

Handbook For Judges and Show Officials

Ch 9 IB Iris



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NOTE: As a prelude to this chapter, it is recommended that judges read “Essay: Comparison of BB, IB, and MTB Iris” which can be found in the printed edition of the *Handbook for Judges* and online.

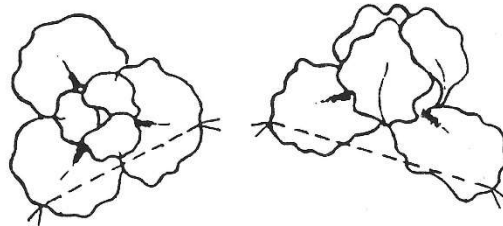
This chapter and others from the *Handbook for Judges* are available online. It is recommended that judges and other readers scan through the Introduction and Table of Contents in the full version of the *Handbook* in order to know the full list of available resources, e.g., Glossary, essays, Judge’s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

Chapter 9

INTERMEDIATE BEARDED IRIS

Approved by the AIS Board of Directors, February 9, 2021

Definition: Plants with bloom stalks 16 to 27.5 inches (41 to 70 cm) in height; leaves substantially erect; stalks branched and preferably extending above the foliage far enough to display the blossoms without interference; blooms 3.5 to 5 inches (9 to 13 cm) in width (see illustration below); typical blooming period is between that of standard dwarf and tall bearded iris.



"Width"

[Fully expanded but fresh flowers measured in natural position]

Intermediate bearded (IB) and border bearded (BB) iris have the same height range but because of the diverse species background of the intermediate class, the criteria for judging the IB iris, particularly with regard to branching and bud count, are somewhat less restrictive. In addition, the season of bloom for IBs typically commences earlier than BBs, although some intermediates having large numbers of buds or producing sequential stalks might continue their bloom period into the tall bearded/border bearded season.

Also, because of the diversity of genetic background, a great variety of plant, stalk and flower types is found that fits the IB class. There are some, usually smaller and earlier flowering, which, except for their greater height and flower size, resemble standard dwarfs in style as well as habits of growth and bloom. Some of the IBs approach the miniature tall bearded in size, proportion and branching while others are virtually indistinguishable from BBs except in season of bloom. This diversity should be encouraged and no one type is preferred over

any other, so long as the cultivar meets all other standards of quality. Neither is there any specific penalty for bloom occurring somewhat earlier or later than is typical for the class, since “season of bloom” is at best an estimate, and actual performance might vary greatly from climate to climate and from season to season.

Among bearded iris, intermediates are unexcelled as versatile and obliging garden subjects, typically having great vigor and being especially generous of bloom. Judges have a responsibility to see that such vigor and reliable bloom, as well as diseases resistance and neat growth habits, are maintained in the class, and their absence must be severely penalized. Rapid advancement has been and is being made in the intermediate class, giving a full range of color and pattern as well as high quality in other respects. For this reason, no allowances should be made in matters of overall quality.

A pleasing fragrance is an asset, both indoors and in the garden and the judge may consider it in making an overall evaluation. However, many iris have little or no fragrance, thus its presence is not required, nor should its absence be penalized.

GARDEN JUDGING

Introduced Varieties and Seedlings of IB Iris

The intermediate bearded (IB) iris must conform to the definition of its class but should also have all the general attributes of a fine garden iris.

In judging this class, which is noted for its excellent growth habits, emphasis must be placed upon overall desirability as a garden subject. The same criterion applies to judging seedlings. In addition, judges must seek varieties that are recognizably different from and/or better than varieties already in commerce.

The point scale shown below is intended not as a prescription for overall artistic merit, but as a guideline which the judge may use in giving relative emphasis to the specific qualities of the variety being judged. The scale is useful to the student judge in learning the special requirements of the class and to the experienced judge in comparing varieties which appear at a glance to be essentially equal in quality.

SCALE OF POINTS

Garden Judging of Introduced Cultivars & Seedlings of IB Iris

1. Overall Proportion			20
2. Flower			35
	a. Color & Finish	15	
	b. Form	10	
	c. Substance & Durability	10	
3. Stalk			20
	a. Proportion	10	
	b. Branching & Buds	10	
4. Plant & Foliage			10
5. Distinctiveness			15
TOTAL			100

1. Overall Proportion – 20 points

A pleasing, well-balanced relationship among foliage, stalk and flower is essential in iris of all types, but even more critical for the median classes, whose smaller flowers require proportionally more refined stalks and foliage in order to achieve artistic balance. Roughly 3 to 3.5 x (height + width of blossom) = the height of the stalk gives plants the best overall proportion. All parts should contribute harmoniously to the whole, with no one feature overwhelming another, and points should be awarded or deducted accordingly.

2. Flower – 35 points

a. Color and Finish (15 points). A full range of colors can be found in intermediates, as well as a vast array of patterns. Some patterns, such as the *Iris pumila* spot and halo, are rarely found in other iris of similar stature. There is no preference between vivid colors and the more subtle shades, both of which have value in the garden. However, the colors should be harmonious. In general, clean, clear colors are more pleasing to the eye and are preferred. Finish or texture refers to the type of petal surface, e.g. matte, velvety, satiny or crystalline. Texture is important to the extent it enhances or detracts from the underlying color and/or pattern.

b. Form (10 points). Form is the means by which color and pattern are displayed and should be judged according to its value in that regard. Intermediates come in a variety of forms, and this diversity should be maintained and encouraged, so long as there is a harmonious balance between the standards and falls and the total visual effect is pleasing. Standards may be domed, cupped, erect or somewhat open, provided their contours suit the overall flower shape and their midribs are strong enough to hold them firmly in position. Angle of view often determines the suitability of a particular form. For example, extremely flaring falls might be a greater asset on smaller, shorter cultivars which are viewed from above compared to viewing at an angle such falls on a taller, larger flower. Decorations, including ruffles, lace and “space age” features such as horns and spoons, should enhance but never overwhelm the form. Judges should bear in mind that no decoration, however attractive or unusual, excuses serious faults in the underlying flower structure.

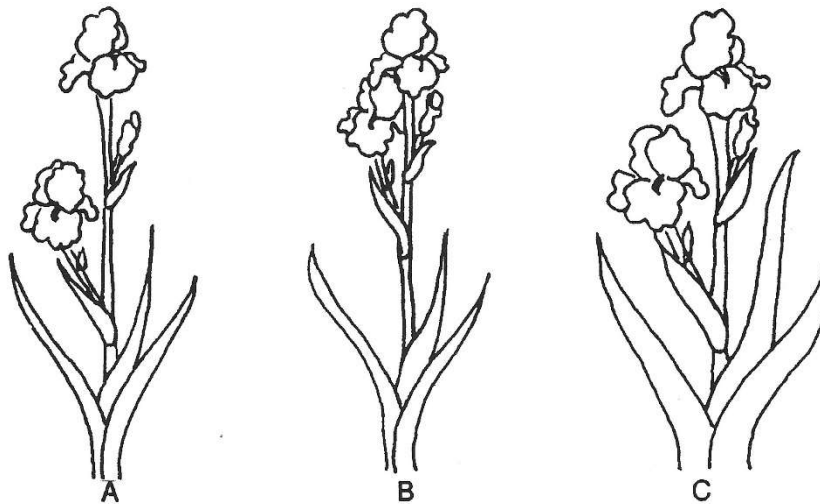
c. Substance and durability (10 points). Substance is a matter of tissue structure, including but not limited to petal thickness. Its purpose is to stabilize the flower form and to render the flower able to withstand weather conditions over a reasonable period of time. The eye can be fooled; many flowers with “heavy substance” (thick petals) are easily fractured or unable to withstand hot sun, while other, more fragile looking flowers can take adverse weather in their stride. For this reason, judgments should be made based upon the actual staying power of the blossoms rather than solely on their appearance when fresh. Flowers should last at least three days under normal weather conditions.

3. Stalk – 20 points

a. Proportion (10 points). Regardless of the branch habit, the height and diameter of the stalk must attractively balance both the flowers and the plant from which it emerges. Its failure to do so should be heavily penalized. Thick and clubby stalks should be heavily penalized.

b. Branching and buds (10 points). Many types of branching are found in the intermediate class, depending to a large extent on the species involved in the breeding. Derivatives of *Iris pumila* might have only two fairly short branches and four to five buds, whereas *Iris aphylla* hybrids often have very wide branching, sometimes with secondary branches originating close to the base of the stalk and correspondingly larger numbers of buds. In the interest of preserving diversity in this class, there is no preference between these two extreme types. Whatever

the branch habit, it should serve to present the flowers artistically throughout the bloom season without crowding. Generally, greater numbers of buds are preferred because they tend to lengthen the bloom season, but the buds should open in a sequence which displays each individual blossom attractively. Overall floriferousness of the clump is important. It should be kept in mind that plants which produce repeat or sequential stalks often give generous bloom for long periods of time despite having relatively few branches and buds per stalk. Such cultivars should not be penalized simply because of their lower bud count.



- A A nicely proportioned intermediate
 B Branching too high; flowers bunched
 C Flowers and foliage too large; stem too thick

4. Plant and Foliage – 10 points

Plants should be healthy and disease-resistant, with foliage of good color and in proportion to the dimensions of the stalk and the size of the flower. Excessively wide foliage is unsuitable for the smaller stalks and flowers of IB iris and should be penalized accordingly. During the bloom season, the foliage should remain short enough so as not to interfere with the blossoms. A neat, compact plant is desirable. Vigorous growth is the norm for the intermediate class and is in large measure responsible for the popularity of these iris as garden subjects. A lack of vigor must therefore be severely penalized.

5. Distinctiveness – 15 points

Distinctiveness includes all characteristics which set a cultivar apart from others of its kind. Unusual qualities of flower shape, color and pattern immediately come to mind, but other qualities, such as particularly elegant branching or an especially appealing fragrance, can also render a plant distinctive. Personalities abound in the intermediate class, and anything new or different which gives a cultivar individuality is desirable, but never at the expense of overall quality.

EXHIBITION JUDGING Horticultural Entries of IB Iris

Exhibition judging of iris is distinctly different from judging in the garden. On the show bench a judge is not trying to determine the qualities and attributes of a particular variety. Rather, the exhibition judge must pass judgement in two areas:

1. Cultural perfection - how well the specimen has been grown by comparing it to the maximum typical performance of the variety being judged.
2. Condition and grooming - how well the specimen was prepared for entry into the exhibition.

Exhibition judging evaluates the specimen as it is shown at the moment the judge sees it.

Placement in the class is determined by the official registration of the cultivar, even if the registered classification appears to be incorrect. The specimen must be correctly identified and should appear well grown and disease-free. In size and proportion, it should be typical of the cultivar as it performs in the geographical area where it has been grown. Faults inherent in the cultivar itself are not penalized, except that an exhibit which is “out of class” in any respect may receive no award higher than a blue ribbon, even where the discrepancy is typical of the cultivar exhibited. Section and higher awards are withheld from such exhibits because any cultivar which does not conform to the intermediate bearded guidelines tends to misrepresent the class to the gardening public.

The exhibitor’s presentation skills are also judged. Specimens should be clean, free of mechanical injury and carefully groomed. Any removal of spent blooms or trimming of foliage must be inconspicuous. Blossoms should be fresh and if two

or more are displayed on the stalk, they should balance one another attractively. Entries must be evaluated as they appear at the moment of judging. No assumptions may be made with regard to how the exhibit might appear later on the show day. However, when severe local weather conditions have damaged large numbers of entries in a particular show, the criteria for judging may be relaxed somewhat.

Although TBs that are larger than normal might be awarded points for an especially well-grown specimen, stalks of IB cultivars should clearly be in class in terms of both flower and stalk. Flowers and stalks that are out of class should not receive any points for cultural perfection.

SCALE OF POINTS Exhibition Judging of Horticultural IB Iris

1. Cultural Perfection			75
	a. Flower	45	
	b. Stalk	30	
2. Condition & Grooming			25
TOTAL			100

EXHIBITION JUDGING IB Seedlings

In judging seedling classes, judges should remember that they are not seeking a superior horticultural specimen. But rather a new cultivar which not only conforms to the guidelines for the class, but exhibits desirable qualities comprising improvement and/or innovation. Condition is not a factor in judging seedlings. In fact, it is preferable that the stalks are not groomed, so that the judge can more easily evaluate such features as branching and bud count. Spent flowers can be removed if done so that the ovary remains visible.

The Exhibition Certificate (EC) is awarded to the “Best Seedling” if one is chosen. The certificate is not a recommendation for introduction, since on the show bench it is not possible to evaluate plant qualities. The Best Seedling Award should not be given when no entry is worthy. Exhibition Certificates are also awarded to

seedlings that receive votes from at least five judges on special seedling ballots. Judges visiting a show are urged to review the seedling entries and use these ballots to reward excellence where they find it.

SCALE OF POINTS
Exhibition Judging of IB Seedlings

1. Overall Proportion			25
2. Flower			35
	a. Color & Finish	15	
	b. Form	10	
	c. Substance	10	
3. Stalk			20
	a. Proportion	10	
	b. Branching & Buds	10	
4. Distinctiveness			20
TOTAL			100