

# Well worth waiting for

A Second World War hero's superior range of British-bred irises will soon be available to buy, reveals Kathryn Bradley-Hole

Photographs by Marianne Majerus

**B**RYAN DODSWORTH (1920–2009) was a Second World War veteran awarded the MC and a successful businessman. But his lasting legacy is a remarkable range of tall, bearded irises, bred in his garden in his long retirement years. What distinguishes his irises are their clean, clear colours, vigour, high bud count and perfect, evenly spaced flowers. Achieving perfection usually goes hand in hand with a streak of ruthlessness, and of the 100,000 or so seedling plants he bred, only a few dozen satisfied him and were named by him; the rest, he destroyed. Of those chosen, no fewer than 12 were awarded the coveted UK Dykes Medal. Mr Dodsworth's son, Simon, is now working with his former colleague, Barry Emmerson, sorting, cataloguing and increasing stocks, which they intend to sell from next year. For more information, telephone 07789 670299 or email [simon.dodsworth50@googlemail.com](mailto:simon.dodsworth50@googlemail.com)



↑ **Red Pike**

Sumptuous, velvety and one of the best Dodsworth irises. It was registered in 1995 as Chateau Lafite, but its name was changed for legal reasons

↑ **William of Orange**

Registered in 1999, one of the spectacular new oranges from the most recent phase of concentrated hybridising. At 38in tall, Mr Dodsworth considered it an outstanding plant





↑ **Seedling 93D**  
Bred in 1993 and not registered, although it was considered by Mr Dodsworth to be his best blue. Robust, with exquisite flowers, this is an exceptional and captivating plant



↑ **Sherwood Primrose**  
One of three outstanding yellows, its name, registered in 1996, reflects the local links with Nottinghamshire. It's 42in tall, and a cross between Buckden Pike (*overleaf*) and Sanderling



↑ **Teesdale**  
Commemorating one of Mr Dodsworth's favourite places. A spectacular plant, registered in 1999, it has great structure and strong flowers that withstood the recent downpours





← **High Peak**  
A tall, outstanding variety, registered in 1987, winning the Dykes Medal in 1990. A cross between Annabel Jane (*below*) and Dialogue, it commemorates the Derbyshire Peak District so beloved of its creator

↑ **Unnamed seedling**  
One of Mr Dodsworth's most recent and finest hybrids, made before he died in 2009. In the past 10 years, he focused almost exclusively on reds and oranges



→ **Annabel Jane**  
Registered in 1973, this was Mr Dodsworth's first registered variety, named after his daughter. A tall and spectacular multi-award winner, which earned him a Dykes Medal in 1977



↑ **Blaeberry Pie**  
Registered in 1998, this wonderful plant came out of the last concentrated phase of hybridising. The name makes the link with wild places and childhood memories



↑ **Buckden Pike**  
Registered in 1985, it won the Dykes Medal in 1987. A plant of great beauty, 34in tall, it commemorates a favourite mountain at the head of Wharfedale in Yorkshire



↑ **Eileen Louise**  
Bred in 1993 and registered in 1999, standing 36in tall. One of the finest pinks, a perfectly structured plant with great beauty. It commemorates Mr Dodsworth's mother



↑ **Sherwood Pink**  
Bred in 1990 and registered in 1996. At 44in, a spectacular plant—strong and vigorous with great structure and balance, and three to four stems carrying the exquisite classic pink blooms