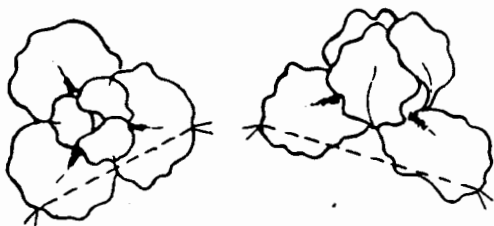


CHAPTER 8

INTERMEDIATE BEARDED IRISES

Definition: Plants with bloomstalks 41 to 70 cm (16 to 27 1/2 inches) in height; leaves substantially erect; stalks branched and preferably extending above the foliage far enough to display the blossoms without interference; blooms 9 to 13 cm (3 1/2 to 5 inches) in width (see illustration below); typical blooming period intermediate between that of standard dwarf and tall bearded irises.



"Width"

[Fully expanded but fresh flowers measured in natural position]

GARDEN JUDGING

Intermediate bearded (IB) and border bearded (BB) irises have the same height range, but because of the diverse species background of the intermediate class, the criteria for judging these irises, particularly with regard to branching and bud count, are somewhat less restrictive. In addition, their season of bloom commences earlier, although some intermediates having large numbers of buds or producing sequential stalks may 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 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 approach the miniature tall bearded in size, proportion and branching; still others are virtually indistinguishable from border bearded 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 may vary greatly from climate to climate and from season to season.

Among bearded irises, 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 disease 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 irises have little or no fragrance; thus its presence is not required, nor should its absence be penalized.

INTRODUCED VARIETIES AND SEEDLINGS

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



- A A nicely proportioned intermediate
B Branching too high; flowers bunched
C Flowers and foliage too large; stem too thick
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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, but 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. In this way it 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

1. OVERALL PROPORTION	20
2. FLOWER	35
a. Color and Finish	15
b. Form	10
c. Substance and Durability	10
3. STALK	20
a. Proportion	10
b. Branching and Buds	10
4. PLANT AND FOLIAGE	10
5. DISTINCTIVENESS	<u>15</u>
	100

1. OVERALL PROPORTION - 20 points

A pleasing, well-balanced relationship among foliage, stalk and flower is essential in irises 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. 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 may be found in intermediates, as well as a vast array of patterns, some of which, such as *I. pumila* spot and halo, are rarely found in other irises of similar stature. There is no preference between vivid colors and the more subtle shades, both of which have value in the garden, but 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, and 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 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, e.g., extremely flaring falls may be a greater asset on smaller, shorter cultivars which are viewed from directly above than on taller, larger ones viewed obliquely. 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.

3. STALK - 20 points

a) **Proportion** (10 points). Regardless of the branch habit, which may vary greatly, the stalk, in both height and diameter, must attractively balance both the flowers which it displays and the plant from which it emerges, and its failure to do so should be heavily penalized.

b) **Branching and Buds** (10 points). Many styles of branching are found in the intermediate class, depending to a large extent on the species involved in the breeding. Derivatives of *I. pumila* may have only two fairly short branches and four to five buds, whereas *I. 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 interests 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, and 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.

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 median irises 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 irises as garden subjects; 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.