

TAIS Newsletter

Our 53rd year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



Flopsy,

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

President's Message

I hope you were inspired to try some iris hybridizing after Rick Tasco's presentation to us. The stratifying process was all new to me. I'm stratifying some iris seeds now from crosses I made last summer. I'm hoping for something interesting in a couple of years. See you at our March meeting where Sue will educate us on preparing our flowers for the April show.

- Kevin Kartchner

People from a planet without flowers would think we must be mad with joy the whole time to have such things about us.

- Iris Murdoch, British novelist

Upcoming Events

Next TAIS meeting: Saturday, March 10 - 10 AM. Tucson Botanical Gardens, Porter Hall. Preparing for our show: AIS slide shows, discussion, tips, naming contest. Please note different time and place than usual.

April 14. TAIS Iris Show. Murphy-Wilmot Library, large room. Set-up at 8 AM. Show: 9 AM to 3 PM. Additional set-up the day before at 4-5 PM.

April 14. Pima County Master Gardener 19th Annual Home Garden Tour, 9 AM to 3 PM. Tickets on sale online and at local nurseries. \$15-\$20.

April 20-21. AIS Spring Trek. Phoenix. A wonderful, nearby learning opportunity!

Birthday Wishes to:

Kristee West

Steven Ginter

Paul Bessey

Martin Juarez

Celia Keener



from clipartpanda.com

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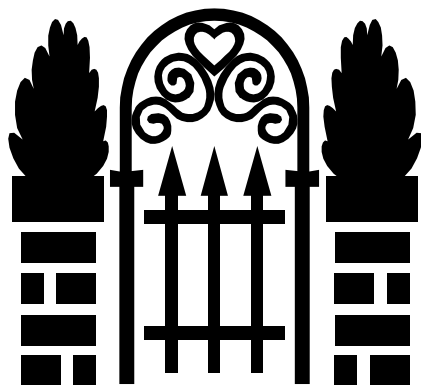
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February Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

February 10, 2018

There were 26 present. Rick Tasco gave a presentation on hybridizing iris. Everyone from the novice to the seasoned iris grower learned from Rick's informative talk. He took us from pollinating to stratifying to planting the seedlings.

Three club irises were given out – Hall Bradshaw, a guest, took 'Big Band,' Kathy Windischman took 'Fall Fantasy,' and Diane Tweedy took 'Ravishing Ruby.'

A listing of our guests follows the minutes.

The board meeting came to order at 3:10 PM.

Ardi Kary has some judges-in-training who could come to judge our show in April. We would like to name the show and will be offering Iris Bucks to the best name! An example of an old name is "Putting our Best Blooms Forward."

We decided that the show should end at 3 PM rather than 4 PM, allowing more time for clean-up. The show will be staffed as follows: 8-11 Melania, Madeleine, and Kevin; 11-1 Diane, Carol and Janet; 1-3 Bonnie, Kathy and Kevin. Kathy will need help setting up after bringing the tables, etc. from TBG storage (also clean-up).

Kristee will purchase \$500 in iris (and postage) from Superstition Iris Gardens and \$300 in iris from Region 15 (newer introductions).

If any of the growers have a final shipping date of late August or so, Kristee will tend those rhizomes until our sale.

For the sale this year, we discussed that we'll need to purchase rhizomes in order to have an adequate supply. Angela made a motion to obtain them from three growers at \$300 each. Carol seconded.

The meeting closed at 3:30 PM. Kristee motioned, Bonnie seconded.

GUESTS:

Margaret Allen
Marybeth Murphy
Ardi Kary
Hall Bradshaw
Cheryl Creeger
Carolyn P. Holliday
Sheila Barry-Harris
Pat Barry
Chris Dickens
Roberta Russell

Submitted by Janet Gardner,
secretary



**Name our Iris Show.
Win \$10 in Iris Bucks!
Submit name to Editor.**



We're on the web!

Tucsoniris.org

Tidbits from Rick Tasco's talk

When hybridizing irises, it is important to select a goal and to keep the characteristics of a ideal iris plant in mind - high bud count, good branching, vigorous growth, etc.

Some examples of goals include falls rimmed in a certain color or excessive ruffles or lace. Having a goal helps you avoid making indiscriminate crosses. Select parents that might lead to the desired goal, and buy multiples of each one.

Using tweezers, remove a pollen-covered anther (you should see yellow grains) from one parent (the pollen parent) and smear the grains on the sticky surface of the stigmatic lip of the other parent (the pod parent). Repeat for all three anthers and stigmas to increase the likelihood that the cross will "take" or be successful.

Keep in mind that the stigma will wither and die when the air temperature reaches 85° F, and that pollen will be destroyed if it gets wet.

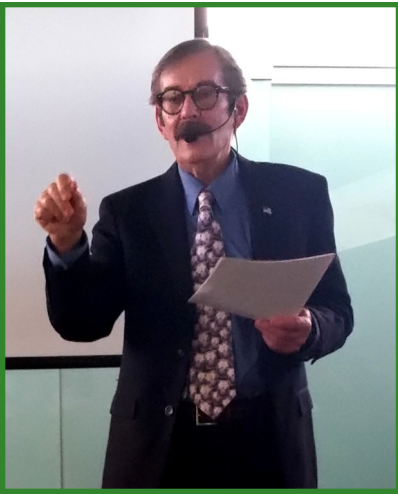
As soon as the cross is made, label the pod parent with a tag: **Name of pod parent X name of pollen parent, date.** A #2 pencil is best for writing on the tag. If a seed pod forms, record the same information in a log book.

It takes about two months for a seed pod to mature, at which time it will brown and begin to crack open. Carefully empty the seeds from one pod into a bowl, and then transfer seeds to a small manila envelope. Tape the tag to the front of the envelope and store in your pantry until the Fall.

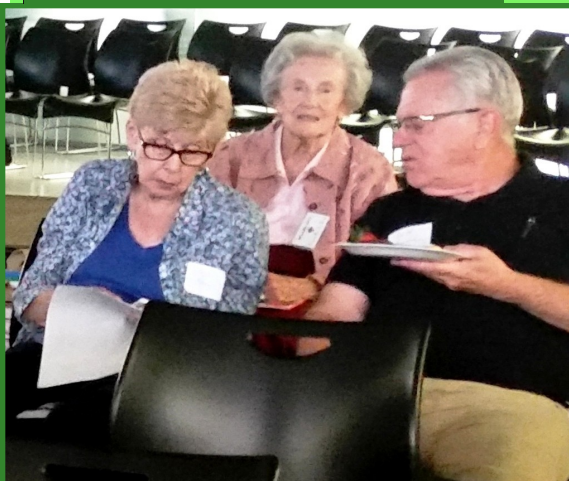
Because of our mild winters, we MUST stratify iris seeds. Soaking them in water for ten days removes growth inhibitors and refrigerating them for 30 days mimics a winter. Before placing the seeds in the crisper, though, transfer each envelope's seeds into a Ziploc sandwich bag which has been filled with moist vermiculite. Record identifying information on the baggie.

Pot seeds in the Fall, marking each pot. Keep them sheltered and moist throughout the winter. Harden them off in the sun in about April and transfer them into a bed in late May-early June. Expect blooms next Spring! - SC

Rick Tasco's presentation at our February Meeting



Photos by
Sue Clark



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

Date	Debits/Checks	Deposits	Balance	Details
	#1767 \$330.00			Region 15 Auction
	#1768 \$30.00			AIS 2018 Registration
Pending Uncashed Expenses Total \$360.00				
6-Feb	\$220.00			Sue Clark - Zelle - projector rental & deposit
12-Feb	\$88.64			lunch with speaker - Guadalajara Grill - debit card
12-Feb	#1772 \$21.70			Angela Powers - refreshments
14-Feb	#1770 \$240.00			Superstition Iris Gardens - transportation
14-Feb	#1769 \$500.00			Superstition Iris Gardens - 2018 Club Iris Order
22-Feb	#1773 \$75.00			Rick Tasco - honorarium
22-Feb	#1771 \$80.89			Diane Tweedy - refreshments
26-Feb	\$500.00			Tim Valenzuela - Website expenses - online payment
28-Feb	\$20.38			Vista Print - Business Cards for TBG box - debit card
20-Feb		\$53.00		Dues - checks
28-Feb	Bank Balance		\$5,294.76	
	Pending Uncashed Checks		\$360.00	
28-Feb	TAIS Balance		\$4,934.76	

Orange Irises - Popsicles, Creamsicles, and Cheesecake, oh my!

The second stop on our tour through the rainbow of iris colors is orange. According to Kelly Norris in [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#), "An orange bearded iris of some kind is an essential plant to grow." If your iris beds need a bit of spicing up, adding some orange is just the ticket. Orange irises were created by an intense breeding program between yellow and pink varieties, and it took some years to get clear orange tones in flowers with good substance and architecture. Topping the list of Kelly's recommendations are **'Chariots of Fire'** (Aitken 2006) and **'Crackling Caldera'** (Aitken 2003), with their ruffles and citrusy shades. Other orange tall bearded irises that he recommends include: **'Mango Entrée'** (Blyth 1996-97) (honey-apricot flowered and forms an impressive clump) and two varieties from Schreiner's that perform well throughout the country - **'Avalon Sunset'** (1994) and **'Magical Glow'** (2003). Anyone who wishes to grow standard dwarf bearded irises has some terrific options with **'Orange Tiger,' 'Sedona,' 'Classic Sunrise'** (all by Bennet Jones, 1988, 2003, and 2005 respectively), and **'Clockwork,'** (Keppel 2003).

The brilliant orange **'Firebreather'** (Schreiner 1992) has open standards that vaguely suggest the mouth of a dragon. Dykes Medal-winner **'Golden Panther'** (Tasco 2000), is golden orange, with good substance and covered in ruffles. **'Autumn Riesling'** (Schreiner 2006) fairly glows in the garden. **'China Moon'** (Schreiner 1998) forms a vigorous clump. Possibly the orange iris with the most unusual name and coloring is **'Cheetah Cheese'** (Kasperek 2001), with falls of orange, garnet, and creamy white streaks. (See picture on p. 6). Our own Kevin Kartchner said that **'Orange Popsicle'** (Sutton 1987) smells exactly like its namesake, transporting him back to childhood for a few seconds.

Orange flowers appeal to me and in my own garden I am growing **'Avalon Sunset,' 'Penny Lane'** (Lauer 1999), and **'Pumpkin Cheesecake'** (Niswonger 1995) (all from Cathy Pane-Scire). Others have orange and various colors. One of my Club irises is **'Lotsa Heat'** (Burseen 2017), very promising with bright gold standards and orchid falls edged in coppery orange. I also grow **'Rocket'** (Mrs. Whiting 1945) with yellow standards and orangish falls, and am hoping that it grows as prolifically for me as it does for others. My **'Grand Canyon Sunset'** (Schreiner 2011) will sparkle when it blooms with its softly orange standards and light orchid falls rimmed in apricot. **'Jane Troutman'** (Kerr 2006) reminds me of a Creamsicle, with its orange standards and white falls rimmed in orange.



© Schreiner's Iris Gardens



From top: **'Chariots of Fire,' 'Crackling Caldera,' 'Firebreather.'**
All from Schreiners website.

TAIS iris grower's interview #13

Bonnie Else lives on the east side of Tucson, near Sabino Canyon. She has loved irises and flowers of all types since she was a kid. Her mother and grandmother had lovely flower gardens. Bonnie began actively growing irises about ten years ago, after attending a TAIS rhizome sale. She joined our club soon after that.

Right now, Bonnie's irises grow in pots and in the ground, but this Fall, she will transfer all of the potted ones to a bed she has prepared for them. To get the bed ready, she had to remove 7-8" of caliche and tree roots, which she replaced completely with Miracle-Gro Moisture-Control soil. In her established beds, she amends the soil annually by digging around each iris plant and working in a powder which breaks down the caliche that had formed that year.

Bonnie's fertilizer of choice is Super Bloom. She sprinkles the dry powder directly on the soil around each plant, works it in, and then waters. The timing of her fertilizing routine is every other week from Valentine's Day until a month or two after the last bloom has faded away. Pests have not been an issue (although she quickly knocked on wood after saying this!).

Watering is accomplished via a drip system. Each plant, including the potted ones, has its own dripper. Bonnie thinks that they are the 1/2 gallon/hour emitters. During the cool season, plants receive water for 15 minutes twice a week. This is upped to daily in the hot season.

Bonnie will divide many of her irises this Fall for the first time, as they are getting overly crowded. Her Club Irises from 2016 are also ready to divide and go into our rhizome sale.

Her favorites: the tall bearded. She is interested in buying some rebloomers this year, since she does not have any. Bonnie mentioned that she has a large clump of an older dark purple variety (probably historic) that a lady gave her about 12 years ago. It has been blooming since December, probably due to the warm winter. This clump will also get divided and

brought to our rhizome sale.

Poor performance and poor plant habits have not been issues so far, so Bonnie has not had to decide whether she'd get rid of an iris or not. She said that she has done that with her orchids, so could probably do it with irises.

Bonnie's irises grow in beds in combination with several other plants, including penstemon, sages of various colors, butterfly bush, yellow bells, petunias and amaryllis. Her only iris mishap has been losing the names of nearly half of her varieties when the labels faded away. She then switched to a system of using colored ribbons and a log book, but she may try marking with a #2 pencil as Rick Tasco suggested.

Her best advice? **Be persistent and be careful not to kill them with kindness!**

Editor's Message - In the spirit of sharing, learning, and building community, I have been interviewing members of our group about their iris gardens. Contact me at taisnewsletter@yahoo.com if you wish to be interviewed. I will e-mail you a list of questions. You can call me on the phone, I will take notes, and then write an article. - SC



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

What to do in the Iris Garden for March:

From January through April, iris plants put up 90% of their growth, so they need more water during this active growth period.
- from Darol of Sun Country Iris Society

Continue applying a fertilizer high in phosphate, such as **Super Bloom** (12-55-6) or **Ferti-Lome Blooming and Rooting** (9-59-8) every one to two weeks according to directions on package.



Tip Exchange

Because rot is a major challenge to those of us who wish to grow irises in the desert, planting them in raised beds allows for the best drainage. Adding some perlite, vermiculite, or small gravel to the soil can help drainage, as well. - Hall Bradshaw, personal conversation

A substance called **Great Big Plants**, which is a natural compost extract, can help your irises grow, well, *great big!* It is available from Amazon. - Darol from Sun Country Iris Society, personal conversation

Iris Limerick:

“An orange iris is just what I need,”
 Remarked a man known as Smead.
 “The color of fire
 Is what I desire,
 To add sparks to the garden of Smead.”
 - Sue Clark



Cheetah Cheese

Did You Know? More tidbits from Rick Tasco's talk:

Iris pollen reaches the immature seeds in the ovary within two hours of the pollen's placement on the stigmatic lip, completing the fertilization process.

Some good potting soils include Miracle-Gro and Lowe's Sta-Green.

Always use new potting soil when planting iris seeds. Transfer the seeds in their vermiculite host to a pot and cover them with 1" of potting soil. - SC

**Daffodils. That come before the swallow dars, and
 take The winds of March with beauty. - Shakespeare**

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

“No perennial has been so transformed into such an array of colors, patterns, and forms in the 20th century as the bearded iris,” according to the late garden writer Henry Mitchell. Fortunately, there are individuals who have followed in the footsteps of Philippe Lévêque de Vilmorin (featured in last month's column), who consider the historic irises to be worth preserving, both for their role in creating the modern iris and for their potential genetic significance.

During the 1960's, in the days when correspondence was carried out by letters rather than by e-mail, some members of the American Iris Society decided to further their interest in historic irises. They organized several Round Robins in order to exchange information. In this system, a person writes a letter regarding iris history and historic irises, mails it to the next person on the list, then that individual adds his own letter to the packet, and sends both letters on to the following person, etc. When the packet arrives back at the originator, she removes her letter and replaces it with a new one. Besides sharing information, questions could be asked and answered, and historic rhizomes traded amongst enthusiasts. Gerta Beach of Pittsburgh and Harriet Segessemann of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey organized these Historic Iris Round Robins, and Segessemann edited a document called the *Historical Chronicles*, which contained articles written by the 30 members of the Round Robins. Members received copies and most of these can be found in the AIS library. The *Chronicles* contain biographies of hybridizers and lists and descriptions of the irises that they created. In the late 1980's, the Historic Iris Preservation Society was created in order “to locate, preserve, and aid in the distribution of historic iris cultivars.”

So when you are thinking about irises, reflect on Lémon's varieties which were saved by Verdier, and then Verdier's collection which was preserved by Lévêque de Vilmorin, and about how those historic irises made our modern irises the stars of our gardens. “If you have ever enjoyed the beauty of irises, you owe these men a debt of gratitude.” - SC

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

The Magic of Iris

Region 15 Spring Trek 2018

Hosted by Sun Country Iris Society
Phoenix, AZ

April 20 & 21, 2018

Featured banquet speaker Steve Schreiner
In-garden Judges Training by Kathy Chilton

Trek Headquarters

Four Points Phoenix North (by Sheraton)

2532 W Peoria Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85029

Hotel Reservations: 866-716-8133

NOTE: Discount rate of \$109 per night for convention guests
(To guarantee convention room rate, reserve room by March 20, 2018, use code
"Sun Country Iris," there are a limited number rooms available at this rate)
fourpointsphoenixnorth.com

Trek registration check in at the Hotel lobby starts 2 pm on April 20, 2018
(check Sun Country Iris Society website for schedule of events: suncountryiris.org)

Boxed lunch @ Arizona Heritage Center at Papago Park

Arizona Historical Society

1300 North College Ave., Tempe, AZ 85281

(admission included)

Judges Training Friday evening

In-Garden Judges Training

Registration Deadline: March 20, 2018

Please print – Registrant 1

Please Print – Registrant 2

Name (to appear on badge): _____

Name (to appear on badge): _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Ph: _____

Ph: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

Attending In-Garden Judges Training: Registrant 1: _____ Registrant 2: _____

Saturday dinner choice:

Saturday dinner choice:

New York Strip _____

New York Strip _____

Chicken Gruyere _____

Chicken Gruyere _____

Grilled Salmon stuffed with crabmeat _____

Grilled Salmon stuffed with crabmeat _____

Please notify in advance of any dietary restrictions – vegetarian available on request

	# persons	Fee	Total
Full registration (on or before March 20, includes tour, lunch & banquet) _____	X	\$100	= \$ _____
Full registration (after March 20, includes tour lunch and Banquet) _____	X	\$120	= \$ _____
Garden tour only (includes lunch) _____	X	\$ 50	= \$ _____
Banquet only _____	X	\$ 50	= \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

Send registration and check payable to "Sun Country Iris Society," mail to:

Bob Buchwald
 5866 E. Ironwood Dr.
 Scottsdale, AZ 85266

For inquiries or questions, email: Suncountryiris@yahoo.com

19th Annual Master Gardener Home Tour

The Pima County Master Gardeners are pleased to announce their 19th annual Home Garden Tour to be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018 from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Four beautiful and distinctive gardens will demonstrate art and design in the mid-Tucson setting. A wide variety of informative garden related topics will be discussed at each venue including garden design basics, dealing with small or shady areas, using grey and rain water, encouraging wildlife, and even raising chickens in the city. The Demonstration Gardens at the Cooperative Extension Service will also be open for touring at 4210 N. Campbell Ave.

Tickets will be available on March 2, 2018 at the following garden centers: Arbico, Bachs, EcoGro, Harlows, Mesquite Valley Growers, Plants for the Southwest, Rillito Nursery, and at the Cooperative Extension Service.

Tickets may also be purchased on line at: <https://uacals.org/70f>

Tickets will be available on the day of the tour at each home garden and at the Cooperative Extension Demonstration Gardens on Campbell Avenue.

Tickets are \$15.00 in advance and \$20.00 on line and on the day of the tour. For more information call 626 5161.

The Featured 2018 Home Gardens:

The Gardens at La Finca: 4540 E. Cerro de Aguila

Good gardening practices and skillful design have transformed this overgrown and neglected four acre property into a gorgeous respite in the desert. Water flow and usage, animal life, seasonal changes, and views were some of the many factors considered in the long term planning. You will experience a pollinator garden, raised bed vegetables growing, a nature walk among rescued native plants, and take in a panoramic view of the city.

Topics:

The Basics of Designing a Garden
Re-vegetating with Rescue Plants

Funkadelica: 5433 E. Burns

Art is everywhere in this delightful garden! It has been developed from a mid-century, ordinary city lot into an enchanting expression of personality and creativity. Plants have grown and multiplied to create a lush environment with minimal water usage, but there is much more! A trip to Barcelona and the art of Gaudi were the inspiration for much of the tile art and ceramics that greet you at every turn in this fun and “funky” retreat.

Topics:

Funksional Art in the Garden
Creating a Lush Garden in a Small Space

Cacti, Citrus, and Chickens. Oh My! 602 N. Miramonte

A corner city lot with existing vegetation presented many challenges to these new owners. Mature citrus and other trees were a plus, but other trees that were damaged or diseased had to be removed. The grass that required so much water was removed, while more desert friendly plants were introduced to add shade and an inviting atmosphere. Cisterns, creative iron work, raised beds for vegetables, and, yes, chickens are just the thing to complete this colorful inner city respite.

Topics:

Passive and Active Rainwater and Grey Water Harvesting
Raising Chickens in an Urban Garden

An Old Arizona Garden, 2548 E. 7th Street

This 1926 home on a corner lot was lush with an Aleppo pine, date palms, juniper and arborvitae when purchased almost twenty years ago. A slow but steady process began to make it into the magical garden it is now. Found and re-purposed items have cleverly added a touch of whimsy and repose. A pond and fountain offer running water and plants provide food and cover to qualify this charming city garden as a Natural Wildlife Habitat.

Topics:

Creating a Certified Wildlife Habitat
Gardening in the Shade