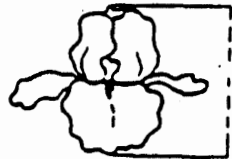


## CHAPTER 10

### STANDARD DWARF BEARDED IRISES

**Definition:** Plants 21 to 40 cm (8 to 16 inches) in height; blooms 5 to 10 cm (up to, but not including, 4 inches) wide; stems branched or unbranched, usually with two or more terminal buds; leaves essentially erect and no taller than the height of the bloomstalk; bloom season generally after the peak of the miniature dwarf bearded irises and before the peak of the intermediate bearded irises.

---



Width

Height

Minimum overall size: Width + Height = 8.6 cm (3.4 in)

Maximum overall size: Width + Height = 17.2 cm (6.8 in)

All measurements to be taken with flower in its natural position.

---

## GARDEN JUDGING

### INTRODUCED VARIETIES AND SEEDLINGS

Garden judging of standard dwarf bearded (SDB) irises should be done on two or three year clumps, as first year plants may not be representative of the variety. Judges should be aware that an SDB is not merely a miniaturization of a tall bearded iris,

out a dainty type of iris that must be judged on its own distinctive characteristics. In the SDB class, considerable variations in flower form are acceptable and numerous stems per clump are expected. Flowers are smaller than the taller intermediate, border or tall bearded irises and should be in proportion to their own stem height. A good SDB should be very free-blooming and withstand adverse weather conditions better than most classes of irises. Because of their diverse parentage, some SDBs display unusual growth habits. Some have an initial bloom at under 8 inches, subsequent stems at 9 to 11 inches, continued blooming at 12 to 13 inches, and a final wave of bloom at 14 to 15 inches. As this extends the bloom season, this characteristic should be rewarded. In this type of iris the height for classification purposes should be determined at midseason when the clump is at peak bloom.

The following scale of points should be used only as a guideline in weighing the comparative importance of plant and flower characteristics. It can be a great help in acquiring judging skills and practice judging.

### SCALE OF POINTS

1. <b>Proportion</b> .....	20
2. <b>Flower</b> .....	40
a. Color and Finish .....	15
b. Form .....	15
c. Substance and Durability .....	10
3. <b>Floriferousness</b> .....	15
4. <b>Foliage and Plant</b> .....	10
5. <b>Distinctiveness</b> .....	<u>15</u>
	100

#### 1. PROPORTION - 20 points

In judging the standard dwarf bearded (SDB) irises, the judge must be conscious of the proportion of the plant at all times. Flower, stalk, foliage and clump must be evaluated together.

Terminal flowers should be held no lower than the tips of the foliage. The larger the entire plant, the more the flowers should rise above the foliage. Thick stalks are not appropriate on small plants. Foliage width and thickness should be consistent with its height. With the large variation permitted in both height of the stalk and width of the flower, it is essential that they be in proportion. While a 3.9-inch flower on an 8.3-inch stalk is definitely outsize, a 2-inch flower on a 15.75-inch stalk is equally out of proportion. The rule-of-thumb is a stalk height that is 3.75 to 4 times the width of the flower. Thus a 2.5-inch wide bloom on a 9.5-inch stalk, a 3-inch wide bloom on an 11.5-inch stalk, or the maximum 3.9-inch bloom on a 15.75-inch stalk would be considered to have good proportion. Additionally, the size of the flowers should be in harmony with the size and type of foliage. A very dainty flower on a tall stem with thick foliage is as out of place as a large flower on a delicate stem with minute foliage.

Absence of good overall proportion should be severely penalized and precludes an out-of-proportion standard dwarf iris receiving any awards. Irises larger than the maximum limits are not to be considered for awards.



A

B

C

Three common faults in standard dwarf iris.

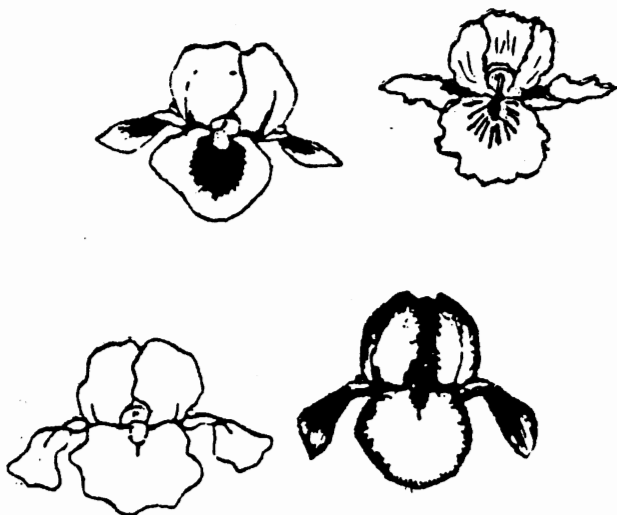
- A. Flowers too large for stem height.
- B. Crowding of flowers.
- C. Flowers obscured by foliage (stalks too short and/or foliage too tall)

## 2. FLOWER - 40 points

Since the standard dwarf bearded iris is viewed in the garden from above, it is essential that it be judged from that angle.

a. **Color** (15 points). The color and pattern are major components of the total impact of the iris. Both should be viewed from a distance for overall garden effect and from close range for clarity, color distribution and saturation, and pattern. Spot, halo, plicata markings, haft markings, beards, and style arm color should be considered and evaluated from both close and far range. Patterns should be distinctive and contrasts well defined, not fuzzy. Gradual blending from color to color is different from a pattern and can be very attractive. Soft and pastel colors are needed, as well as bright primary colors. Markings on the hafts or shoulders should be harmonious. Coarse markings or unpleasant color contrasts detract from the total effect. Extraordinary beard color can add substantially to the distinctiveness of the SDB iris. Finish (texture) is a surface condition of the flower and contributes to the effect of color. Smooth, silky, velvety and waxy surfaces contribute, while crepey surfaces detract from the flower.

b. **Form** (15 points). Standards may be open, arched, domed or pyramidal, provided they are displayed neatly and precisely. The midrib of the standard must be sufficiently strong to keep the standard in its position and not permit it to flop. Open or erect standards should not collapse and look like they have been sat upon. Flaring or horizontal falls display the color and pattern of the SDB iris to advantage. The falls should be relatively wide, but variations are acceptable if the form is pleasing. Neither narrow hafts with long parallel sides nor pinched or tucked falls are preferred forms. Ruffled and tailored forms are personal preferences, and neither should be overemphasized or disregarded, because either could be used as an excuse to overlook any basic faults of the flower. Scalloped outline (scrolled) edges and rolled back edges which produce a point on the falls are acceptable if the overall effect does not detract from the flower.



Standard dwarfs exhibit many variations in form and color pattern.

---

c. **Substance and Durability** (10 points). Since the standard dwarf iris blooms early, the weather often is variable, with rain, wind and sun combining to provide a severe environment for an iris with marginal substance. Substance (tissue structure) is the quality of the flower which provides crispness, stiffness and toughness to both the standards and falls in order for them to endure the inclement weather from a flower's opening bud to the completion of its bloom, permitting it to fade out gracefully and not disintegrate into a shapeless blob. Thin, transparent or watery appearance is not acceptable for a good iris.

### **3. FLORIFEROUSNESS - 15 points**

Because the standard dwarf iris usually has only three buds per bloomstalk, several stalks are necessary in a normal size clump to produce an acceptable garden effect. More stalks with fewer buds to each stem are acceptable if the buds bloom sequentially, giving an adequate period of bloom. Stems with only one or two blooms that quickly finish blooming should be penalized. Some varieties have more than the normal two terminal buds and a bud on a branch or spur. If these bloom sequentially, do not crowd other blooms, and are not obscured by foliage, this should extend the length of bloom season and should be rewarded. An established (two or three year) clump should have a bloom period of at least 10 to 15 days. Individual blooms on newer varieties should last for three days.

### **4. FOLIAGE and PLANT - 10 points**

Foliage should be dense and in proportion to stems and flowers. Stalks should be sturdy but not coarse. The flowers should be at or above the tips of the leaves. Coarse, overwide, rank or untidy growth detracts from the garden effect and is unacceptable. Good color and disease resistance are essential. No more than half the fans should be bloomstalks; sufficient fans should remain to ensure continuation of the plant. A tendency to bloom out is a serious fault.

### **5. DISTINCTIVENESS - 15 points**

Distinctiveness is one of the major features that attract attention. Poise, personality, proportion, charm, color and pattern combine with form to produce that distinctiveness. Color breaks, exotic patterns and new forms are distinctive and often desirable; however, they must never be rewarded at the expense of the basic qualities of beauty, grace and charm. Distinctiveness must not override the basic requirement of meeting the class specification.