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Chapter 26, Revised

CONTAINER-GROWN IRIS

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There is nothing more impressive than a plant growing and blooming in a container. Container gardens are used in homes with limited yard space and on the balconies of apartments in high-rise buildings. The tradition of growing plants in containers, such as some Japanese irises, goes back centuries. Particular strains of Japanese irises were developed for use as ornamental plants, to be brought into the house and admired while in bloom.

There are many reasons to grow irises in containers. A clump of iris in bloom in a pot can be a special feature brought out for viewing and when the flowers are spent, the pot can be moved to a growing area, out of sight, for the rest of the year. People living in snowy climates might choose to grow their irises in pots. The pots can be moved into a greenhouse during the winter and out into the open when the weather inspires growth. Small irises can be more visible when grown in a pot and displayed on a table or as part of a miniature landscape. Irises with special needs can be better nurtured when grown in a container. For example, moisture-loving irises might grow better in a trough garden. An iris grown in a raised pot can be safe from potential predators such as rabbits and gophers. A well grown clump of iris growing and blooming in a pot can make a better display than a bloom stalk stuck in a bottle.

Container-grown iris are not eligible for the Best Specimen of Show Award.

Each exhibitor is permitted to enter only one stalk of any particular cultivar, including registered but un-introduced seedlings, in any of the single stalk sections (e.g., Tall Bearded, Arilbred, Spuria) of the Open Horticultural Division. The same cultivar may also be entered in any of the Collection, English Boxes, Container-Grown Iris, or Single Blossom Sections. (Keep in mind that entries in the sections of Collections, English Boxes, Container-Grown Iris, and Single Blossom are not eligible for Best Specimen of Show.) For example, an exhibitor may enter 'Dusky Challenger' in the Tall Bearded Section as a single stalk and in the Container-grown Section, according to instructions in the show schedule. **This also applies to seedlings: they may be entered in the Seedling Division and in any of the Collection, English Boxes, Container-Grown Iris or Single Blossom sections following the guidelines in the following chart:**

Eligibility of a seedling entered by one exhibitor:

	Eligible for Seedling Division only	Eligible for Seedling OR Open Horticultural Division	Eligible for Seedling AND Open Horticultural Divisions	Eligible for sections that are NOT competing for Best Specimen in Show
A seedling not registered and not introduced (i.e., seedling with number only)	yes	no	no	yes
A seedling registered but NOT introduced	no	yes	no	yes

EXHIBITION JUDGING Container-Grown Iris

Exhibition judging of irises is distinctly different from judging in the garden. On the show bench a judge is not trying to determine the qualities and attributes of a particular variety. Rather, the exhibition judge must pass judgement in two areas:

1. Cultural perfection - how well the specimen has been grown by comparing it to the maximum typical performance of the variety being judged.
2. Condition and grooming - how well the specimen was prepared for entry into the exhibition.

Exhibition judging evaluates the specimen as it is shown at the moment the judge sees it.

In a public display such as an iris show, the container of iris should be in best form with the goal of encouraging the public to grow irises.

SCALE of POINTS
Exhibition Judging of Container-Grown Iris

1. Cultural Perfection			70
	a. Vigor and Condition of Plant	30	
	b. Floriferousness of Plant	40	
2. Condition & Grooming			30
	a. Appropriateness of Container for Growing the Plant	10	
	b. Presentation of Container	5	
	c. Grooming of Plant	15	
TOTAL			100

1. Cultural Perfection - 70 points

Container-grown plants may in some cases grow larger than normal because of extra pampering and in some cases, the plants might be smaller than normal because they have been grown out of their normal habitat. The container should be adequate and proportional to the way the plant is growing. A big floppy plant in a small container is not attractive nor is a dwarf plant in an over-sized ceramic pot. Container-grown plants should not be judged on how they grow in the garden but how appropriate their growth is for the choice of container.

The bloom stalk should stand freely within the clump without artificial support. The horticultural quality of the flowers should be typical of the variety. However, there should be no penalty for a cultivar with flowers smaller than is typical for the variety or fewer flowers than is typical for the variety if that cultivar is an unusual entry in the area of the show. For example, a container-grown Siberian iris grown in Las Cruces, New Mexico, is likely to have fewer and smaller flowers than the same cultivar grown in Omaha, Nebraska. In this case, the Las Cruces container-grown iris with flowers should be rewarded not penalized.

2. Condition & Grooming - 30 points

The container should be an appropriate size for the iris, in proportion with the size of the clump. The container should be clean. Spent bloom stalks, dead leaves and other debris should be removed from the clump. There is no penalty for the occasional

blemish on leaves. However, severe insect damage or disease should be penalized. Containers such as troughs are actually more desirable if they have moss or lichens growing on them, since they demonstrate real slices of nature. The expense of the container should not enter into the evaluation. A plain clay pot should be considered equal to a fancy ceramic version. However, an over-decorated container should be penalized if it overshadows the charm and beauty of the iris. Plants grown in black plastic pots may be inserted into more decorative pots, but if so, they should be top-dressed with gravel or sphagnum so that they appear to be growing in the decorative pot.

The skills of the exhibitor are evaluated here. The specimen should reflect visible improvement in the clump, flower and stem resulting from the exhibitor's grooming. This includes neat removal of diseased or damaged foliage; cleanliness of the stem and flower; absence of insect infestations; firm upright positioning of the specimen; facing of the specimen; and a neat removal of spent blossoms, including the ovaries, with no damage to the spathes. The result should be a specimen being presented in its best possible appearance.

A judge may encounter trickery such as pinning or taping of flower parts, flower replacement from another stem, the addition of flower spikes, splicing of stems, unattached leaves or leaf spathes, cracking of stems to make them appear straighter, or hidden supports and wedges. If any such alterations are found, the entry is to be disqualified from competition.

Containers offer the opportunity to time the opening of the flower with a scheduled show. Late-blooming irises can be forced into bloom while early-blooming irises can be held back from blooming. A container in peak bloom should be rewarded for reaching its peak on show day.

ABOUT CONTAINERS IN EXHIBITION

Large containers of plants can be quite heavy and if too heavy, should not be placed up on display tables. In general, large plants are best viewed as they would be displayed in the garden, in other words at ground level. Short pedestals may be used to raise plants closer to eye level if they are secure. Smaller containers can be displayed on tables.

Information about the display of container-grown iris in an exhibition should be available in the show schedule.