

Ariel Barker  
Region 14  
1<sup>st</sup> Place  
10-12 Years Old

### My Iris Garden

After we moved to Oakhurst, I realized two things: There were no irises in our yard and we didn't actually have a yard! So, I walked over to Mrs. Neapon's house. I knocked on her front door. "Come in! Oh, do come in," a pleasant voice called from inside the house. I opened the door and stepped inside her lovely home. Mrs. Neapon was my neighbor. She was around seventy years old. There was something about her that was...magical. She had shimmering blue eyes that shone like the moon and the stars in the night sky. Mrs. Neapon smiled brightly and said, "What can I do for you?" I replied, "Well as you know, we just moved here from Fresno and our backyard is—well you get the picture." "Go on," she responded. I continued, "Your backyard is way bigger than ours and it's so much prettier. I was wondering if," — (I took a deep breath), "Could I make an iris garden in your backyard?" Her eyes were shining like the sun as she answered, "I would absolutely *love* that?"

I began planting blend and self irises because they are complete opposites. Self consists of just one color, whereas, a blend is a combination of different colors, blended together. Both the standards and falls look nothing short of marvelous@! These irises brought new life to the garden. The self iris I chose was a radiant hue of dark purple. The blend iris was a light shade of baby pink and vibrant, sunshine yellow.

I can still recall purchasing my very first iris at the local nursery and the smell of the soil and the color of the falls. Also, the texture of the beard on the palm of my hands. I also recall the plicata iris and its unique fragrance and beautiful color, shining through the plastic bag in which the cashier had placed it in. I can even recall the excitement in my eyes and joy in my heart. After I planted my first iris into the soil, I know that I had a passion for nature and for irises!

On a clear day I visit my iris garden. I see the trees swaying in the breeze, faint whispers of the rustling leaves that fill the air, birds perched on the branches of the trees and singing sweet songs. However, the real beauty of the garden was of course, the irises.

I have loved irises since before I can remember. What I love most about them is how they can transform a mediocre garden into something straight out of a dream. I think that is I spent so much time in my iris garden. I remember spending hours sitting there, in the midst of it all, reading and doing my homework. But most of all, I remember Mrs. Neapon saying, "Do you know what we have created?"

I said, "An iris garden."

And she said, "A paradise!"

Lily Young  
Region 7  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place  
10-12 Years Old

### Teepee In The Middle

If I were to plant a garden, it would be in the shape of a circle. I would have a teepee in the middle. I'll tie string around it so I can plant beans that can grow and provide shade. I'll put my hammock in the teepee so I can read in the shade. I'll put Tiger's Eye Sunflowers around the teepee but leave a space for the entrance. I'll hang up a Michael Jordan flag above the entrance for a "door." I'll also put two cacti plants on the sides of the opening pathway, and I will put three around the teepee. The cacti will prevent animals from eating my beans. When I get parched, I will throw on the gloves that I keep close to my machete and chop a little piece of cactus off. After I cut the prickles off, I'll drink from the cactus. It'll quench ya.

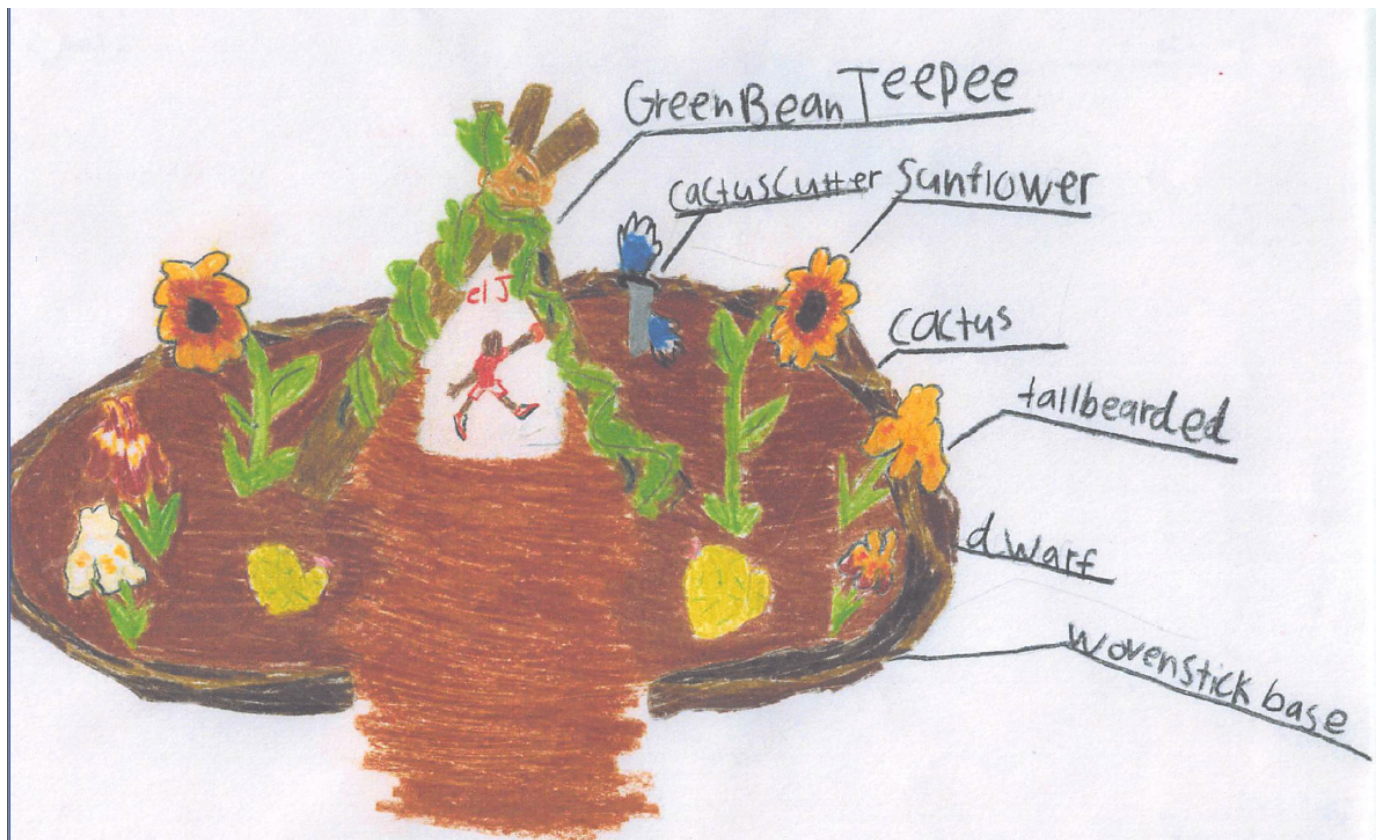
In between the sunflowers and the edge of the garden is where I'll put my irises. The colors I choose are burgundy and yellow. The irises I've chosen are, Here Comes Trouble, Luxor Gold, Practical Joke, It's Sunny Babe, Trip Wires, and Curley Fries. I chose these colors because I like them, and they are colors from Harry Potter. By mixing tall bearded and dwarf bearded irises, I will have a longer bloom time.

Since I have dwarf irises in my selection, I will put them closest to my gardens first and outside row. I will have dwarf irises in this pattern: It's Sunny Babe, Trip Wire, and Curly Fries.

The second row closest to the sunflowers will be my tall bearded. They will be in this pattern: Here Comes Trouble, Luxor Gold, and Practical Joke. Some of these are new introductions. To fill the space in between my irises, I will plant shasta daisies, golden yarrow, common yarrow and butter daisies. This will create a balance between the red, white, and yellow.

For my edging I will have woven willow sticks. It will be six inches high to prevent root rot from our red clay mud. I chose this type of edging because it looks cool and natural.

Lily Young  
Region 7  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place  
10-12 Years Old



Benjamin Wilson  
Region 15  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place  
10-12 Years Old

### **I Did This!**

My family and I have recently moved to a new house and fortunately for us, it has enough land that I can make an area into my own flower garden. My Mom and I both love bearded iris so much that we even joined the San Diego Iris Society. I go with her to their meetings, and I have helped set up the last public rhizome sale. I got to pick out a couple rhizomes, which I planted myself.

Being able to pick out the colors of iris I want for this glower bed is exciting. I've decided on blue and black colored iris for the new bed. Some of the blue varieties I'd like to purchase are Amas, downstream, FX Schreiner, Sea Power, Bubbling Waves, Can't Touch This, Captain's Choice, and Mariposa. For the blacks, I'd like Black Friday, Black Suited, Here comes The Night, Black is Black, Hello Darkness, Senor Jinx, and Awakening Embers.

I am hoping to attend an iris meeting that teaches me how to hybridize iris and then I'll experiment with blending my blue and black iris to create new varieties. I'm especially intrigued by broken iris. The patterns are so unique. They remind me of shattered glass in the sunlight. I haven't been able to find any black broken iris yet. I did find a blue broken call Blutique that I plan on using in my design.

Maybe I'll create a black and blue broken iris. I'd name it "Bruiser." Get it? Bruises are black and blue, and this new introduction would be the colors of a bruise!

I've drawn out a picture of what I dream my garden will look like. I've decided to shape my garden area in the shape of a dumbbell. There will be two round areas on each end with a rectangle middle area in between the two round areas. I's plant the tallest plants such as sunflowers and roses in a straight line through the middle of the whole design. After that, I'd go towards the edges according to plant height. I think the pansies would be closest to the edge. The edging would be about six inches high and probably be bricks.

I love birds and so I want to put out a bird bath in the garden to encourage the to stay around. I have seen some pretty metal wind spinners in the shape of flowers I'd like to put in the design also. I'd place these away from the bird baths, so they don't scare away the birds.

I can't wait to see how it all works out and be able to say, "I did this!"

blue iris side

black iris side

