

What is a trial garden?

From 2010 The Iris Society of Australia, Handbook for Judges

The purpose of a trial garden is to provide both an objective assessment of seedlings' overall merits and also their performance in gardens and climates which are different to their garden of origin. This assessment gives valuable feedback both to the hybridiser and, through the awards system, to the general public.

In the trial garden the whole plant must come under close scrutiny, and particular attention must be given to the plant's health and vigour. People are always going to buy irises that appeal to their particular colour preferences, but it is vital that those irises which win awards be good garden plants.

The most important criteria in trial garden judging are those which deal with the plant: its ability to produce increase, to produce numerous flowers of quality, and to resist disease. Another point which is important to consider in garden judging is distinctiveness. To be worthy of introduction, a new seedling must have some qualities which make it different to, or an improvement on, the many thousands of irises already available.

Other issues to consider are: Does it grow well in a variety of conditions and soils (within the limits of the species) and provide adequate increase? Does it transplant readily (within the limits of the species)? Is the foliage clean, healthy and of neat appearance? Does it produce an adequate number of attractive bloom stalks and buds. Is the bloom appealing as to form, colour and substance? It is important to remember that the more times that a plant is observed growing in a garden situation, the easier it is to make an objective overall assessment of it. The plant's garden value is of prime importance and length of bloom season is an important factor here, as is general floriferousness.

To be deserving of awards, a cultivar should have its own particular charm and personality, which draws you in from across the garden. It should be an appealing garden plant, floriferous and healthy, with superior landscape value, and an overall appearance of grace,

balance and beauty.

## GARDEN JUDGING POINTS SYSTEM

### Plant 25

Growth and increase 15, Health / disease-resistance 10

### Stem / Stalk 30

Branching, strength and proportion 15, Bud count, floriferousness and bloom sequence 15

### Flower 30

Colour 5, Form 10, Substance, texture and durability 15, Distinctiveness, beauty and garden appeal 15