



TAIS Newsletter

Our 53rd year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



President's Message

I managed to see some Arctic Iris in bloom while backpacking in Juneau, Alaska. Juneau's 90" of precipitation per year would probably drown our rhizomes. Everybody has iris challenges.

Now what? I stratified iris seed in February after Rick's inspirational meeting. Now I have several dozen 6" high seedlings and I don't know where to transplant them. The burdens of success (for once). I'm looking forward to our rhizome auction in August and sale in September to collect a few rhizomes from real hybridizers.

- Kevin Kartchner

'Lest We Forget'
(G. Sutton, 2007)

Hummingbird Iris Gardens,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2018

I walk without flinching through the burning cathedral of the summer. My bank of wild grass is majestic and full of music. It is a fire that solitude presses against my lips. - Violette Leduc

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Upcoming Events

Next meeting: August - Tucson Botanical Garden - Region 15 Auction. Date pending.

July 28th, 10 AM-3 PM: PAIS Annual Iris Rhizome Sale, 1300 Stoneridge Drive, Prescott Valley, AZ 86312. For information contact Dennis 623-980-6627.

Birthday Wishes to:

Gary Carruthers Janet Gardner
Pam Court David Johnson

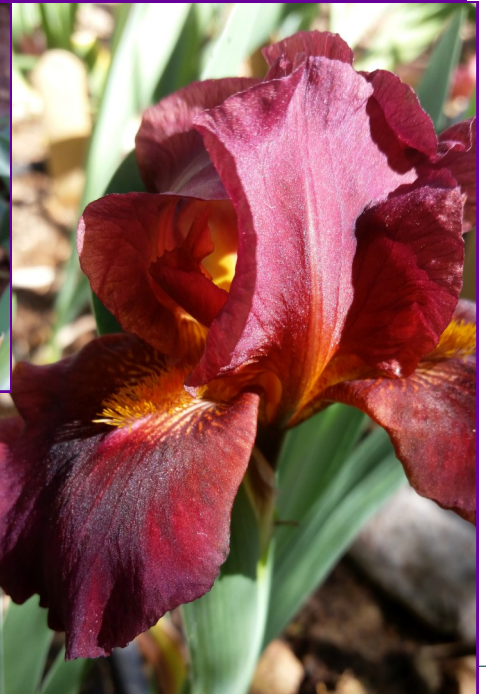


<http://humblebutton.blogspot.com/search/label/Iris>

Sue Clark's Irises, 2018



All NOIDs except the first one, 'Autumn Explosion' the Dutch irises, 'Sapphire Beauty,' and 'Blue Magic' and the morea irises. Photos by SC.



The Search is on for the Irises of Margie Valenzuela

The Prescott Area Iris Society is looking for the following irises to add to the Sculpture Garden in Prescott, Arizona to honor Arizona Hybridizers. If you have any of the following irises, please, contact Dennis Luebkin at dluebkin@q.com or 623-980-6627.

Border Bearded:

Desert Legacy

Tall Bearded:

Birthday Cheer

Birthday Confetti

Birthday Magic

Easter Wonder

Elegant Dancer

Got Spots

Peaceful Living

Pirates Den

Promises Kept

Royal Slippers

Salt and Pepper

Secret World

Silver Jacket



Photos of Margie Valenzuela's irises currently found in the Marcusen Sculpture Gardens in Prescott (clockwise from top): 'Morning Pause' (2013), 'Blue Coyote' (2012), 'Sky's the Limit' (2008), and 'Hidden Gem' (2009). Photos by Sue Clark, May 2018.



Treasurer's Report for June - submitted by Kristee West, Treasurer

Date	Debits/Checks	Deposits	Balance	Details
	\$0.00	Pending Uncashed Expenses Total		
20-Jun	#1776	\$300.00		Napa Iris Gardens Club Iris Order
13-Jun	#1777	\$90.58		Tweedy - Postage, AIS Cards, March Refreshments
	#1778	void		
8-Jun	#1779	\$10.27		Kutz- Show Posters
8-Jun	#1780	\$10.36		Kutz - Refreshments
	#1781	void		
20-Jun	#1782	\$65.89		Powers - Apr and May Refreshments
29-Jun			\$4,107.93	Bank Balance
			\$0.00	Pending Uncashed Checks
29-Jun	CASH ON HAND		\$21.00	Donations and sale of handouts
29-Jun			\$4,128.93	TAIS Balance

Purple Iris - Quintessential Coloring

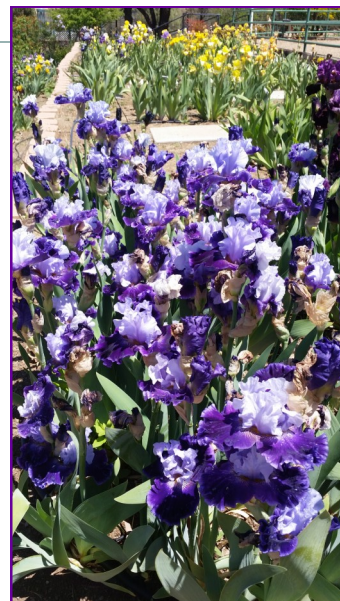
Upon hearing the word iris, many individuals immediately picture a purple iris. Most of the *species*, or wild, irises are purple, and from them hybridizers have selectively bred for the rest of the rainbow of colors. According to Kelly Norris in his book, [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#), "Given its default status in the iris realm, many breeders have avoided working with this color class specifically, unless on the way to goals involving blacks or maybe even complex bicolors. Purple bearded irises otherwise just happen." He recommends the following purples in his list of irises that everyone should grow: 'Alan M. Touring' (Jameson 2001), a late-blooming, dark metallic purple with a red-violet wire rim; 'Conjuration' (Byers 1989), a white and purple bicolored space-ager with horns and 8-12 buds per candelabra-branched stem, also a late-bloomer; the Dykes medal-winning 'Jesse's Song' (Williamson 1983), a purple and white plicata with ruffles, and a vigorous grower and bloomer; the historic 'Quaker Lady' (Farr 1909), a lilac and bronze beauty with "a soft-spoken princess charm;" and lastly 'Wintry Sky' (Keppel 2002), a bold, ruffled reverse amoena with pristine white falls and purple standards which decrease in color intensity toward the top. Two Dykes-winning purples made Kelly's Gallery pages, but not the must-grow list: 'Montmartre' (Keppel 2008), a red-violet luminata with lots of ruffles and a white wire rim on both standards and falls; and 'Gypsy Lord' (Keppel 2006), stunning with its white standards and purple falls with white centers accented with tangerine beards. The latter is a favorite of mine, and I grow it in my garden, along with various historic NOIDs in varying shades of purple. I also grow Rick Tasco's rebloomer 'Autumn Explosion' (2013), which flowered in January this year. See photos on p. 2.

Other purples come recommended in a blog post about irises called "[Best of the Best](#)" on Houzz.com, posted on 14 Feb 2008. 'Superstition' is a favorite, submitted by five gardeners as being in their Top Ten irises list. 'Dusky Challenger' and 'Paul Black' made Top Ten lists three and two times, respectively. Other purples in these Top Ten lists include 'Matt McNames,' 'Jesse's Song,' 'Persian Berry,' 'New Leaf,' 'Recurring Dream,' 'Classic Look,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'Montmartre,' 'Mary Frances,' and 'Windwalker.'

Two purples that captured my attention at Hummingbird Iris Gardens in Prescott last month are 'Global Crossing' (Van Liere 2011), which dazzled in its clump of bluish-purple bicolored blooms, and 'Louisa's Song' (Blyth 2000), a ruffled delight in lilac and red-violet with a white rim and tangerine beards.

Craving something new? [Schreiner's](#) offers 'Velvet Voyage,' (2018) with large ruffled flowers bearing royal purple standards and purplish-black falls, as well as their classic medal-winning 'Diabolique' (1997), with its garnet-purple ruffly flared flowers - 8-9 of them per stem! Also in their catalog is 'Titan's Glory' (1981), a royal purple self that won the Dykes Medal in 1988. And lastly, Kelly Norris suggests that 'Eleanor Roosevelt' (Sass-McDade 1933) could survive in concrete! (That's what I need at this point..).

If you are missing the *color of kings* in your garden (or if you just need more of it), there are sure to be some lovely varieties at our Rhizome Sale on September 22 at Harlow's Gardens! - SC



From top: 'Global Crossing' and 'Louisa's Song.' Hummingbird Iris Gardens, Prescott. Photos by Sue Clark, May 2018

Aphids - a sticky problem

Have you ever noticed small light gray bumps on your iris leaves? And upon closer examination, do those bumps have tiny legs? Those are aphids. I have seen green aphids on other plants, but only these gray ones on my irises, and only this year. They focused in on three of my irises.

In [The Gardener's Iris Book](#), William Shear states that aphids suck sap and can spread disease from plant to plant. He suggests removal by wiping the affected leaves between finger and thumb, spraying with insecticidal soap or a dilute dish soap solution, or treating the plant with pyrethrin. Other sources suggest spraying aphids off with a jet of water.

Our own Kristee West plants onions and garlic near her irises to ward off aphids and other pests. Natural predators include ladybugs, lacewings, and daddy longlegs. Kelly Norris does not mention aphids in his book, [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#), so perhaps they are not a serious pest of irises, at least in Iowa where he lives.

A little more reading gave me more insight. There are over 4,000 types of aphids. They are really only an issue if plants (in general, not irises specifically) become heavily infested, at which point the damage inflicted includes curled leaves, wilted or yellowed leaves, stunted growth, and reduced vigor. As aphids feed, they release a sticky liquid known as 'honeydew,' which then attracts both ants and a sooty black fungus.

Honeydew must be what discolored the leaves in my photo, above. This same [article](#) stated that aphids can pass along diseases and viruses as they feed. The author suggests releasing ladybugs or lacewings when infestations are at low- to medium-levels, and using a short-lived insecticide to bring severe infestations to that level before using the biologics. Diatomaceous earth works well, too, and they sell a 'bug-blaster' (link from the article) that attaches to a garden hose and delivers a powerful spray which can knock off all sorts of pests.

How can an aphid infestation get out of control?

It's due to their somewhat unusual life cycle. (See Figure 2), Aphids produce a type of female that gives birth to 4-12 female nymphs a day, each of which can give birth to more females for about a week. If things get overcrowded, winged females are produced, which can fly off to establish another infestation elsewhere. As the day length shortens in the Fall, an egg-laying or *oviparous* (oh vip' uh rus) female is produced. After mating, she lays eggs that overwinter and hatch in the Spring. These eggs are very cold-hardy and will hatch into the *viviparous* (vie vip' uh rus) or live-bearing females. And the changing climate is a factor. According to a study quoted in this [article](#), a 2°C increase in global temperature would allow *five* extra generations of aphids a year! Yikes!

My aphids? I sprayed with insecticidal soap and headed to the nursery for some onions. I found some called I'toi onions, which have been grown by the O'odham peoples for centuries, so I chose those. The aphids seemed not to be an issue after this double treatment. - SC



Figure 1. Aphids on one of my Club irises, March 2018. The leaves are stained with honeydew from the aphids.

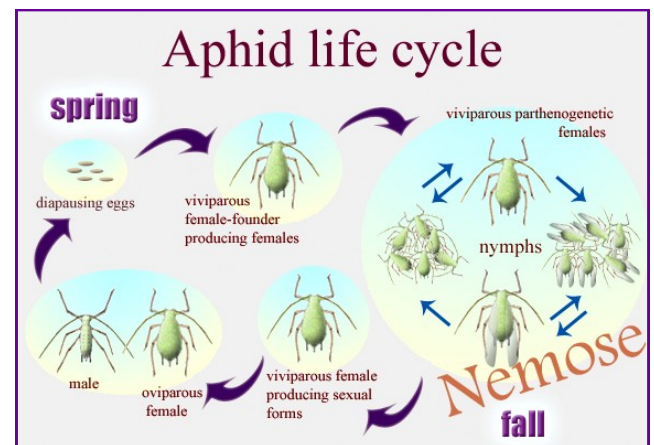


Figure 2. Life cycle of aphids, specifically the pea aphid, from <http://www.metapathogen.com/aphid/>.

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2018

Kevin Kartchner – President

Vice President—open

Janet Gardner – Secretary

Kristee West – Treasurer

Carol Peterson—Membership Chairperson

Melania Kutz—Program Chairperson

Madeleine Glaser - Asst. Program Chairperson

Angela Powers - Hospitality

Tony Kutz - Photographer

Sue Clark – Newsletter Editor

Iris Limerick:

There once was a man who loved purple.
He lived in the town of Dunkirkle.
His garden had space
So he set a quick pace
To fill it with irises of purple.

-Sue Clark



'Ciel et Mer' (Cayeux 2007)

Do You Know?

Do you know why irises are often called “flags”? I have not been able to find the reason. Someone suggested that it's because they often appear *on* flags, in their form as a fleur-di-lis. *Stars* often appear on flags, yet they are still known as stars, so that reason doesn't really seem logical to me. If you have any insight about this puzzle, please contact me at TAISnewsletter@yahoo.com. - SC

"The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses." - Hanna Rion

What to do in the Iris Garden for July:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

Leaves make food for the plant, so do not trim them off unless they are dead. No need for cutting them into the fan shapes of old, unless they look really bad and need tidying.

Provide afternoon relief with shade cloth or by moving potted irises into the shade.

Continue to water and feed reblooming irises.



Tip Exchange

Self-watering planter pots from Walmart are highly recommended by Melania and Tony. These plastic pots with a water reservoir in the bottom come in green, terra cotta, and stone. The largest one, at \$10, has a 17" diameter at the top and could hold two irises. The middle-sized one (\$8) has a 14" diameter, and the smallest one (\$6), an 11.5" diameter. These are made by Misco, who also manufactures a self-watering window planter. The reservoir holds water for up to two weeks (probably for one week here in the desert). Order [here](#), if not available in stores. - SC

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Last month, we looked at the Kennicott family, plantsmen in Illinois for six generations. Surely, plants are in the blood (or perhaps DNA?) of certain families, don't you think? This month, we focus in on an French family with just that sort of passion, especially for irises. Four generations of the Cayeux family did much to improve the iris for the modern day. In fact, Ferdinand Cayeux is considered to have had “the most distinguished hybridizing career in the history of garden irises.” Ferdinand learned about plants from his father Victor, a nurseryman, and then later at the National School of Horticulture. He and his friend Leon Le Clerc bought a seed nursery where they had been working, and renamed it Cayeux et Le Clerc. Their company was three doors down from Vilmorin-Andrieux et Cie, (featured in the April and May 2018 editions of this newsletter), and was in fact, housed in a building purchased from Vilmorin. The Vilmorin company likely stimulated Ferdinand's interest in hybridizing irises. In 1906, he introduced four varieties. 'Ma Mie,' whose white flowers with violet stitchery along the edges has been grown in thousands of gardens in Europe and America, won an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1916. 'Mme Blanche Pion,' another of the four, was named for Ferdinand's sister and displays cream standards and violet falls. This particular variety was “a favorite of gardeners in the first three decades of the 20th century.” Ferdinand introduced a mauve-colored iris in 1910, 'Germaine Le Clerc.' Regrettably, only one of his early introductions survives in the modern day, and that is 'Ma Mie' (which means “my true love”).

Beginning in 1908, Ferdinand ramped up his hybridizing efforts, making between 250 and 500 crosses per year! He knew much about plant genetics and kept detailed records. However, World War I interrupted his efforts to introduce any new irises. In 1922, all five of Cayeux's initial introductions were included on a list of the 100 most outstanding irises grown in France, a superb example of quality versus quantity! John Wister visited the Cayeux nursery in 1922, and described it as 10+ acres surrounded by a stone wall, with seedlings growing side-by-side with their parents. Wister's favorite was 'Mme Henri Cayeux,' (1924), whose red-violet standards and darker red-violet falls still shine in many historic iris collections.

“Cayeux et Le Clerc published its first iris catalogue in 1923. The American Iris Society's Alphabetical iris Check List for 1939 says of Cayeux et Le Clerc that “from 1924 on this firm has probably been the world's greatest in this work.” [hybridizing and selling outstanding iris cultivars].” More next month! - SC

Source: [Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them](#) by Clarence E. Mahan