

Friends of Old Bulbs Gazette

[Old House Gardens](#), Ann Arbor, Michigan, 734-995-1486

“June comes, and ours is so green a world that we quite forget the all but leafless days of January, so warm and beneficent a world that we can't quite remember those zero mornings when the land was white with snow and ice. Now it is June, it is warm, it is summer.”

– Hal Borland, 1900-1978, American author, journalist and naturalist, “The Green, Green World”, *A Countryman's Woods*, 1983

June in the Iris-Beds: Favorites, and an Unexpected Discovery



It's been a busy month tending the iris at Old House Gardens, with the usual weeding, dead-heading, and photographing, complicated by a 22-day drought with temperatures in the 90s followed by air-quality alerts due to the Canadian forest fires. This added the additional task of watering at a time we're already swamped. So what a delight when 1st-year gardener Rachel found a red-winged-blackbird nest in the midst of our iris field! Apparently they are usually marsh dwellers but large iris beds seem to be acceptable as well.

We also polled our garden crew for their favorite iris recommendations based on their up-close-and-personal observations. Rachel (majoring in Horticulture at MSU) chose '[Honorabile](#)' for its unique red/yellow combination. Anna (now in her 4th year at OHG) recommends '[Wyomissing](#)',

whose opalescent color appears to change with the light. It seems, she says, “like a flower that would be in a Fairy Forest: sweet, magical, and feminine.”

Sue (office staff as well as long-time garden crew member) likes [‘Monsignor’](#) which was “a trooper during the exceptionally hot days of spring and is the last iris still in bloom as summer approaches. It is striking with the white detail on the falls that contrast with the bold, deep violet purple.” Finally, Jarod (in his second year at OHG) chose [‘Colonel Candelot’](#) as “a great mood booster, pleasant and soothing; great for a bouquet in the house” and compared it to a sunset-mix of colors with the beard providing a flash of golden-yellow.

Our 2023 Peonies Offerings Include Two Making Their OHG Debut



[‘Rachel’](#) peony



[‘Solange’](#) peony

We rotate through peony varieties each year as there are far more historic ones we love than we can accommodate in our shipping area in a single season. We’re happy to announce the return of favorites including bee-friendly [‘Miss America’](#), gently-fragrant [‘Dr. F. G. Brethour’](#), the jewel-toned [fern-leafed peony](#), gloriously scented [‘Hermione’](#), pink single [‘Seashell’](#) and rare [‘Madame Ducl’](#). And we’re thrilled to have found a source for true stock of the French beauty [‘Solange’](#) (1907), a sumptuous creamy double with buff and rose highlights and [‘Rachel’](#) (by 1925) who combines deep rosy-red coloring with mild fragrance, a trait unusual in most red peonies.

Peonies provide exquisitely beautiful blooms for both the garden and the vase while being tough, undemanding perennials likely to live for decades. Why not plant a legacy for future generations by planting a few this fall?

Summer-Shipped Iris and Daylilies



['Blue Rhythm'](#) iris



['Demi-Deuil'](#) iris



['Her Majesty'](#) iris

If you checked our selections earlier this spring, please take another look at our iris as we have 11 newly added varieties for 22 total - the most we've ever offered at one time. We're currently accepting orders for [iris](#) and [daylilies](#) to be shipped next month – all our varieties have been loved and treasured for generations now, and - as our recent experience reminds us - are quite drought-tolerant in addition to being beautiful!

If you already have an order for this summer, we'll combine your new order or email us to add another favorite.

Exciting News: Our Search for Our Own Land is Complete!



We're thrilled to announce the purchase of our new “home” has been finalized. The property is less than 10 miles from our current location. It totals 23 acres, has rolling hills, sandy soil, a creek and wetlands in the back of the property. The wetland area is home to turtles, snakes, and cranes. Pictured above is Jarod clearing the land for our first bed that will be completed in less than 2 weeks. As timing is right for the different varieties, we'll begin digging and replanting there. We'll keep you posted on our progress!

A Few Simple Bulb Tips for June



Dead-Heading Iris and Peonies – Cutting faded blooms redirects your plants' energy from seed-making to future growth and bloom. Cut down iris bloom-stalks (not individual leaves) as close as possible to the rhizome, but cut back peony bloom-stalks no more than is needed to make the plant look good.

Growing Bulbs in Pots – Container gardening is great, but it's not the same as growing bulbs in the ground. For the best results, see our [Bulbs in Pots](#) page.

Multiplying Your Rarest Tulips – In most gardens, the best way to give your rarest tulips the dry summer rest they need is to dig them up after the foliage yellows and store them in a dry, well-ventilated place – maybe hanging in mesh bags from the rafters in your basement or garage. Then put a note on your calendar so you don't forget to replant them in the fall!

Staking Dahlias – For a bushier plant, pinch out the center shoot after three or four sets of leaves develop. Although dahlias grow upright and may look like they don't need support, they do. [Learn more.](#)

Controlling Red Lily Leaf Beetle – The earlier you find and destroy these pests – which are currently expanding beyond New England – the better. [Learn more.](#)

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