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Chapter 2, Revised

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUDGES

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Being appointed a judge of the American Iris Society is a distinct privilege. Being a judge means accepting the responsibility of serving the American Iris Society (AIS) and the gardening public which relies on the selection of irises made by the judges. No AIS member should accept an appointment as a judge without understanding the duties and responsibilities of that position. The judge must be willing to give time and sometimes spend money in an effort to be informed and qualified and to fulfill the duties of a judge. Judges should be willing to follow all rules and responsibilities concerning AIS judges or not accept appointment as a judge.

APPLICABLE TO ALL JUDGING

A thorough knowledge of irises is the first requirement for judging. This should include all types of irises. The second requirement is to understand the difference between judging on the show bench and judging in the garden.

The only way to know irises is to grow them. Judges have an obligation to maintain a representative collection of iris types that can be grown in their area and to add some new varieties each year. Since it is impossible to grow all irises that a judge might be asked to evaluate, visits to other gardens are necessary. During these garden visits, the judge should study new and unfamiliar iris varieties and compare the growth habits of familiar iris.

When planning visits to other gardens, the judge should keep in mind that seeing an iris once is not sufficient to truly evaluate the plant. For this reason, more than one visit should be made to all area gardens where newer varieties are being grown. Evaluation of all irises should be based on two years of observation. It is not possible to make sound decisions regarding the performance of an iris without observing it for at least two seasons.

Every judge should continue to study written material and to attend training sessions to improve judging techniques. An exchange of ideas and opinions with other judges will improve one's knowledge of iris. There is always something new to be learned.

Being willing to spend time and money is part of the responsibility of being a judge. Visiting gardens, attending training sessions and meetings, and studying the *Handbook for Judges & Show Officials* are all part of being a well-educated judge.

Fully accredited judges should be willing to volunteer to help train, be a mentor to and help other judges who are working on their hours to become certified as garden/exhibition and artistic design judges.

As a representative of the American Iris Society, a judge should promote the organization by participating in local, regional, and national activities, writing for publications, and speaking to horticultural groups about irises.

JUDGING IN THE GARDEN

The primary duty of the AIS judge is to evaluate iris in the garden. Every category of the official AIS Ballot is based on performance of irises in the garden. To vote intelligently, the judge must see as many varieties and classifications of irises in a garden as possible and evaluate them for a two-year period under varied weather conditions. Never should voting be based on shows, photos, publicity or the popularity of a hybridizer. AIS awards should be based totally on garden performance.

The judge should visit gardens of local hybridizers as often as possible. The judge should be honest, but tactful, in evaluating the seedlings, pointing out good traits as well as any shortcomings. The judge should always take notes when visiting a garden for review before the official AIS Ballot is cast.

When the judge evaluates the worthiness of an iris in the garden, it should be for its garden value. The most important aspects of judging in the garden deal with the plant: its ability to produce increase, to produce numerous blossoms of quality over an acceptable period of time, and to resist disease. Garden judging is very different from exhibition judging and judges should be sure they do not use exhibition techniques when judging in the garden.

When tutoring an apprentice in garden judging, the instructor should help the student to understand the importance of evaluating the entire plant. The apprentice should study the plant, stalk and branching, flower, substance and durability, bud count and all other things which make an iris worthy of garden awards. The apprentice training session is not just a visit to admire the beauty of new introductions. The instructor should ensure that proper training is given and then forward the evaluation of the apprentice's performance to the designated regional official immediately after the training session.

JUDGING AT AN IRIS SHOW

At no time is the work of a judge more in the public's eye than when working as an exhibition judge. As soon as judging ends, the decisions of the judges are open to public scrutiny. A thorough knowledge of irises and their characteristics is a necessity. Both new and old varieties will be on display at a show. The more varieties with which a judge is familiar, the easier is the task of exhibition judging which is why a judge should have visited as many gardens as possible. The show is one of the ways in which the public is educated about the qualities of a good iris. Poor judging is detrimental to this educational purpose.

Before arriving at an AIS sanctioned exhibition, the judge should have received and studied the show schedule and should be familiar with the classes and varieties being evaluated. The judge should review the chapters of the *Handbook for Judges & Show Officials*: "Duties and Responsibilities of Judges," "Organizing and Presenting an Iris Show" and "Rules and Regulations of an Iris Show". At the exhibition, the judge should have access to the current copy of the *Handbook for Judges and Show Officials* and the most recent AIS Check List(s), Registrations and Introductions (R&Is) or access to the online Iris Register. To assist with identification, judges are allowed to use electronic devices to access the *AIS Iris Encyclopedia*.

Judges should enter their own irises in shows regularly in order to be familiar with the process of selecting, transporting and grooming irises. Serving on show committees will also provide experience for becoming a better judge. Judges are strongly urged not to enter specimens in shows when serving as a judge for that show. However, some shows permit judges to enter their bloom stalks. In those cases, the judge should choose not to judge or give input when their own entries are being evaluated.

Whenever possible, the judge should accept invitations to judge shows. Continued refusal to judge when invited to do so is a neglect of duty. When judging in a panel, the judge should not be afraid to express an opinion. However, if the majority agrees that one specimen is better than any other, the dissenting judge should accept the decision of the other panel members and quietly concur. One judge should not dominate other members of the panel and it is a good idea to take turns in giving oral evaluations of a specimen.

After accepting an invitation to judge a show, it is acceptable for the judge to ask what expenses the hosting organization is planning to pay. If the judge cannot afford to make the trip and the host group is not paying travel expense, the judge may decline the invitation. It is permissible to accept mileage, but the judge should not expect to be paid a fee for the actual judging.

A primary consideration when judging a show is to follow the AIS rules for judging and giving awards. Personal preferences in color and form should not be allowed to interfere with selection of worthy specimens for awards. All classifications of irises eligible for awards must be considered. The judge must be careful not to award ribbons

where they are not deserved. An entry should not be given an award if it is entered in the wrong class. If such an error is discovered prior to judging, the show chair should be asked to place it in its proper class. If the class has already been judged, it is up to the show chair to determine if the class should be rejudged or the misplaced specimen disqualified.

No grooming of entries is permitted after judging begins. The specimens are to be judged as they appear at the moment of judging. The judge should never touch the specimen in any way and certainly should not remove spent blossoms, force partially open buds or alter the entry in any way. The judge may ask a show official to move an entry to better to evaluate it, but judges are not allowed to touch or move any entry.

Any unnamed or misnamed specimen is not eligible for an award. The judge should use caution in determining that an entry is misnamed. Climate, growing conditions and other factors affect the way an iris appears. It is not the responsibility of the judge to provide a correct name for a misnamed entry. AIS Check Lists and Registrations and Introductions (R&Is) can and should be used as aids in determining the accuracy of the entry's identity and classification. The online Iris Register and the *AIS Iris Encyclopedia* can be used to assist with identification.

It is improper to award ribbons to every entry in a show and the judge should keep in mind that an inferior specimen should never be awarded a ribbon. Exhibition awards are based on perfection for that particular variety and an entry which does not meet that criterion should not receive a ribbon. If adverse weather conditions have severely reduced the overall quality of show entries, this should be taken into consideration during judging.

The Exhibition Certificate (EC) is awarded to worthy seedlings entered in the Seedling Division of a show. The judges may select an entry as "Best Seedling of Show," and it will receive the EC automatically. In addition, all judges visiting a show may request a ballot on which they can vote for seedlings they consider worthy of an EC.

All Exhibition Certificate (EC) ballots must be turned in at the show and will be sent to the AIS exhibitions committee chair along with the show report. Any seedling receiving five or more votes nationwide in one year will receive an EC, but a judge is under no obligation to vote for any seedling unless it is worthy. An EC is not a recommendation for introduction. But the EC does indicate that the seedling showed exceptional merit as it appeared on the show bench.

If a problem or irregularity occurs during the judging process, a judge should handle it clearly and firmly and after the show send a report of the problem or irregularity to the AIS exhibition committee member in charge of show approval/schedules.

Any misconduct by a judge should be reported to the AIS chair of judges.

When an apprentice judge is assigned to accompany a panel of judges, it is the duty of those judges to follow the AIS guidelines as outlined in Chapter 1 while tutoring that apprentice. Each panel should have no more than one apprentice. The apprentice should have no other duties and must not serve as a clerk while receiving apprentice training. Judges must not ask an apprentice to settle differences of opinion because the apprentice judge is not yet qualified to make such decisions.

The judge supervising the apprentice should allow the apprentice to evaluate specimens during the judging. However, the final decision on awarding ribbons is determined by the fully accredited judges. In order not to disturb the judging, the apprentice should ask questions after the judging has been completed. Immediately after the show, the supervising judge should complete the report on the performance of the apprentice judge and mail to the designated regional official. An apprentice judge who cannot get the needed credit in an actual show can receive training under simulated conditions with prior approval of the RVP or designee. The AIS judge who conducts such a training session should ensure that the apprentice receives the correct training needed.

VOTING THE OFFICIAL AIS BALLOT FOR GARDEN AWARDS

All awards voted on the official AIS Ballot are based on garden judging. The judge must be thoroughly familiar with the AIS rules regarding these awards and with the traits of a good iris in the various classifications. A vote should never be cast for an iris when it does not conform to the requirements of the class in which it is listed. The instructions on the official AIS Ballot should be read carefully so that the maximum number of votes allowed is not exceeded. Too many votes cast in a category by a judge will cancel all of the votes in that particular category.

When voting the official AIS Ballot, it is not necessary to vote in every category. If the judge has not seen a sufficient number of the irises listed to know that those listed are truly worthy, no vote should be cast. To vote, a judge must have seen the iris growing and blooming in a garden over a two-year period. Voting for an iris that does not grow in the judge's home area should be avoided unless sufficient evaluation has been made in gardens where these irises do grow.

The judge who only votes for irises from a few hybridizers might be voting for favorite hybridizers. The judge who votes only for irises from a particular region might not be visiting enough gardens and might be unable to fairly evaluate irises from many regions. To vote or to withhold a vote on the basis of the hybridizer or region of iris involved indicates the judge does not understand the duties of judging.

In order to eliminate the possibility of voting for too many in one category, the conscientious judge will plan before actually marking the official AIS Ballot. The judge should use a marker which makes dark, easy-to-read marks and then check that the marks do not bleed through to opposite side of the ballot page.

Reading the ballot instructions carefully will provide all the information needed to vote properly. No matter how much care is taken in evaluating the irises and marking the ballot, it is of no avail unless the ballot is mailed on time. The official AIS Ballot is void and the judge is considered as not to have voted if the ballot is postmarked after the deadline to vote, mailed to the wrong person, contains incorrect markings or is unsigned by the judge. A judge may feel unqualified to vote because of illness or other circumstances that prevent visiting gardens and evaluating irises. In that event, to be counted as having voted, the judge must sign or electronically submit the ballot, write the reason for not voting and submit the ballot before the deadline. Only serious illness or extreme circumstances are considered valid reasons for not voting. Minor illness, a busy schedule and/or forgetfulness are unacceptable excuses for not voting.

In voting the High Commendation Award (HC) for numbered or named seedlings, it is imperative that the number or name is listed exactly as its owner listed it, the hybridizer's name is correct, and the writing is legible. If a seedling has been named, its name and number should be listed when both are known. The HC Award indicates that an iris is worthy of introduction. A judge should vote for an iris that is superior to others available in its class and color range; not just because the hybridizer is well-known, the seedling was produced locally, or because it is the only one in a class. Using the same rules for judging irises in its class, the vote for HC should be based on the entire plant including stalk, clump, and flowers.

A judge who does not receive an official AIS Ballot by April 15 should contact the RVP or designee of their region or the AIS awards chair immediately. A judge can vote the AIS Ballot by paper ballot or electronically using the online voting system. This is important because if a judge does not receive an official AIS Ballot and does not notify anyone in time for an adjustment to be made, then no valid excuse is available for not voting.