

Arilbred Dwarfs and Arilbred Medians: Frequently Asked Questions

The terminology adopted in the most recent edition of *A Checklist of Arilbred Dwarfs and Medians* has been endorsed by the Aril Society International Judges Handbook committee, and will appear in upcoming revision of the handbook, subject to approval by the AIS Board of Directors. Because there has been no official terminology for many years, and not everyone is familiar with the rationale of the proposed terminology, I thought an FAQ would be helpful.

Aren't arilbreds classified according to their aril content, not their height?

Yes, the proposed terminology does not replace the current official classification system, it merely supplements it, and its use is optional. For example, an arilbred median that is one-quarter aril (mixed oncocyclus and Regelia), is still officially classified as OGB-. If one wishes to indicate that it also falls within the arilbred median height range (13 to 22 inches, inclusive), it can be designated OGB-/ABM.

What about pure arils? Why should these natural botanical groups be sorted according to height?

The terminology applies only to some arilbreds, not to any arils.

So is there an arilbred median class corresponding to each median class? Isn't that complicated?

No. There are only two categories for smaller arilbreds, **arilbred dwarf (ABD)** and **arilbred median (ABM)**. The classes for median irises are based on the types of bearded iris breeding used to create them. Arilbreds involve different types of breeding, and do not correspond to bearded classes such as MTB, IB, etc.

Aren't they called "arilmedians"?

This is a commonly used term, but it has no official definition and can be misleading, because all the irises in question are arilbreds, not arils (see above). The terms "arilbred median" and "arilbred dwarf" emphasize the difference between arilbreds and arils.

The upper height limit for arilbred medians is only 22 inches. Shouldn't it be 27.5 inches, like the bearded iris median classes?

Arilbreds fall naturally into different height ranges than do bearded irises. Arils are smaller than TBs, so arilbreds are also smaller, even those with no dwarf or median ancestry. The 22-inch height limit was chosen so that most small arilbreds with dwarf or median ancestry would be ABMs, but most arilbreds with only TB and aril ancestry would not be.

So what happens to judging and awards?

Because these terms are unofficial and optional, the awards system for arilbreds does not change at all. It is hoped that the terms will help judges appreciate the range of variety among arilbreds.

Does this mean the Median Iris Society is now in charge of these arilbreds?

No. Any iris registered as an arilbred remains under the auspices of the Aril Society International. MIS has long included arilbred medians in its symposium because many of its members have an interest in them, but they have no official authority over any arilbreds. By acknowledging the existence of arilbred dwarfs and medians and establishing a terminology for them, the ASI reasserts its prerogative in promoting these arilbreds.

What are the actual definitions?

ARILBRED DWARF (ABD): any arilbred with a registered height less than 33 cm (13 inches).

ARILBRED MEDIAN (ABM): any arilbred of one-half aril complement or less, with a registered height between 33 and 56 cm (13 and 22 inches), inclusive.

ARILBRED (TALL) (ABT): any arilbred with a registered height greater than 56 cm (22 inches), or any arilbred of more than one-half aril complement with a registered height of 33 cm (13 inches) or greater.

(The word “tall” is placed in parentheses in the last definition, because it is not intended to create a new terminology for these arilbreds. The abbreviation “ABT” is just made available for situations in which it is needed to single out arilbreds that are not ABDs or ABMs.)

I still have questions. Where can I learn more about this?

“The Arilbred Median Story” is a history of arilbred dwarfs and medians, with an explanation of the types of breeding that produce them. It is available on line at <http://www.telp.com/irises/ABMstory.htm>

“Coming to Terms with Arilbred Medians” provides a detailed explanation and justification of the terminology. This is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand the choices that have been made in developing this system of categories. It is available on line at <http://www.telp.com/irises/ABMterms.htm>

A Checklist of Arilbred Dwarfs and Medians lists all irises that might be considered arilbred dwarfs or medians, classified according to the definitions above. It is the basic resource in understanding how the terminology is applied in practice. It is updated regularly with new registrations and available on line at <http://www.telp.com/irises/checklist.htm>

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