



SUMMER 2021

NEWSLETTER

2020 NSW Trial Garden Awards



2020
Alan Johnson
Medal
TB Iris

P26-3
John C Taylor

2020
Gordon Loveridge
Medal
Pacific Coast Iris

PCNI 16-41
John C Taylor



2020
Joyce Donaldson
Medal
Iris ensata

'Cattai Plum'
Barbara Levy /
Hiroshi Shimizu



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2021 Fee Holiday

In December the Society committee agreed to waive membership fees for 2021 for all members who had been 'financial' for the whole of 2020. This decision was in recognition of the cancellation of the Annual Show and general hardship caused by Covid19.

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2020 NSW Trial Garden Results (AM and HM Awards only listed)

Hybridiser	Type	Award	Name/Seedling	Breeding of Seedlings	Score
Tall Bearded					
John Taylor	TB	AM	Spring Riches (14L232-1)	Jane's Emma x Stop Flirting	90
John Taylor	TB	AM	16M 73-1	Hopeless Romantic x Smart Money	92
John Taylor	TB	AM	N 16-74	Waterline x Haunted Heart	91
John Taylor	TB	AM	Masterclass (16N 29-6)	Beauty Becomes Her x Haunted Heart	95
John Taylor	TB	AM	N 76-13	Center Ice x Gypsy Lord	93
John Taylor	TB	HM	P1-14	Arrividerci x Haunted Heart	89
John Taylor	TB	HM	P2-23	Arrividerci x Wishes Granted	88
John Taylor	TB	HM	P2-37	Arrividerci x Wishes Granted	85
John Taylor	TB	HM	P5-12	Center Ice x Dancing at Dubbo	86
John Taylor	TB	HM	P22-5	Gypsy Lady x Haunted Heart	90
John Taylor	TB	HM	P26-3	My Beloved x M101-1 (Taylor)	96
Alan Johnson Medallion to TB P26-3 by John Taylor					

Pacific Coast					
John Taylor	PCNI	AM	16-41	13-64 x 13-31	95
Gordon Loveridge Medallion to PCNI 16-41 by John Taylor					
John Taylor	PCNI	AM	16-124	13-64 x 13-31	89
John Taylor	PCNI	AM	16-167	13-64 x 13-31	94
John Taylor	PCNI	AM	16-176	13-64 x 13-31	87
John Taylor	PCNI	AM	16-188	13-64 x 13-31	85
John Taylor	PCNI	HM	16 PC 9-9	14-62 x 16-4	94
John Taylor	PCNI	HM	16PC 42-17	16-107 x A44	93
John Taylor	PCNI	HM	16PC 52-1	16-136 x 16-22	90
John Taylor	PCNI	HM	16PC 55-6	16-152 x A44	92
John Taylor	PCNI	HM	16PC 117-1	16-167 x Unknown	91

Ensata					
B Levy/H Shimizu	Ensata	AM	Jl B10-2 Cattai Plum	Wakasazome x Hatsu Komachi	87
Joyce Donaldson Medallion to Cattai Plum by Barbara Levy/Shimizu					
B Levy/H Shimizu	Ensata	AM	Jl A10-2 Our Diana	Momozue x unknown parentage	85
B Levy/H Shimizu	Ensata	HM	Jl C10-1 Silken Breeze	Kuokusho x Suisei	75
D Cox/H Shimizu	Ensata	HM	Jl DC Wh N		79
Virginica / Crosses					
Craig Carroll	Virginica X	HM	Jay's Touch the Sky	I Virginica orchid x unknown	81
Craig Carroll	Species X	HM	Reflecting Wings	I Virginica orchid x I Versicolour	76
Congratulations also go to Craig Carroll, John Taylor, Barbara Levy and Di Cox on cultivars achieving Highly Commended status.					

More Trial Garden entries



Rattatattat - John Taylor



Our Diana - B. Levy / H. Shimzu



Jay's Touch the Sky - Craig Carroll



Master Class - John Taylor

Three levels of achievement for Iris in Australian Trial Gardens

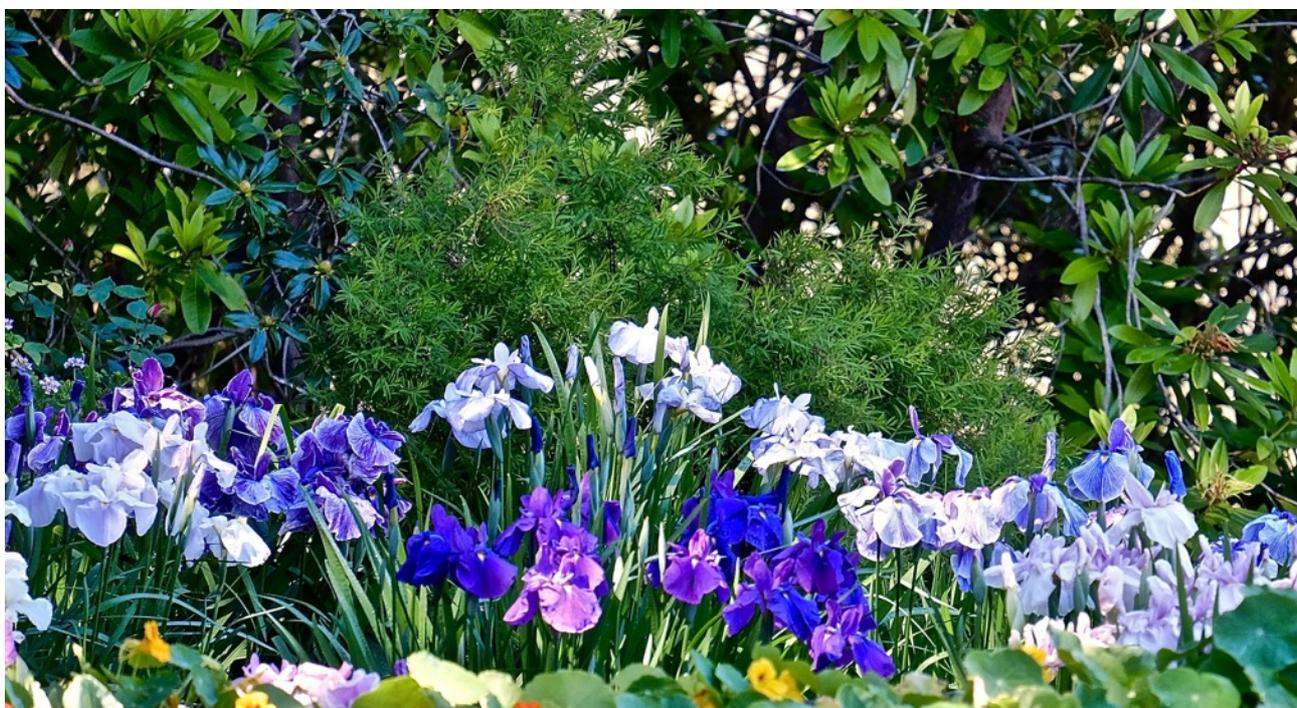
1. Highly Commended (HC) in the year of entry and one subsequent year where cultivars need to achieve a score of at least 70%. A cultivar which does not achieve HC after two years will be deemed to have completed its time in the Trial Garden and will not be evaluated in the third year.

2. Honourable Mention (HM) for a period of up to three years from the time of entry where cultivars need to achieve a score of at least 75%

3. Award of Merit (AM) for a period of up to five years from the time of entry where cultivars need to achieve at a score of at least 85%.

AM is the top award in the Trial Gardens.

Ensatas at Everglades, Leura: Michael Barnes



Designed by renowned Danish-born designer Paul Sorensen, the stunning gardens of Everglades ideally complement the 1930s Art Deco house and their picturesque Blue Mountains location. Designed at a time when *Japonisme* was all the rage, the 5.3ha (13 acre) gardens are believed to have originally hosted a collection of Japanese Iris (Iris Ensata).

The National Trust, who manage the property, were therefore delighted when the NSW Iris Society wanted to switch our trial gardens in Everglades from Louisiana Iris to Ensatas.

Four years on, the terraced gardens we manage are host to 21 Ensata cultivars, all of which originated as seed from the President of the Japanese Iris Society in Japan, Hiroshi Shimizu. They have been germinated, grown and selected by members of the NSW Society and entered in the trial gardens to be assessed.

As an official trial garden for the Society, the iris have been judged in recent years, with the unregistered purple seedling (B10-1) emerging victorious in 2019 for grower Barbara Levy. Barb repeated her success in 2020, with B10-2 CATTAI PLUM achieving the highest scores. As winner of the best Ensata in a NSW trial garden, Barb has now twice won the Joyce Donaldson Medal, named after Honorary Society member and former Dykes medal judge from Currububula, near Tamworth in NSW, and sponsored by Graeme Grosvenor.

Ensatas at Everglades - Michael Barnes cont'd

I will admit to having difficulty judging Ensatas! The Japanese are so reverential that they find far more to praise than criticise with their irises. Everything seems acceptable! Branching varies, but is not a priority for connoisseurs of Ensatas. Similarly, they don't discriminate between three, six or nine falls.

Assessed this year on three occasions over about three weeks, virtually all the Everglades exhibits offer appealing proportion and healthy foliage. Good strong spikes are held aloft with an abundance of blooms. Some flowers lack the substance of others, and given the constant rain during the judging season, this probably proved the primary discriminatory factor in 2020. Some cultivars increase better than others, while others are marginally more floriferous – factors that have to be rewarded in garden judging.



The wetlands-loving plants are watered daily, by drippers on a timer. Members of the society maintain the gardens, weeding, fertilising and mulching the beds. Over the forthcoming summer, with the blessing of the National Trust garden team, we are to double the area dedicated to Ensatas, for an even more spectacular display. Several clumps will come out of the judging area this summer, including the recent winners, and will be moved to create a spectacular display in the lower terrace. A good number of new cultivars will be added to the judging area this season, to be assessed against those that remain eligible for judging in 2021 and beyond.

They're a true delight, and I highly recommend a visit to Everglades in early November to take in these spectacular irises at their best.



Iris Society members and Everglades staff maintain the Ensata Garden throughout the year. Pictured above - Michael Barnes (Trial garden Judge) , Phil Budge, Barbara Levy, Scott Fletcher, Liz Fox and Di Cox at work 2020.

Meet the members: Elizabeth Fox



I consider myself a very fortunate lady as I was part of a family where plants and flowers were always the main topics of conversation around our dinner table. My father was a landscape gardener and his last assignment was the Wrigley's Factory Garden. I spent a lot of time with my father in our garden of four and a half acres. I knew the botanical names of every plant in that garden before I started kindergarten

I found it hard to adjust to kinder ~ as I was used to being out in the garden all day. I went on to be a primary teacher (even though my first choice was to be a florist). I enjoyed every day of my teaching and spent the last 18 years at Orange East Public School in Orange. I completed a BA through New England majoring in Botany.

I lived in Orange for 37 years and even though I had always loved irises it was because we now had our own home that irises were no longer just loved they were now becoming a passion. Before our move to Orange we had lived in school residences at Towamba (near Bega), Tilbuster (near Armidale) and Black Springs (near Oberon). I left a little bed of irises behind in each of those gardens. My first iris was given to me by the principal of Calare School in Orange, where my children attended. It was "Going my Way" ~ purple on white plicata. Each year from then on (1988) I sent a modest order to Rainbow Ridge (still at Dural) and to Tempo Two (in Victoria). I didn't like to grow my irises amongst my other garden plants so after about 5 years the entire, large vegetable garden had to go for my irises. In those early days Leda's Lover, (glorious white) Vanity (palest pink), Ruban Bleu (white standards, startling blue falls with a white heart), Coffee Whispers (white standards and coffee pink falls with a white edge) and Rare Treat (white flowers with precise blue edgings) still remain in my mind but Beverley Sills (perfect coral pink flowers), Hello Darkness (almost black), Louisa's Song (lilac standards/red lavender falls) and Silverado (silvery white) were all amazing at that time. When Rainbow Ridge completed their move to Burnt Yards, I was able to visit every year in the blooming season.



Twelve years ago we decided to move to Blackheath. I have always enjoyed a cold climate (so did my precious irises)! We were able to extend settlement time to 12 weeks and I potted all my irises. How many were there? LOTS! A wonderful friend lent his industrial trailer and made 2 trips to Blackheath. My irises, that ‘grew like weeds’ in Orange, were difficult to grow in Blackheath not because of the cold winter but because the summer was too short and not warm enough. The soil was too acidic (great for rhododendrons but NOT for irises!) I have replaced the soil and added dolomite.



Joining the NSW Iris Society has been a positive activity for me. I have ‘spread my wings’ and diversified my iris collection to include louisianas, spurias, siberian, dutch and unguicularis. If I have an iris problem I am in instant contact with experts to help me. I have regular contact with the friendliest group of people who constitute the NSW Iris Society and I am included in their activities particularly the Iris Show. In 2017 I won 1st place for Spike of Bearded Iris (Novice) with Imogen Page, and in 2019 I won 1st place for TB

Bicolour with Mysterioso at the NSW Annual Iris Show in Blackheath. I am restricted in showing my iris because of the climate ~ I need a warm spring to have flowers open for the show.

Five years ago a friend encouraged me to show my daffodils and I have had wonderful success with them. I guess I have a competitive streak because I have been ‘Most Successful Exhibitor’ 4 times at Blackheath Flower Show and 2019 at Bilpin Flower Show. I love all flowers but Irises will always be my favourite flower.

Greetings from French & Italian Iris Societies



Bilpin Picnic Day

Thanks to Covid19 there would be no NSW Iris Show in 2020. So we thought, with some restrictions easing, we could have a picnic - a Covid- safe outdoor event. Michael Barnes offered his place as he was hosting open days though October anyway, the peak Iris bloom time at Iris Australis.

A good crowd of members and others turned up on the day and the Iris certainly were blooming and doing their best to put on a display. The only problem was the weather. It was VERY WET and VERY COLD the whole day. Not picnic weather at all. But everyone



who made the trip seemed happy to be there and to see each other after months of only 'meeting' by phone and email. Wandering through blooming Iris beds seems to uplift the spirits, whatever the weather. There were members' Irises on sale including the potted Iris donated to the Society by Kath Fraser. I saw many visitors going home with their cars full of Irises and plans for their gardens.

Society Notes

2021 membership fee holiday

For members who were 'financial' during 2020, you will enjoy a fee holiday for 2021. If you have paid for 2021 already, another 12 months will be added to you membership. Emails have been sent to all eligible members. If you forgot to renew in 2020, you can pay any arrears now and receive 2021 membership 'free'. Contact Barbara, 0433 494 102 or email: irissocietynsw@gmail.com if you need to check your membership details.

Newsletter topics

Do you have any requests / ideas / contributions for the Newsletter? The editors would be glad to hear from you. Email: irissocietynsw@gmail.com

For the diary

2021 Collectors Plant Fair - 10 and 11 April at Clarendon, near Richmond.

<http://www.collectorsplantfair.com.au/>

Photos this issue

Barbara Levy, Gillian Serisier, John Taylor, Liz Fox.

NSW Late Show - December 2020 'Summerhill' Orange



The venue for the 2020 'Late Show' was 'Summerhill' the home and garden of Gillian and David Serisier. A more beautiful setting would be hard to imagine and the ample verandahs provided a sheltered, outdoor space to hold the members' event.

Our aim was to encourage 'local' and newer members to come along, meet each other, enjoy the gardens of 'Summerhill' and learn about exhibiting.

A group of around twenty gathered with whatever exhibits they could muster at this late stage of the iris season. While no-one believed they'd brought along a 'show stopper', most had one or more interesting blooms or spikes to display and it was great to have a local member, Rachel Barnes, enter a TB spike from her own breeding. Another highlight was the artwork entry by Katy Huang - a framed painting of a TB iris from her own garden.

Judging, led by Michael Barnes, was conducted to provide attendees with a Q&A and commentary on the process - such as checking there are no disqualifying issues prior to judging (like stems being too long on bloom exhibits) and exhibits being in the wrong class, then onto the general assessment criteria for an iris, e.g. correct number of falls and standards and then the specific criteria for each iris type. Finally selecting a 'champion' exhibit - perhaps the hardest of all. Everyone had an opinion, and the opinions varied, but there was one winner in the end - an ensata seedling.



Grateful thanks to Gillian and David Serisier for hosting this event. Those who came along to the Late Shows in 2019 and in 2020 say they enjoy the opportunity to meet and socialise with, and swap information (and plants) with other members and to exhibit in a relaxed environment. And of course it provides a chance to see and exhibit late blooming Iris.

Meet the Family - Iridaceae

Readers who've attended any of the NSW Iris Society shows will be aware that, while the show focuses on irises, there are also cultural and photographic classes for their relations, which we designate in the show schedule '**Iridaceae other than Iris**'.

Common names can confuse, such as when *Dietes grandiflora* are called South African Iris, *Dietes robinsoniana* are called Norfolk Island Iris, *Patersonia* are called (Australian) Native Iris and several *Neomarica* are called Walking Iris. None of these are Iris.



Iridaceae, the botanical family to which the iris genus belongs, includes around 80 other genera, which are in turn divided into about 2200 species. They originate in all continents bar Antarctica, and from very diverse environments from Arctic substrate, through to the tropics, via swamps and deserts.

What links most of the Iridaceae genera is their growth habit. Most are perennial and have long, narrow leaves, are monocots, with parallel veins. Underground they have rhizomes, bulbs or corms.

While some Iridaceae produce a single bloom (e.g. crocus), others produce multiple blooms (e.g. gladioli), sometimes branched (e.g. bearded iris). Blooms are commonly divided into threes, or multiples thereof, with three petals, sepals and reproductive parts the most common.

They reproduce vegetatively with increase from the rhizome, bulb or corm, as well as sexually with the pollination of flowers.



Images:

Top. *Dietes grandiflora*

Above. *Watsonia tabularis*

Centre. *Patersonia sericeae*.

Right. *Neomarica caerulea*

