

Handbook For Judges and Show Officials

Ch 3 Awards



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Note: This chapter and others from the *Handbook for Judges* are available online. It is recommended that judges and other readers scan 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 3

AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY AWARDS AND HONORS

Approved by the AIS Board of Directors, February 2, 2021

The responsibility for setting policy, establishing rules and implementing procedures for the American Iris Society's awards for iris rests with the AIS Board of Directors. The Awards Committee of the American Iris Society is delegated the authority to coordinate, conduct, compile and report the results of the national competitions for garden awards, including the official AIS Ballot awards and the convention awards and honors. The symposium chair is responsible for the tall bearded symposium ballots. The Exhibitions Committee of the AIS is given the authority to administer and report the results of exhibition awards earned at AIS accredited iris shows.

I. AIS OFFICIAL GARDEN AWARDS

Each year the accredited judges of the American Iris Society (AIS), on the official AIS Ballot, cast their votes for the AIS garden awards and from this balloting, the AIS garden awards are decided. Voting the official AIS Ballot may be done using an official printed ballot or the on-line voting system. The emphasis is repeatedly placed on the word garden because this system of awards is based entirely on performance in the garden. All evaluations must be made of iris seen growing and in bloom in gardens, over a period of time, in different locations and under varying climatic conditions. When an iris variety is considered for an official garden award, its qualities as a cut flower, an exhibited specimen or from a photo must be disregarded.

At the present time, official garden awards of the American Iris Society have been established for the following classifications of iris:

- Miniature Dwarf Bearded (MDB)
- Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB)
- Intermediate Bearded (IB)
- Border Bearded (BB)

Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB)
Tall Bearded (TB)
Arilbred (AB)
Aril (AR)
Japanese (JI)
Siberian (SIB)
Louisiana (LA)
Pacific Coast Natives (PCN)
Spuria (SPU)
Species (SPEC)
Inter-species (SPEC-X)

Including all categories of awards in every classification, an AIS accredited judge has the opportunity to cast several dozen votes on the official AIS Ballot. However, because of the iris season's time limitations and cultural demands or the lack of opportunities to see, study, and acquire sufficient knowledge of iris in all classifications, few, if any, judges will make all the selections permitted. A judge probably will cast votes for fewer than half those allowed. An AIS accredited judge expects to spend many hours and days visiting not only local gardens, but also private and display gardens in the area and region. If possible, the judge should visit gardens across the country, weighing the merits of eligible varieties.

The AIS' official garden awards are listed below with the conditions of eligibility, the number of votes the accredited judge may cast for each award, and the number of cultivars winning each award.

The High Commendation Award

The High Commendation (HC) Award is reserved for seedling iris, viewed in gardens under seedling number or registered name, which has not yet been introduced to commerce. A seedling in any of the established classifications listed previously is eligible for the HC Award. Judges are cautioned not to vote for a first-year seedling and to be certain that the seedling being considered conforms to the requirements of its designated classification.

The HC Award is granted to each seedling that receives five or more votes. It is acceptable for a seedling to win the HC Award more than once and as often as the judges award it. A seedling remains eligible up to the time of its introduction. In any award year, the HC Award is limited to iris that have not been introduced before the deadline date for filing the official AIS Ballot.

The maximum number of tall bearded seedlings that the judge may enter on the ballot is eight. For each of the other classifications the maximum number is three.

The Honorable Mention Award

An officially registered and introduced iris in the classification of TB, BB, IB, SDB, MDB, MTB, Aril, Arilbred, becomes eligible for the Honorable Mention (HM) Award the second year after its year of introduction to commerce. All other classes, as registered by the introducer, become eligible for the HM Award the third year following introduction.

[An introduction is an offering for sale to the public by printed document such as a catalog or printed list, or by advertisement in the *AIS Bulletin* or on a website. However, to be eligible for official AIS awards above the level of High Commendation Award, the iris introduction must be recorded with the AIS Registrar.]

Iris of each classification remain on the official AIS Ballot for a period of three years. Normally an iris is registered before introduction. In the case that an iris is registered after introduction, some HM eligibility may be lost. An iris can go on to the official AIS Ballot only if it has been both registered and introduced. The end of its eligibility is determined by its date of introduction. An iris variety may win the HM Award only once.

Occasionally a hybridizer realizes that an iris that has been registered (and perhaps also introduced) must be reclassified. For example, it might be a perfect border bearded iris in its home garden but grows to tall bearded size almost everywhere else. When this happens and the iris is re-registered, the iris must start over in the awards system in its new class, based on the dates of its re-registration and re-introduction, even if it already has won an award in its old class.

If there are three or more eligible cultivars for any Honorable Mention (HM), a judge is permitted to cast votes for ten percent (10%) of the iris (rounded to the next higher number) eligible to be voted for, with a minimum of two. If there are two eligible cultivars for any HM, a judge is permitted to cast a vote for one. If there is only one eligible cultivar for any HM, that HM will not be placed on the official AIS Ballot for vote until there are at least two eligible cultivars for that specific HM.

Each eligible cultivar will continue on the ballot for the full three years of eligibility.

The number of HMs awarded is the same as the number of votes permitted for that class of iris, unless increased by ties.

The Fred and Barbara Walther Cup

The Fred and Barbara Walther Cup is awarded annually by the American Iris Society to the originator of the iris variety that receives the greatest number of votes in the HM Award balloting, regardless of classification. All classifications of iris are eligible.

The Award of Merit

One of the American Iris Society's most coveted awards is the Award of Merit (AM). The AM is given each year to a limited number of iris varieties in each of the recognized classifications of iris, but only after the eligible varieties have been marketed over a period of time. This assures wide distribution and thus affords the judges sufficient opportunities to properly evaluate the eligible varieties as worthy of the AM. Judges again are reminded that it is the responsibility of the individual judge to determine that the iris variety conforms to the requirements of the classification in which it is registered.

Eligibility for the Award of Merit begins the second year after the iris variety has received the HM Award and eligibility continues for three years. All eligible varieties are listed on the official AIS Ballot during the three years of eligibility. An iris may win an Award of Merit only once.

If there are three or more eligible cultivars for any Award of Merit, a judge is permitted to cast votes for ten percent (10%) of the iris (rounded to the next higher number) eligible to be voted for, with a minimum of two. If there are two eligible cultivars for any AM, a judge is permitted to cast a vote for one. If there is only one eligible cultivar for any AM, that AM will not be placed on the official AIS Ballot for vote until there are at least two eligible cultivars for that specific AM. Each eligible cultivar will continue on the ballot for the full three years of eligibility.

The number of AMs awarded is the same as the number of votes permitted for that class of iris, unless increased by ties.

The Special Medal Awards

Each class of iris has its special medal, and they are as follows:

The CAPARNE-WELCH MEDAL is restricted to miniature dwarf bearded iris (MDB).

The COOK-DOUGLAS MEDAL is restricted to standard dwarf bearded iris (SDB).

The HANS AND JACOB SASS MEDAL is restricted to intermediate bearded iris (IB).

The KNOWLTON MEDAL is restricted to border bearded iris (BB).

The WILLIAMSON-WHITE MEDAL is restricted to miniature tall bearded iris (MTB).

The CLARENCE G. WHITE MEDAL is restricted to iris of one-half or more aril content that clearly exhibit at least three readily recognizable aril flower characteristics as defined and approved by the Aril Society International.

(AR - pure aril & arilbred of $\geq 50\%$ aril)

The WILLIAM MOHR MEDAL is restricted to iris of one-quarter or more aril content that do not meet the more restrictive requirements of the C. G. White Medal and that clearly exhibit at least two readily recognizable flower characteristics as defined and approved by the Aril Society International (AB of 25 to 49.9% aril).

The JOHN C. WISTER MEMORIAL MEDAL is restricted to tall bearded iris (TB).

The PAYNE MEDAL is restricted to Japanese iris (JI).

The MARY SWORDS DeBAILLON MEDAL is restricted to Louisiana iris (LA).

The SYDNEY B. MITCHELL MEDAL is restricted to Pacific Coast Native iris (Californicae) (PCN).

The MORGAN-WOOD MEDAL is restricted to Siberian iris (SIB).

The ERIC NIES MEDAL is restricted to Spuria iris (SPU).

The FOUNDERS OF SIGNA MEDAL is restricted to species iris (SPEC).

The RANDOLPH-PERRY MEDAL is restricted to interspecies iris (SPEC-X).

To become eligible for a special medal, an iris must have received the Award of Merit in its class. Eligibility begins the second year after the variety has received its AM and continues for a period of three years. Qualified varieties are listed on the official AIS Ballot during the three-year period of eligibility. Judges may vote for one choice for each of the special medals, except for the John C. Wister Memorial Medal, where a judge may vote for three choices.

Except for tall bearded iris, a special medal is awarded to the one iris in each classification that receives the most votes. The John C. Wister Medal is awarded to each of the three tall bearded varieties that receive the most votes. In the case of a tie, those iris tied shall receive duplicate medals.

In any given year in which there are fewer than two eligible cultivars for a special medal, that medal will not be placed on the official AIS Ballot for vote until there are at least two eligible cultivars for that specific special medal. Each eligible cultivar will continue on the AIS Ballot for the full three years of eligibility.

The Knowlton, Hans and Jacob Sass, Cook-Douglas, and Williamson-White Medals are provided by the Median Iris Society for awarding by the American Iris Society. The Caparne-Welch Medal is provided by the Dwarf Iris Society. The Mary Swords DeBaillon Medal is provided by the Society for Louisiana Iris. The Morgan-Wood Medal is provided by the Society for Siberian Iris. SIGNA provides the Founders of Signa and the Randolph-Perry Medals. The Eric Nies Medal is provided by the Spuria Iris Society. The Payne Medal is provided by the Society for Japanese Iris. The Clarence G. White and William Mohr Medals are provided by the Aril Society International. The Sydney B. Mitchell Medal is provided by the Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris.

The Dykes Memorial Medal

The Dykes Memorial Medal is the highest award an iris can receive. The medal honors William Rickatson Dykes (1877-1925), the English botanist and author of the great monograph, *The Genus Iris*. The Dykes Medal for America is awarded annually by the British Iris Society through the American Iris Society and is restricted to iris which originated in the United States or Canada. The first Dykes Medal for America was awarded in 1927.

To become eligible for the American Dykes Medal, an iris must have received a special medal. However, not all special medal winners are eligible, since they might have originated outside of the United States or Canada.

The special medal winners become eligible for the Dykes Medal the first year after receiving a special medal. The period of eligibility is three years. All eligible varieties are listed on the official AIS Ballot during the three years of eligibility.

Each judge may cast one vote for the Dykes Medal. The iris which receives the greatest number of votes regardless of classification is designated the winner. In case of a tie, multiple medals shall be awarded.

II. BOARD OF DIRECTORS AWARD

This distinctive award is neither a garden award nor an exhibition award. This award is made by the American Iris Society's Board of Directors to honor an iris which has not won a Dykes Medal, but which shows clearly in its progeny that it is among the greats of irisdome.

Candidate cultivars for this award are presented to the AIS Board of Directors by the Awards Committee or by nomination from any AIS member. A nomination should be sent to the awards chair with supporting documentation. A simple majority of the AIS Board of Directors is required to give this award.

The Board of Directors Award, which is not an annual award, was established in 1972 and first awarded in 1975. Previous winners were Snow Flurry TB in 1974, Tobacco Road TB in 1975 and White Swirl SIB in 1987.

III. POPULAR SELECTIONS OF IRIS

Symposium of 100 Favorite Tall Bearded Iris

The Symposium of 100 Tall Bearded Favorite Iris is conducted annually by the American Iris Society. Often referred to as the "Popularity Poll," the Symposium was begun in the early 1940s and the voting of iris was restricted to accredited judges. In 1952, the Symposium was opened to all AIS members. Currently, everyone is invited to participate in its balloting, including non-AIS members.

Symposium balloting is limited to tall bearded (TB) iris. Varieties eligible and listed on the ballot include the following:

- 1) The top 100 varieties of tall bearded iris on the previous year's Symposium.
- 2) TB iris included in the current year's Dykes eligibility list.
- 3) TB iris included in the current year's Award of Merit eligibility list.
- 4) TB iris included in the current year's Wister eligibility list.
- 5) TB Award of Merit winners of the previous year.
- 6) TB Honorable Mention Award winners of the previous year.

Each AIS member may vote for no more than twenty-five varieties. If a member votes for more than 25 varieties, then the entire ballot is voided.

The Symposium ballot is mailed to AIS members in the spring issue of the *AIS Bulletin*. Completed ballots must be returned to a member's Regional Vice President (RVP) by the date stated on the ballot. Each RVP tabulates the region's ballots and sends the totals for the region to the AIS symposium chair for final compilation. Overseas members should return their ballots directly to the AIS symposium chair. Results of the Symposium are published in the winter issue of the *AIS Bulletin*.

Sections in the AIS, such as the Society for Louisiana Iris and the Spuria Iris Society, conduct polls similar to the Symposium for the different classifications of iris. Section members participate in selecting the favorite iris for those classifications.

IV. AIS CONVENTION AWARDS AND HONORS

The American Iris Society's national meeting, popularly known as the AIS national convention, is held annually in the spring of the year. Everyone attending the national meeting who has paid the convention's registration fees is entitled to cast ballots to honor outstanding iris seen in the convention's official tour gardens. The privilege is extended to all registrants without regard to status as an AIS member. In case of a tie, there can be multiple winners.

The Franklin Cook Memorial Cup

The Franklin Cook Memorial Cup is awarded annually during the American Iris Society's national meeting. All introduced iris seen growing and in bloom in

the official tour gardens of the meeting are eligible for the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup, except for iris that originated within the host region for that year's national meeting or originated by a hybridizer whose garden is included on the official garden tour, regardless of its location. Iris considered for this award may or may not be official guest iris. For the convention ballots, introduced iris will include all iris properly registered and offered for sale prior to or in the spring issue of *IRISES, the Bulletin of the American Iris Society* of the year of that national meeting.

Each convention registrant may vote for only one variety and the Franklin Cook Memorial Cup is awarded to the iris receiving the most votes. In case of a tie, there can be multiple winners.

The President's Cup

The President's Cup is awarded annually during the American Iris Society's national meeting. Eligibility is restricted to introduced iris that originated within the host region for that year's national meeting or originated by a hybridizer whose garden is included on the meeting's official convention tour, regardless of its location. Iris must have been seen growing and in bloom in the meeting's official tour gardens but need not be official guest iris.

Each convention registrant may vote for one variety and The President's Cup is awarded to the iris with the most votes. In case of a tie, there can be multiple winners.

Ben R. Hager Cup

The Ben R. Hager Cup is awarded annually during the American Iris Society's national convention. Eligibility is restricted to introduced median iris (e.g. SDB, IB, BB, MTB) seen growing and in bloom in the meeting's official tour gardens but need not be official guest iris.

Each convention registrant may vote for one variety, and the Ben R. Hager Cup is awarded to the iris with the most votes. In case of a tie, there can be multiple winners.

Lloyd Zurbrigg-Clarence Mahan Seedling Cup

This cup is awarded to the seedling at the AIS' national convention that receives the most votes by convention registrants. The seedling may be of any type and registered but not introduced. It is presented by AIS Region 4 in honor of two of its distinguished members, Lloyd Zurbrigg, a noted hybridizer of reblooming iris and Clarence Mahan, a hybridizer and past president of AIS. The Zurbrigg-Mahan Cup was first awarded in 2014 at the AIS national Convention in Dallas, Texas. Notably different from other AIS awards, the recipient retains the award, a new engraved cup, which is donated each year.

The Gerald Richardson Award

The Gerald Richardson Award is awarded annually during the American Iris Society's national meeting, for the best integrated privately maintained planting at an AIS convention garden as designated in the convention booklet. An integrated garden is defined as a garden bed composed of iris and companion plants that displays the iris to their best effect as a landscape plant.

Each convention registrant may vote for one garden. The Richardson Award is given to the garden with the most votes. The first Richardson Award was given at the 2019 AIS Convention in San Ramon, CA.

Favorite Guest Iris

The AIS' national meeting ballot for favorite guest iris allows each registrant the privilege of voting for up to fifteen outstanding guest iris. Eligibility is restricted to registered iris, introduced or not introduced, which are official convention guest iris. They must be listed in the meeting's program book and must have been seen growing and in bloom on the meeting's official garden tour. The meeting's official list of Favorite Guest Iris (usually 25) is made up of the varieties receiving the highest number of votes.

V. AIS OFFICIAL EXHIBITION AWARDS

Iris Show Awards

The highly prized show awards of the American Iris Society are awarded by AIS accredited judges who are acting as official show judges at AIS accredited iris shows. Only AIS accredited shows which conform to the exhibition rules of AIS and which have been approved by the AIS Exhibitions Committee are eligible to give these awards.

AIS show awards range from the traditional ribbons and rosettes to the youth division Silver and Bronze Medals and the AIS Silver and Bronze Medals and Certificates. The list of show awards and the conditions under which they are awarded are presented in detail in Chapter 4.

The Nelson Award

The Nelson Award was first given in 1966. This award honors the iris which has been selected Best Specimen of the Show in the most AIS accredited iris shows during the calendar year. In case of a tie more than one award may be given and the same variety may win more than once. The Nelson Award is determined by the AIS Exhibition Committee. The iris that wins the Nelson Award will be honored in *IRISES*.

Regional and Affiliate Society Awards and Honors

Many AIS regions and affiliate societies have garden awards and honors that are not part of the AIS Awards and Honors system. Information and guidelines about these awards can be found in regional convention booklets.

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