of iris can be historic (e.g., intermediate bearded, Louisiana, spuria, arilbred, etc.) If appropriate, the classification committee or show chair can sub-divide the entries of historic iris into smaller groups.

The point scales used in judging modern cultivars can be applied to historic iris. However, it must be kept in mind that bearded classes have been redefined in recent years. For example, in 1976, the maximum miniature dwarf bearded (MDB) height was changed from 10 inches to 8 inches and many diploid tall bearded iris might not grow to the present minimum TB height specification of 27.5 inches. Also, keep in mind that the intermediate bearded (IB) designation appearing in the 1939 and 1949 *Check Lists* was based solely on height without regard to flowering time, ancestry, or overall proportion.

Iris in those check lists that are designated IB encompass true intermediates as well as diploid and tetraploid short tall bearded, some of which now would be classed as border bearded. In all cases, the specimen must conform not to present-day class guidelines, but to those applicable at the time of its original registration or any subsequent reclassification. Especially important, emphasis should be on the excellence of the horticultural specimen rather than any proximity of the cultivar itself to currently preferred style in flower form, stalk or overall size. As with all iris in exhibition, the specimen must be judged against cultural perfection for that particular variety.

If the historic iris is judged to be better than the best iris in the other sections of the show, the historic iris can and should be deemed best specimen of show. However, should two specimens be judged equal, the newer variety by year of introduction should be placed higher because it represents to the public the closest current standard of perfection.

Correct identification sometimes can be a problem with older iris. It is recommended that judges have access to the older *Check Lists*, the on-line Iris Register or the AIS Iris Encyclopedia and, if possible, the HIPS online photo gallery of verified cultivars. To become better educated about historic iris, judges should study the changes in iris form and attributes over the history of hybridizing, as well as the changes in classification. Familiarity with the historic cultivars grown in the geographic area of the show is also helpful.