

TAIS Newsletter

Our 53rd year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Give it Away'
(Lauer 2015)

2018 Region 15 Spring Iris
Trek, Phoenix area, AZ

Photo by Sue Clark, 2018

President's Message

I hope everyone enjoyed our iris photo contest. I sure did. So many beautiful photos to appreciate and choose from. Soon it will be spring and time to collect another round of photos. Join us on November 10th for the always great selection of food at our potluck and I'll show our photos again, and more (no contest pressure this time).

- Kevin Kartchner

**Sunlight sparkles low in afternoon skies.
Geese write patterns upon the horizon.
Winter draws nigh.
Iris roots - both settled and new - fall into slumber.
A season's work complete, hands - worked and worn -
Stretched to the horizon in gratitude.**

- Schreiner's Iris Gardens email dated 22 Nov 2017

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Upcoming Events

Meeting: November 10 - doors open at noon. Meeting begins at 1 PM with a Pot Luck, Installation of Officers, and Awards. Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library, small room, 530 N Wilmot Rd. Please join us for food, friendship, & flower talk!

Membership renewals are due by the January meeting.

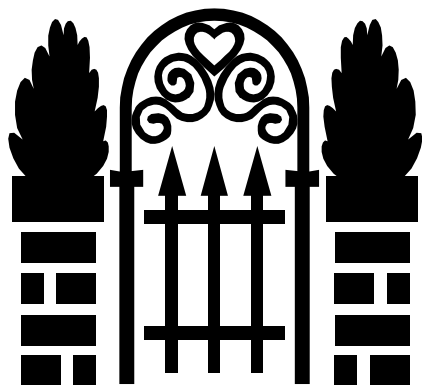
No meeting in December. Happy Holidays to you!

Birthday Wishes to:

Angela Powers Mary Ellen Stinski
Susan Schaefer Bonnie Colby
Tracy Salvemini



October Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

Our 1st-Annual Photo Contest was a success! 95 photos were entered by nine individuals in three categories: single iris bloom or stem, macro view, and garden view. We had a big turnout of 21 people to view the pictures, including four new members. Who doesn't enjoy seeing beautiful photos of irises?! More about the contest on p. 5.

Kristee motioned to accept the new slate of officers for 2019, and Bonnie seconded the motion. The officers and their helpers are listed at the top of p. 7.

Kristee offered to handle the auction in August. She suggested forming a group of three to manage the sale, and Kevin agreed that we would begin this process in January.

Our recent sale took in approximately \$3000 and we had spent about \$1500. We discussed the need to add "cash or checks only" to our sale publicity in the future.

Melania reported success with publicity on the AARP website, not in some newspapers, and with posters placed at the Extension Service.

Kristee will pass along information about accessing the TAIS Facebook page to Martin, and he offered to post our newsletters there. The group decided that they wish the newsletter to be available to interested individuals, rather than being restricted to members.

Some of the group asked for a membership list. Susan, our new membership chair, will compose a list from previous versions and then update it in January when dues are due. Because of privacy issues, this list will not be distributed, though.

Winners of the 2018-introduction rhizome door prizes were Melania, Carolyn, and Lucille.

Meeting adjourned at 3 PM.

- Sue Clark, secretary

Please bring a
potluck dish to the
November meeting.



We're on the web!

Tucsoniris.org

White Irises



From top: 'Fresh Powder,' 'Laced Cotton,' 'Sly Fox,' and 'Bubbly Mood' (all from blog post mentioned on p. 4)

TAIS October Meeting



**Photos by
Tony Kutz**

Welcome to our new members!

Thomas and Cheryl Modaff

Marilyn Jensen

Rose Murray

Barb Nicholson

Carolyn Moser

Alexa Wheeler

Tracy and Ron Salvemini

Stanna Schoepel

Lenore Mackey

Candace Shelton

Whitney Judd

(Most joined at our Sale!)



January 12 Meeting - Our speaker will be Greg Starr, who has written two books - Cool Plants for Hot Gardens and Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers. Check them out! Bring along your gardening friends!

Treasurer's Report for October

| Date | Debits/Checks | Deposits | Balance | Details |
|--------|----------------|----------|-------------------|--|
| 5 Oct | #1784 \$20.45 | | | Angela Powers - hospitality for August mtg |
| 2 Oct | #1786 \$122.45 | | | Mesilla Valley Iris Society - iris & postage |
| 2 Oct | #1787 \$88.20 | | | Fleur De Lis Iris Gardens - postage |
| 25 Oct | #1788 \$9.28 | | | Sue Clark - copy & send 2 newsletters |
| 24 Oct | #1790 \$18.98 | | | Diane Tweedy - hospitality for Oct meeting |
| 23 Oct | | \$10 | | |
| 29 Oct | | | \$7,033.88 | Balance |

White Irises in the Spotlight

“Whether planted next to a swarm of black irises or intermittently between lupines, white bearded irises occupy a hallowed place in many gardens,” states Kelly Norris in his book [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#). ‘Kashmir White’ (Foster 1912) is the one that started it all, being much improved over *Iris pallida* and *I. variegata*, whose whites were drab or marked with other colors. ‘Kashmir White’ was a parent to purer whites as well as cleaner blues. Bertrand Farr’s iris ‘Anna Farr’ (1913), pure white and vigorous, was named for his wife. ‘Purissima’ (Mohr-Mitchell 1927), a grandchild of ‘Kashmir White’ reigned as the supreme white iris of its time, until it was upstaged by its own child, ‘Snow Flurry’ (Rees 1939). Norris calls ‘Snow Flurry’ “the most important bearded iris of all time.” (See the article about ‘Snow Flurry,’ the first modern iris, in the December 2016 issue of this newsletter, which is available at [our website](#)). Norris describes how the cross between ‘Purissima’ and the orchid-pink ‘Thais’ (Cayeux 1926) resulted in only two seeds, one of which was so shriveled that it was thrown away, and how Clara Rees and her sister Ruth debated whether to bother growing the remaining seed - which they thankfully did! ‘Snow Flurry’s’ prodigious offspring of all colors tend to carry on its ruffled look. ‘Snow Flurry’ is available from both Fleur de Lis Iris Gardens and [Cynthia’s](#).

Modern whites tend toward more substance than the older ones, which turned droopy and soggy after a rain. They often sport ruffles and lace, as well as “diamond dusting” - a characteristic of the flower’s cells which catch the sun’s rays and make the petals appear to sparkle. Whites recommended by Kelly Norris include the ruffled and flounced ‘Pure Innocence’ (M. Sutton 2006) with its lavender tint at the bases of the standards; the fast-growing ‘Immortality’ (Zurbrigg 1982), “probably one of the most reliable rebloomers across the entire country;” and the creamy white and rugged ‘Ten Carat Diamond’ (Slagle 2013).

In her [19 Dec 2016 post](#) to the World of Irises blog, entitled “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas,” Susanne Holland Spicker offers these tips: white irises make small spaces appear larger, too many whites can “drown out” a bed, don’t forget about their undertones when placing them, and that an all-white bed can be peaceful, almost ethereal. She selected nine favorite whites based on reliability, vigor, heavy bloom, and excellent form. Her list: ruffled ‘Skating Party;’ laced, ruffled and red-bearded ‘Sly Fox;’ ultra-lacy ‘Laced Cotton;’ bright white with tangerine beards ‘Fresh Powder;’ the huge ruffled blooms of ‘Bubbly Mood’ (see photos of these four on p.2); bright-red-orange bearded ‘Christmas Eve;’ the extra large flowers of ‘Garden Bride;’ tall and flounced ‘Mesmerizer;’ and laced and ruffled ‘Devonshire Cream.’

In my own garden, I grow ‘Mesmerizer’ (Byers 1991) and some white historic NOIDs including a rebloomer from a friend in Pennsylvania. On the Iris Trek in April, I fell under the spell of ‘Coconut Snow’ (Painter 2016) with its large substantial blooms, and purchased it at our auction in August And I was lucky enough to buy the iconic ‘Snow Flurry’ at our recent sale. - SC



From top: ‘Kashmir White’ and ‘Purissima’ (from Iris Wiki), ‘Skating Party’ (from blog article), and ‘Christmas Eve’ (from Iris4U website).

1st Annual TAI5 Photo Contest

Nine individuals entered 95 pictures in three categories: Macro, Garden view, and Single blossom or stem. Participants included Bonnie, Cathy, Kevin, Kristee, Madeleine, Melania and Tony, Shirley, Sue, and Susan. Entries were displayed in three Powerpoint presentations put together by Kevin and the winners were chosen by popular vote. Thank you to all who participated and to Kevin for his preparation.

Prizes: 1st place - a recently-introduced rhizome and \$30 in Iris Bucks, 2nd place - \$20 in Iris Bucks, and 3rd place - \$10 in Iris Bucks

And the winners are:



1st place Macro - Sue - 'Autumn Explosion'



2nd place Macro - Kevin - 'Alabaster Unicorn'



3rd place Macro - Sue - 'Autumn Explosion' (same flower as the 1st place one)



1st place - Garden - Kevin - unknown variety



2nd place - Garden - Kevin - various varieties and grandson Karston



3rd place - Garden - Kevin - various varieties



1st place - Single blossom or stem - Kevin - 'Ticket to Ride'



2nd place - Single blossom or stem - Melania & Tony - 'Illusionist'



3rd place - Single blossom or stem - Sue - 'Dazzling Sarah'

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2019

Kevin Kartchner – President

Bonnie Else - Vice President

Sue Clark – Secretary

Martin Juarez – Treasurer

Susan Schaefer – Membership Chairperson

Melania Kutz—Programs & Publicity

Madeleine Glaser - Asst. Program
Chairperson & 2nd Signatory on Account

Angela Powers - Hospitality & Door Prizes

Diane Tweedy - Birthday Cards & Hospitality

Tony Kutz - Photographer

Sue Clark – Newsletter Editor & Publisher

Iris Haiku:

Silvery moon-glow
Silhouetting iris blooms.
My heart enraptured.
- Sue Clark



'Quaker Lady' (Farr 1909) from AIS Iris Wiki

Did You Know?

Irises with **purple-based foliage**, meaning that the leaves have a purple tint at their bases, often descend from *Iris variegata*.
- Clarence E. Mahan in Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them, p. 174.

**Thanks for time to be together. turkey. talk.
and tangy weather...** - Aileen Fisher, *All in a Word*

What to do in the Iris Garden for November:

Finish planting rhizomes early this month so that they can start growing before it gets cold.

Move potted irises to sunny spots for the cool season.

Feed with a balanced fertilizer. I am trying out this one - ecoscraps rose & flower plant food for organic gardening (4-6-3), which I bought at Lowe's. Be sure to scratch fertilizer into the soil and then water it in.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.



Tip Exchange

Solarization is an excellent way to clear an area of grass for a new bed. Decide where you want the bed to be and cover the area with clear plastic wrap [e.g., Saran Wrap]. Hold down the edges of the plastic with rocks or soil. The wrap will trap the sun's heat and thereby kill the grass along with weeds and their seeds, diseases, and pests. This method takes two to three weeks and obviously works best in sunny climates. Black landscaping plastic will not work, as it simply blocks the sunshine.

- William Shear in The Gardener's Iris Book, p. 40.

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, the story of the history of irises travels to my home state of Pennsylvania. Bertrand Farr, born in 1863 in Vermont, "more than any other man, made the present popularity of iris in America possible" according to John Wister. When Bertrand was seven, he was captivated by a red peony in his aunt's Wisconsin garden and asked for a piece of it. She told him that he could have a "toe" of the peony if he would bring her cows in from the pasture for a week, which he was more than happy to do in exchange for a piece of that plant. Farr grew up on the Iowa prairie, and a story survives about him converting an abandoned wolf den into a secret hideout, from which he looked out over a pond circled by wild irises and dreamed of creating his own iris garden. A few years later, Bertrand's father granted his request for a portion of the family's vegetable garden, and this was converted into a flower garden with raised beds and paths.

Following graduation from high school, Farr taught school, took piano lessons, and studied music in Boston. His free time was spent at Hovey's Greenhouse in nearby Cambridge, with its "finest collection of flowering plants in the United States." He returned to Iowa in 1885 and opened a music store, and following its failure, accepted a teaching position in a music school in Philadelphia. When the school closed in 1895, Farr moved to nearby Reading and became a piano tuner and hobby gardener. His passion for plants and for a girl he had courted back in Iowa soon got the best of him. He bought land in the new town of Wyomissing near Reading, arranged to have the first house built there, and returned to Iowa to marry his sweetheart Anna Willis. Soon afterwards, the couple settled in Wyomissing and Farr began work on his new garden, resolving "to grow every variety of peony and iris that he could obtain." He opened and sold a music store, started another one, began renting lots all over Wyomissing as his plant collection overflowed his own garden, and then opened a plant nursery in 1908. His first catalog included these iris introductions: 'Quaker Lady,' 'Wyomissing,' 'Juniata,' and 'Windham,' the first three of which are still grown. 'Quaker Lady' glows with its yellow center and orange beards surrounded by bronzed smoky lavender petals. (See photo above). With its vigor and slightly smaller flowers, this charmer shows best in mass plantings. - SC **To be continued...**

Source: Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them by Clarence E. Mahan

TAIS Interest Survey 2018 Please check all items that interest you (some ideas came from other clubs):

Programs and Activities :

Touring one another's gardens: as a group? individually? Would you open your garden to this (say for specific days)?

Touring some Phoenix-area gardens as a field trip

Non-iris presentations please circle): Tucson Organic Gardeners, water harvesting, TBG historian, water garden expert, AZ Seed Search, Pima County Extension Service, Agua Caliente Park, etc.

Photo contest of members' photos: in the following categories: iris landscape or wide-angle view, single iris or cluster of irises, macro view or Photoshopped picture of iris(es), iris with animal (pet, bug, or person), non-iris photo from our garden

Perhaps a class during which we each make a stepping stone for our own gardens? Or a tufa planter? (where?)

Are there any topics or speakers you can suggest? _____

Can you think of anywhere where we might install iris beds in a public place besides the one we have at TBG?

Other ideas: _____

Meetings:

Does the second Saturday of the month suit you and your schedule? If not is there a better day? _____

Does early afternoon work for you? We usually meet at 12:30 or 1:00 PM _____

Is there a place you can think of where you might rather have the meeting? _____

Do you enjoy having snacks and birthday cakes at the meetings? If so, at the end of the meeting? _____

Would you prefer more time for socializing at the meetings?

Do you like having Potluck lunches at certain meetings? Ice Cream Socials? Would a Game Day be of interest?

Newsletter:

Do you have any ideas for topics that you would like to see in the newsletter? _____

Membership:

Any ideas for gaining new members? _____

It seems that we have captive audiences at the Show and the Sale. What would you think if individuals who joined TAIS at the Show were given a coupon for a free rhizome at the Sale, and those who joined at the Sale could choose a free rhizome right there? _____

Fundraising:

Any ideas for what we could do besides the Sale and the Region 15 Auction? _____

Would you like to have a Plant Table at certain meetings where people could bring extra plants (of any type) and meeting attendees could purchase them for a few dollars or so? Or trade them?

Ditto but for White Elephant items?

Shows:

Any ideas for the show, for publicity, etc.?

Would you be interested in a judged show?

Sale:

Do you like the idea of a members-only discount hour?

Are you comfortable with and willing to donate your surplus rhizomes to the Sale in exchange for Iris Bucks?

Miscellaneous: _____

Please bring completed form to the November meeting or scan and email to TAISnewsletter@yahoo.com.