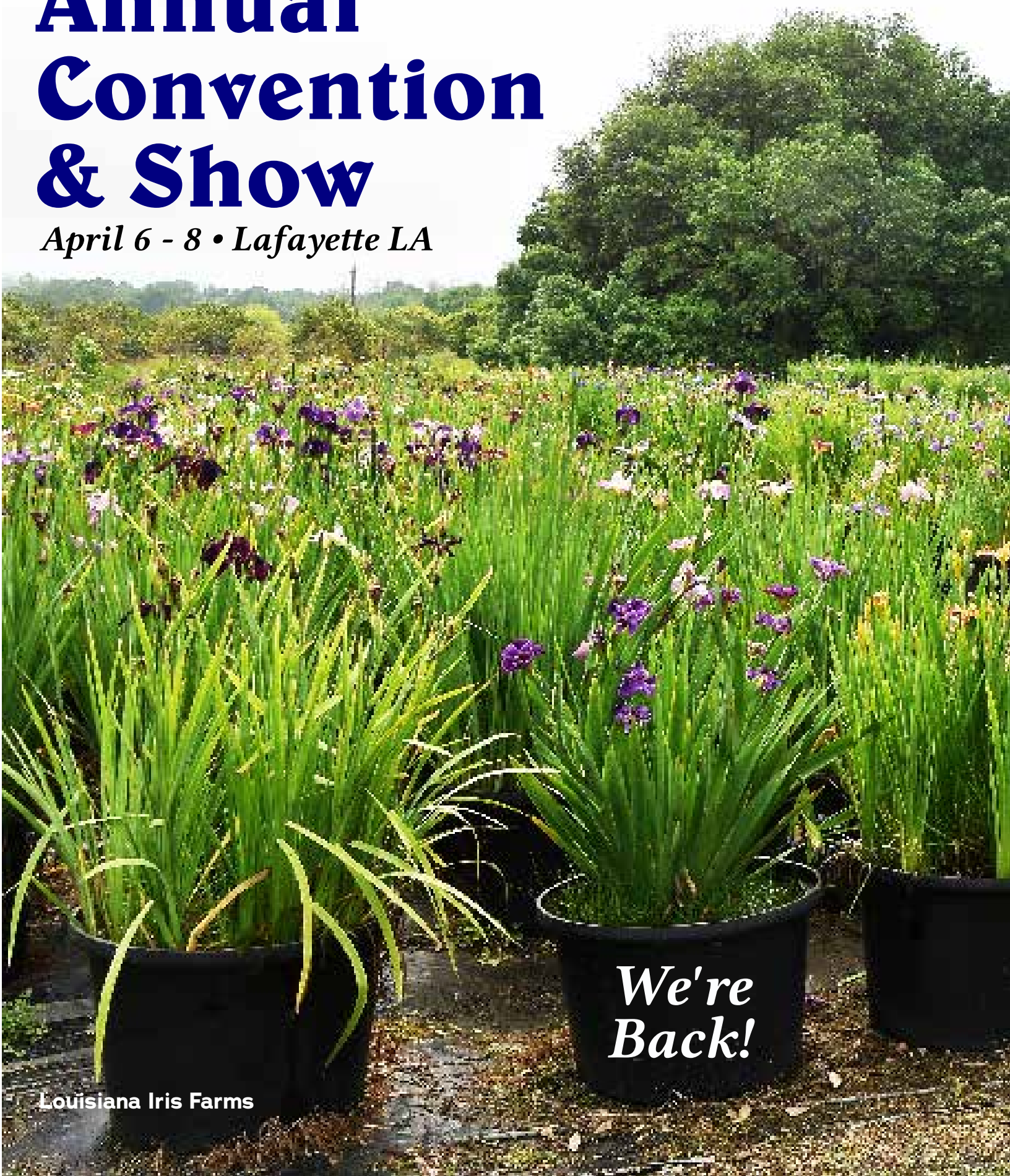


*2022 Society for Louisiana Irises*

# **Annual Convention & Show**

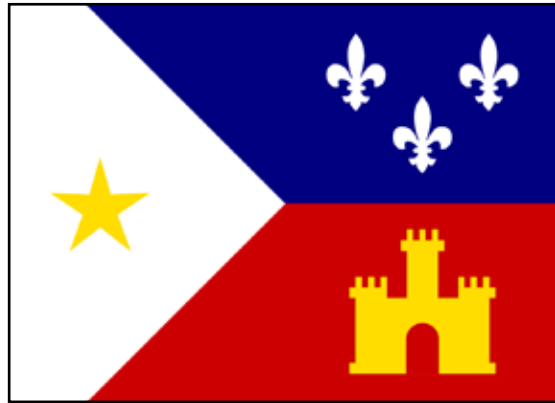
*April 6 - 8 • Lafayette LA*



Louisiana Iris Farms

*We're  
Back!*

# The 2022 SLI Convention Returns to Lafayette, Its Ancestral Home in Acadiana



**For two years, we have been rendered homeless by COVID, but not this time. So, come pass a good time at our 2022 Convention in Lafayette in the heart of Acadiana!**

The structure of this year's convention will be a bit different. It ends on Friday evening instead of Saturday to accommodate a return of our Louisiana Iris Show to the Festival de Fleurs and Blackham Coliseum on Saturday, a short distance from the convention hotel. This Flower and Garden Show will expose our beautiful irises to the gardening public and will help reintroduce SLI in the Lafayette area. For over fifty years, SLI staged all its conventions in Lafayette.

This convention will be more compact, but with three great garden tours on Thursday and the Louisiana Iris Show on Friday (and holding over through Saturday). The Friday dinner will feature the Silent and Live Auctions, always a highlight and critically important to financing SLI activities and publications. The traditional Symposium will feature a panel and member discussion on the future of the Society, a topic critical to all plant organizations in this day and age. Look for two dinners, a slide show, awards, and lots of socializing with new friends and old ones you have not seen in a few years.

**This Convention Section will tell you what you need to know to get yourself to Lafayette and what to expect when you arrive.**

Questions? Contact Convention Chair Joe Musacchia at [1CajunJoe@att.net](mailto:1CajunJoe@att.net) or 985-209-2917.





# Society for Louisiana Irises 2022 Convention Schedule

PRELIMINARY TIMELINE - ALL CONVENTION ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## REGISTRATION IN HOSPITALITY SUITE BEFORE EVENTS

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6**

5:00 - 6:00 PM

Welcome Mixer - Hotel Hospitality Suite

6:30 - 8:00 PM

SLI Board Meeting

### **THURSDAY, APRIL 7**

7:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Tour to Betzer Garden, Louisiana Iris Farms, Rabalais Garden

Vans leave from hotel. A box lunch will be provided.

Garden Judges' training in the Rabalais Garden.

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Symposium: Panel on the Future of the Society

6:00 PM

Welcome Banquet

Hybridizers Slide Show and General Membership Meeting Afterwards

### **FRIDAY, APRIL 8**

7:00 AM - 10 AM

Show Entries Accepted - Blackham Coliseum

10:00 AM - 12 Noon

Show Judging

12 Noon - 1:00 PM

Award Voting By SLI Members

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Show Open To General Public

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Lunch On Your Own

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Judges Training (Show Judging) - Blackham Coliseum

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Silent Auction

6:00 PM

Awards Banquet and Live Auction

## **CONVENTION ENDS**

\*A shuttle bus will run between the hotel and Blackham Coliseum on Friday

### **SATURDAY, APRIL 9**

## **Festival des Fleurs de Louisiane**

The Festival des Fleurs runs between at 8 AM - 4:00 PM on Saturday, April 9 in the Blackham Coliseum. SLI Louisiana Iris Show entries will remain on view during the Festival. The Festival features many plant, food, and other vendors. Show breakdown will occur at 4:00 PM in the Coliseum.



# 2022 Society for Louisiana Irises Annual Convention

April 6-9, 2022 • Lafayette, LA

## Registration Form

Room reservations are separate from convention registration. Contact Hilton Garden Inn, 2350 West Congress St., Lafayette, LA 70506. For reservations, call (337) 291-1977 by 3/15/2022. We have special room pricing for the Convention; use Event No. 5047, Group Code IRIS 22. The convention price for a standard room is \$104 + taxes. Rooms available for Wednesday, April 6 through Friday, April 8, 2022. Check-in time is 3 PM on Wednesday and check-out time is noon on Saturday. This rate is good for 2 days before + 2 days after the Convention. Parking is free.

**Please Print**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name of those traveling with you (unless they are registering separately) \_\_\_\_\_

### Convention Schedule & Pricing

	# OF PERSONS		PRICE		TOTAL
Convention Registration Fee		X	\$35	=	
Thursday Tour: Betzer Garden, Louisiana Iris Farm, Rabalais Garden		X	\$30	=	
Thursday Lunch: Po-Boy sandwich meal from Olde Tyme Grocery (included) Please select: <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Ham <input type="checkbox"/> Roast Beef <input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp		X	-	=	
<b>Thursday Dinner:</b> Please select from below:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Pork Loin		X	\$32	=	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shrimp or Crawfish Etouffee		X	\$25	=	
<input type="checkbox"/> Portobello Mushroom		X	\$27	=	
<b>Friday Banquet:</b> Please select from below:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Bronzed Tilapia		X	\$32	=	
<input type="checkbox"/> Herbed Chicken		X	\$23	=	
<input type="checkbox"/> Spinach Enchilada		X	\$27	=	
<b>Optional Donation to help SLI General Operating Fund</b>					
<b>Grand Total = Total Registration Fees + Total for Tours + Total for Meals + Donation</b>					

Please complete and mail this form so that it arrives no later than **March 15, 2022**. Reservations will be acknowledged by e-mail, if one is provided. You will receive a packet upon arrival at the convention with name tags, tickets for meals and events, and other necessary information. Please visit the website for additional copies of this form and to review any updates or changes: <http://www.louisianas.org>

**Send Registration Form & Payment to:**

Ron L. Killingsworth, 10329 Caddo Lake Road,  
Mooringsport, LA 71060  
Phone: 318-426-3654 / E-mail: retmiagt@gmail.com  
**\*No refunds after March 15, 2022**

**Payment Options:**

- Checks Payable to SLI **or** PayPal (must include e-mail address to receive invoice if choosing PayPal option)



# Garden Tours

Garden visits, for many, are the highlight of any iris convention. In fact, they may be the primary reason many attend. The gardens of others are full of ideas and glimpses of what could be at home. We crave a look at new varieties we might add to our gardens and a glimpse of design ideas that we could adapt. Iris judges want to assess the latest, supposedly greatest, and most popular performing varieties. Catalog and internet pictures are wonderful, but how do they perform?

This year, we will be treated to a visit to Jim Leonard's Louisiana Iris Farms, a major commercial garden; Ron Betzer's home garden, the work of a significant hybridizer; and Gordon Rabalais' Arnaudville garden, a restoration to iris glory in progress. We will be indebted to the hosts, who must do the hard work of making their gardens ready for visitors.

## Betzer Garden Lafayette

Ron and Eugenie Betzer's garden surrounds their home in Lafayette. It is on a large city lot but, uniquely, located on a bluff overlooking the Vermilion River. If one thinks of South Louisiana as flat, well, not entirely.



The garden is a beautifully designed home landscape with many plants other than irises. Large iris beds flow with the contours of the garden, and plants from many hybridizers are represented. In addition, there is a bed of guest irises, and Ron's registered hybrids have a home in another bed.

Ron reviews his hybridizing program in a subsequent article in this issue of the *Fleur*. He has won two Mary Swords Debaillon Medals in recent years. Perhaps visitors will see future winners among his seedlings.

## Louisiana Iris Farms Lafayette



If vast expanses of blooming irises are to your taste, Jim and Kathy Leonard's Louisiana Iris Farms will more than satisfy. The cover picture of this issue of the *Fleur* and the lead image in the convention section both offer views of the extensive iris plantings at Louisiana Iris Farms. In business since 1990, the irises are grown in large tubs well-organized along

gravel paths that seem to go on forever.

Not surprisingly, the planting exhibits the work of many hybridizers, and Louisiana Iris Farms is a place to see both new varieties and older ones. Inevitably in a planting so extensive, proven and enduring irises from over the years are well represented. Newer hybrids are there, of course, and since Louisiana Iris Farms introduces for hybridizer Kevin Vaughn, it is the go-to place to see his irises.

Louisiana Iris Farms is divided into two enterprises. The garden on tour sells irises by named variety, but from another location, plants are offered by color, often sold in large quantities. It is a big operation.

Louisiana Iris Farms is a place to come with your camera poised to be busy and perhaps a pad and pencil for notes. You may want a record of the irises that you may never get to see elsewhere.

## Rabalais Garden Arnaudville

Gordon Rabalais's garden in Arnaudville has been on SLI tours before, but not in its current incarnation. His pond was a beautiful setting, but lumbar disc problems interfered with working in the muck, and his gardening went in the direction of upland plants, such as camellias, crinums, and tropicals.



After therapy and retirement, the irises are coming back. Gordon has been growing many varieties in containers, where they have awaited reintroduction into his landscape. By spring, we should see them back in the setting that produced so many blue-ribbon irises at SLI Shows over the years.



# Festival des Fleurs

By Billy Welsh

The Festival des Fleurs is a traditional Garden Show and Sale held as an annual fund-raising event for the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center at UL Lafayette. It was begun in 1996 to supplement the Center's annual budget allotment. Over the years, funds raised have helped maintain the principal building, greenhouses, and grounds. They have contributed to equipment purchases, flooring replacement, greenhouse benches, central air conditioning and heat, electrical work, irrigation, and other projects.



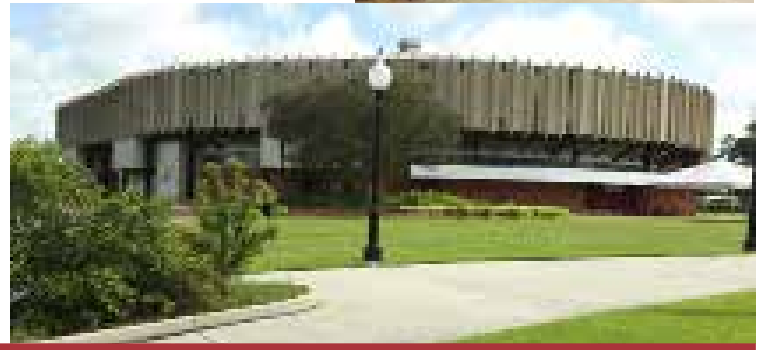
In its 29th year, the Festival des Fleurs will be held at the Blackham Coliseum, next door to the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center, on **Saturday, April 9, 2022, from 8:00 am – 4:00 PM.** The Coliseum address is 2300 Johnston Street, Lafayette.

The 2022 Festival is excited to host the annual Society for Louisiana Iris Louisiana Iris Show, a return to tradition since Festivals have been the site of SLI shows in the past and since UL Lafayette played a substantial role in SLI's beginnings. The University hosted SLI's organizational meetings in the early 1940s, and the Society staged its first shows on campus. The Special Collections in the Edith Garland Dupré Library houses SLI's archives, including the organization's official files and the papers of many early activists and founders. These include Ira S. Nelson, a University horticulture professor and a founding member of SLI. SLI has strong roots at UL Lafayette, and it is good to see them revived and strengthened.

The Festival des Fleurs will display the Show irises, and SLI will also sell bare-root iris rhizomes. These will be among the many garden-related items available from vendors at the Festival, such as plants of all kinds, garden accessories and gifts, pottery, garden supplies, and so forth. The Festival will feature approximately 75 indoor and outdoor booths, an area for displays and information featuring local plant societies and organizations, including the Lafayette Garden Club, the Bonsai Society of Acadiana, the Acadian Rose Society, the Acadian Orchid Society, and the Acadiana Hibiscus Society. Food vendors will be present, of course. The Lafayette Parish Master Gardeners will participate with a sales booth, and they also will provide gardening demonstrations throughout the day. A children's activity area will be featured.

The Festival has an annual attendance of 1,000 to 1,400, and every one of those visitors will have a chance to view the entries in the Louisiana Iris Show. Admission to the Festival is \$5.00 for adults/12 and under are free.

SLI members may enter free with their convention badge. Occurring at the end of SLI convention events, the Festival des Fleurs offers a unique extension of garden activities and opportunities for Society members.

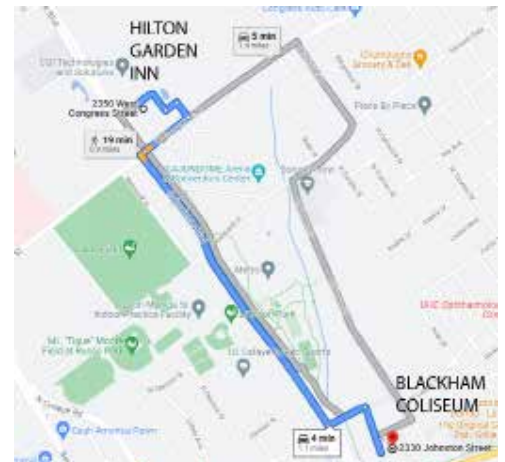


## Hotel and Navigation



The Hilton Garden Inn at 2350 Congress will host the convention. See details on the Registration Form.

The Show will be in the Blackham Coliseum 1.1 miles away, a brisk four minute walk, stroll, or hike, depending on your perspective. Vans will be available as shuttles, also.





# General Information

## Symposium

This year's Symposium will address a topic of critical importance to us all: **"The Future of the Society."** Ninety minutes are scheduled between the Thursday tour and the Welcome Banquet for a panel discussion of strategies and tactics for SLI to survive and thrive in an era of social media and other changes.

It will not be the intent of the session to bemoan or belabor our condition. We all know that plant organizations face challenges. Almost all have experienced declining membership, aging leadership, and financial and other problems due partly to COVID-induced inactivity.

The purpose of the Symposium will be to help explore tangible steps we can take to adapt and to assure that the Society can effectively continue its mission in the future. Scheduled panelists at this time include Charles Perilloux and Daphne Sawyer. Patrick O'Connor will moderate, call upon designated members to respond, and lead a discussion among members.

So, put on your thinking caps and bring your ideas along to this important session.

## Registration

Registration is open, and the form appears in this section. Additional copies can be downloaded from the SLI website: <http://www.louisianas.org>.

Please register as early as possible, and remember that the hotel registration is separate from the convention registration.

Registration packages (name tags, meal tickets, and so forth) can be picked up in the hospitality suite Wednesday before the Welcome Mixer, or see Ron Killingsworth before loading on the vans for the tours. Ron will serve as Convention Registrar. 318-426-3654 [remiagt@gmail.com](mailto:remiagt@gmail.com)

## Welcome Banquet

The traditional Welcome Banquet will be Thursday evening, April 6 in the convention hotel. As is the custom, it will conclude with a hybridizer's slide show of their recent irises. Before the slide show, there will be a brief General Membership meeting to conduct necessary business. That will include filling any vacancies in officer or board positions.

## Iris Show

We will stage an AIS-accredited Iris Show in Blackham Coliseum with iris entry on Friday morning, April 8.

Anyone is free to enter an iris. The Show will open for SLI members to vote for SLI Awards from Noon to 1:00 PM. Entries from the show will also be on display all day Saturday at the Festival des Fleurs.

## Awards Banquet and Auctions

On Friday night, the Awards Dinner is bracketed by the Silent and Live Auctions. These are always entertaining events and exceedingly important to the financial health of the Society. Auction revenues enable SLI to provide the *Fleur* and other operating costs while keeping dues moderate.

Daphne Sawyer of South Carolina will be in charge of the Silent Auction this year. Auctions never fail to assemble a fascinating array of irises and related items. For the Live Auction, hybridizers and growers always donate some of their latest plants plus other recent and historic Louisianas. The Live Auction offers a chance to get a quick start in obtaining new introductions.

## Hospitality

A hospitality suite will be available at various times during the convention. It will be the site of the Welcome Mixer on Wednesday evening and will be the initial location for you to pick up your convention packet, meals tickets, and so forth. Look for more information when you arrive.

## WE NEED ITEMS FOR THE SILENT AUCTION

The Society depends upon auction revenue to cover operating costs, including a large portion of *Fleur* expenses. Please consider donating items to our Silent Auction.

You may bring them to the convention or send them to Ron Betzer in advance. 120 Adair Ln, Lafayette, LA 70508

Many thanks for considering my request!

-Daphne Sawyer, Silent Auction Chair



# General Information

## Transportation

The Society will provide fifteen-passenger vans for the Garden Tours on Thursday and will have one available on Friday to assist members in getting from the hotel to Blackham Coliseum, the site of the Show. The bus will be available as a shuttle on a schedule to be determined.

Out-of-town members are encouraged to make friends with local folks. Sharing a ride will be convenient in many cases. The distance between the hotel and the Coliseum is just over a mile, so walking might be an option for some.

## Judges Training

Both Exhibition and Garden Judges Training will be offered. One hour of Show Judging is scheduled from 2-3 PM on Friday at Blackham Coliseum. An hour of Garden Judges Training is set for Thursday during the tour of the Rabalais garden.

Members with no interest in becoming an iris judge are encouraged to attend judges training. It is an excellent way to learn how to appreciate the finer points of Louisiana irises.

You will be asked to register for judges training so we can prepare for the sessions, but there is no fee.



## Touristy Places

There's a lot to see in Acadiana. Come early. Stay late.



**Moncus Park.** A new but long-planned park in Lafayette, a short distance from the hotel. 8,000 irises in bands of color around a four-acre pond. A half-mile from Blackham Coliseum. Park opens January 1, 2022. [www.moncus.com](http://www.moncus.com)

**Vermilionville** Dedicated to the history and culture of the peoples of the Attakapas region through the end of the 1800s. <https://bayouvermiliondistrict.org/vermilionville/>

**Acadian Village.** Recreation of a small 19th-century Cajun bayou community. <https://acadianvillage.org/>

**Lafayette Visitor's Center.** 1400 NW Evangeline Throughway. An attractive place for tourist information set near a pond planted with Louisiana irises.

## Volunteers for the Festival

The Convention is over Friday night, but SLI will staff a booth during the Festival des Fleurs on Saturday. We encourage members to attend, and if possible, help at the booth.

We will be selling donated iris rhizomes, and the large crowd expected at the Festival will offer an excellent opportunity to raise funds for the Society. It also will give us a chance to promote the organization and, hopefully, rebuild our membership in the Lafayette area.

The Show irises will be on display all day on Saturday, and they alone should sell the Society.

If you are willing to help during the Festival, or if you can provide bare root rhizomes for the sale, please let Ron Killingsworth know. 318-426-3654 [retmiagt@gmail.com](mailto:retmiagt@gmail.com)

### *Dietary Requirements*

We are able to accommodate persons with special dietary requirements, but we must receive notification in advance. If you have any special requirements, please contact Ron Killingsworth. 318-426-3654 [retmiagt@gmail.com](mailto:retmiagt@gmail.com)

**Lake Martin.** A small lake near Breaux Bridge and St. Martinville. A wildlife preserve and one of Louisiana's swamplands. Several swamp tours available.

**Palmetto Island State Park.** Located below Abbeville, about 31 miles South of Lafayette. Contains a large planting of *I. nelsonii*, which occurs only in a swamp just across the Vermilion River to the east. <https://friendsofpalmetto.org/>

**Avery Island - Jungle Gardens and Tabasco Factory and Museum.** Two attractions are located on this salt dome near New Iberia. <https://www.tabasco.com/visit-avery-island/tabasco-tour/> and <https://www.junglegardens.org/>

**Rip Van Winkle Gardens.** Another beautiful garden on a South Louisiana salt dome. <https://ripvanwinklegardens.com/>