

TAIS Newsletter



Tahitian Treat (rebloomer)
Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

President's Message

It was nice to see everybody at our last meeting, especially all the visitors. I enjoyed watching and learning something from the color patterns and forms slide show. For a review (and more great iris photos) see: <https://theamericanirissociety.blogspot.com/2014/12/tall-bearded-iris-color-terms.html>

My last iris of the season, Mimosa, bloomed yesterday. Time to survive the summer and start thinking about planting in the Fall. See you at our rhizome auction in August. Keep growing and stay cool.

- Kevin Kartchner

"Then followed that beautiful season... Summer... Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape lay as if new created in all the freshness of childhood." - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Inside this issue:

May Meeting Minutes, Hondo Iris Garden	2
Photos from May Meeting	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Iris Experiment Update	4
Interview of Kevin Kartchner	5
What to do in the Iris Garden for June	6
Isis Limerick, Did You Know?	6
Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History	6

Upcoming Events

Next meeting: August - Tucson Botanical Garden - Region 15 Auction and Potluck. Date pending.

Newsletters will continue through the Summer.

June Birthday Wishes to:

Diane Tweedy



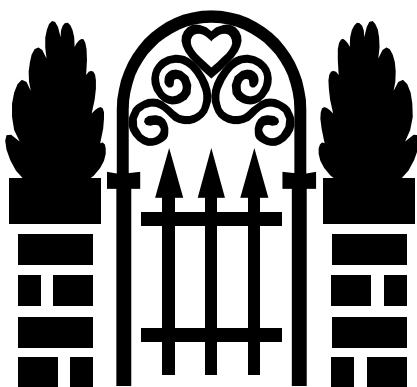
<http://bumblebutton.blogspot.com/search/label/Iris>

May Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2017

This month we had six visitors including Susan Schafer who was a past member who has rejoined our group; Wilma Agnew, who

has gone to TBG; Chris who attended our show; Bonnie and Jack, iris lovers who saw our ad in the newspaper; and Audrey, who is planning to move to Tucson.



We ♥ Irises

and that we'll pay for it. Perhaps it could say "Supplied and maintained by Tucson Area Iris Society" along with our website address.

Our August meeting will be based on when we receive our club iris. It was originally scheduled for Aug 12.

The Fall Sale will be Sept 23rd at Harlow Gardens.

Kevin presented a program that we purchased from the American Iris Society. It gave definitions/examples of color patterns, forms and novelty iris. Great learning tool!

Call to order at 2:15 PM

A big thank you to Kathy W. for having the mulch removed on the beds at TBG. Fertilization will be done by us in a week or so. We will have a custom shed for our storage there. TBG does have boxes for visitors to take information on the adjacent display. We feel that a sign with our website prominently featured would be a better fit for us rather than a box for handouts.

Kevin and Kathy suggested that when it is time to renew our contract with TBG, we could ask them to have the sign made

Shirley Andrews gave Kristee \$100 to purchase rhizomes for her from our sale because she won't be back in time to attend.

The board moved (Diane) and seconded (Janet) a \$500 limit for the purchase of club/auction iris.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM.

- submitted by Janet Gardner,
TAIS secretary

Hondo Iris Farm in New Mexico

In our neighboring state of New Mexico, there is a lovely iris garden located between Ruidoso and Roswell off Highway 70. The garden is open every day in May from 8 AM to 5 PM, so that visitors may see the 400+ varieties of rises in peak bloom. Admission is free. Bring a lunch and sit on the Hummingbird porch to watch hummingbirds and butterflies flit about. The iris garden has several sections: One is filled with post-1990 award winners, another with 100+-year-old historic irises from the Hondo Valley, and another section is filled with irises from Santa Fe-area *acequias* (communal irrigation systems). In the latter, irises that are several centuries old were brought from Santa Fe, the former home of owner Alice Seeley. Besides rhizomes, potted irises, jewelry and folk art, Alice sells her own blend of fertilizer called Bloom Better (5-12-12). Information: Hondo Iris Farm, PO Box 166, Hondo, NM 88336 (24 miles east of Ruidoso, at mile marker 284 on Hwy. 70), 5 7 5 - 6 5 3 - 4 0 6 2 ; <http://www.hondoirisfarm.com/>, iris@hondoirisfarm.com. - SC

See you at the
August meeting!
Date is pending.



We're on the web!
Tucsoniris.org



Photo from their website

TAIS May Meeting



Photos by
Tony Kutz



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

Date		Debits/Checks	Deposits	Balance	Details
	AIS	\$16.00			2 iris presentations
	Pending Uncashed Checks Total	\$16.00			
1-May	Beginning Bank Balance			\$5,755.37	
15-May	Debit Card - Office Max	\$8.43			treasurer's folders
17-May	1757 - Diane Tweedy	\$74.27			birthday cards, refreshments
19-May	1755 - Angela Powers	\$22.68			door prizes
31-May	Bank Balance			\$5,649.99	
	Pending Uncashed Checks			\$16.00	
31-May	TAIS Balance			\$5,633.99	

Iris Experiment Update

Here is an update of the experiment I conducted on several rhizomes which had not rooted between late September when they were planted and March 1st when I lifted them out of the soil and placed them in a bowl of shallow water. Some of them developed roots within a day or two in the bowl and continued to grow. Others did not sprout any roots, even after two weeks in the shallow water. The *About Town* rhizome was

Main Street on March 2 & 13

Main Street on May 23

About Town on May 23



oddly shaped, and I had originally soaked it upside down. It sprouted roots right away when I soaked it right side up.

It seems that the rhizomes which root within two days in the water will continue to grow and those that do not probably won't grow roots, even after twelve days. At this point, I cannot explain the issues with the latter group. - SC

Arizona Sandstone and a Noid. They grew no roots while in water and still seem dormant.

TAIS iris grower's interview #4

Our president, Kevin Kartchner, lives on the northeast side of Tucson. He has been growing irises with intention for 25 years, starting when Gary Carothers introduced him to the Tucson Area Iris Society. Kevin's daughter became a youth member of the Society about 20 years ago. Kevin credits a TAIS iris show at the Park Mall years ago as what got him hooked on the flower.

Kevin amends his soil with organic matter and a general fertilizer. He buys whatever is on sale, and does not use a specific amount of either, but goes with what seems right for the type of natural soil. He feels that he probably doesn't amend his soil enough.

When planting in the Fall, Kevin uses a general purpose fertilizer and is careful not to plant the rhizomes too deep. Beginning in January, he applies a general purpose fertilizer about once a month. He does not use Super Bloom or Triple Super Phosphate.

Javelinas have caused more troubles in Kevin's iris beds than any other creature – not because they have eaten the plants, but because when Kevin tries to chase them out of his yard, they run through the iris beds and trample them in their haste to get away. He has also had occasional issues with aphids and thrips.

Irises in Kevin's garden are watered a couple of different ways. Some receive their water via a dripline and others via sprinklers, both at a fairly slow rate. He mentioned that there are good and bad things about each method. The irises are watered every three days.

Kevin divides his irises when they need it and/or when he gets around to it, and estimated that this occurs about every three to four years.

His favorite iris? *Mesmerizer*. It even bloomed the first year after dividing. He has at least one historic iris, *Lady Friend*, which is a prolific grower for him.

Kevin admitted that he absolutely still buys irises. (I think that we all noticed this during the auction last August!) The portion of his yard given over to the flower is limited by his water bill, or else the whole yard might be devoted to them!

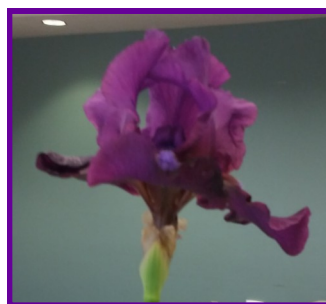
Before getting rid of a poor performer, Kevin gives it every chance for several years. He has noticed that his dark varieties crisp along their edges after one day in the sun, so believes that they would prefer some afternoon shade.

Oriental poppies grow and reseed themselves between some of his irises. This was not an intentional mix, but it is pleasing.

As for iris mishaps or disasters, Kevin lost rhizomes to rot one summer when the drip line and the monsoons both did their very best to keep the ground wet.

His best tip to offer others? **Keep trying!**

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



Two of Kevin's irises from our Show in April - *Scoonchee* and *Mesmerizer*.

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 June:

Remove spent iris stems. Using scissors, cut at an angle close to the ground. Remove dead leaves in the same way.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

Be sure that the plants get enough water during the hot season. They will be growing and increasing until next bloom time.



Tip Exchange

My friend Jane gave me a copy of a sheet called “Bearded Iris Culture” from Shepard’s Iris Gardens in Phoenix, which closed in 2007. Some items that stood out:

- “In hotter climates, we strongly suggest planting iris in a bed by themselves, [so that] watering is better controlled.”
- “In Arizona: By June 1, spread watering over longer intervals for summer cycle, watering very lightly until fall.”
- “Put 3/4” soil on top of the rhizome.”

Iris Limerick:

There once was a gardener named Hess
Who lived in the town of Verness.

Iris were his fave,
Of them he did rave,

And he shared them with all in Verness.

- Sue Clark



Did You Know?

“Bloom,” the whitish coating on the leaves and stems of irises and certain other plants which gives them a bluish cast, is from wax crystals. This epicuticular wax is multipurpose. It creates an anti-climb surface, increases water repellency, prevents water loss, and reflects ultraviolet light. In certain plants such as hostas, the wax can melt or be washed off during the summer, giving blue hostas a dull or faded look. That seems to happen with many iris leaves, as well, especially in the desert.- SC
Info from Wikipedia (“Epicuticular wax”) and <http://awaytogarden.com/things-i-didnt-know-about-hosta-with-tony-avent/>

“And since all this loveliness cannot be Heaven,
I know in my heart it is June.” - Abba Woolson

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

In the next chapter in the history of the iris, Frenchman **Jean-Nicolas Lémon** is noted for developing over 150 new varieties of irises and for giving them non-Latin names. Some of his irises survive into the present day and are grown in historic iris gardens. Examples include *Madame Chereau*, *Victorine* (known as *Victoire Lemon* in France), and *Faustine*. When Lémon’s father died in 1835, 18-year-old Jean-Nicolas took over the running of his successful horticultural business. The elder Lémon was famous for peonies, pelargoniums (zonal geraniums), and was one of the first nurserymen to grow chrysanthemums. He also had a beautiful collection of irises by 1833, which included some of his own (unnamed) seedlings. Some of these were likely named and introduced by his son Jean-Nicolas. The younger Lémon’s nursery was described by the famous physician and botanist Loiseleur-Deslongchamps in 1845. “I saw with pleasure that he does not need a trumpet. I could not but admire the vast flowerbeds of irises that were presented to our gaze. The superb and magnificent flowers, riches of nearly all the colors and of an infinite variety of shades, present a truly enchanting picture...” Lémon explained to the doctor that he did not hybridize his seedlings, but simply planted whatever seeds developed via natural pollination of *Iris pallida* and *Iris variegata*. Being a shrewd businessman, Lémon often named his new varieties for distinguished patrons of horticulture, nurserymen, Greek and Roman gods, and characters from famous literature. One of Lémon’s most famous irises is *Innocenza*, which appeared in a catalog from 1848. This white form of *I. variegata* was used by several hybridizers in the early 20th century, so it is an ancestor of many of today’s tall bearded varieties. The iris *Madame Chereau* remains Lémon’s most popular variety. It can be seen in the Tufton Farm historic iris garden at Monticello in Virginia, as well as the splendid Botanical Garden in Pruhonice in the Czech Republic, to name a few places. “[Jean-Nicolas Lémon] revealed to the world that the simple irises of his time had, hidden within their essence, myriad forms and colors waiting to be set free.”

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