

Tucson Area Iris Society



July 2016

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Happy Fourth of July

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Tucson's World of Iris

Things to remember– July

We are dark again this month. Our next meeting is August 20th.

Pages 8 & 9 **Botanical Garden
New Partnership**

*No President's Message this month.
We gave Kristee a much needed vacation.*

Iris donation to TAIS

For those of you in attendance at our last potluck/meeting, you are aware that Jim Leverton, a local hybridizer, offered to donate 110 named iris to TAIS in 3 gallon containers. Greta Dunnigan offered to sit the plants until our September 24th sale, at which time we will try to sell some as part of our event.

Now let's have a reality check!

Kathleen, Dan (her husband), Gary and Roger arrived at Jim's home to transport the iris in a pick-up truck. After loading the iris—double stacked—we noticed we had not even made a dent in the amount of containers to be moved. We drove to Greta's and off loaded the plants and returned to the donors home. This time I started counting. 86 iris containers were put in Dan's truck and there were still many, many more. Jim said "load my truck," so we did. That was another 104 plants. End of story—our 110 iris grew to over 270. Poor Greta! Her back yard looks like a nursery gone mad.

Greta now has them all organized for watering and the labels are prominently displayed for us to prepare a computer list of the names.

We are buying soil and fertilizers to aid Greta in her care and feeding of the plants. We know what she is doing this summer!



We would like to welcome two new members to our iris family.

**Bonnie Colby
Ted Weinert**

**We hope to meet you both at our August potluck!
Perhaps you'll win an iris to grace your yard.**

Louisiana Iris Family

Zydeco Louisiana Iris Garden
Article courtesy of the internet.



American Iris Society:

Louisianas are native to the American Gulf Coast; they require soil that is somewhat acidic and wet in the spring. The blooms are usually very wide petaled and open, showing brightly colored style arms and sharp signal crests.

Louisiana iris are adaptable to most parts of the country. Although the preponderance of the iris found in the wild occur along the Gulf Coast, two of the five species are indigenous as far north as Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. One, *I. brevicaulis*, is found in Ontario. Experience with Louisianas in colder climates has been good.

The low and wetland origins of the native species should not imply that Louisiana iris require aquatic culture. They do love water and thrive in ponds and boggy settings, but Louisianas also grow and bloom exceedingly well in typical garden beds. These iris should not be allowed to dry out during periods of drought, however. They will stay green and grow through hot weather only with ample moisture.

Louisianas should be grown in half to full sun. Less than a half day of sun will diminish bloom. It is highly advisable to avoid close competition with large trees, or plants with extensive root systems that would use most of the soil moisture. In hot climates, unless the iris are in ample water, full sun may stress the plants at certain times of the year.

An acid soil is often recommended for Louisiana iris, but this is not necessary. Soils in much of the Gulf Coast are acid, but some areas, such as parts of New Orleans and the Mississippi River flood plain, may be a bit more neutral. Louisianas grown in very alkaline soils, such as some Western states, will exhibit yellow leaves and stunted growth. Tolerance in the 6.5 to just over 7.2 range has produced excellent results.

Iris need a soil high in fertility and organic matter. Finely ground pine bark, composted oak and other leaves, or rotted manure, for example, are excellent additions that should be worked into the soil when beds are made. If the soil has a clay texture, adding some sand may be helpful.

If iris are grown in water instead of a garden bed, there are other factors to consider. With any container placed in a pond, a soil too light may tend to float away. Store-bought soils and amendments, unless designed for aquatic culture, may not be well adapted for pots immersed in water, and a heavier soil is advised. In water culture where the appearance of the water is not an issue, a wide variety of soil types seem to work well, from nearly soil-less mixes to typical garden soil.

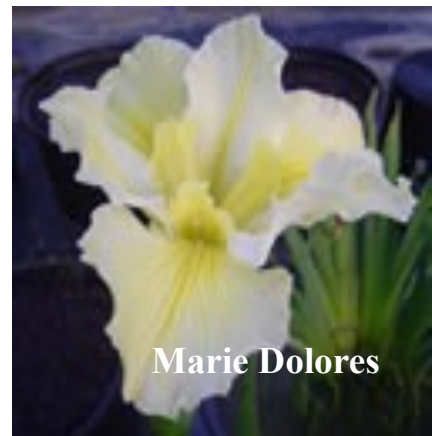


If possible, prepare iris beds a few weeks before planting. Add a generous amount of commercial fertilizer (8-8-8) to the bed and work it in.

An azalea/camellia fertilizer is a good choice if there is a need to adjust for an excessively alkaline soil.

Planting and Dividing

Unlike most plants which go dormant, or grow little in the winter, the growth cycle of Louisiana Iris in their native range actually begins in the fall, continues through winter and culminates in a burst of rapid growth and bloom in the spring. When the weather gets hot, growth may slow or even stop, especially if moisture and soil fertility are not optimal.



The best time to plant and divide Louisiana iris along the Gulf Coast is mid to late August and September, not long after the period of new growth has begun. Transplanting immediately after bloom is not recommended. The longer the season the foliage growth can be continued, the better the chances of good bloom the next year. Growers in warm climates, such as South Florida, report that Louisianas can be divided at any time of the year.

Iris should be planted with about 1/2 to 3/4 inch of soil covering the rhizome and, ideally, 1-2 inches of mulch over the soil. Planted about 12" apart, they can be left in place 3 to 4 years.

To read the full article go to www.zydecoirises.com/Culture/CultureZydeco.htm 4



Birthdays to Celebrate– July

Gary Carruthers	July 13
David Johnson	July 15
Janet Gardner	July 17
Pam Court	July 26

Remember that children, marriage and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get.

Jackson Brown, Jr.



Spotlight on Membership

Madeleine Glaser is our Membership Chair

Madeline and her husband moved to Green Valley in 2004 having lived in Colorado for 24 years. Although she had grown iris in both Illinois and Colorado, she did not know they could be grown successfully here in Arizona until she visited the Tucson Botanical Gardens and the beautiful iris garden. That same year, she joined TAIS and began her adventure of growing iris in the desert.

According to Madeleine: Being a part of TAIS has broadened my knowledge of gardening here, which for the most part has been successful. After moving to Marana in the fall of 2014, I started getting my back yard ready to be as beautiful as my yard in Green Valley had been. It is still a work in progress, but shows improvement with each new endeavor. Currently, I have only 12 iris, as some that I moved from Green Valley did not thrive. I have ordered more to be planted in the fall, and I hope to add to that number at the TAIS auction.

The job of **MEMBERSHIP CHAIR** involves several tasks. First, the chair keeps track of all current member's contact information. When a check comes in for a renewal, or a new membership, all of the information is put into the membership record, and then the check gets forwarded to the treasurer and the birthdates go to the newsletter editor. When members do not renew, they are put on an inactive status, but may continue to receive the newsletter. Permanent membership records are forwarded to the officers and webmaster, so that they can contact the members, if necessary.

Thank you Madeline for the great job you do for us.

Terminology continued from the June issue. Did you have the right answer?

Plicata: Iris that have patterns of stitched, stippled, or banded colors contrasting a base color. (Internet)

Kathy Chilton was kind enough to provide additional insight into the definition. *Well, iris color genetics are very complicated and I am no scientist, but here is my understanding:*

A traditional pattern involves dark blue anthocyanin pigment distributed around the edges of white petals, giving a “stitched” edge. Examples are “San Francisco” (Mohr/Mitchell 1927) the first American Dyke’s Medal winner, and “Ink Patterns” (T. Johnson 2007) 2013 Wister Medal winner.



Hybridizers have stretched the boundaries of this pattern, but one discerning criteria is that there is always darker pigment in dots, or lines beside the beard. Variations of the pattern include all-over dotting like Dyke’s Medal winner “Splashacata” (Tasco), to almost complete coverage of the petals in “Drama Queen”. Sometimes, a seemingly solid pastel flower shows plicata background with only faint darker lines near the beard.

The plicata pattern is now seen in many colors on many different colored backgrounds, and often is combined with other patterns such as “Luminata” which has no markings around the beard and light edges, and “Emma Cook” pattern, which has a darker watercolor type band of color on the fall edges.



Batik— A method of dyeing a fabric by which the parts of the fabric not intended to be dyed are covered with removable wax.

BEWILDERBEAST— 1994

Brad Kasperek TB 30” M

This iris received many favorable votes at our April Iris Show. Look for it at our September sale.

TAIS “TIP”

Kristee West and Roger Osgood are caretakers of some of our test iris. Summer is upon us and I thought it was time for us to give reports as to how they are doing in our two different climates: One very hot (Yuma) and one a little cooler, but not much (Tucson). **Editors Note:** Kristee’s article was lengthy, so my report will follow next month in the August issue, where I will have a little more space.

Thanks, Kristee, for such a comprehensive report on your TIPS.

Test Iris Program– Green Valley

Article by Kristee West

I need to caution you that in the first year, the rhizome that you are growing, may have grown so well in the hybridizer’s climate, that you will have marvelous performance that first year, based on the strength stored from its home climate.

TIP wants to prove that the rhizome will grow well in our climate and that will take at least 2 bloom seasons to determine.

Of the club irises that I am growing for the Test Iris Program (TIP), only 2 of them really impressed me with their first year height, bloom, branching and bud count. Both of them are in 1 gallon pots that have been sunk into the rim of the pot in my raised beds to prevent them from being crowded out by my existing irises. This allows them to be watered by the drip irrigation system and gives them normal sun and temperature, but I think I need to use 3 gallon pots in the future.

COZY COTTON is a 36” TB ML (mid to late blooming), RE (reblooming) iris hybridized by Sutton and introduced in 2015. There are 2 in pots in my garden and both bloomed with good height and branching. The bud count was not the standard 7+ that is actually recommended for new introductions by the American Iris Society (AIS), but I am blaming that on the fact that I removed the 1 gallon pot from the garden in January so that we could have a live iris at the Home Show Booth. I really liked the form of the flower and being able to see the iris at sundown, against the beige colored wall. I may have to reconsider my prejudice against white irises, especially if it reblooms easily.



TREASURE TRADER is a 37” TB (Tall bearded), VE (very, very early blooming) iris hybridized by Barry Blyth and introduced in 2010. It has good height, branching and bud count. It didn’t bloom early for me.





June 21, 2016

To: Tucson Area Iris Society
Roger Osgood, Treasurer
Kristee West, President

Re: Annual Partnership Agreement with the Tucson Botanica Gardens

Dear Kristee and Roger,

It's been a pleasure talking with you and the other members of the Tucson Area Iris Society. I can't tell you how pleased I am that we are going to be formalizing our partnership/friendship.

Per our conversation, the upcoming dig date is set for September 17th. You are requesting that the Gardens begin composting on September 18th and finish composting by September 30th.

As part of our new partnership, I have outlined items that we agreed upon. This agreement will be reviewed and renewed each year.

Once again, thank you so much for reaching out and sharing your hopes and dreams for the Tucson Area Iris Society. Most of all, thank you for your dedication and hard work in maintaining the Iris beds, and for continuing on as one of TBG's important Legacy Garden Partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Conklin".

Michelle Conklin
Executive Director

Encl.

TAIS is pleased to recognize our formal partnership with **Tucson Botanical Gardens**. We are publishing our agreement in order to share with you the incredible relationship we have formed with one of our great supporters. The garden sees 75,000 visitors each year. What an opportunity we have to educate visitors in the care and feeding of our favorite flower.

Agreement between Tucson Botanical Gardens and Tucson Area Iris Society

Tucson Botanical Gardens will:

- Remove the hedges against the north wall (completed by 8/31)
- Remove the Fairy Duster bushes from the Iris beds (completed by 8/31)
- Replace the hedges with appropriate vine plantings (completed by 8/31)
- In the Spring, TBG will water with Super Bloom Booster from February 14 to bloom season
- Water and weed on a daily and monthly basis and upkeep the irrigation
- In the fall, TBG will add compost to empty beds after the digging takes place
- Provide to TAIS four free daytime classroom rentals (dependent upon availability)
- Host the annual TAIS Iris Show in April. (date must be reserved up to four months in advance and dependent upon availability)
- Provide an on-site, a 5 x 5 shed for TAIS supplies

Tucson Area Iris Society will:

- Provide 3 community education classes and one (1) class to the Gardens Docents
- Provide educational tours to visitors during bloom season
- Each fall, dig beds with three year iris clumps in late September
- Replant Iris in early October
- Provide new Iris signs as needed
- Provide Triple Super Phosphate fertilizer at planting
- Monthly: provide 4 – 5 people to monitor and prune iris plants
- Work with the Executive Director in creating themed iris beds
- Create a handout for the information box
- Provide Rhizomes to TBG to sell. All proceeds to support the mission of the Tucson Botanical Gardens.

Michelle Conklin, Executive Director
Tucson Botanical Gardens

Kristee West, President
Tucson Area Iris Society