

# Committee for National Collections; Test, and Display Gardens Report 2010-09-28

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Respectfully submitted; Robert Pries, chair.

**National Collections:** It is the purpose of these collections to support the diversity in the genus *Iris*, making it available for study and when necessary reintroduction into commerce. Hopefully this will increase the diversity available to our gardens

At present the committees work has been discovering what is extant in American Gardens both public and private. After a sense of the state of the *Iris* is measured, the needs for various types of collections will be assessed and National Collections encouraged by highest priority or practical opportunity.

Data is still being generated. The SIGNA membership was surveyed and worldwide the numbers are considerably better, but within North America possibly only as few as 25% of *Iris* species have a firm foothold in our gardens. This is defined as occurring in 3 or more gardens.

The Dwarf *Iris* Society is also being polled and possibly fewer than 5% of registered MDB cultivars have a foothold in American Gardens. Presently a university in Southern Illinois has offered to create a National Collection of Dwarf *Irises* with space for 500 cultivars if that many could be found.

We continue to communicate with the American Association of Public Gardens offering assistance with their National Collections of *Iris* and possible certification of Private collections as part of their system.

**Test Gardens;** Test gardens report on responses to local growing conditions and have in the past provided a great deal of descriptive data far beyond the official registration descriptions. Without the early Test Garden Reports the Historic *Iris* Society would lose much of its data base. Test gardens are continually being set up by Universities and extension services/ Master gardeners and other agencies. So far this committee is attempting to bring together their reports for better understanding and to encourage some of the observations that have been useful in the past.

**Display Gardens:** A comprehensive list of public and private *Iris* display gardens is being compiled. This list could be sorted by location, Time of display, and types of *Iris*. This could allow someone interested to *Iris* to plan a grand tour or a weekend road-trip. It would be possible to create an area of the *Iris* Encyclopedia for gardens and the above lists be created with links to descriptions of individual gardens public and private. The IE being a wiki would allow for garden owners, themselves, to update conditions and descriptions as needed.

In conclusion; The possibilities are enormous for saving diversity and increasing our knowledge and enjoyment of the Iris. I would be delighted to have volunteers who would like to help.