



# RAMBLING RHIZOMES

February 2007

Newsletter of the Tucson Area Iris Society

tucsoniris.org



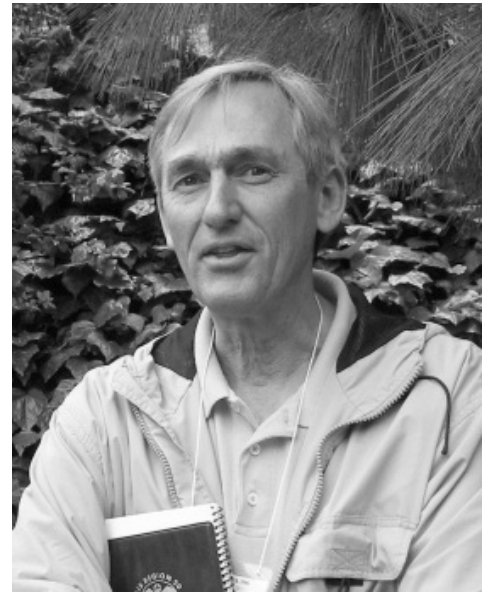
## TAIS MEETING

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1pm

Featuring

**BOB VAN LIERE** of  
**Iris4U IRIS GARDEN**

Tucson City Council Offices, Ward 6  
3202 E. First Street  
(map on p. 4)



LORETTO HEIGHTS



CASTING CROWNS



Iris4U Iris Garden  
Denver, Colorado

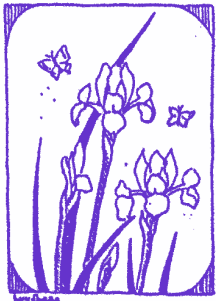


GRATEFUL PRAISE



SPECIAL KAY





*Peggi's Corner*  
*from TAIS President*  
*Peggi Ishman*

This rain we just had will certainly give our irises a boost. Since I never got around to the December and January fertilizing, this was a nice enhancement for my garden.

If you are wondering what you need to be doing right now for your irises, I'd say three things. Keep the outer brown leaves that have frozen back pulled off, keep the weeds pulled, and fertilize the irises. It doesn't hurt now to step up the fertilizing to every other week until the bloom comes on in early April. I think a good liquid application of 10-30-20, or 20-20-20 is best right now. You can also use Mac's Magic Mix from Catalina Heights Nursery. A couple of tablespoons scratched into the soil around each iris clump and watered in well will certainly help them right now.

Look in this issue of the newsletter for more complete information on what the different elements of these fertilizers do for the plants, and why they are important to their overall development. (see p. 4)

I also think this time of year is a good one for making sure the garden plot maps are up to date, and the signs are clear, correct, and easy to read.

If you have been by TBG lately you will see that some changes have been made in our iris patch. Read all about those in an update from Stan Jankowski. In a section here is the newsletter he repots on the developments there.

I would like to thank both Sue Burg and Joannie Mahmoodi for their dedicated service to TAIS activities. Sue served as the membership

chair the past 2 years, and did a great job making sure all new members got their directories, and were added to our membership list. Joannie was good at getting our tasty refreshments lined up for each meeting and club function. Thank you both.

We have had two members volunteer to fill those vacancies. Stephanie Lee is our new membership chair, and Ginny Hester who assisted Joannie on hospitality, will assume that function. Please support and help them all you can.

The newsletter will now be available on our website. You can check there for current information on upcoming events. Refer your neighbors and friends to that website as well. Tim Valenzuela does a super job at keeping our news current there. Check it out: [www.tucsoniris.org](http://www.tucsoniris.org)

We are still looking for a spring and fall sale chair, a spring iris show chair, and someone to assume getting out our publicity for upcoming meetings and activities.

I am happy to report we have made progress on the spring iris show. Foothills Mall has reserved our space for Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> and we have 3 judges who are lined up already. Charlotte Clarke has agreed to chair the artistic division. She did a wonderful job last spring and will again. It would be good if you would contact Charlotte and commit to do an arrangement for the show, before she needs to start calling each of us to ask. Let's help her out all we can.

See you at the February meeting. You will greatly enjoy meeting Bob Van Liere and learning about his garden and hybridizing program. I'm sure he will enjoy the warmer Tucson weather!

*Peggi*



**JANUARY MEETING  
with  
VINCENT CHRISTOPHERSON of ACCENT IRIS GARDEN**

The kick-off meeting for 2007 was attended by 25 people who were treated to a slide presentation given by Vincent Christopherson of Accent Iris Gardens, following lunch at Marie Callender's Restaurant. Raffle drawings for iris artwork, which netted \$38, were won by Kathy Chilton and Doug Larsen. New iris program winners were Gary Carruthers and Joani Mahmoodi. Winners of Accent Iris were Jeannie Allen, Carolyn Cowan, Ben Herman, Joani Mahmoodi, Stephanie Lee, Irene Watkins, Bert Detwiler and Doug Larsen. Stephanie Lee volunteered to be Member Chair and Ginny Hester volunteered to be Hospitality Chair. Volunteers still needed for TBG Sale Chair and Spring Show Chair.

***Winners of Vince's iris were:***

- Jeannie Allen, Navajo Code
- Carolyn Cowan, Navajo Code
- Ben Herman, Heartbeat Away
- Joani (daughter Heather) Mahmoodi, In a Heartbeat
- Stephanie Lee, Make A Wish
- Irene Watkins, Make A Wish
- Bert Detwiler, Magic Moonbeams
- Doug Larsen, Magic Moonbeams

**TAIS NEWS**

**2007 TAIS SPRING SHOW**

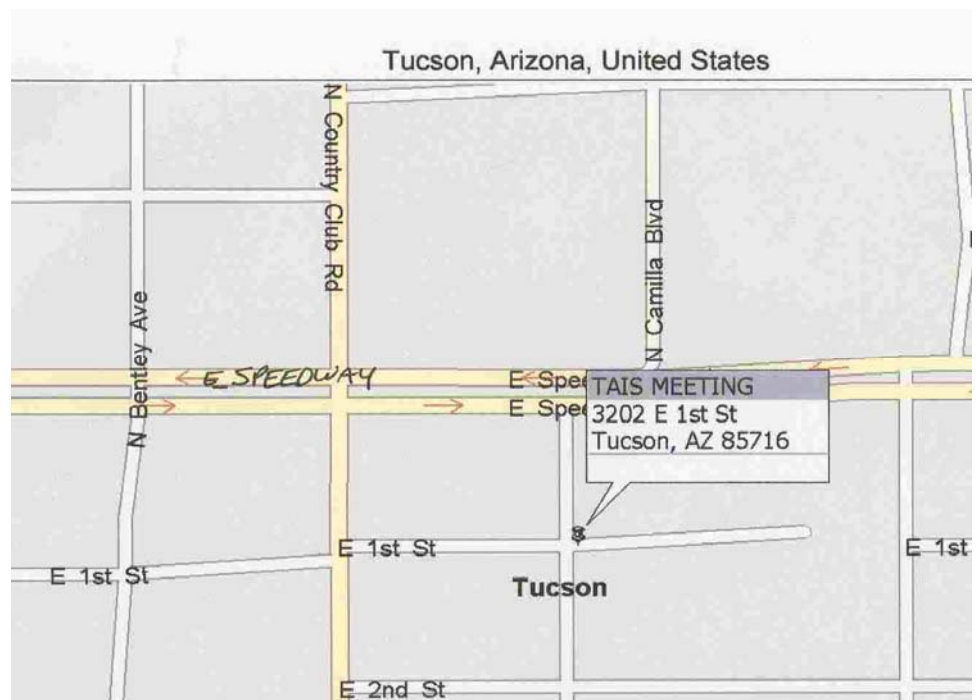
***"HARBINGER OF SPRING"***

***Sunday, April 15 at Foothills Mall***

Along with a full Horticulture Division, the Artistic Division will feature designs in these categories:

- 1. Welcome Sunshine** - A creative design using light colored iris and white.  
Assessories permitted.  
All fresh plant material.
- 2. Springtime Magic** - An abstract design. An arrangement using any colored iris with wood, dried, or fresh materials.
- 3. An Easter Surprise** - An arrangement using a basket container.  
Assessories permitted - any color iris.

**FEBRUARY 17  
MEETING LOCATION**  
  
**3202 E. FIRST STREET**  
  
**TUCSON CITY  
COUNCIL OFFICES  
WARD 6**  
  
***SEE YOU  
THERE!!***  
  
***1PM***



## Why Do We Use Fertilizers?

When you look at plants in your garden do you sometime think some are not thriving? Do you know what to give them for help? Haven't we all found our plants in need of special care at some time?

3-10-3, 4-10-6, 10-10-10, 15-30-15. Have you wondered what those three numbers on a fertilizer bag mean? Here is help for you to decide what will work best to change your plants into thriving ones or to ensure your plants keep their health.

Each fertilizer comes with information showing three numbers. These are nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium. So for example, one like Miracle Gro that shows 20-20-20 has equals parts of all three primary elements.

### Nitrogen

If your plants have yellow or light green leaves, or are stunted in their growth they need nitrogen. Nitrogen stimulates healthy growth of nice green leaves and good stems. This can be provided by adding in cottonseed meal, bone meal, manure, or fish emulsion. Manure can burn irises, so choosing another source for this element is wise. For example, if using bone meal it would be applied in 5 pounds per 100 square feet of garden area.

### Phosphorus

If the plant has red leaves or has cell retardation, or is lacking in utilizing other elements, it may need phosphorus. Phosphorus stimulates early formation and growth of roots. It also gives plants a rapid and vigorous growth. Sources for this are bone meal and rock phosphate. Super triple phosphate which is 0-45-0 is a wonderful source applied in June after the bloom stalks are cut off and again in the fall. Always water this in well.

### Potassium

Potassium increases a plant's vigor and helps make it disease resistant.

Be careful because too much can cause the plants to have reduced absorption of magnesium or calcium. Potassium is the third number on a product label.

### Other nutrients

Secondary elements like magnesium, sulfur, and calcium are included in many plant formulas. Before working with these elements it would be good to test the soil for the pH levels. So often nothing needs to be added.

Magnesium aids in photosynthesis. When we see chlorosis on old leaves, this can be a sign of lack of magnesium. Epsom salts can correct this. I have never needed to add magnesium to irises. Only to rose bushes.

Sulfur helps build proteins. A deficiency here would look like a lack of nitrogen. If the pH balance is too low sulfur burn can occur. Lack of calcium stops growing points in plants. Excess calcium can reduce the intake of potassium and magnesium. Sources for this are gypsum or oyster shells.

The final elements to consider are air and water. Carbon comes from air in carbon dioxide. It is the keystone of all organic substances. Oxygen for respiration comes from water and oxygen in the air. Hydrogen comes from water and is necessary for all plant functions.

### Irises

Now if all this information seems more than enough, the things to know when it comes to our irises is they need sun, water, good amended soils, and fertilizer during the growing months when it is cool, and before they have bloomed. We all know that watering correctly, choosing a sunny location for the irises, and planting in well amended soils helps irises thrive.

Once irises bloom, we don't need to fertilize again until October or November when we see new growth. Then we start using a 10-30-15 or a 20-20-20 monthly. The exception being the application of 0-45-0 we use for giving them good root growth when we plant in the Fall, and just after they bloom in May or June.

If we want to use a boost of a 10-55-10 (sometimes called Bloombuster or Superbloom) as a spring wake-up call in mid-March, that will help bring on really nice-sized irises.

## TAIS 2007 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 17, SAT. 1PM  
Tucson City Council Offices, Ward 6  
3202 E. First Street

BOB VAN LIERE  
"IRIS4U GARDEN"

MARCH 10, SAT. 1PM  
  
(MARCH TBG SALE??)

EILEEN FIUMARA  
FLOWER ARRANGING WORKSHOP

APRIL 15, SUN 1-5 PM

SPRING SHOW (ONE DAY SHOW)  
"HARBINGER OF SPRING"  
FOOTHILLS MALL

APRIL 21-22

REGION 15 SPRING TREK  
RIVERSIDE, CA

APRIL 22

ISHMAN GARDEN TOUR  
FUNDRAISER

APRIL 30-May 5

AIS NAT'L CONVENTION  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

JUNE 16, SAT 1PM

OKC CONVENTION RECAP  
KATHY CHILTON

AUGUST 25, SAT 5PM

POTLUCK/AUCTION

SEPTEMBER 15, SAT. 9-4

RHIZOME SALE AT HARLOW'S

(SEPT/OCT TBG SALE??)

OCTOBER 20, SAT. 1PM

ELECTION, NEW IRISES

NOVEMBER

BD MTG (TBA)

DECEMBER 8, SAT 12:00PM

HOLIDAY PARTY

Check our website for updates and additional information!



**IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR  
TAIS MEMBERSHIP!!  
(If you haven't already)**

**WE WANT YOU—WE NEED YOU!  
DON'T MISS OUT!**

**Fill out the Membership Form in this Newsletter.  
Mail it in or bring it to the meeting!**

**IT'S THAT TIME . . .**

If your name DOES NOT appear below, please complete the Renewal Application for TAIS below and mail with your dues  
New directories will be available at the February meeting.

The following are paid up for 2007: Shirley Andrews, Karen Bergamo, Ruth Cely, Ina Gable, Werner Kuster.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> name if dual membership (in same household) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

(√ box) Single \$10 \_\_\_ Dual \$13 \_\_\_ Youth \$5 \_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL CHECK ENCLOSED (Make check payable to TAIS) . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to:

- Receive newsletters by email (instead of snail mail hard copies)
- Assist at the 4/15/07 Spring Show (Foothills Mall)
- Assist with the Fall Iris Sales (dates and places TBA);  Assist at the TBG Sales
- Bring treats to a meeting  Help with the newsletter
- Care for TBG's iris bed the month of \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Application to Maxine Fifer, 4527 N. Camino Cardenal, Tucson, AZ 85718  
?????? Call 743-5334 or email WeTypeFast@aol.com



**Please meet.....**

**Paul and Fran Bessey**

**by Peggi Ishman**

We have two very special long standing Tucson Area Iris Society members that I would like to spotlight in this issue.

Paul and Fran Bessey. Many of you know the Besseys, but for those who haven't met them yet, and even those who have, I think you will enjoy learning about them.

Paul became interested in irises while seeing them in his grandmother's garden when he was only 10 years old.

She grew them in Madison, Wisconsin. Fran saw irises in many gardens during her own childhood growing up in Chicago, and spending her summers at his father's resort in Wisconsin. The Besseys moved to Mesa, Arizona in 1957. Paul worked at the U. of Arizona agricultural department first in Mesa, and then in Tucson. He retired from there in 1989. They have 5 grown children.

Their real interest in growing irises began in Mesa with four or five varieties. This increased when they moved to their current location here in Tucson in 1973. They started adding more varieties here buying those early additions from Marilyn Harlow, and Jen Jasper during the TAIS fall rhizomes sale. First they grew them in the backyard. It wasn't long before their collection outgrew that space. Paul said the decision was made to move the seconds to the front curb areas until they could determine if they were safe there and wouldn't be taken by passersby. It turned out it was safe, and the collection grew and grew. Pretty soon Ingel's Florist on Broadway was telling its customers "If you want to see irises, go down to Arroyo Chico and see the Bessey's garden."

I personally remember one summer in the 1980s when the club held our annual potluck and auction in the Bessey's backyard. They had just dug out a wonderful lowered area for seating in a large oval. The garden was all grown up in all sorts of plantings. It was a like a tropical paradise. Clearly, they had been preparing for the evening of having us all there.

To list all the garden clubs and activities they have been involved in throughout the years would be enough to fill a book. Paul has served as president of The Mesa Histori-

cal Society, Maricopa 4-H, Tucson Area Iris Society, Rose Society, Tucson Men's Garden Club, Tucson Garden Club and many other groups and organizations. He has judged over 400 shows in his long career. Those being in 4-H and horticultural events. Fran too has served in all sorts of official positions in these groups. They are a team in every sense of the word. They have been involved in many fund raising projects including one to start the 4-H camp near Mormon Lake outside Flagstaff, AZ., and the development of a canal preserve park in Mesa, AZ.

For 10 years Paul wrote a column giving sage gardening advice in the Arizona Daily Star. It was witty and informative. I'm sure many of you remember reading it over the years. Prior to that Paul was the associate editor of The American Society of Horticultural Science. He has held writing positions on other professional journals and magazines. Always generously sharing his advice and expertise.

When Dr. Ray Allen, who had been the AIS president, American Rose Society president, and the National Garden Club president decided to retire from Directorship of Kingwood Garden in Ohio, he picked Tucson, AZ. During those retirement years he went on to establish an extensive iris garden collection at the Tucson Botanical Garden. Later on when Dr. Allen was slowing down in some of his own activities, he looked to Paul to take over the care of this collection. Paul and Fran did that and kept up the TBG iris garden for many years.

Both Fran and Paul have been constant volunteers at TAIS functions in addition to their many other clubs and activities. They have always been counted on to pitch in and lend a hand at our TAIS functions. For example they have babysat the many canned irises we have potted up after the fall rhizome sales for selling in the spring.

Clubs could not function without the tireless support of special members like the Bessey's.

We salute and thank you, Paul and Fran, for all your dedicated years with TAIS and the community of garden clubs in Tucson.



**SAN FERNANDO VALLEY IRIS SOCIETY  
REGION 15 - 2006 SPRING TREK  
APRIL 21-23, 2006**

**GOLD MEDAL IRIS**

**SCHEDULE:**

Friday, April 21, 2006

3 pm – 9 pm	Registration – Boutique - Raffle
4 pm – 5:30 pm	Region 15 Board Meeting
5:30 pm – 6 pm	General Region Meeting
7 pm – 9 pm	Judges Training – Artistic Design by Eileen Fiumara

Saturday, April 22, 2006

6:30 am – 7:15 am	Registration
7:15 am – 5 pm	Bus Tour through 6 gardens, including lunch
5 pm – 6:30 pm	Raffle and Boutique
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Social Hour
7:30 pm	Banquet with speaker Marky Smith

Sunday, April 23, 2006

9 am – 11 am	Open Garden – Bonino garden in Glendale.
	Judges Garden Training – AIS Pres. Jeanne Clay Plank

**HOTEL:**

**HOLIDAY INN – BURBANK MEDIA CENTER- (818) 841-4770  
150 E. ANGELINO AVE.  
BURBANK CA, 91502**

Special rate for Iris Society: \$99.00 + tax (Mention code "ISR" to get group rate)  
Deadline for making room reservations is April 7, 2006

**REGISTRATION FORM:**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Club affiliation: _____	Office held _____
AIS member? _____	Office held _____
Judge status: _____	
Email for confirmation: _____	

Full Registration before April 1, 2006 # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$90.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Includes bus tour w/lunches & awards banquet)

Full Registration after April 1, 2006 # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$100.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Banquet Only (Saturday evening, April 22) # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Bus Tour Only (Saturday) # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$50.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Full Registration – Youth # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday April 22 Dinner Choice  
Apple stuffed chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Roast Beef Bordelaise \_\_\_\_\_

Please make Check or money order payable to SFVIS and send with registration form to:  
John Huffman johnhuffman@socal.rr.com (818) 998-5231  
10040 Rudnick Ave.  
Chatsworth, CA 91311

This is your **LAST** newsletter, if you haven't paid your 2007



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