

## CHAPTER 2

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUDGES

Being appointed a judge of The American Iris Society is a distinct privilege. More importantly, however, the judge has accepted the responsibilities to serve The American Iris Society and the gardening public which relies on the selections 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 keep himself/herself informed and qualified and to fulfill his/her duties. He/she should never accept the appointment unless he/she is willing to follow all rules concerning AIS judges.

### APPLICABLE TO ALL JUDGING

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

The only way to know irises is to grow them. Each judge has an obligation to maintain a representative collection of iris types that can be grown in his/her area and to add some new varieties each year. Since it is impossible to grow all irises a judge might be asked to evaluate, visits to other gardens is a necessity. Not only can iris varieties that a judge does not grow be seen, but comparisons of growth habits can be made.

When planning visits to other gardens, the judge should keep in mind that seeing an iris only 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 abilities and broaden his/her knowledge as there is always something new to be learned. (See "Accreditation of Judges" for the requirements of appointment.)

Giving freely of time and money is a responsibility the judge must be willing to accept. One cannot expect to fulfill obligations unless time is given for studying, visiting gardens and iris shows and attending training sessions and meetings. Often there will be expenses involved in doing these things as well as the expense of buying newer varieties of irises.

As a representative of The American Iris Society, a judge should promote the organization. Participation in local, regional and national activities, writing for publications and speaking to horticultural groups about irises are duties of every judge. Failure to fulfill the duties of this position can result in disqualification and withholding of reappointment. Anyone who is considering appointment should be sure he/she understands the requirements and is willing to fulfill the responsibilities. If not, he/she should not enroll in the judges' training program.

## **JUDGING IN THE GARDEN**

The primary duty a judge should perform most conscientiously is judging varieties in the garden. Every category of the AIS Official 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. It is the judge's duty to evaluate the performance of irises in the garden. Never should his/her votes be based on shows, slides,

publicity or 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. He/she should be honest, but tactful, in evaluating the seedlings seen, pointing out good traits as well as any shortcomings. The judge should always take a notebook when visiting a garden so notes can be made and reviewed before the Official 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 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 are part of an iris worthy of garden awards. The apprentice training is not to be just a visit to admire the beauty of new introductions. The judge-instructor should be sure that proper training is given and then mail his/her evaluations 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 he/she works as an exhibition judge. As soon as the 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 shown, and this points again to the need for much garden visiting. The

more varieties with which a judge is familiar, the easier his/her task in exhibition judging. The show is one of the ways in which the public is educated about the qualities of a good iris. Poor judging would only serve as a detriment to this educational purpose.

To be a better judge, one should enter his/her own irises in shows regularly so he/she will be more familiar with the process of selecting, transporting and grooming irises. Serving on show committees will also provide experience to make one a better judge. A judge is strongly urged **not** to enter specimens in shows where he/she is serving as a judge. Read the section on Judges for the Show in "Rules and Regulations of an Iris Show" (page 38) carefully. A hybridizer who is judging in an iris show may choose not to judge when his/her own varieties are being evaluated.

Continued refusal to judge shows when invited to do so is neglect of duty, as is failing to vote the Official Ballot. Whenever possible, invitations to judge should be accepted. The judge should not be afraid to judge a show alone or in a group. When judging with others, one should not be afraid to express an opinion, but he/she must also be willing to accept the decisions of other panel members if they differ from his own. If the majority agree that one specimen is better than any other, the judge should 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.

When a judge accepts an invitation to judge a show, he/she should learn what expenses the hosting organization is planning to pay. If the judge feels that he/she 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, the show chairman should be asked to place it in its proper class prior to the judging. If the class has already been judged, it is up to the show chairman to determine if the class should be rejudged or the misplaced specimen disqualified.

No grooming of entries is permitted after judging begins. Since this is one of the areas in which the skill of the exhibitor is evaluated, it would be unfair to allow grooming of one entry and not others. 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 enable him/her better to evaluate it, but the judge should never move the entry himself/herself.

When a specimen is not named or is misnamed, it 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, but it is his/her responsibility to be reasonably certain it is misnamed. AIS *Check Lists* and *Registrations and Introductions* can and should be used as aids in determining the accuracy of the entry's identity and classification.

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. Sometimes

adverse weather conditions can reduce the quality of show entries severely.

The Exhibition Certificate (EC) is awarded to unimported seedlings entered in 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 may vote for seedlings they consider worthy of an EC.

All Exhibition Certificate ballots must be turned in at the show and will be sent to the Exhibitions Committee Chairman with the Show Report. Any seedling receiving five or more votes 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 it indicates the seedling showed exceptional merit as it appeared on the show bench.

The certifying official of the show should ask the judges to sign the Show Report upon completion of their task. A judge should sign only if The AIS rules have been followed in the judging process. If problems are encountered, the judge should handle them to the best of his/her ability and refer them to the Exhibitions Chairman of AIS for instructions. If a judge has demonstrated misconduct, he/she should be reported to The AIS Chairman 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 in tutoring that apprentice. Only one apprentice should accompany each panel. He/she should have no other duties or serve as a clerk while receiving apprentice training. Judges must not ask that apprentice to settle differences of opinion. An apprentice judge is not yet qualified to make such decisions. Study related material in "Accreditation of Judges" (Chapter 1) carefully.

If the apprentice has questions, he/she should save them until after the judging has been completed. The supervising judge should allow the apprentice to evaluate specimens as the judging is done. However, the final decision on awarding ribbons is determined by the fully accredited judges. (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 and the regional Judges' Training Chairman. The AIS judge who conducts such a training session should ensure that the apprentice receives the correct training needed.) 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.

## VOTING THE OFFICIAL AIS BALLOT

All awards voted on the Official Ballot are based on garden judging. The judge must be thoroughly familiar with the AIS rules regarding these awards and must be certain that he/she is familiar 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 Ballot should be read carefully so that the maximum number of votes allowed is not exceeded. Too many votes cast in a category cancels all of the votes in that particular category.

In voting the High Commendation (HC) award for numbered or named seedlings, it is imperative that the number or name be listed exactly as its owner lists 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. This award should be given to an iris that is superior to others available in its class and color range -- not because the hybridizer is a friend, the seedling was produced locally or because it is the only one seen in a classification. The HC, as well as any other award, should not be based on the beauty of

the flower alone, since no flowers could be present without a stalk to display them and a plant to produce them.

When voting, it is not necessary to vote in every category on the ballot. 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 votes only for irises from a few hybridizers or only for irises from a particular region may not be visiting enough gardens or even worse, may be voting for his/her friends instead of fairly evaluating the irises. To vote or to withhold a vote on the basis of the hybridizer involved indicates the judge does not understand his/her duties.

The conscientious judge will plan before actually marking the ballot. This eliminates the possibility of voting for too many in one category and makes the ballot much easier to read. A marker which makes dark, easily read marks should be used, and a check should be made to see that the marks do not bleed through the 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 to no avail unless the ballot is mailed on time. A ballot postmarked after the deadline date is voided, and the judge is considered as not having voted. Mailing the ballot late, to the wrong person, incorrect markings or failing to sign are indications that the judge is careless in performing his/her duties. If illness or other circumstances prevent the judge from visiting gardens to evaluate irises, he/she may feel unqualified to vote. In that event, he/she will be counted as having voted if the judge signs the ballot, writes the reason for not voting and mails the ballot on time. 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.

A judge who does not receive an Official Ballot by April 15 should contact the RVP or The AIS Awards Chairman immediately. This is important because if a judge does not receive an Official Ballot and does not notify anyone in time for an adjustment to be made, then no valid excuse is available for not voting.

A good AIS judge should have integrity, and he/she must be flexible and conscientious. Most of all, an AIS judge must be willing to work hard to deserve the privilege that has been accorded him/her.