

TAIS Newsletter

November 2017

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



Rare Quality

Haas Interfaith Memorial Chapel,
Embry-Riddle campus, Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

(Available from www.iris4u.com)

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President's Message:

Ah, Tucson Fall, the temperatures are finally below 100 and my iris are showing new growth. Is it too early to wonder what blooms will be coming from my new rhizomes that will accompany my favorites?

Thanks again to the board members that so graciously volunteered for another year of TAIS service. I look forward to continuing to work with you.
- Kevin Kartchner

"Most people, early in November, take last looks at their gardens, and are then prepared to ignore them until the spring. I am quite sure that a garden doesn't like to be ignored like this. It doesn't like to be covered in dust sheets, as though it were an old room which you had shut up during the winter. Especially since a garden knows how gay and delightful it can be, even in the very frozen heart of the winter, if you only give it a chance." - Beverley Nichols

Upcoming Events

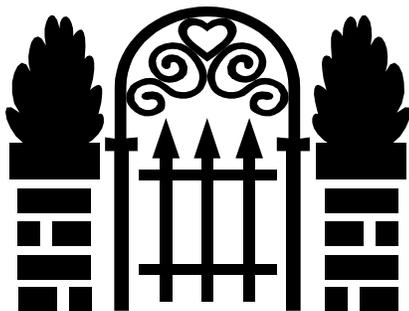
Next meeting: November 18 at 12:30, Murphy-Wilmot Library, 530 N. Wilmot Road, large room - can enter from side doors. Potluck and Installation of Officers. No meeting in December.

November Birthday Wishes to:

Angela Powers Mary Ellen Stinski
Susan Shafer



October Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

Even with a cancelled speaker and a president in California to celebrate the 2nd birthday of his grandson, Kristee ran an excellent meeting for us! A guest at the meeting inquired why we had run out of rhizomes at last month's sale, which prompted a discussion of why indeed had we run out? Should we form a committee to investigate options? Tony will research if we, as a non-profit entity, can purchase rhizomes from our members or not. Two members who had previously provided numerous rhizomes for the sale did not do so this year. Greta said that the club used to buy irises from growers, and that we would send \$100 and get at least 100 rhizomes of their choice for that amount. The arrangements had to be made in advance, of course. Sue reported that she and Kathy have been creating a Quick Guide about organizing and running the sale.

In keeping with today's theme of companion plants, members told what they combine with their irises: daylilies, rain lilies, daffodils, amaryllis, Easter lilies, poppies (might take over), garlic, and onions. Be sure plants have similar watering and light needs. Sue read an article from our May 2017 newsletter about this topic, which Melania had conveniently brought along.

Spearheaded by Melania, the club ordered 15 rhizomes from Mid-America's big sale for door prizes up through March. Today's winners were Sue, Cat (our new member), and Madeleine. Remaining rhizomes will be tended by Susan (for Nov.), Greta (Jan.), Sue (Feb.), and Gary (Mar.). Kristee provided pots for them to use.

Pam and Gary motioned to accept the current officers' offers to serve another year. Directors will be Melania, Tony, Madeleine, Carole, Greta, and Kathy W., with Angela as alternate. Gary and Tony motioned for them to be accepted. Angela will continue to bring birthday cakes and Diane the snacks. Sue will update the membership form on the website.

Pam brought a portion of her collection of iris Depression glass and asked us to buy some for her if we ever find it at garage sales. Most are clear glass and some are a light amber color.

Sue showed our banner, which had debuted at the rhizome sale.

Board meeting will be held next month.

- Sue Clark, substitute secretary

Door prizes will be
rhizomes through
March!

We're on the web!
Tucsoniris.org

Fig Beetles & their grubby grubs

Cathy Scire discovered some serious grub problems when she attempted to separate her iris rhizomes for our sale in September. Although the leaves were green and the rhizomes just had a few nibbles here and there, all of the roots were gone. Many live and dead grubs were immediately noticeable. Cathy lost years worth of her iris collection. She has three fig trees in her yard, and we speculated that they may be **fig beetle** grubs. Has anyone else had this issue?

The fig beetle, also known as figeater beetle, green fruit beetle, or green June bug, is a type of scarab beetle that feeds on figs, cactus fruit, and other sweet fruits. It became a crop pest in California upon arrival there in the 1960's, probably spreading out from Arizona and New Mexico. The beetles are dark metallic green and have a rather buzzing, bumbling type of flight during which they often collide with things. This might be due to their size (1.25") and their heavy wing armor, called *elytra*.

Fig beetles, *Continus mutabilis*, lay their eggs in compost piles or decaying matter such as mulch. Pupation occurs in Spring, and adults emerge between July and September depending on location. The larvae or grubs, known as "crawly backs" due to their habit of flipping over to their backs if alarmed and crawling with the stiff bristles there, can be 2" long. (See the larva on the far right side, below). When at rest, they remain curled in a tight "C" shape.

Continued on p. 5...



Above left: Larvae. By Elf (Own work) [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Above right: Adult beetle. User:jengod [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], via Wikimedia Commons

TAIS October Meeting



Photos by
Tony Kutz and
Sue Clark



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

| | Debits/Checks | Deposits | Balance | Notes |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| Region 15 Auction | \$330.00 | | | |
| Angela Powers | \$9.99 | | | refreshments |
| Diane Tweedy | <u>\$11.64</u> | | | refreshments |
| Pending/Uncashed Total | \$351.63 | | | |
| Cat McCord | | \$10.00 | | dues |
| Gary Carruthers | | \$10.00 | | dues |
| Greta Dunnigan | | \$10.00 | | dues |
| Phil Doonan | | \$15.00 | | dues |
| Miriam Diamond | | \$15.00 | | dues |
| Tony and Melania Kutz | | \$13.00 | | |
| Kutz iris payment | | \$36.00 | | |
| Bank Balance | | | \$7038.73 | |
| Pending/Uncashed checks | | | -\$351.63 | |
| TAIS Balance | | | \$6687.10 | |

Reblooming Irises are better than ever

In the AIS Region 15 Fall 2017 newsletter, Carole Buckheim reported that some Southern California irises (Zones 9 and 10) have been noted as **blooming for four to five months in a row!** If you want to get in on some of this goodness, try any or all of the following varieties: *Wizard of Odds*, *Always Lovely* (BB), *Summer Sunburst*, *Struck Twice*, *Honeycomb*, *Cloud Reflection*, *My Generation*, *Brouhaha*, and *La Scala*. Some of these are not classified as Rebloomers, but their description mentions the tendency and experience has proven it. - SC



Wizard of Odds TB
(P. Black 2009)



Always Lovely BB
(P. Black 2010)



Summer Sunburst TB RE
(T. Aitken 2010)



Struck Twice TB RE
(L. Lauer 2009)



Honeycomb TB
(L. Lauer 2006)

Tips for successful reblooming:

- Ask others in your area to recommend specific rebloomers that they have had success with. (p. 5)
- Prepare beds carefully and give the rebloomers more space than non-rebloomers.
- Fertilize three times a year rather than two. Use a low-nitrogen fertilizer.
- Water beds of rebloomers regularly, especially through the summer.
- As always, be sure beds are well-drained, receive at least a half-day of sunshine, and are kept clear of leaves and other iris litter. - SC

TAIS iris grower's interview #9

Greta Dunnigan lives in mid-town Tucson. She moved to this city in 1970, and it was a TAIS rhizome sale out in front of Harlow's Gardens that year which started her iris-growing career. She joined our club in 1973, after her son was a preschooler.

Greta improves her iris beds with a bagged soil amendment from Lowe's whenever she divides a clump of rhizomes, which is on an as-needed basis. In February, she sprinkles a multi-purpose fertilizer (such as Miracle-Gro) around her irises, works it into the soil, and then waters. Pests have not been an issue.

Greta prefers watering by hand with a sprinkling can, and is careful to water the bed and *not* the plants. In the summer, she waters once a week or less. She pokes a teaspoon down into the soil to see how it feels. If it is wet at the bowl part of the spoon, then the plants have adequate water. If not, out comes the sprinkling can!

Arils are Greta's favorite type of iris (and she thinks that this will likely cause some readers to gasp!). She has no historic varieties and no longer buys irises. She does have two new Club Irises from the Rhizome Sale to tend this year.

Greta said that she discards any varieties that do not grow well for her, as she refuses to waste water on them. She grows desert plants near her irises, but not mixed in with them. She has not had any iris mishaps or disasters.

Her best tip? Try this as an experiment: Don't trim iris leaves into 6" fans. Probably just the outer two leaves will yellow and die back and the others can continue to photosynthesize. - 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

Which Rebloomers have you had success with in the Tucson area?

Kristee - *Anxious, Autumn Explosion, Double Shot, October Sky, Ozark Rebounder (once), Struck Twice, Winesap, Zurich.*

Kevin - *October Sky*

Shirley - *Victoria Falls*

Kathy C - Reliable ones: *Billionaire, Buckwheat, His Royal Highness, Low Ho Silver (IB), Pure as Gold, Starmaster, Winesap and Zurich.* **Occasional ones:** *All America, Anxious, Autumn Circus, Be Mine, Bernices's Legacy, Bountiful Harvest, Feedback, Frequent Flyer, Hemstitched, Marty Richards, Raspberry Frost, Rosalie Figge, Total Recall.* **Check out Mystic Lake Gardens for rebloomers for our Region.**

Melania - *Blatant, Corn Harvest, Happy New Year, Immortality, Low Ho Silver, Zurich.*

Fig Beetles & Grubs, continued from p. 2

The popularity of home gardens has provided more food for both adult beetles and larvae. Eggs are laid in the Fall in mulch and compost. Larvae feed on these decomposing materials (and the occasional plant root) and grow through the Winter and Spring. In the Spring, these 'eating machines' come to the surface for their second larval stage. You might see them or the mounds of soil near their tunnel entrances. The larvae cause two problems at this time - the tunnels allow plant roots to dry out, and animals may decide to forage through your beds to eat the grubs! The pupal stage lasts through April and May, during which the larvae metamorphose into beetles inside a case of sand and frasse (solid excreta). Controlling the larvae appears to be the best way to reduce the problem. More next month! Or see <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/r261300511.html> if you cannot wait till then! - 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 & Diane Tweedy - Hospitality

Tony Kutz - Photographer

Sue Clark – Newsletter Editor

What to do in the Iris Garden for November:

Be sure that the plants get enough water. They will be growing and increasing until next bloom time. Do not water from overhead if temperatures are above 85°.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

Label any new rhizomes.

Report names of all Club Irises to Kristee.



Tip Exchange

Words written with paint-based markers or permanent markers can be removed from metal plant labels using fine steel wool dampened with a bit of water. - SC

The **Sharpie paint marker** writing held up well on my metal plant markers. - SC

Kristee mentioned that she had rot problems with rhizomes that received full sun.

Cathy Scire is looking for Kathy's Karnival iris, her favorite. Is anyone willing to trade with her?

Iris Haiku:

**Purple velvet petals,
Silky beards like caterpillars.
Stately irises.**

- Sue Clark



Iris patula, Vol. 5, Les Liliacees, PJ Redoute, 1809

Did You Know?

The earliest cultivated irises were grown about 7000 BC by the Egyptians, according to information on the website of the Greater St. Louis Iris Society.

**"November comes and November goes,
With the last red berries and the first white snows.**

**With night coming early, and dawn coming late,
And ice in the bucket and frost by the gate.**

**The fires burn and the kettles sing,
And earth sinks to rest until next spring."**

- Elizabeth Coatsworth



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month we focus on Sir Michael Foster, who, besides teaching physiology at Trinity College and Cambridge University, writing highly-regarded textbooks on embryology and physiology, being Secretary of the Royal Society and a member of Parliament, "did more to expand our knowledge of the genus *Iris* and to explore and expand the breeding potential of irises than any other man or woman" in the 19th century. In 1865, at age 29, he began amassing a collection of irises. Now, it was not so easy to get irises in those days. Various people, including missionaries, sent him irises from Central Asia and Asia Minor, where they grew in profusion. He chose the site for his home near New Shelford in England because of its alkalinity and excellent drainage, both crucial for bearded iris culture. He had to bring in soil since there was not much of that present. In fact, whenever he gave irises to his numerous friends, he shook all of the dirt off, saying, "You can have as many of my plants as you like, but I can't spare you any of my soil." Although he was not a botanist, Foster named and published formal descriptions of more than 24 species of irises, as well as a new section in the classification of irises. He kept detailed records and sketches of his hybridizing experiments. He popularized *Spuria* irises as garden plants and co-created the *arilbreds* along with the Van Turbergens of Holland. But, the thing that Foster did that *really changed* the course of garden iris history was to use newly discovered tetraploid irises from India, Cyprus, and Turkey (where they were found growing in graveyards, gardens, and ruins) to hybridize with bearded irises to create tetraploid bearded irises with 48 chromosomes rather than 24, which allows for more mutations, bigger flowers, and larger plants. Nearly every tall bearded iris today descends from Sir Michael Foster's bearded irises. Thank you, Sir Michael! Foster's *Blue Boy* is an important ancestor of today's blue varieties, and his *Dauntless* the ancestor of the pink varieties. In [The World of Irises](#), Hamblen and Keppel wrote that Foster's *Kashmir White* "shaped the future of the whites." Other Foster irises include *Mrs. Horace Darwin*, *Mrs. George Darwin*, and *Caterina*. Source: [Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them](#) by Clarence E. Mahan

TAIS Interest Survey 2017 **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 ones that interest you): 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 your 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?

Ditto but for White Elephant items on specific dates?

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?

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

Tucson Area Iris Society 2018 Membership Application – www.tucsoniris.org

Name(s) _____

Address (Street, City, State, Zip)

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

Birth month and day ___/___

Monthly newsletters will be sent to your e-mail address.

Please select membership category:

Single \$10

Dual \$13

Youth \$3

Our membership year is from January through December.

Please mail this form and your check (payable to **TAIS**) to:

**Carol Peterson
2152 N. Ramona
Casa Grande, AZ 85122**

Please check all opportunities that you might be interested in:

assist at Spring iris show

assist at Fall rhizome sale

bring treats to meetings

work on a committee

Give your gardening friends gift memberships!



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

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)

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