

The Rainbow Goddess

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President's Message, January 2022

Richard Hebda

Another busy iris garden year passed. Many folks reported a strong show of bearded irises in their gardens. I had a few visitors, and they were impressed by the colour especially of my scattered tall bearded irises. One newly established bed really performed well and I finally had success with Queen's Circle after several years of trying. Lots of new members joined the BC Iris Society, and it seems that folks like using our website credit and debit membership dues payment option. It also really reduces our administration to consider a three year membership. 2022 dues are now owing. (See page 14.)

Our two main display gardens in Summerland and Saanich fared well despite limitations placed on their care by COVID restrictions. We expect colourful displays in the coming spring. In the Okanagan, despite evacuation alerts, heatwaves and fires Penny Santosham reports the blooms were exceptional with strong fall rebloom. In Saanich, I report that the modifications to adapt to extreme moisture appear to have been successful. Irises really seem to be the garden flowers well adapted or adaptable to our changing climate.

Top photo: Black Joker Siberian Iris - Krissy Boucher

Okanagan members Penny Santosham and Lesia Lalonde embraced a little-grown group of irises in Canada called Arils and Arilbreds. In Penny's article, you can read about the particular terminology used for this group and about the considerable success they had with the varieties in their gardens.

The online availability of our Rainbow Goddess resulted in a remarkable connection. Myrtle Neel the granddaughter of E.W Neel who bred irises (Shah Jehan being best known) in Duncan on Vancouver Island e-mailed us. Our late and much-missed Director Ian Efford had written an article about Neel a couple of years ago in the Rainbow Goddess Winter 2019 issue. Myrtle generously donated memorabilia of her grandfather's iris accomplishments.

Among other topics covered in this issue of the Rainbow Goddess, there is an interesting article about the very unusual Snakes Head or widow iris, *Iris tuberosa*.

Take a look at our website and enjoy the iris photos as an antidote to the dark days of winter. It won't be long before the sparkling dwarf bulbous irises will be in bloom to usher in another year of iris rainbows in our gardens.

Finally, we congratulate our Secretary-Treasurer and Rainbow Goddess editor Bill Dumont on his election as a Director of the American Iris Society.

President's Favourite: Bluebeard's Ghost.

I like white irises especially those with a splash of another colour. Bluebeard's Ghost a Standard Dwarf Bearded Iris (SDB) is one of my favourites because

it blooms strongly and shows a stunning contrast of the white standards and falls with the blue beard.

'Bluebeard's Ghost' was introduced by Paul Black in 2006 and has been popular ever since. It is a robust SDB growing to 37 cm (14.5") tall at the upper end of the SDB Class. Supposedly it is a mid-season to late bloomer as far as SDBs go but in the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific gardens, it appears as one of the earlier and showy varieties. Standards and style arms are white with the standards marked by delicate green-gold veins up the rib. The falls are white too, with a fine hardly visible network of greenish veins toward the base. The fully saturated blue beards provide the highlight of this iris.

The standards and falls are slightly ruffled with the falls displayed almost horizontally. The standards are relatively short and the image with the article shows them overtopped by the white style arms, an unusual condition. The bloom has a slight sweet fragrance.

The patch at the HCP has grown strongly and spread well and has shown no sign of the dreaded rhizome rot. It flowered reliably over the three years in the display beds. My own patch was placed between two Tall bearded irises and got a bit overwhelmed by its neighbours and its growth was not as vigorous as desired, so I moved part of it into full-sun: seems this iris needs a spot on its own with lots of room to bloom. Bluebeard's Ghost has won multiple awards from the American Iris Society including an Honorable Mention 2008; the Walther Cup 2008; an Award of Merit in 2010; and Cook Douglas Medal in 2012 for the best SDB. For any iris gardener and especially for a small garden Bluebeard's Ghost is a reliable and stunning choice.



Bluebeard's Ghost SDB with tall, erect style arms. Horticultural Centre of the Pacific. Saanich, BC. Photo - Richard Hebda, April 27, 2021.



Okanagan Report - Fall 2021

Penny Santosham, BCIS Okanagan Director

This was possibly the most challenging summer ever for BCIS members in the Okanagan. We had scorching record-breaking temperatures up to 44° C (113F) in Kelowna, drought conditions throughout the Southern Interior and several towns were threatened by out of control forest fires.

Iris friends in Falkland, Vernon, Coldstream and Silver Star were on Evacuation Alert for months. Many days here in Penticton the skies were filled with smoke and a few times ash fell so heavily that it dusted plants and built up in birdbaths and on cars. Ironically, wood ash also contains nutrients and some old-timers credited it with the extra beautiful gardens. Sadly, with severe irrigation restrictions, many shrubs and trees in public areas dried up and died.

Spring Bloom in the Heritage Iris Bed at Summerland Ornamental Gardens. Photo - Penny Santosham, 2021.



*A clump of Compassionate, TB.
Photo - Penny Santosham, 2021.*

Although the summer was trying, spring iris bloom was terrific with early warmth, moderate rainfall and mild breezes. One iris which I had bought in 2016, King of the Road, bloomed for the first time in my front garden. Arilbred irises which were planted in 2019, flowered profusely and then increased at a great rate. The very pretty tall dwarf, My Cher, appeared, two dwarf species had four falls instead of 3 and the miniature dwarf iris, Elfin Magic, was indeed magic. It started out white and then slowly turned powder blue. It's true, it did! There are photos of it on the web.

During the year we welcomed three new BCIS members in the Okanagan: Maureen Moore – Farleigh Lake, Danielle Hitchings – Vernon, and Marcia Lang – Naramata. And I finally met 2020 new member, Krissy Boucher from Summerland.

After being closed to the public, as well as employees and garden volunteers for all of 2020, Summerland Ornamental Gardens (SOG) finally allowed limited visiting at the end of May 2021. With only minimal attention for over a year, the Heritage Garden was still full of thriving plants and colourful flowers. Dwarfs and Median irises in The West Border did well but due to irrigation problems, we lost 7 of 20 tall bearded clumps. Lesia and Gerry Lalonde and I provided replacements which have settled in well. Kathryn McCourt, the Grounds Director, reported that the irises were much admired by visitors during the bloom season. Irrigation has been repaired so next summer I'm planning to add a couple of Arilbred irises from my collection.

Picnic, trading and sharing of iris rhizomes in the SOG gazebo, Sunday, August 15th. Front: Hermione Blue Heeler and owner Krissy Boucher, Jacquie McDonald and Lesia Lalonde. Back row: Gerry Lalonde, Penny Santosham and Eve Petersen.



In June, the BCIS executive kindly provided an allowance to purchase fertilizer and perennial, drought-tolerant flowering plants to provide summer colour in the Heritage Iris Garden. The West Border already has hundreds of such plants with irises providing accents.



Bear at our picnic.

In early August I sent a note to Okanagan members to see if anyone was interested in a BCIS Picnic at the SOG Gazebo mid-month – to include trading of rhizomes and visiting. Most members were unable to attend for various reasons including evacuation alerts, holiday plans and COVID concerns. We did have a cheerful group including Hermione, the Blue Heeler, and prospective new member, Eve Petersen from Peachland, gather for lunch and some generous sharing of irises. Our enthusiasm spilled over to a gentleman strolling by who happily received extra rhizomes. As a finale, Lesia led the group on a tour of the BCIS beds which included an encounter with a bear - from the safety of a car.

Lulu Leman and I did a fall cleanup and trimming of all the BCIS irises

in early October and then I did a final tidying and distribution of alfalfa pellets on each clump on October 25th. I was delighted to find the long-planned West Border sign installed in a prominent place and beautifully illustrated with photos of four bearded irises and text recognizing the work of the



Fall trimming and clean up of the SOG beds, October 1st, by Lulu Leman and Penny.

BCIS in providing and planting the specimens.

Reblooming has been excellent this year in the valley. TB Champagne Elegance put out 5 consecutively blooming stalks through August/September, dwarfs Forever Blue and White Again bloomed two more times. In November, TBs Spun Gold and Bountiful Harvest had flowers. Lesia reported she had blooms on her median Lenora Pearl. All in all we had several examples of blooming irises in mid November here in the Okanagan!



New sign up at the SOG West Border. October 25th, 2021.



Aril and Arilbred Irises

Penny Santosham, BCIS Okanagan Director

In the summer of 2019, after much discussion and research, Lesia Lalonde and I decided to expand our Iris collections by adding some Aril clones to our Okanagan gardens. Then we discovered that there were none of this variety for sale anywhere in Canada. Fortunately through a BCIS group order that year we were able to purchase several from Oregon. Including the price of a phytosanitary certificate, the dollar exchange rate, duty and shipping, we paid \$16-\$18 per rhizome.

Arils and their crosses are unique as they are characterized by heavy veining, a dark spot below or around their beard and may include both features. They prefer the warmest and driest of regions. Penticton is one of the top cities in Canada for this kind of climate. During this past summer's 'heat dome' the temperature reached +42 by the end of June. Until October we were considered to be in a drought with irrigation allowed only twice a week during the nights.

Shepherd's Anthem. Photo - Penny Santosham, 2021.



Sri Lanka. Photo - Penny Santosham, 2021.

Together Lesia and I purchased six rhizomes and divided them between my flat town garden near Skaha Lake and Lesia's & Gerry's acreage on a plateau above the city. We hoped that within a few years we would be able to share rhizome divisions and discover if Aril irises were suitable for our growing conditions in the interior of BC. With our order, we were gifted one extra rhizome as a bonus.

Our experiment was successful and this August (year two) we were able to divide and share irises. Dubai, with the most aril content, was the only one that took 2 years to settle into its new home before blooming. It is recommended that these species be divided every 2 years as once established they increase quickly.

Before making our choices we had understood what numerous abbreviations meant. We learned that pure Arils and those with more than 50% aril ancestry (OB) and (RC) could be challenging to grow but that arils crossed with bearded irises - Arilbreds, (AB) and (OGB) are excellent for low water Xeriscape gardens. They are sun-loving and enjoy similar conditions to bearded irises. Arilbreds have nine categories including abbreviations using + and -, indicating more or less aril content. OB refers to bearded irises crossed with Oncocyclus arils, RB refers to bearded irises crossed with Regelia arils and OGB refers to bearded irises crossed with both varieties of arils. AB simply means Arilbred, indicating an unknown amount of aril content but less than 50%.

In 2020 spring, the first year after planting, my white/yellow Sri Lanka (OGB-) was the first tall iris to bloom in my garden and continued flowering for 5 weeks. This year all my three including Heart of Hearts (OGB-) and Shepherd's Anthem (OGB-) bloomed profusely for long periods. Lesia's four all bloomed this year as well: Dubai (OGB+), Glaxinia (OGB-), Perry Dyer (OGB-) and Shimmy Shake (AB1/4). We both planted the irises in their own garden section so growing conditions would be the same: soil, moisture, wind and sun exposure.

Heart of Hearts. Photo - Penny Santosham, 2021.



Our conclusion, as suggested from our research, was that the greater Aril content, the more preferential treatment might be required. Ted Baker reported that the Arilbreds that he and Richard Hebda planted at Government House did quite well. One grew so tall and had such huge flowers that the stalks flopped over and will need staking in future. Others needed more sun. The ones in the BCIS garden at the Pacific Horticultural Center were only 'fair' and some varieties were lost.

Arils need dry, coarse soil, sharp drainage/minimum water, full sun for at least 2/3's of the day and often go dormant in the summer and lose their leaves. Arilbreds like loose soil, can handle variable amounts of water, need good drainage and some protection in very cold winters. As a mulch and soil conditioner, I sprinkle pure alfalfa pellets on all my Iris clumps after the first hard frost. Lesia has hers on a steep slope facing southwest with good drainage and has not had to mulch or provide any winter protection.

Overall, we feel that Arilbred irises are a lovely, interesting addition to our gardens and that they increase well without any special attention.

To learn more about these beauties, check out *Aril Society International* at: <https://arilsociety.org/index.pl?Intro> It is comprised of an active membership from around the World: 9 Canadians, 215 U.S., & 62 Foreign.

Feel free to email me if you wish more information or suggestions of where you can acquire Arilbred irises in BC.

All BCIS Publications Now on our Website

After lots of research and searching back to 2005 and scanning more than 350 pages of old BCIS documents we have now uploaded all our previous publications to our website and you can find them on our **Newsletters & Bulletins** page (<https://www.bcirissociety.com/newsletters-bulletins/>). There are many excellent articles on our favourite plant species and this new resource will be a big help in developing the planned BCIS Book – *Knowing and Growing Irises in British Columbia* for the 2025 Region 13 Convention.

BCIS Iris Display Beds Horticultural Centre of the Pacific:

Summer-Fall 2021

Richard Hebda, BCIS President

There is lots of good news for our HCP beds and preparing for the 2025 AIS Regional gathering. Following our rotting rhizomes of 2020 and the rebuilding of our display, I can report that the ridge and swale approach appears to have worked. All but one of our replanted rhizomes and clumps planted late summer last year survived and began to grow. Admittedly this spring was not nearly as wet as last year, nevertheless, all the ridge-planted bearded irises took hold. A couple of older clumps in parts of the beds that were not modified did however show rot. So far only one of them failed to make it after “surgery” to remove the rotted rhizome and treatment with powdered sulphur.



BC Iris Society display beds at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, Saanich, BC. Photo - Richard Hebda, June 1, 2021.

We were dealing with mostly new replacement plants this spring so that the display was not as showy as in the previous year. Nevertheless, there was still lots of colour, and garden staff and volunteers were very much impressed. The weeds were largely kept at bay and the clumps kept tidy by the efforts of Ted Baker, Linda Sangster, Darlene Li and Richard Hebda. One problematic weed that has spread explosively into the beds is spotted sandmat (*Chamaesyce* or *Euphorbia maculata*). This milky mat-forming invader is difficult to see with its brownish-red leaves that seem to look almost the same colour as the soil. A hands-and-knees crawl and weed-about got most of them in the fall.



Snail damage on flowering stalk of bearded iris. HCP, Saanich, BC. Left - damage to stalk and bud. Right - damage to leaves. Photos - Richard Hebda, May 11, 2021.

Slug and snail damage is a new problem identified by Ted during one of our work mornings (see photo). I did notice this year that snails were particularly more abundant than in previous years in my garden and this was the case at the HCP too. The HCP uses Safer Slug and Snail Killer on its property to control these pesky invertebrates. It is safe for pets and wildlife and persists despite rain. I used some of their supply and sprinkled it around the iris clumps with the worst damage and it seems to have done the job.

In the summer Ted and I added a small number of bearded irises to fill in the empty spots. This fall we added hundreds more dwarf bulbous irises (*Iris reticulata* hybrids and kin) and Dutch bulbous irises to strengthen the show of colour. As I noted in the previous issue of Rainbow Goddess the *Iris reticulata* were much appreciated by HCP staff in the late winter. Dutch Bulbous irises are a new addition and should punch up the colour even more.

The HCP students weeded many of the paths next to our beds. Then a new top dressing of path gravel was added. The result was a very neat presentation of our garden during the summer months.

In mid-fall, a work party including Ted Baker, Bill Dumont, Sandy Gibb, Richard Hebda, and Darlene Li,

planted bulbous irises, trimmed up the iris plants and weeded and cultivated the beds. Richard, Darlene and Diane Whitehead followed up with a "mulchathon" spreading one and a half wagon loads of the HCP's best rotted organic matter.

A new temporary sign went up for the display and we await the design of the permanent sign. All in all, our display beds are in good shape and continue to attract



Volunteer crew fall clean up Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, Saanich BC. Left to right: Darlene Li, Bill Dumont, Ted Baker and Sandy Gibb. Photo - Richard Hebda, November 1, 2021.

positive reviews.

AIS 2025 Convention Beds

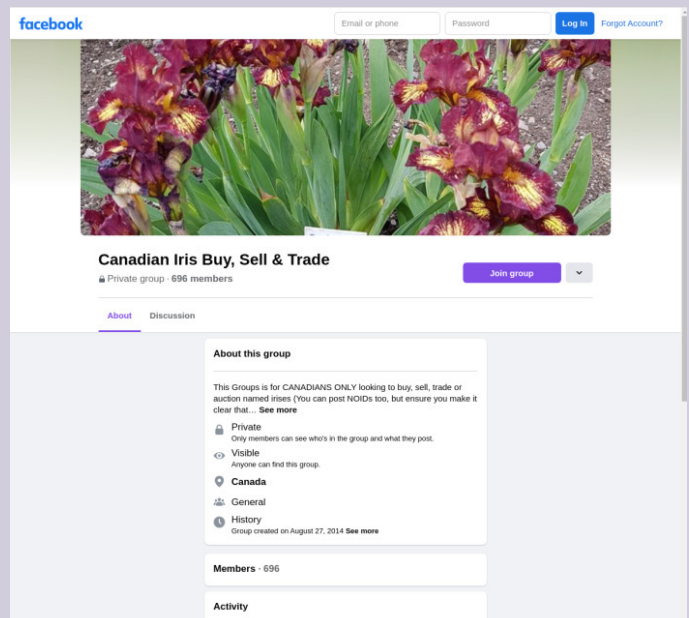
In another part of the HCP grounds, two muscular summer students began the preparation of the first beds for our AIS regional meeting planned for 2025. Calum Lewis and Andrew George pulled out the weeds and deeply dug a bed for planting of guest Siberian irises in the spring of next year. Calum also spent several days atop a ladder shortening by several metres a vigorous willow shrub growing next to the beds.



Weeded bed for planting and display of Siberian Irises for AIS Region 13 2025 convention. Photo - Richard Hebda, August 20, 2021.

Canadian Iris Buy Sell and Trade Facebook Group

This private Facebook group can be found <https://www.facebook.com/groups/349129545262721> and has almost 700 members. You can apply to join and get many opportunities for acquiring, trading and selling irises. This group is dedicated to Canadian sellers, buyers, and traders. The reason this group exists is to enable us as Canadians to make connections across our country for people who want to share their iris at a cost or free trade plus whatever it may cost to ship.



Snake's Head or Widow Iris: a Most Unusual Iris

Richard Hebda, President BC Iris Society

Once in a while, an interesting plant comes on the market and then seems to disappear from it. Thirty or so years ago I bought some tubers called *Iris tuberosa*, commonly known as snake's head iris or widow iris. Being a bulbous plant fanatic, I figured this would be a plant interesting to try. For many years it was kicked out of the genus iris and called *Hermodactylus tuberosus*, but apparently, it is now back in the fold so to speak.

I. tuberosa grows in the form of a herb with narrow grassy leaves attached to a finger-like tuber slightly smaller than your little pinky. The plants grow 20-40 cm high with the late-winter leaves at first erect then becoming lax. The leaves are much longer than the bloom and its stem. Each leaf is distinctly four-angled in cross-section and only 2-4 mm wide.

The flowers distinguish this iris from its kin. The bloom appears in late winter and early spring, depending on your garden's climate from as early as February to typically late March and April in my garden on the Saanich Peninsula. There is usually a single flower per tuber about half the length of the leaves at bloom time, but sometimes reaching 30-40 cm tall. The form is somewhat like a shallow wide tube or cup and faces upward to begin with then nods as it ages. Its colour overall is yellowish-green. However, the blade that connects the falls to the stem and often the falls too are violet-brown even dark purplish-black and the texture of velvet. The standards are about half as long as the falls and the style branches petal-like. The standards are split or forked at the tip and according to some authors, this feature is the inspiration for the common name



Side view of *Iris tuberosa* flower showing yellow-green standards above dark purple velvet falls and tube-like shape. Photo by Richard Hebda April 14, 2021, Saanich Peninsula BC.

Iris tuberosa flower showing yellow-green standards above dark purple velvet falls amongst grass-like leaves. Photo by Richard Hebda April 14, 2021, Saanich Peninsula BC.



snake's head iris.

Iris tuberosa may not have the horticultural beauty of some bearded irises, but it is fascinating nevertheless because of the enchanting scent. Bend down to flower level and you will be tantalized by a sweet touch of cinnamon and more, very hard to describe, but pleasant and alluring especially in a sunny early spring garden. This iris is grown as a cut flower in Cornwall and Scilly Isles of the United Kingdom, considered attractive by some, and available in better-class florists' shops. G.E Cassidy and S. Linnegar in their 1982 book, *Growing Irises*, claim the flowers "...come brilliantly alive in a vase". I would agree and the scent is so much easier to appreciate indoors.

In the wild tuberous iris occurs around the Mediterranean from southern France, through Italy, southern Europe, the Balkans, western Turkey and into North Africa. Sunny, dry stony places are its natural environment.

Growing tuberous iris is not difficult. The ideal setting is a sunny rock garden or against a south-facing wall. I have it growing among the stems of some old black currant bushes planted when the current plants were young. The currants are nearly dead, but the iris thrives. My soil is silty with a few stones, and I suspect any soil except clay will do. Place the tubers about 5-10 cm deep in the soil and add some bone meal for long-term nutrition. Water them in at the time of planting. Do not grow this iris in a moist or wet site where it seems to decline over time. In the dry season, which for us is anytime from June to September, gently dig out the tubers and replant them wherever you see fit or share them with friends.

Snake's head iris seems to require very little attention and has persisted in the same place in my garden for 30 years. The patch will spread slowly and a top dressing

of compost every few years will sustain it well. *I. tuberosa* makes a good pot subject too. Use a somewhat coarse well-draining soil and place it in a sunny spot. It should make a fine balcony plant. Bring the pot indoors at bloom time to enjoy the scent. *Iris tuberosa* is hardy to at least zone 6 and some sources claim it to be "fully" hardy, but maybe not so in Canada. Accordingly, we can grow it anywhere in the valley bottoms and lower slopes of southern interior BC

and certainly on the coast.

If you are looking for a pleasant sensory spring surprise, find a little dry sunny corner in your garden perhaps mixed with some early blooming miniature or standard dwarf bearded irises like "Alpine Lake". You too may be drawn outdoors on a sunny spring day to enjoy the exotic scent of the tuberous dwarf iris and appreciate its most interesting flowers.



Pot-grown Miniature Dwarf Bearded Iris "Alpine Lake". Photo - Richard Hebda, Saanich Peninsula BC, April 26, 2021.

BCIS Website Photo Gallery – Worth a Visit

We are building a nice collection of iris pictures on our BC Iris Society website for everyone to enjoy at <https://www.bcirissociety.com/iris-galleries/>. These images have been provided by a few of our dedicated members and we welcome your own contributions to the photo gallery with the names of your favourites. If you see a labelling error and know the correct name, please let Bill Dumont know at wedumont@hotmail.com. You can also send him your suggestions and contributions for the gallery.



Request for Guest Irises - 2025 Region 13 Convention Early Announcement

The British Columbia Iris Society will host the AIS Region 13 Spring Convention and Garden Tour from June 6 to 8, 2025 on southern Vancouver Island. We are requesting guest plants of Siberian irises, mid-season Species, mid-season Interspecies, and other mid-season beardless irises to be planted for display and judging at the convention. These may be either rhizomes of recent (2017 to present) introductions or seedlings under consideration for introduction.

Please observe the following guidelines when sending guest plants as only officially submitted rhizomes will appear in the Convention booklet. Up to 3 rhizomes of each variety will be accepted from September 12, 2022, to September 21, 2022. The name of the variety or seedling number should be clearly marked on each plant. Please include a separate packing list with your plants. The packing list should include the following information: 1) Hybridizer's name and address, 2) Variety name or seedling number, 3) Class of iris, 4) Height, colour, a photo is helpful, 5) Year of introduction, if applicable and 6) Quantity.

For Canadian hybridizers, please ship to Richard Hebda, 90 Durrance Rd, Victoria BC, V9E 2G5 Canada. For US hybridizers, we will provide a U.S. address for shipping in our Summer issue of Rainbow Goddess in July 2022.

Expect to be contacted in early 2025 to determine: 1) if



Photo - Richard Hebda, BCIS President

any of the seedlings have been named and introduced in the intervening 2 and ½ years and 2) what disposition method you want the club to use. The choices are usually for seedlings to be returned (at the hybridizer's expense) or destroyed. Named varieties are typically given out one to each guest garden owner and the rest are used for a Region 13 "re-distribution". You need to instruct the Convention Committee in a timely fashion in early 2025 if you want all or some of your named varieties returned to you; again at your expense.

The Convention Committee and the owners of the individual host gardens will strictly adhere to the Code of Ethics as contained in the AIS Convention Handbook. The Convention Committee and garden owners will not be responsible for losses beyond their control.

Meet Iris - My German Shorthaired Pointer

Bill Dumont

Irises can be more than beautiful flowers, they can also be great companions! After a fairly nasty trip to Princeton from Cobble Hill just after Christmas where it was minus 33, my new 9-week old puppy named Iris was ready for pickup. She has unique colouring and is curious and feisty and gets along very well with her sister, Sadie, a 2 ½-year-old chocolate lab. Both will enjoy my iris and rhododendron garden – the Rose Tree Garden.



BCIS Executive 2021-2022

| Position | Name | Email/Contact |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| President | Richard Hebda | hebda@shaw.ca |
| Secretary/Treasurer Newsletter | Bill Dumont | wedumont@hotmail.com |
| Past President | Ted Baker | tedebaker41@gmail.com |
| Membership | Diane Whitehead | voltaire@islandnet.com |
| Director | Malcolm Ho You | ho-you@telus.net |
| Director | Richard Cypher | cypher.rl@gmail.com |
| Director | Penny Santosham | pennysantosham@gmail.com |
| Director | Darlene Li | darleneli@shaw.ca |

BCIS 2021 Group Order - A Big Success

One of the many special benefits of being a BCIS member is the opportunity to participate in group orders of special irises from local and US hybridizers. In 2021 BCIS arranged for members to order from Aitken's Salmon Creek Garden in Vancouver Washington. Aitkens nursery has been selling irises for more than 40 years. Terry Aitken is a world-renowned hybridizer.



A record total of 18 members ordered 251 iris plants in this year's group purchase. Members ordered and paid for their new treasures online at Aitkens. Then the plants were inspected by USDA and a phytosanitary certificate was issued and the plants were shipped by the US post office, cleared by Canadian customs and plant inspectors and delivered to Bill Dumont in Cobble Hill. There he and Richard Hebda carefully re-packed the labelled plants and shipped or hand-delivered the various orders to members. Everyone reported their plants arrived in fine condition and are looking forward to seeing some beautiful flowers this spring.

Photos of your new plants and flowers with names would be appreciated for the next Rainbow



Richard Hebda, BCIS president, with group orders.

Goddess. Send to Bill Dumont at wedumont@hotmail.com.

BC Iris Society Financial Statements
January 1 to December 31, 2020

Total Deposits – ISCU – January 1, 2020

18759.86

REGULAR CHEQUING

Opening Balance 3717.60

Expenditures

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Bank Fees | 16.00 | |
| HIPS/AIS Fees/Membership | 97.41 | |
| BC Coun. Garden Clubs Insr + Fees | 161.80 | |
| Website (2 years hosting + updates) | 910.09 | |
| BC Filing fees | 40.00 | |
| Rainbow Goddess Newsletter | 1044.64 | |
| Teleconference | 68.38 | |
| HCP Garden Supplies | 39.76 | 2378.08 |

Revenue

| | | |
|-------------|---------|---------|
| Memberships | 1151.21 | |
| Donation | 40.00 | 1191.21 |

Closing Balance 2530.73

BUSINESS ACCOUNT

Balance 45.00

TERM DEPOSIT

No. 4 - April 2022 - 1 .8%

15250.35

MEMBERSHIP SHARES

5.60

Total Deposits – ISCU – December 31, 2020

17831.68

W. Dumont, Treasurer, 250-743-9882

British Columbia Iris Society
Statement of Financial Position
 December 31, 2020
(Unaudited)

| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| ASSETS | | | |
| Current Assets: | | | |
| Cash and Term Deposits | 17832 | 18760 | 21156 |
| LIABILITIES & SURPLUS/DEFICIT | | | |
| Current Liabilities | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Opening Accumulated Surplus | 18760 | 21156 | 23033 |
| Current Year Surplus (Deficit) | (928) | (2396) | (1910) |
| Closing Accumulated Surplus | 17832 | 18760 | 21156 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SURPLUS | 17832 | 18760 | 21156 |

2022 Dues Are Due Now for This Calendar Year

Our membership chair Diane Whitehead will be contacting members directly regarding their 2022 dues when this newsletter is being distributed. Many of you have paid multi-year membership dues and Diane will confirm if any are outstanding from you for this year.

You can either pay online at bcirissociety.com or mail a cheque made out to BCIS c/o Bill Dumont 995 Hutchinson Road, Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L4. Thanks for continuing to support BCIS and our Iris promotion work in the community and with our members.

Want to Join BCIS?

Sign up and join directly on our website:
<https://www.bcirissociety.com/join-bcis/>

*Onlooker, Arilbred Iris.
 Photo - Paul Archer.*



British Columbia Iris Society
Statement of Income and Deficit
For the Year Ended December 31, 2020
(Unaudited)

REVENUES

| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Memberships | 1151 | 1206 | 923 |
| Field Trips - Spring OK Tour | | 1887 | |
| Interest | | 245 | 156 |
| Donation | 40 | 500 | |
| AGM | | 276 | 425 |
| Total Revenues | 1191 | 4114 | 1504 |

EXPENSES

| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Bulletins | 0 | 982 | 1202 |
| Rainbow Newsletters | 1045 | 1008 | |
| Field Trips - Spring Tour | | 2118 | |
| Annual Report | 40 | 40 | 95 |
| BCCGC Fees | 162 | 159 | 207 |
| Bank Fees + Expenses | 16 | 232 | 22 |
| Website/Social Media | 910 | 503 | 518 |
| AGM Luncheon/Travel | | 570 | 216 |
| Memberships/Meetings | 68 | 20 | 94 |
| Iris Beds HCP/GH | 40 | 365 | 1014 |
| AIS/HIPS Fees | 97 | 46 | |
| BCIS Rack Card | | 513 | |
| Total Expenses | 2378 | 6510 | 3414 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) | (928) | (2396) | (1910) |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|

Fall Iris Care: Learning at the HCP Clean-Up

Richard Hebda, BCIS President

Bearded and other irises can get quite messy in the cool and rainy days of fall. An autumn clean-up prepares the clumps for healthy growth in the spring. In November Ted Baker shared with the BCIS HCP volunteers his simple but reliable approach to this task.

To begin with, our normal practice is to dead-head old flowering stalks during summer maintenance. But some stalks get missed. For tall, intermediate and bearded irises Ted simply snaps them off at the base. This technique mostly works well, however, I sometimes find that for the shorter stalks you need to clip them off just above the rhizome because they are too flexible to snap.

For the fall routine, Ted's favourite tool is a pair of heavy-duty grass shears, the kind we used before the advent of spinning weed snippers (Figure 1). These shears work for both bearded irises and Siberian and



Figure 2. Tall bearded iris fans trimmed to point, ready for the winter and spring growth. Horticulture Centre of the Pacific's BC Iris Display Beds. Photo - Richard Hebda November 1, 2021.

Figure 1. Ted Baker using his trusty grass shears to trim a Siberian iris clump at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific's BC Iris Display Beds. Photo - Richard Hebda November 1, 2021.



other clumps. The fans and clumps of bearded iris leaves are first chopped well down the leaves to about 10-15 cm (4-6 inches) above the rhizome. The leaves are then chopped again to form a point at the centre, very much in the way one prepares dug up rhizome clumps in the summer for sharing and sale (Figure 2). Other tools such as a long, serrated knife work well. Sandy Gibb uses this in her fall maintenance of Siberian irises (Figure 3). Garden clippers work too but they take much more time than the tools mentioned earlier.

We had a bit of a discussion concerning whether or not to pull off old dead and dying leaves. Ted's view is to be careful with leaf pulling and avoid wounding the bearded iris rhizome. Leaf bases protect the rhizome over winter in colder climates too. However, in my opinion, they shade the rhizome a bit and perhaps slow bud development and ripening process. In Ted's view pulling off leaves that still may have some life to them could scar the rhizome and create a pathway for disease especially in our relatively mild and wet coastal climate. Leaving them on makes the process of fall clean-up quicker because you do not spend the extra time specifically removing the senescing leaves. By cutting low enough above the rhizome and then gently raking or picking up the debris most of the dead leaves end up being removed anyway.



Figure 3. Sandy Gibb trimming a Siberian iris clump with a long, serrated knife at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific's BC Iris Display Beds. Bill Dumont looks on in the background. Photo - Richard Hebda November 1, 2021.

you can replant them in another spot. Fall is a good time to divide and transplant Siberians on the coast. Seems to me, if you have a lot of Siberians or grassy clump formers, a weed-eater might do the job too.

Finally rake or pick up and dispose of all the old unsightly debris with its diseases, give the soil a scrape perhaps a light mulching away from the crowns and you are ready for spring blooms.



Figure 4. A Siberian iris clump trimmed by Ted Baker during fall clean-up using grass shears. Horticulture Centre of the Pacific's BC Iris Display Beds. Photo - Richard Hebda November 1, 2021.

The strategy for Siberian irises and those that form grassy clumps the approach is simple... just chop away with shears or knife straight across about 5-10 cm (2-4") above the ground (Figure 4). The leafy bases that remain protect the crown of the iris against frost or other problems. Then simply rake or pick off the debris and dispose of it. Generally, it is not necessary to pull out what appear to be dead nodes or clusters. In older clumps, these may have live roots at the base often at this time of the year. If you accidentally pull them out,



BCIS Commissions New Logo and You Can Help!

The BC Iris Society was incorporated on April 12, 2010, but operated without incorporation from early 2005. In October of that year, the organization issued its first member update and the first BCIS logo appeared in early 2006 as shown.



A new logo was developed and approved about 5 years ago but has proven to be difficult to reproduce on signs and swag and was never secured in an acceptable format for printing and other uses. During the past year, we have had several requests from host gardens for the digital files of the current logo and we have had to improvise. We are hoping to develop a new logo in 2022 that will be in a proper format that is attractive, colourful, distinctive, easy to duplicate in print, on swag and signs. There is some cost (up to \$600) to get our current newsletter designer, Raielene Langdon of **Blue Pixel Design**, to give us some options for



British Columbia Iris Society

'Iris, the flower for all seasons'

the new logo. These options will be presented to the current board of directors for final approval.

Our Secretary has generously offered two original watercolours of Irises painted by his sister Ruth Cash for auction to support the new logo. Here are the two 16 inch by 20 inch framed originals. The auction is

open now for bids (singly or for the pair) and bids will close on March 1, 2022.

Please email your bid starting at \$100 for the pair to wedumont@hotmail.com. If you are the successful bidder these will be delivered to you free of charge. Bids should be in increments of \$25.



2022 Live AGM at Horticulture Center of the Pacific

Covid permitting we are planning to hold our 2022 AGM at the HCP on **Saturday, June 4, 2022**. We hope you will be able to attend and hear a great speaker and see our impressive developing BCIS plot at HCP. A delicious lunch will be served and everyone is welcome. Further information and confirmation will follow in the spring but mark this date in your calendars now.

100 YEARS OF VANCOUVER ISLAND ROCK & ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY

VIRAGS ANNUAL SPRING SHOW & SALE 2022

APRIL 1st 1-8PM & APRIL 2nd 1-5PM
MARY WINSPEAR CENTER, SIDNEY, BC

Entry by donation

Plant show & sale, silent auction & door prizes, tea & lunches available

Crevice garden demo with Paul Spriggs,

Chris Dixon & Ty Danylchuk, April 1st 2-5pm

Info @ virags.com/the-spring-show

SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 2nd 9AM-12PM

Panayoti Kelaidis: North American

Rock Plants, 2nd Series-Revisiting Hugh Preece

Laura Caddy: Rock Gardening in the Pacific North West

Limited registration-\$35 @ virags.com/the-spring-show



For info visit

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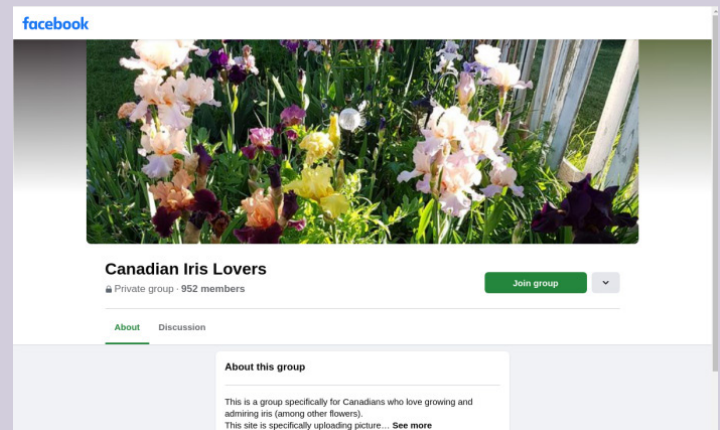
Instagram @ [virags_pics](https://www.instagram.com/virags_pics)

Facebook Page for Canadian Iris Lovers

Since 2018 the following Facebook group has been a trusted info source for iris lovers in Canada. There are almost 1000 followers of this private group at this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/382552905587749>

It is specifically for Canadians who love growing and admiring iris (among other flowers) and uploading pictures of your beloved iris and asking iris related questions.



The Reblooming Iris Society

The RIS was organized in 1967 and is a section of the American Iris Society devoted to promoting interest and development of all iris types having more than one bloom season per year. Their website is found here: **Reblooming Iris Society** and you can become a member online.

In milder parts of the United States, some iris have reached the “ever bloom” classification, in others, a second and possibly a third bloom. In California, there is almost year-round bloom. In some far northern areas such as Maine, there are also reblooming iris. Some varieties of Siberian and Japanese iris have been reported to bloom for up to 10 weeks.

Consider joining and supporting the RIS - As a member, and there are currently more than 260, you will receive two digital editions of the **Reblooming Iris Recorder (RIR)** annually. It contains many colour photos, data on when varieties actually bloom, regional news, research, and notes of personal experience. They are always recruiting more folks to keep bloom data and send photos. Consequently, the bloom information is ever-expanding with more varieties and locations listed. Dues are US\$12 for one year or USD\$25 for 3 years.



Raspberry Frost, Tall Bearded Reblooming.
Photo - RIS Website gallery.

Ever-Cool, Intermediate Bearded Reblooming. Photo - RIS Website gallery.

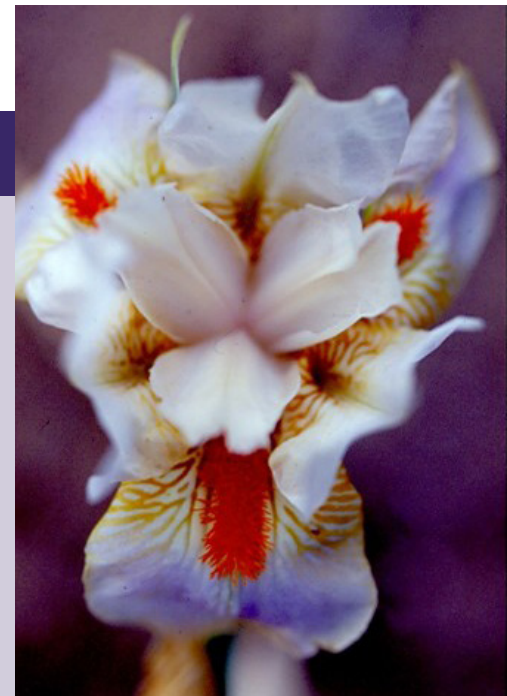
Are you following us on Facebook?

We add news about plant sales, garden tours, special iris talks, etc., plus photos and information about irises to our page, so be sure to like us at:

 [britishcolumbiairissociety](https://www.facebook.com/britishcolumbiairissociety)

Be sure to check out our website as well where you'll find upcoming events, newsletters, and our photo gallery full of beautiful iris photos:

bcirisociety.com



*This newsletter was produced by Bill Dumont with graphic design by Raielene Langdon of **Blue Pixel Design**. Thanks to all who contributed articles, photos and other information. Please send contributions for our next 2022 newsletter by June 15 to wedumont@hotmail.com.*