

# PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING REPORT – SPRING 2016

## Iris Encyclopedia

---

Work continues and new features are added:

- A new layout for pages emphasizes one large picture as most representative.
- There is a new layout with jump boxes to references, offspring and other data.
- Each of the 3,400 Hybridizers now has his own page.
- The development of the various groups of Iris as pictorial essays is based on the *World of Iris*.
- Galleries are being constructed for searching by color and by date.
- To emphasize its diversity each web now has a gallery of rotating Images.
- Various languages are being translated so the meaning of the plant name is evident.
- There are now 99% of all named irises on the Encyclopedia, 63,223, with about 10,000 pages of additional topics.
- There are now 1233 items in the Library, including 620 catalogs.

The Wiki has the following goals:

- To involve irisarians in a cooperative effort of AIS that gives them a sense of being a part of something bigger than their own gardens. People who want to be a part of this register as users, so they may add material. We have 1,223 registered users. Users help to create the wiki so that others may benefit also. In April 12,000 people used the wiki.
- To provide information on any Iris name someone may encounter. As of April there were 63,000+ names on the Encyclopedia, probably 99% of all names.
- To provide a method of identification of an Iris. An illustrated dichotomous key for species is under construction. Galleries of Irises with similar colors and patterns are being created for cultivars.
- To provide a resource and nexus for all Iris information.
- To present Iris information in easily understood and attractive formats.

The Encyclopedia is created by a collaborative effort of Wiki workers. Decisions of format and content have been made totally by those workers. It would be helpful to get some input from the AIS Board since this venue is AIS's largest face to the world.

## News & Notes

The AIS monthly electronic newsletter **News & Notes** has continued to be published on a monthly basis with Special Editions announcing the AIS Medal Awards. The latter continues to be the most popular issue, both in the number of members who read it and in the number who follow links for further information. Our statistics also continue to be 2-3 times what Constant Contact reports for non-profits. We have a 54% average for opens compared to an industry average of 22%. Our click-through rate is 32% and the industry average is 9%.

The most recent advance has been extending use of Constant Contact to other parts of AIS. We are able to create subgroups of our mailing list, for example, for a particular Section, at no additional cost to us. The first test of this is the Dwarf Iris Society with their Tiny Tales newsletter recently sending its inaugural issue. Lyn Wilson prepared the newsletter layout and the topics, and we “translated” it to create a similar look in Constant Contact. In the process we learned more Constant Contact’s capabilities. The look is much different from the *News & Notes* you know. **Please let us know if you would like to see how it looks or to be added to the mailing list.**

Next up will be the Historic Iris Preservation Society. Cathy Egerer is planning to do a HIPS electronic newsletter, which they will create directly in Constant Contact.

The portion of *News & Notes* opened by mobile devices continues to grow. For the most recent issue of *News & Notes*, the split is 64% on computers and 36% on mobile devices. Last fall it was 70+% on computers. This may affect how we design future editions of *News & Notes*.

AIS Convention notices have been the most frequent topics in the spring. We may consider a dedicated Convention issue shortly before future Conventions.

Again, **please let us know when you have topics that should be included and what else you would like to see in *News & Notes*.**

## **Voucher Program**

The Voucher Program is still an additional tool for marketing the American Iris Society. Sadly, there are still many affiliates that are not taking advantage of this tool for recruitment. Each RVP has been sent a reminder to be sure each affiliate in their Region knows about the Voucher Program, and a link to the explanation of the program on the AIS website will be in *News and Notes* periodically.

Since the Membership Secretary’s report in fall 2015, 348 vouchers have been sent out to new and upgrading members of AIS. Most of the voucher nurseries have reported they have received a good response from the program so far.

Each nursery listed may use the phrase, “AIS Voucher Nursery”, in any printed material or ads they produce. This will serve to identify them as a cooperating part of the Voucher Program.

## **AIS Membership Campaign**

The AIS Membership Campaign is an ongoing tool in the effort to keep the AIS growing. Every Region, Affiliate, and member should be aware of the contest and rules. The AIS Board through each committee could do much to keep the Campaign before the AIS membership. Reminders about the Campaign should be printed in the *IRISES* at least once a year, and sent to members’

emails through *News and Notes*. Since there have been no entries in the Campaign this year, perhaps a reminder about the contest rules is in order. Feel free to copy and use these rules in your Region and Affiliate for next year, so we can continue to see AIS grow.

### **AIS Membership Campaign Rules**

The contest period is from the spring AIS convention to two weeks before the next year's spring AIS convention. Submit the names of the new members with addresses, emails, phone numbers, and type of membership to the Public Relations and Marketing Committee. Please remember to include the Region and affiliate name for each new member name.

The current prizes are two new iris introductions for the AIS member who enlists the most new members, \$100.00 for the affiliate that has the most new members, and special recognition at the AIS Awards Banquet for the Region with the most new members.

Here are some things to remember when you are talking about the AIS to prospective members, as printed in the spring 2014 AIS Bulletin:

- New AIS members receive a voucher worth at least \$25 from a Voucher Nursery.
- An affiliate may give extra free irises for joining AIS at a sale.
- The AIS publication, *IRISES*, comes to members quarterly, and to E-members online.
- Insurance for your iris event is free through the AIS Insurance program.
- *News and Notes*, the informative online publication, is sent once a month to each member who wishes to receive it.

Get a copy of the *AIS Marketing Handbook* from the PR and Marketing Committee to use in your Region or affiliate.

Be sure to involve new members in your local affiliate. Everyone has gifts to share to help make AIS grow.