

TAIS Newsletter

April 2017

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



Queen's Ransom,

Tucson Botanical Gardens

photo by Sue Clark, 2016

Blooming Season is Here!

Now that it's blooming season here in the desert, it's a good time to check if the flowers of your new iris plants match their name. You can find photos at several places on the internet. The American Iris Society's encyclopedia is at <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view/Main/TallBearded>. Click on the letter range for the name of the variety. Another option is the website of the National Gardening Association at <https://garden.org/plants/group/irises/>. Many of the irises have photos, but some only have their characteristics (height, color, etc.) listed. This site also has cultivation tips. A third option for photos is Dave's Garden at <http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/>, which claims to be the largest plant database in the world. They also have bug and bird databases. Or simply Google the name of the variety! And remember to expect approximately 30% of irises planted last Fall to bloom this Spring. Please report in to tainsnewsletter@yahoo.com with your bloom rate for new irises. - SC

*"Bloom season is nigh when an
aardvark crosses your path."*

Old iris adage from Schreiner's Gardens website, 'Aardvark Lark' iris

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Upcoming Events

Next meeting is the TAIS Annual Iris Show: April 8

- Bear Canyon Library - please invite all of your friends to come and view our lovely blooms! 10 AM

TBG - Daytripping to Glorious Gardens - April 8, 9 AM



April Birthday Wishes to:

Clyda Murray Carol Peterson
Susan Oates Kathy Chilton



*With this glad greeting friend of mine
I wish you hearty Birthday cheer
And may life's blessing fair and fine
Bring joy to you through all the year.*

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

March Meeting Minutes

Our speaker for this month was Jill Bonino; who, along with Kathy Chilton, judged the iris at the Parc Floral de Paris in 2015. Jill gave us insight into the layout of the iris beds and how the judges came to make their decision on the winning iris for that year.

Kathleen brought plant stakes to sell. They are \$1 to club members.

Shirley brought Sandy, a visitor this month to our meeting.

It is less than a month to our show at Bear Canyon Library. Kevin was looking for volunteers – from 8 to 11 Tony, Melania, and Angela, from 11 to 2 add Janet, and then from 2 to 4 Kathleen. He also needs help for set-up on Friday afternoon. The show is open from 10 to 4. We will have balloting as in past years and do have some ballets already. Kristee will have name cards for the flowers ready for the show. Angela will bring refreshments.

After the show we will store things in our “new” storage area at TBG. Kathleen was asking for help with this and Kevin volunteered.

Call to order at 2:43 PM

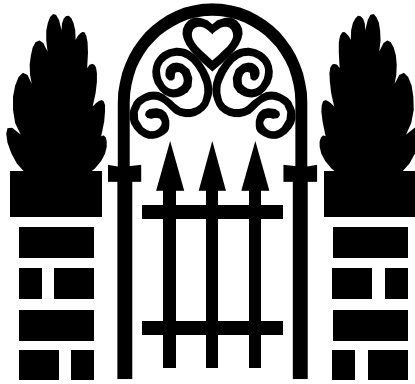
Most everything was covered in the general meeting.

A short discussion on where we should purchase our club irises from this year included the growers of Paul Black and Mystic Lake Gardens. It was felt Mystic Lake Gardens would be a better pick than Paul Black.

We now have a projector! (it was used for our presentation today.)

Tucson Botanical Gardens had laid down 3” of mulch on our iris bed and have been asked to remove it – which has been done.

Treasurer’s report information was in our newsletter. Tony made a motion to approve it and Ben seconded. It was unanimously accepted. A motion was made to have a second signature on the account. Madeleine volunteered and the motion was passed.



We ♥ Irises

Diane would like to order birthday/get well cards and 2 books of postage stamps for the year. A motion was made by Melania to spend up to \$50 on this, was seconded by Carol and was passed.

A question was asked as to where and when to hold our rhizome sale. After discussion was held it was decided the sale will be September 23rd at Harlow Gardens. A motion was made by Janet and seconded by Ben to approve this. It was unanimously passed.

Our 501C paperwork needs to be filed with the state at a cost of \$10. Kristee will do the filing. Tony made a motion to have this done and Diane seconded. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 3 PM.

Submitted by Janet Garner, Secretary

Hummingbird Iris Garden

It’s time to set aside a day in May to drive up to Prescott to see the **Hummingbird Iris Garden** in full bloom. Owner Linda Rossman grows between 2,500 and 3,000 varieties of irises on the two-and-a-fourth-acre property that she shares with her husband Lee and many animals. After moving themselves and several favorite iris plants from California in 1998, Linda found that the rises were quite content in Prescott and increased so much that she could sell their offspring. Besides irises of all types, Linda grows peonies, poppies, and other plants. Visitors who come to see the garden in peak bloom between early May and the first week of June can purchase irises, which may be picked up in July or later. The garden is **open on Fridays and weekends** and other days by appointment. See p. 4 for other iris attractions in Prescott in May. - SC

Hummingbird Iris Garden (928)777-8110

Linda Rossman
5942 Old Black Canyon Hwy
Prescott, AZ 86303

lindarae@cablone.net - call or email her to make an appointment

Iris Show April 8th -
set-up will start
at 8 AM!



We're on the web!

Tucsoniris.org



Source: www.dcourier.com/news/2016

March 11th meeting - Iris Judging in France

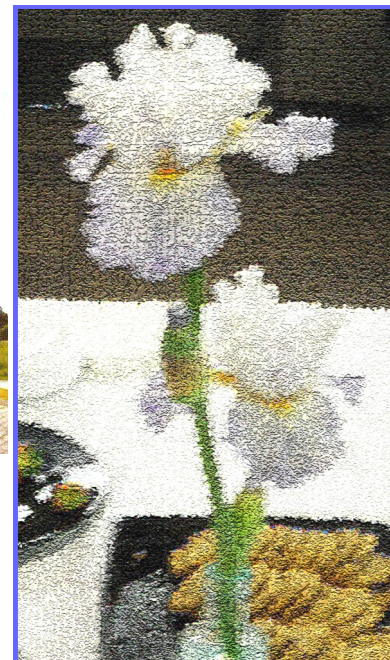


Jill Bonino, speaker



Photos by
Tony Kutz

with an attempt at some
PhotoShopping by Sue Clark



Madeleine Glaser's "Bragging Rights" by Tom Burseen

An Experiment Born of a Quandary

Almost all of my new irises are growing well, and I am hoping and praying that some of them will bloom during their first Spring in my garden. Four rhizomes showed no signs of growth by March 1 and the leaf on one of those (*Main Street*) had faded from green to brown. That could not be good. With the intense heat of Summer rapidly approaching, I wanted to give them the best possible chance of surviving it. What to do??? Recalling the success I'd had in the Fall by soaking iris rhizomes in water for a couple of days during which they grew fresh roots, I decided to try doing that with these four. When I lifted *Main Street* out of the ground and picked the three other rhizomes out of their pots,

I realized that none of them had developed roots in the five months since they had been planted! So I placed them in a shallow bowl of water with a few drops of 10-10-10 fertilizer. *Main Street* sprouted a root within 24 hours, and had four roots and two new shoots by March 13, when I decided to plant it in a pot. (See the photos at right). The other three rhizomes still had no roots, so I replaced the water with diluted transplanting solution and added another rhizome (*About Town*) which looked like its small leaf buds were starting to brown. *About Town* had a new root by the following day, but the other three still had no roots. Two of them did appear to be developing new shoots, though, and the leaf on the third one had grown a bit. My new quandary - could the lower surface of the rhizomes

After one day

After 12 days



remain in water for more than two weeks or would they begin to rot? Because the transplant solution did not seem to be helping much, I switched to a rooting hormone on March 20. *About Town* was dipped in it and then replanted. The other three were checked for rot, and one end of each rhizomes was snipped off to be safe, and dusted with Comet cleanser. They were left to air-dry for a day, rinsed, dusted with rooting hormone, and planted in pots. Results? See next issue. - SC

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

date	debits/cks	deposits	balance	details
4/1/17	-\$7.64			Sue Clark - copies, postage
Pending total	-\$7.64			
3/1/17			\$6577.77	Beginning Bank Balance
3/3	-\$500			Tim Valenzuela – website maint.
3/14		\$63		dues
3/14		\$15		plant stakes sold
3/28 #1747	-\$30			AIS 2017 dues
3/22 #1749	-\$10.63			Sue Clark- copies, postage
3/2 #1748	-\$75.00			Ron Coleman – presentation
3/17 #1750	-\$24.78			Diane Tweedy – H ₂ O, snacks
3/20 #1751	-\$55.65			Angela Powers – prizes, snacks
3/11	-\$75.58			Kathi Windischam – TBG supplies
3/31/17			\$5884.13	Ending Bank Balance
3/31/17			- \$7.64	Pending
3/31/17			\$5891.77	TAIS Balance

Other Iris Attractions in Prescott during the month of May

If you go to Prescott to see the Hummingbird Iris Garden, you may also want to see the irises at the following locations, which should be in peak bloom during May. All were installed and are maintained by our sister group, the Prescott Area Iris Society. These four sites are open daily. The **Haas Interfaith Memorial Chapel** on the Embry-Riddle campus is surrounded by a meditative walkway and iris garden, both of which honor the 19 Prescott Hotshot firefighters who died in 2013. The irises were selected for their names, which relate to fire and to life, including *Fire Breather, Flame, Blazing Beacon, Immortality, and Stairway to Heaven*. The four-acre **Richard Marcusen Sculpture Garden** on the campus of Yavapai College features irises amid sculptures by nationally-known artists. Various iris beds include Dykes medal winners, black irises, varieties with names of storybook characters, and iris hybridized by Arizonan Francelle Edwards. Evolution of iris forms and colors can be viewed in the Dykes section, which features the best-of-the-best from 1927 to the present. The **Historic Iris Garden at the Sharlot Hall Museum** is just two years old and contains about 200 varieties ranging from 1497 to 1943. The **Citizens Cemetery** operated from 1864 to 1933, and contains many historic varieties of irises. When the restoration project began in 1996, there were clumps of irises ranging up to 20' in diameter! These large clumps have been separated and distributed throughout the cemetery. Some of them now reside the garden at the Sharlot Hall Museum and some are sold by PAIS in their annual rhizome sale. One last iris spot is Golden's Iris Garden, 4564 Robin Drive, just off Rt. 69. - SC



Source: www.PrescottIrisSociety.org/outreach. All photos were found on the PAIS website, as well.

TAIS iris grower's interview #2

Our newsletter editor, Sue Clark, lives in Chandler, Arizona and has a house in Tucson, Arizona. She has been growing irises for about 15 years, or at least growing their lovely leaves. She began to cultivate the flower actively about two years ago when she spoke to a member of the Sun Country Iris Society about her lack-of-flowers issue and was advised about fertilizing. Last year, she joined our iris society, helped with the sale, and started buying irises. Sue reflects that it was the irises on the steep bank between her parents' house and the neighbors' house in western Pennsylvania that initiated her love affair with them. Those plants were there when her parents bought the house in 1960, and probably long before that. The first ones in her own garden were a gift from when she helped her friend Jane split the irises at a Montessori school in Mesa.

Sue has irises growing in beds and containers in Chandler and in beds in Tucson. For the beds, she dug to the depth of her spade and refilled the holes in Chandler with a 50-50 mix of the original soil and Gro-Well Organic Garden Compost, and in Tucson with original soil and Planting Mix from Mesquite Valley Growers. In the pots, she used E B Stone Ultimate Recipe Potting Soil. In her biggest pots, she used Kristee's tip of filling the bottom with plastic water bottles.

When getting ready to plant in the Fall, Sue swishes all of her new rhizomes in a 10% bleach solution to kill any unwanted organisms. After rinsing them, she soaked some rhizomes in water and had rootlets within 48 hours. She puts 1 Tablespoon of Triple Super Phosphate (0-45-0) under each rhizome and covers it with a bit of soil before placing the rhizome above it. Over half of each rhizome remains above ground level. Starting on Valentine's Day, she applies Super Bloom (10-52-10) every two weeks, mixed according to the directions on the package, and plans for an application two weeks after bloom time. She also sings to the iris.

So far, aphids been noted (on the very day of this interview!) and sprayed with insecticidal soap. Sue has seen the havoc wreaked by iris borers in her mom's iris beds in Pennsylvania and bought her some nematodes to try to combat them. Her mom also squishes the borers as possible. Thankfully, we do not have those nasty beasts here!

Irises in Sue's garden are watered by hand in Chandler and via a drip line in Tucson. She uses a

moisture meter to determine if the plants need to be watered – inserting the probe to its full depth in order to determine the moisture level near the roots. Thanks to Kristee for that useful tip, as Sue had been watering quite a bit more than necessary!

Besides all the new rhizomes from last Fall, Sue dug up all of her *noird* (no ID) irises, amended their soil, and replanted as for the new ones, placing them in a sunny spot. Two of them bloomed, and looked like historic!

Her favorite type? Tall bearded irises. Sue grows two varieties of historic irises – *Lady Friend* and *Be Mine*, both from the 1980's. She has ordered a dozen older varieties from the Shady Spot Iris Garden. Sue still purchases irises since she is just starting out and has no willpower where they are concerned. She buys some for their names (such as *Peekaboo Zebu* and she probably needs *Starship Enterprise*) and some for their looks. Sue has some Dutch and Morea irises. And she is trying some that her mom sent her, possibly Louisianas, since her mom said that they can grow in a wet spot or not. Her mom has also sent her tall bearded, too, and ordered her the lovely new *Rum is the Reason* from Schreiner's for her birthday.

At this point, Sue does not discard varieties that perform poorly, because of the aforementioned issue of lack of blooming. This is her reboot year and she is hoping for great results!

Sue and a couple of friends are taking a field trip to Prescott in early May to see the iris attractions and have Tea at the English Garden Tea Room there.

Her best tip? **Ask questions and keep learning from others!** "I learned so much when I helped Gordon dig his gardens for the rhizome sale, as well as at the sale itself. All of this started when I listened to Kristee speak in the iris garden at the Tucson Botanical Gardens last April. Researching articles for the newsletter also helps, as I learn new things every month!" - SC

Editor's Message - In the spirit of sharing, learning, and building community, I have begun interviewing members of our group about their iris gardens. These interviews will be featured in the newsletter in the coming months. Please 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 2017

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 April:

Continue applying Super Bloom (12-55-6) or a similar fertilizer (at least 0-45-0) once every two weeks. Apply one last dose about two weeks after bloom time.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

Remove and discard any leaves that turn brown. Aphids might congregate at their base otherwise.



Tip Exchange

AIS recommends removing each stem from an iris plant after it has finished blooming, so that seeds do not form. Creating seeds uses the plant's energy, which could otherwise go into reserve. Plants resulting from the seeds would not be true to form and would just crowd the existing irises - and we know that they do not like to be crowded! The Delaware Valley Iris Society recommends cutting off the stems at an angle close to the ground. If torn off, there is an increased chance of *Erwinia carotovora*, the bacterium which causes soft rot, being able to enter. Trim off dead leaves with scissors, rather than tearing them off, for the same reason.

Iris Limerick:

There once was a gardener named Cyrus
Who grew two hundred and fifty-five iris.
They bloomed oh-so-pretty
Which pleased his wife Betty,
And put a grin of the face of young Cyrus.
- Sue Clark



Did You Know?

Since the best way of weeding Is to stop weeds from seeding,
The least procrastination Of any operation
To prevent semination Of noxious vegetation
Is a Source of Tribulation;
And, this a truth in fact is, Which Gardeners ought to practice,
And Farmers should remember From April to December.

Source: The Old Farmer's Almanac, 1832, contributed by Melania Kutz

*The air soft as that of Seville in April, and so
fragrant that it was delicious to breathe it.*

Christopher Columbus

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Marie-Guillaume de Bure, also known as Paul Debure, is considered to be the father of modern iris culture. By careful experimentation, this amateur botanist discovered that several irises which were considered to be species were actually hybrids, information which was ignored by professional botanists for a century despite its publication in 1837. In the 1820's, de Bure hybridized irises in his gardens in Paris and at his country estate, the most noted of which he called "de Bure's iris," and which came to be called *Buriensis*. Although this iris was famous in France from about 1830-1850, no one alive has seen it or even found a drawing of it! Publications of the times praise it, stating that it was a seedling of *Iris plicata*, and that its flower, larger than that of *Iris plicata*, was white with violet. De Bure died in 1842. His legacy was proving that a wide variety of bearded irises could be hybridized from species iris and cultivars. Several factors came together to make Paris the hotbed of iris breeding in the early 18th century. Following the Napoleonic Wars, many types of irises were brought to the Jardin des Plantes, enough people had the time and money to garden as a hobby, and a horticultural press developed to publish articles. Within 20 years, irises were all the rage in Paris! - SC

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