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Newsletter

Waco Iris Society



Iris Show Prep

Next meeting: Saturday,
 March 16, 2024
 10:00 a.m. until NOON
 Crestview Church of Christ
 Community Center
 7129 Delhi Rd., Waco

(A reprint from the Tucson Iris Society website)

First Steps:

The first step in preparing your irises for successful entry in an iris show is to cut the stalks before the buds open. This practice avoids potential damage to the blooms from rain, wind or hail. It also avoids possible sun fading of blooms, particularly a problem in strong sunlight in the case of the darker colored irises. Also, in spite of your best efforts, the buds may open too soon or, they may not open in time. Thus, it makes sense to cut two or three stalks of each variety as insurance against these problems.

The best time to cut the stalks is early in the morning. Next best is late evening. As the buds mature and flowers open, water and nutrients continue to be transported up through the stalk. When you cut the stalk, the "driving force" to carry water up to the buds through the stalk is reduced.

As soon as possible after cutting the stalk, it should be placed in a full

container of water and placed in the shade or indoors. The foliage at the base of the stalk should be removed at this time. Evaporation from foliage helps deplete available water in the stalk. Furthermore, bad foliage detracts from the scoring of the stalk by judges, good foliage adds little.

While cutting, transporting and placing a stalk in a container, avoid handling the bud and avoid letting the bud touch anything. If you bruise the bud, the unsightly results will show up in the opened bloom. It is desirable that each individual stalk be placed in its own container so as to avoid one bud rubbing against another. It is also desirable to "wedge" the stalk at this time with plastic foam, paper toweling, etc., so as to hold the stalk firmly in the upright position in which it will be later shown. You should also attach a temporary label to the container with the name of the variety, then it should be stored in its container in a cool location out of direct sunlight. You should also be careful to allow enough space between containers to avoid contact

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between the open flower and other nearby stalks or flowers. What about additives in the water? Tablespoon of corn syrup per gallon of water seems to help.

If you cut it the morning before the show, you should cut stalks on which the bud is very close to opening and would be expected to open during the day before the show if left on the plant. Cutting a mature bud the day before the show is the best practice. The most effective means of forcing is to place the stalk in the container in a heated and humid space (bathroom heated from 100°-110°. Placing the stalk in hot water is substantially less effective.)

Condition and Grooming: Condition refers to the degree of visible improvement in the appearance of the specimen stalk as a result of grooming. Grooming involves those finishing touches the exhibitor makes so that the entry presents the best possible appearance.

Stalk Height: It is generally recommended that a stalk be exhibited at an appropriate height that is proportional. In order to maintain pleasing proportion in the exhibit, it is often necessary to position the stalk in the container with the end of the stalk above the bottom of the container. Adjust the stalk until it looks good to you.

Foliage: Trimming is necessary when there is faint discoloration, disease or injury to leaf edges. Such procedure should remove less than one-fourth inch of foliage edges and

should follow the natural contour of the leaf in its entirety. Blunt edges or massive trimming is totally unacceptable. Foliage which covers the juncture between a branch and the stalk or is at the base of a bud must be left in place although it may be trimmed.

Spathes: If a flower has been removed, ascertain that the spathe has not been damaged and is intact. Detectable trimming of the spathe is unacceptable.

Branches: Suppose that you have removed a faded flower (or one that is beginning to fade}. If there is an unopened bud remaining (the second bud in the socket) the branch with the unopened bud should be left in place. If there is no unopened bud, the entire branch should be removed.

Cleanliness: The stalk, flower and blooms should be clean with no dirt, dust or spray residues. Slight smudges or fingerprints on the stalks are easily removed when the exhibitor gently wipes the stalk with soft tissue. If fingerprints are noticeable as a result of handling, wiping the stalk to remove all of the powdery substance is the answer.

Insects: The presence of one or two aphids or other insects is no cause for alarm as these creatures can travel from stalk to stalk during or after entry.

Position in Container: The bottom branch should be exhibited above the container's opening. 2/3 of the stalk should be above the bottle. Be sure that you always securely wedge the stalk in the con-

tainer. Never simply stick the stalk in the container without wedging.

Removal of Flowers: The condition of the flowers is the one factor that judges pay most attention to. If one of the flowers on a stalk is aged, it should be removed. Removal should be performed carefully so that no "stub" is visible.

Exhibition Containers: Insert the stalks into the containers in which they are to be exhibited, (we use green bottles or vases) wedge the stalk securely in place with foam pipe insulation or a cut piece of stalk and attach the completed entry card with a rubber band.

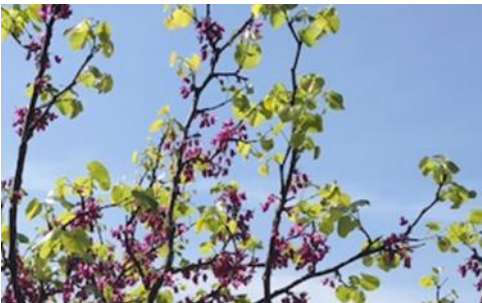
Transporting to the Show: Place the containers with the stalks securely in place in plastic crates wine boxes with empty bottles inserted between the full ones so that no flower can contact anything else, and so that the pack is "solid" and the bottles will not fall over in case of a sudden stop. When you get to the show and as you place your entries on the show tables, check the grooming one more time. Enjoy the show!!!

We are all going to have some beautiful iris stalks open in our gardens on show day. Do you want to leave these beauties standing unappreciated in their beds like Cinderella who didn't get to go to the ball? Of course not, so it's up to you to be the fairy godparent and get them there. There is excitement at an iris show. You may feel butterflies in your tummy as you hurry to do your grooming, then pride as you see your stalks standing tall and lovely among the others.

Signs of Spring Abound—President’s Message by Ken Anderson

It seems that each year, the days and weeks keep speeding up. It also seems like there is always more to do. Any gardener will tell you that Spring is the busiest time of the year. It is time to tidy up the flower beds and provide some supplemental feeding. It is also time to set out bedding plants and repot plants that have outgrown their containers. The list goes on and on. There are a variety of plants to prune early in the year. If you have not done so by now, you might be trying to catch up, and hope you are not too late. Just yesterday, I discovered that one of my crape myrtle trees was already beginning to bud. There was so much pruning that needed to be done. The need was immediate. I suppose all of us gardeners have had that experience where we have certain goals or tasks to complete each week. But then, all of a sudden, one’s attention is drawn to something that needed to be done yesterday. So, you put your other gardening tasks on hold, even if just for a few hours, and tend to things that were not on your task list for the day. One can always feel a sense of accomplishment when one task is completed but maybe get just a little bit stressed by seeing all those things that remain on the “to-do” list. Perhaps we can accept the fact that gardening tasks are never completely done.

So, as you are going about the task of completing many Spring chores, it is impossible to notice that the signs of Spring abound. Just yesterday, I spent some time at my little space in the country. To my delight, Texas Redbud trees were in full bloom and greeted me as I drove up the road into my property. In fact, the



This Texas Redbud tree has been in full bloom for at least two weeks and is nearing the end of its bloom cycle.

trees had been blooming for several days, maybe even a week or two, because they were already putting out tiny new leaves. In my backyard, I

noticed the Bridal Wreath Spirea was beginning to bloom. This is one of my favorite shrubs. The contrast of the bright white flowers against that green foliage is irresistible.



Bridal Wreath Spirea is a wonderful hardy shrub. This photo was taken today, March 7, 2024. In a few more days, this plant will be breathtaking as it covers itself with white blossoms.

Another delightful tiny plant, Ipheion, is a plant that grows from a small bulb. It is also called Spring Starflower. A friend of mine gave me some fifteen years ago. They have occupied the same little space in my garden for all those years and continue to give me pleasure every year before the actual arrival of the first day of Spring. I wanted to share just



Ipheion is a wonderful tiny bulb, actually related to Amaryllis, and produces tiny blue star-shaped flowers.

a few comments about these plants because all of them are so dependable. You can always count on them, signaling Spring is just a few weeks away. Certainly, every gardener has those special plants in their garden that foretell the arrival of Spring.

A few *Casino Cruiser* rhizomes were planted near some Verbenas last year. Somehow, the Verbenas and Casino Cruiser have struck up a close relationship. After a bit of protection during the really hard freeze, the Verbenas have come back strong to announce the

President's Message (cont.)



Casino Cruiser and Verbena

arrival of Spring, as seen in this photo taken on Tuesday, March 5, 2024.

I want to welcome our newest members. Joining us in January were Bonnie & Hooker Nichols and Dianne Reagan. We received a mail in membership in early February for Rosa McHenry. Welcome to the Waco Iris Society.

Our program on Saturday, March 16, will be devoted to show preparation and hopefully answering everyone's questions about the rules for the exhibition, giving particular attention to Single Blossom and Photography, which have been added to the show schedule this year. Show schedules will be given to all members, plus entry cards and entry sheets, along with the opportunity to sign up for the artistic division of the show. I look forward to seeing everyone, and I anticipate having a great show in April.

Meeting Minutes-January 20, 2024 by Jacky Roberts, Secretary

President Ken Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:05, and Dan Cathey called the roll. Eleven members were present and welcomed three new members and one guest.

Secretary and Treasury reports were accepted as published in the Newsletter.

Raffle winners were Jacky Roberts, Hooker Nichols, Katrina Rieser, and Diane Reagan.

A.I.S. Membership drawing was won by Jacky and Diane Roberts.

Old Business: Mitchell Whitley reports that the club had a backup meeting place at the Waco Library and questioned if we still needed it. Dan Cathey motioned to research the library, 2nd by Katrina Rieser.

Linda Barnard volunteered to do the research.

New business: Ken Anderson announced the Memorial Service for Jerry Keeth would be held on February 3, and how our club could support the event. Mitchell Whitley motioned that we reimburse Johnson County Iris and Daylily Society, which will be preparing the meal, for the cost of the meat. Linda Roper seconded the motion, which was unanimously voted approved by members.

President Ken Anderson proposed changes to the show schedule. Following his explanation, Linda Roper made the motion that the show schedule be amended to include Single Blossom Entries and

a Photography Division and that Container Grown Iris would be for display only. Katrina Rieser seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried. Next was a refreshment break.

We had a discussion about a Slate of Officers for the 2024-25 club year. This will be voted on in the March meeting. All existing officers have agreed to serve in their current positions.

Bonnie Nichols gave a very informative program on new sections for our Iris Show: "Single Blossom Entries" and "Container Grown Entries".

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55.

