

# TAIS Newsletter

Our 52nd Year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**Mesmerizer (rebloomer)**  
Hummingbird Iris Garden,  
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

## President's Message

**Happy Holidays, everybody! I hope everyone is able to enjoy family, food, and fans (iris, that is). See you in January as we embark on another enjoyable year of TAIS.**

**- Kevin Kartchner**

Kevin participated in the 57-mile long Tour de Tucson in November as part of the Bike Patrol. Thanks for giving back to the community, Kevin! - editor

**"From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens - the garden outdoors, the garden of pots and bowls in the house, and the garden of the mind's eye."**

**- Katherine S. White**

## Inside this issue:

Meeting Minutes, parts of an iris plant and flower	2
Photos from November meeting	3
Treasurer's Report, more on fig beetles and grubs	4
Photos and Interview - Cathy Scire	5-6
Life Cycle of Grubs, Wm. Caparne paintings, late-bloomer in PA	7
What to do in the Iris Garden for December	8
Limerick, Did You Know, Tips, Iris History	8
Iris Trek information	9-10

## Upcoming Events

**No meeting in December.**

**Next meeting on January 13th. 1 PM.**

**Feb 10th meeting - Rick Tasco of Superstition Iris Gardens will speak about hybridizing irises. Tell your friends! Noon or 1 PM. See next month's newsletter or website for start time.**

### December Birthday Wishes to:

**Cathy Scire**

**Madeleine Glaser**

**Gordon Jensen**

**Phil Doonan**



# November Meeting Minutes



Following a potluck lunch full of delicious food, we settled in to our meeting for which Kristee was the MC. Both Sue and Kristee read aloud Thank You cards from the Board, and each received a gift of \$100 for their service to TAIS.

Sue mentioned a Rhizome Sale Guide that she and Kathy have been drafting. Melania brought along Maxine's additions for this. Sue will incorporate them and send a new draft to officers and board members. Melania had also given a copy to Greta for her valued input, but she was not present today.

Kristee would like us to order from Superstition Gardens in 2018. Gary made a motion for this and Angela seconded it. Melania also suggested Mid-America Gardens, as Tom Johnson there was so helpful with our order during their recent big sale. Kristee mentioned that some growers will not hold the rhizomes until September, and want to send them in July and August.

Kristee reviewed the idea of the Club Irises. Members receive them now and then, care for them for two years, keep one of the increases and the original rhizome, and donate the rest of the increases to the club for the sale. In this way, our customers can be confident that the varieties will grow in our climate. There was some debate over whether selling out-of-state irises is ethical. Another component of the Club Iris is Iris Bucks, which members earn by helping with events and other things, and then trade in a certain amount for a Club Iris or a discount at the sale.

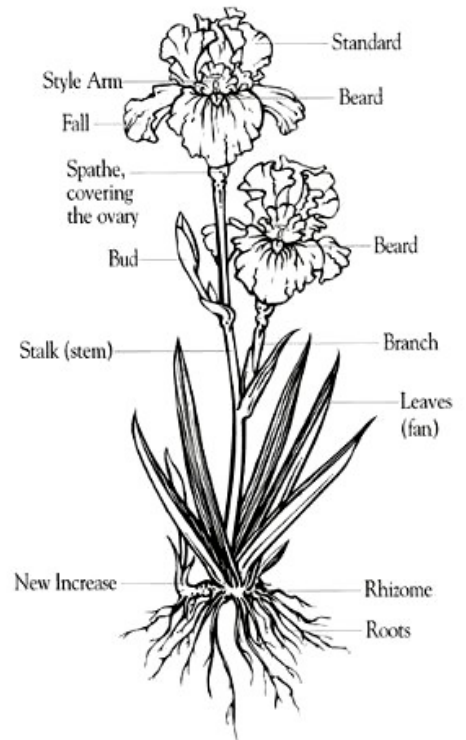
Last year, Kristee sent \$400 to Mid-America Gardens for recent introductions (1-3 years old) and received \$1600-worth of rhizomes. I believe that this offer is extended to clubs. There were also shipping charges of about \$80.

Tony researched the sticky point about the society (as a nonprofit entity) purchasing rhizomes from its members. He read copies of the verbiage from AIS and TAIS, both of which say "the organization is authorized to pay reasonable compensation for goods and/or services in furtherance of the purposes of the organization." Tony suggested that we might pay each member \$2 per rhizome which sells. Melania offered that this could be tracked by assigning a number to each member, and that number would be written on the leaves of each of their rhizomes. Any leftovers would either be returned to their grower, who may chose to take them home or donate them to the society. Kristee suggested that this be discussed in detail at the January meeting.

Kristee is considering chairing the sale in 2018, and perhaps the auction, as well. She has specific ideas about these, as outlined above.

Six rhizomes were given as door prizes, three from the Mid-America sale and three that Bonnie and Kathy had rescued from their work at the Botanical Gardens – tiny ones that were potted and nurtured during the summer by Bonnie. Winners included Kristee, Melania, Tony, Angela, Sue, and Madeleine.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM. – Sue Clark, substitute secretary for Janet Gardner, who, along with three friends, was donating the 20+ quilts that they made in the last year to children during National Adoption Day. Three cheers for Janet and her friends for doing that!

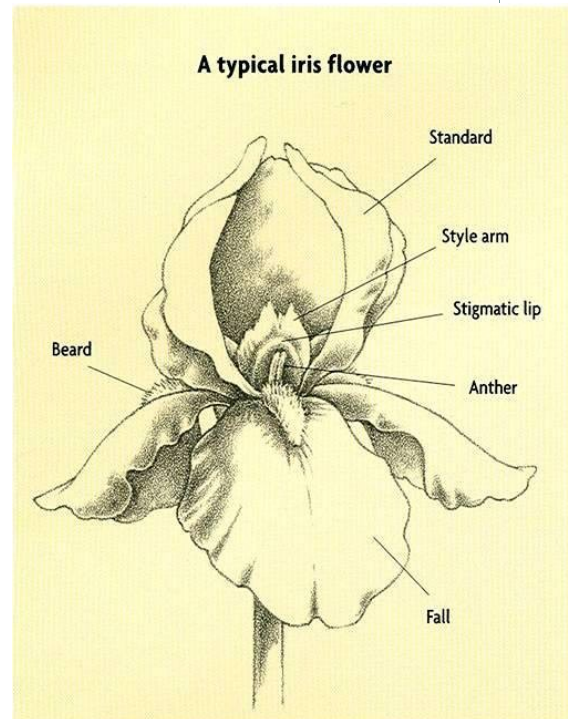


**Above:** Diagram of iris parts from Schreiner's website

**Below:** Close-up diagram of iris flower parts from the Greater St. Louis Iris Society's website

**Meeting information  
is available on the  
website.**

**We're on the web!**  
**[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)**

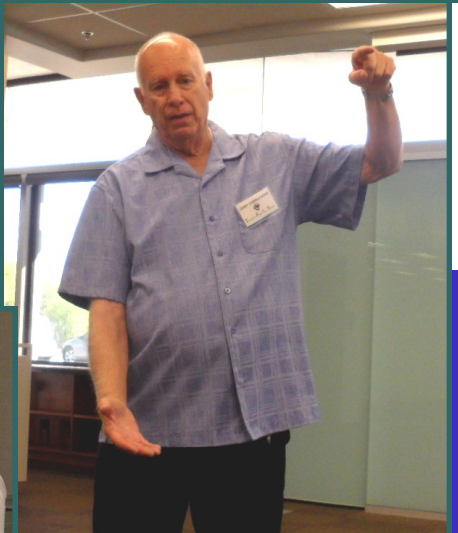




# TAIS November Meeting



**Photos by  
Tony Kutz**





## Treasurer's Report for November - submitted by Kristee West, Treasurer

Date	Debits/Checks	Deposits	Balance	Details
	\$330.00			Region 15 Auction
	\$11.64			Angela: refreshments
<b>Pending/Uncashed Expenses Total</b>	<b>\$353.28</b>			
20-Nov	\$9.99			Diane Tweedy : refreshments
20-Nov	\$100.00			Sue Clark: Thanks from the Board
20-Nov	\$100.00			E. K. West: Thanks from the Board
30-Nov <b>Bank Balance</b>			\$6,828.74	
<b>Pending Uncashed Checks</b>	<b>\$353.28</b>			
30-Nov <b>TAIS Balance</b>			\$6,475.46	
	Cash on hand		\$1.00	
30-Nov <b>Balance + Cash on hand</b>			<b>\$6,476.46</b>	

### More on Fig Beetles and Grubs, continued from last month

This month, we are going to focus on what to do if you have grubs in your iris beds. Grubs survive by eating organic matter at the soil's surface, so one strategy is to remove that material from the surface of the soil so that the larvae will not have any food. Some of the other strategies mentioned might not be good for a bed of irises, I fear. One is to withhold water so that the soil surface dries out and hardens, which would trap the newly-formed adult beetles as they attempt to emerge. This might work if you do not water your irises in the summer. Another idea is to flood irrigate the bed, as larvae and eggs cannot tolerate saturated soil for more than two days. I am not sure that iris rhizomes could either, though. This particular article did not recommend using any type of chemical controls. <http://ipm.ucanr.edu>.

Three **natural treatments** for grubs in flower beds: **Milky spore** will infect the grubs when applied to the area in question. After the grubs die, further quantities of milky spore are released, and the killing cycle continues for *10-40 years*. Use one teaspoon for a 4X4' area. Milky spore is available at Amazon.com. **Beneficial nematodes** are tiny worm-like creatures that release a bacterium into the soil. That bacterium then infects and kills the grubs (but only when grubs are young). A species known to be effective against grubs is *Heterorhabditis bacteriophora*. Mix one packet of nematodes with 5 gal of water. Let soak for 5 minutes. Mix well. Spray or pour solution over the infected area, stirring to prevent nematodes from settling to the bottom of the liquid. Apply in the evening when soil is cooler, and keep area well-watered for a week, with no fertilizer for two weeks before and after application. Beneficial nematodes (*H. bacteriophora*) are available at Amazon.com. **Neem oil**, which is mixed with water and sprayed on the infected area, will inhibit the life cycle of the beetles, including egg-laying, growth, and feeding. **Chemical treatments** include: **Dylox** for Fall use, and either **Merit** and **Mach-2** for Spring use. **Bayer Complete Insect Killer** is another option (available at Target.com). For some types of grubs, Spring may be the best time to treat, as the adult beetles would be killed before they can lay eggs, and any young hatchlings would also die off. See life cycle drawing on p. 7. More at [homeguides.sfgate.com](http://homeguides.sfgate.com), [gardeningknowhow.com](http://gardeningknowhow.com), and [veggiegardener.com](http://veggiegardener.com).

Cathy Scire of our club reports that she has had success with **Spectracide Triazicide Insect Killer** in the past, but thinks that her grubs built up an immunity to it with time. In her latest battle of the grubs, she found that **diatomaceous earth** has worked the best, along with removing and replacing the infested soil. It could be that it was the timing of application of poison that determined the success rate - one article suggested that traditional insecticides work as a preventative measure, but *not* if you have an infestation. - SC



**Some Irises from Cathy Scire's Garden - notice how she combines them with other plants!**





## TAIS iris grower's interview #10

Cathy Pane-Scire lives in the northwest part of Tucson. She has been actively growing irises for about 15 years. Visits to Cooley's and Schreiner's Iris Gardens, where she saw acres and acres of the flowers blooming, fired something inside her. Back home in Arizona, Cathy began buying irises from Margie Valenzuela, and joined our club. She has moved her irises (and she has a lot of them) three times!

Cathy's soil of choice is Miracle-Gro Moisture Control, which is available at CostCo after the holidays, amongst other places. She designed raised beds around the perimeter of her yard, had the all of caliche removed, and replaced it with planting mix. Around the irises, she also adds the Miracle-Gro Moisture Control potting soil. Cathy does not fertilize when planting. She applies Super Bloom every two weeks from the last frost until all plants have flower stalks.

Cathy's watering array and schedule has been adjusted countless times. Her irises are situated along the front edge of her 3'-deep raised beds, and are backed by various salvias, roses, vincas, and other plants. The drip lines run along the back of the beds, so the irises in front receive their water indirectly. Cathy prefers the adjustable flow emitters, which she runs for 45 minutes a day during the hot season (2-3 weeks of 100°+ temperatures), then drops to 30 minutes a day, and finally to 30 minutes every other day.

Cathy divides her irises whenever they need it, as evidenced by reduced bloom rate and overcrowding.

Her favorites? Kathy's Karnival, which not only blooms no matter what or where, but is lovely as well! And Milady Grace, a stunning ruffled purple and blue beauty.

Cathy does not grow any heirloom varieties, but still buys irises that appeal to her. She does not discard ones that do not perform well, but gives

them every chance. She mentioned one variety that took five years to start blooming! And afterward, it never failed to bloom.

Cathy got her ideas for combining irises and other plants from her visit to Schreiner's, where all kinds of flowers bloom together in their Display Gardens.

When Cathy began to dig rhizomes for our sale in September, she had to change plans because she realized that she had a serious grub infestation. Although the leaves looked healthy and the rhizomes were slightly pitted in places, there were *no roots* and there were grubs around all the rhizomes (about 20 live ones for every 10 dead ones). Because she has three fig trees in her yard, we suspected fig beetle larvae. (See the article in last month's newsletter and its conclusion this month). She had all the soil removed from her two large beds, and replaced with fresh soil. Cathy moved those irises that survived to pots for now, and forlornly calculated that she lost the majority of 15 years worth of her collection! She treated with Triazicide Insect Killer, but had better luck with diatomaceous earth, which was recommended by a Harlow's employee during our sale. The grubs may have developed resistance to the poison since Cathy has used it before. She is giving one of the fig trees to her landscaper, but holding on to the other two for now. The only other potential pests Cathy has noticed are tomato hornworms, which should not bother irises.

**Her best advice? Like what you do, and it'll grow if you give it love!**



**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](mailto: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





**SPRING**

Grubs awaken from winter and begin feeding on grass roots. After feeding, grubs change into pupae that will later become beetles.

**SUMMER**

Pupae turn into beetles, including Japanese beetles, which emerge to feed on garden foliage and flowers. Beetles lay eggs in the lawn soon after.

**FALL**

Eggs hatch into new grubs which feed on grass roots, thereby destroying your lawn. The destructive cycle begins all over again.



**Life Cycle of Japanese beetle.** Even though we do not have Japanese beetles (thankfully!), this drawing represents the life cycle of scarab beetles (including Fig beetles, June bugs and European chafers) in general and therefore is important for knowing when to treat for their various phases. <https://www.bayeradvanced.com>. Garden spike sandals (for aerating) can do serious damage to grubs, too! - SC



These four paintings (left) are by William Caparne. See article on p. 8 about Iris History. Images found via Google search.



Above: This beauty was found blooming in Beaver, PA on November 1 by my mom, Rose Clark, and photographed by my niece, Rachel Ammon. -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**

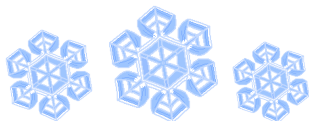
**Sue Clark – Newsletter Editor**

## What to do in the Iris Garden for December:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests. Tiny weeds and grass blades pull out easily.

Remove all brown, dead iris leaves as soon as new foliage appears.

Be sure that the plants get enough water, as they will be growing and increasing until bloom time.



## Tip Exchange

❁ If an iris's leaf fans are situated to block out the sun during the hottest part of the day, they will protect and shade the rhizome. - L. Rossman, Hummingbird Iris Gardens, Prescott

❁ **Ferti-Lome Blooming and Rooting (9-59-8)** is an excellent fertilizer for irises. Mix 1 t into 1 gallon of water and apply weekly during the active growing season. - ditto above

❁ **Grass B Gon** spray is safe around irises and can be used to keep grass away from the edges of your beds. - Schreiner's Month-by-Month Iris Care Guide. The spray is available at Wal-Mart, Amazon.com, and other places. Ortho brand.

## Iris Limerick:

There once was an iris so white.  
It belonged to a young man named Dwight.  
In moonlight, it glowed,  
In daylight, he hoed,  
In evenings, the fairies took flight.

- Sue Clark

## Did You Know?

In ancient times, both Druids and Romans hung sprigs of mistletoe in their homes and places of celebration to bring good fortune, peace and love.

from: <http://www.gardendigest.com/mondec.htm>



Painting by Howard Gaze

**"The gardening season officially begins on January 1st, & ends on December 31." - Marie Huston**

## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

I'll bet that more than one of us has lamented about the relatively brief bloom period of our irises, and wished that it could be extended, even by a little bit. Well, William Caparne wished for that same thing and decided to do something about it! The dwarf irises in his garden in Northhamptonshire in England bloomed in early Spring, and then after a gap of several weeks, the tall bearded irises burst forth. Being both a gardener and a painter, this gap in bloom time was just plain annoying! Caparne, who had begun hybridizing irises in about 1880, devised a plan to see if fertilizing the dwarf irises with pollen from the tall bearded ones would result in dwarf irises that bloomed in between their parents' blooms. How to get pollen from the tall bearded, though, since they flowered several weeks after the dwarfs finished? Caparne forced some tall bearded to bloom early in his greenhouse, and then applied their pollen to the dwarfs. Most of the crosses did not take, and with others, few seeds formed. Some of those seeds sprouted, though, and Caparne received a surprise - the seedlings bloomed during the gap time, but they were intermediate in size between the dwarfs and the tall bearded! Caparne continued to hybridize all three sizes of irises. Besides his duties of teaching art at the Oundle School, he supplemented his income by selling plants and seeds from his garden. Later, he only sold wholesale. William had been gardening since he was six, when his uncle, also a plantsman, gave him a plot of land for a garden. William planted it with irises, and then drew them with his crayons and pastels. His father was a gardener and his grandfather a nurseryman, so growing things was certainly in his blood. Caparne was friends with Sir Michael Foster, who was featured last month, and Foster gave him many irises. William's botanical illustrations enhance Foster's book, Bulbous Irises. He painted 167 daffodil cultivars for Peter Barr. Caparne painted watercolors on commission and for himself, and even painted in Giverny, Claude Monet's garden. Several of Caparne's irises survive, and there is a collection of at least twelve varieties in a garden in Guernsey, his last home. Thank you, Wm Caparne, for intermediates! - 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:Suncountryiris@yahoo.com)