

## Proposal to Create an Artistic Design Certificate for AIS Judges

Submitted by Dawn K. Boyer

**Purpose:** To allow AIS judges to become certified in artistic design so that they are available and qualified to judge both horticulture and artistic design at AIS shows, as outlined in the AIS Handbook.

**Reasoning and Explanation:** Artistic Design is the only chapter in the handbook that refers to judges that are not AIS judges, when it comes to AIS affiliated shows. The handbook is the guide that is followed for exhibition and garden judging, and outlines, using the point scale, how to judge the artistic designs. Yet, several requirements must be followed for a person to become a trained and qualified exhibition and garden judge, but nothing is required to become a design judge. In fact, the thought is, "Why not just find someone from outside of AIS for this job". The only sentence in the old handbook concerning qualifications for judging the artistic design division is "...should be judged by those who have been trained, are experienced and qualified." What does that mean? How is that related to AIS judges? Trained how? How and what kind of experience? What are the qualifications? A person who wants to become an AIS judge in all other areas of iris growing and competition has a clear understanding of, and a path to, a judgeship by following the handbook. Why, then, is it assumed that AIS judges are not competent enough to also be able to follow a path to becoming a judge of iris designs, instead of going outside of the AIS membership? And is it right that judges that are not very familiar with artistic design are just hoping they can "wing it", when asked to judge a show, because the club can't find a "qualified" person. It seems illogical to have an organization where everything is geared to iris lovers, hybridizers, and growers, within it, except when it comes to design. Below are specific reasons why certification is logical and possible:

1. The National Council of State Garden Clubs is no longer the one and only official garden organization for the country, I understand. Individual states have branched off in other directions and created new state groups, such as in Ohio. Therefore, they have different point scales, different ways of judging, etc. AIS does not have a list of what qualifications those members have or their philosophies, or where they are located. If a judge has followed a different point scale than the one in the AIS handbook, they will judge differently. One of the best examples of this is the AIS handbook point scale listing "Conformance to Schedule", which is worth 10 points. If the entrant doesn't follow that through their designs, and confuses the judge, he/she immediately loses all 10 points. Often outside judges are not interested in that part of the AIS point scale, so they ignore it. They also overlook creativity in this area through the entrant's use of containers. They either ignore it, if it is a vase, or sometimes dislike the design if it is something other than a vase. Their main interest is the design principles, which is good, but overlooking the importance of other points can mean the difference between a high or low ribbon for the entrant. AIS society entrants become defeated and lose interest in entering because they have tried their best to follow all of the point scale, but it is not considered in the judging. When I give artistic design presentations, this is the biggest complaint I receive from attendees. Therefore, outside judges who are not AIS members must be required to use the AIS Handbook scale of points and be told to do so before they judge. Hybridizers, iris growers and horticulture entrants would not allow outside judges to come into a show and judge according to a different scale than our handbook.

2. Many societies are in rural areas or have low budgets and few members, but want to have an artistic design division. They may have few blooming irises for the horticulture division at the time of the show, but have nice ones for a design, and the visitors to the show like seeing designs. They also want to be a competitor. Their society cannot afford bringing in separate horticulture and design judges.
3. The Artistic Division of the handbook states "It is recommended that one judge on a panel be an AIS judge so continued education of an iris may be maintained." That is because who knows more about "the iris" than AIS judges, specifically. AIS judges and outside judges need to be in the same frame of thought, and no panel of outside judges only should assume they know more about iris judging than AIS judges. So, I am not suggesting the removal of all outside qualified judges, but I am recommending more possibilities for AIS judges and following the AIS point scale as a requirement.

Steps to Take for Certification: Judges who wish to pursue an Artistic Design certificate should follow these steps:

1. An AIS judge shall inform the Regional Vice President or Regional Judges' Training Chairman, when so authorized by the RVP, of his/her wishes to receive training for certification in iris artistic design.
2. Training sessions and number of hours shall be completed on a yearly activity report, the same way as the procedure that is followed for those pursuing accreditation of judgeships
3. There is no time limit as to when the hours may be completed.
4. Once training is completed, and the judge has been approved for certification by the AIS Chairman of Judges, the person will receive a certificate.
5. A judge may be grandfathered and immediately receive certification if he/she has entered and won at least one Best Design at an AIS show, won Design Sweepstakes at an AIS show, or is a present or past member of a nationally recognized floral organization that has official design judges. (An AIS judge should already know about both iris and other floral judging).

Hours required for certification:

1. One hour covering the Principles of Design
2. One hour covering The Point Scale
3. Two hours of covering the rest of the Chapter on Artistic Design in the new AIS Handbook
4. Two hours of apprenticeship, watching judging of artistic designs at an AIS show or shows
5. Two hours of actual hands-on designing with a design judge.

A request should be made by AIS to each RVP to submit names of judges who could serve as mentors and volunteer time to give artistic design training sessions, or just be contacts for those who wish to pursue the certificate, and then a list should be compiled and sent back to all regions to distribute to members.

I hope that the AIS Board will consider the above proposal, not only as a possibility, but also as a logical and useful creation for AIS judges. Thank you for your time.

