

Points Of Identification: Tall Bearded Irises

Note: size, height, profusion of bloom are RELATIVE qualities. Good or poor culture will influence all three, but the differences in size and height, in particular, will remain fairly constant.

RHIZOME:

A. Size

- relatively small (generally diploid)
- relatively large (frequently tetraploid)

B. Shape

- fairly compact, chunky
- elongated

C. Increase

- slow (2 for 1)
- moderate (about 4 for 1)
- rapid (5 or more for 1)

FOLIAGE:

A. Leaf bases

- conspicuously tinged red to purple
- lightly tinged red to purple
- tinged on initial spring growth only, fading out to all-green generally by bloom time (e.g. some pallidas, Souv. de Mme. Gaudichau)
- entirely green

B. Leaf character

Length:

- relatively long or relatively short
- narrow or fairly broad
- flat, slightly curled at tips, or distinctly curled in upper quarter or so

Carriage: stiff, or lax (tips bend over)

Surface: smooth, or noticeably ribbed

C. Leaf color

- blue green, with glaucous 'bloom' on surface
- "average" green
- yellowish green

STEM:

A. Height

- relatively tall
- average
- relatively short

B. Character

- rigid, straight
- angular (zigzag, from branch to branch)
- flexuous (generally a tetraploid character)

C. Branching

- number of actual branches
- number of sessile bud placements (buds borne against main stem)
- branch placement starts: high (above center); about center; low (below center) to very low

branch length:

- short: buds so close to stem that stem intersects virtually all open flowers
- med: (average): open flowers generally carried far enough from main stem so there's no interference
- long: lowest branch often has one or two sessile buds or even a secondary branch

branch carriage:

- close [see 'short' above]
- buds "toe-in" (point toward stem)
- wide-angled (45 degrees or greater)
- medium (average) intermediate between close and wide-angled [see 'medium' above]

D. Freedom of bloom

- many stems to a clump
- moderate number of stems to a clump
- few stems to a clump

BUDS:

A. Number: per placement (terminal, each branch), and total per stem

B. Spathes

- totally scarious (papery) as in *I. pallida*,
- pale, nearly white tan to brown
- half-scarious/half fleshy
- totally fleshy (may have scarious tip only)
- all green tinged with red to purple (lightly or heavily?) inflated

FLOWER:

A. Size

- relatively small (many diploids)
- average
- large (generally tetraploids)

B. Form

Standards

shape: circular; oblong; ovate; obovate; fiddle-shaped
[note if standard is fairly flat or curves back noticeably from the midrib]

carriage:

- arching (tips touch) or overlapping {both are dome-shaped};
- broadly rounded (globular as in some arilbreds);
- conical; open (anywhere from slight gap to broadly open or cupped);
- floppy (upper portion may flop inward or outward – sometimes entire petal may do so; this may be due to poor substance [see later] or midrib that fails to support entire length of the standard)

margins: ruffled, waved, smooth, laced

Falls

shape: circular; oval; oblong; fiddle-shaped; spatulate
[note if fall is flat, pinched at the sides, or convex]

carriage:

- nearly horizontal;
- flaring (approximately a 45 degree angle);
- drooping to straight-hanging;

___ reflexed (bending back toward stem)
margins: ___ ruffled, ___ waved, ___ smooth, ___ laced

C. Substance:

___ good (stiff);
___ average;
___ poor (flimsy)

D. Color:

Standards

markings:
veins (amount and color) at base of petal:
wire edge of darker or contrasting color around petal edge:
Other notes:

Falls

markings:
haft veins – plentiful to absent:
narrow to wide spacing:
conspicuous dotting – with (or instead of) veining:
edging – lighter margin, dark wire edge, etc.:
Other notes:

Beards character:

___ narrow or ___ broad;
___ dense or ___ sparse;
length they extend onto falls:
color(s): (e.g. evenly yellow; orange with dark tips to hairs; white on blade of fall, yellow in throat; etc)

Style arms and crests:

color(s) of each:
character of crests: ___ conspicuous, ___ prominently exerted, ___ inconspicuous
tips: ___ rounded, ___ pointed, ___ elongated

E. Anthers

length:
___ short (usually diploid)
___ long (usually tetraploid)
___ nearly absent, perhaps just a "hook" at the end of the filament

pollen: ___ present or ___ absent (sometimes anthers may be fully formed but fail to release the pollen – this is worth noting)

F. Texture (separately for standards and falls, if they differ:

Examples: silky, velvety, opaque, translucent, crepy, smooth or with conspicuous texture veins, etc.)

G. Bloom period

___ early, ___ midseason, or ___ late
___ rebloom? (summer, autumn, winter)