

Iris Identification- Can HIPS Help?

You have seen them in old backyards, cemeteries, growing just about all over the place; iris that have ‘lost their identity’ growing blissfully unaware that no one remembers their names. And still, just as lovely as those that do have them.

The HIPS Website gets more correspondence from those who wish to identify an iris than almost any other topic.

On our ‘ID Central’ page <https://www.historiciris.org/about-hips-copy-2/> you will find interesting articles on Iris Identification that will help you track down a name. You can also browse through our Gallery, using the Advanced Search function to narrow down your search to those iris that match the description of your iris.

But if you want our personal help, we can offer that too. HIPS has a small ‘Iris ID Committee’ whose members have volunteered to take a look at your photos and give you their opinion.

We ask you to fill out our questionnaire form available at the link above, along with a few photographs. You can just attach your photos to the form and hit the submit button. We will also accept requests via snail mail.

Do not just take photos and wait to submit them later with the form. While your iris is in bloom, note if it has a scent, how tall it grows, and how big are the blooms. Note the branching, if the iris has purple based foliage, if it holds up well in bad weather. These are the things we ask you on the form.

We do want to help you, but be forewarned, it’s difficult to put a name on an older iris, unless it’s a very distinctive or popular one. Just looking through the AIS checklists, we see how many thousands of ‘named’ iris there are but very few photos of them.

While many times we will not be able to give you an actual name, we usually can offer suggestions as to what it might be. This can be helpful and we encourage you to get a start of the suggested cultivar(s) if available, and grow alongside your iris. Don’t know where to get one? Just ask and we can see if the ‘possible match’ is offered by one of our vendors. With few exceptions it may be the only way to put a positive identification on your iris.

We also keep your iris request on our ID Forum ‘indefinitely’ and encourage other HIPS members to take a look and offer suggestions. You never know who might be growing the same thing.

Iris Identification is frustrating yet fun. But we like to play detective and sometimes are greatly rewarded for our group efforts.

If you are interested in 'iris identification' especially if you have experience, please consider volunteering to be on our Committee. We are also looking for an 'Iris ID Chairperson' to head up the committee. Just contact me Laetitia, at webmaster@historicism.org if you are interested.

Laetitia Munro, ID Committee Member/Webmaster