

TAIS Newsletter

Our 53rd year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



Red NOID

Pottstown, PA (now growing in Chandler, AZ)
(gift from Jill & Jim Conklin)

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

President's Message

Is everybody ready to hear from February's guest speaker Rick Tasco? In addition to winning Dykes medals, Rick grew iris in Arizona. So let's learn as many of his secrets as we can. Bring your friends and significant others. See you there.

- Kevin Kartchner

**"Late February days; and now, at last,
Might you have thought that
Winter's woe was past;
So fair the sky was and so soft the air."**

- William Morris

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Upcoming Events

February 10. Rick Tasco of Superstition Gardens speaking about hybridizing irises at 1 PM. Murphy-Wilmot Library, large room, opens at noon. Members are asked to bring a finger food to share and to help set up at noon. Invite your iris-loving friends!

March 10. Preparation for the Iris Show: AIS slide show, discussion and tips. Tucson Botanical Gardens, Porter Hall, 10 AM.

April 14. Iris Show. Murphy-Wilmot Library, large room. Set-up at 8 AM. Show opens at 9 AM. Additional set-up the day before at 4-5 PM.

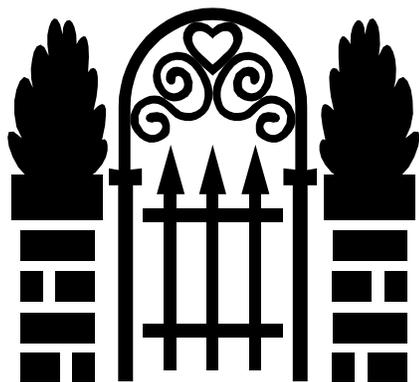
Birthday Wishes to:

Greta Dunnigan Dave Smith Sam Wymer
Shirley Andrews Sue Clark





January 13 Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

We had 14 members present. Kevin started off by going over the last couple months' news. He then presented an AIS digital slide-show "The Storybook Garden" of about 50 slides of iris and "Gardening with Iris" which showcased all different types of iris, many of which would be hard to grow here in our climate.

It was asked that everyone help with refreshments (brownies, cookies, appetizers, etc.) for next month's meeting when Rick Tasco of Superstition Iris Gardens in California will be making a presentation. We have asked other Arizona iris groups to attend.

Set up for the Feb 10th meeting is 12 PM with the program starting at 1 PM. Please plan on helping with the set-up. There will also be a \$75 honorarium given to Rick. As a note, in 2014 when Rick Schreiner was here, the room was filled to capacity.

Kristee has asked that we use Superstition to buy our sale iris this fall as a thanks to Rick for his presentation. She will oversee the Fall sale.

Please note our March meeting will begin at 10 AM in the Porter Hall at TBG where we will have a slide show from AIS on show prep.

The April meeting is our show. It will be at Wilmot with set-up from 4:30-5 on Friday. Saturday we will be able to get in by 8 AM with the show opening at 9. Bonnie and Greta will help Kathy bring supplies to the library on Friday.

Kevin suggested we have a photo contest divided into 4 to 5 categories with the group voting on each group and awarding prizes.

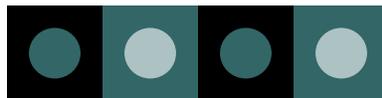
There was further discussion about paying members for their rhizomes. It was again suggested that they be tracked by assigning letters/numbers to each rhizome and those not sold either be returned to the grower or donated. The smaller rhizomes in grab bags would not be compensated. Kevin suggested rather than having money exchanged we should use iris bucks. No decisions were made on this issue.

The storage area at TBG is rather small but holds most everything. (Kevin has some items at his house.) TBG has offered to buy some iris – rebloomers would be appreciated.

The meeting adjourned at 3 PM.

- Janet Gardner, secretary

Name our show!
Winner to receive
\$10 in Iris Bucks on
Mar 10!



We're on the web!
Tucsoniris.org

Seeing Red - Irises, that is!

Many irises have red beards, but hybridizers have struggled in their efforts to move that red pigment, called lycopene, from the beards into the petals. Louisiana irises possess red as a flower pigment, but have been unwilling to share much of it when bred with bearded irises. But hybridizers are still hard at work!

Although there is no fire-engine red bearded iris as of yet, there are some lovely red shades available to us. In a post titled "Best Red Bearded Iris?" on forums.gardenweb.com, two individuals recommended the following reds to someone who had space for *exactly one* red iris and thus wanted the very best option: **'Vizier'** (Ghio 1997), a vibrant wine red; **'Rio Rojo'** (Schreiner 2009) velvety claret and vigorous; **'Lady Friend,'** (Ghio 1981), a garnet red, not vibrant, may clash with neighbors but blooms well and grows well; and **'Chief Quinaby'** (Schreiner 1991), a deep red with rust tones, old gold beards, and ruffles. - continued on page 4.



Above: **'Vizier'** - <https://garden.org/>

TAIS January Meeting



**Photos by
Tony Kutz**



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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Debits/Checks</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Details</u>
		\$330.00		Region 15 Auction
	Pending/Uncashed Expenses Total = \$330.00			
24-Jan	\$15.99			Angela Powers - refreshments - #1765
19-Jan	\$18.74			Diane Tweedy - refreshments - #1766
22-Jan		\$183.00		Dues - checks (one check appears to have both dues and iris sales)
22-Jan		\$23.00		Dues - cash
31-Jan	Bank Balance		\$6,988.37	
	Pending/Uncashed Checks		- \$330.00	
31-Jan	TAIS Balance		\$6,658.37	

Seeing Red - Irises, that is! Continued from page 2

In his book, A Guide to Bearded Irises, Kelly D. Norris presents a somewhat longer list of reds to try in your garden: **'Code Red'** (Aitken 2003), **'Red Hot Mamma'** (Spoon 2014), **'Warrior King'** (Schreiner 1984), **'Play with Fire'** (Schreiner 1987), **'War Chief'** (Schreiner 1992), **'Dynamite'** (Schreiner 1997) (has huge flowers!), as well as **'Valentino'** (Painter 2008), **'Candy Apple Classic'** (Maryott 1999), **'Lady Friend'** (Ghio 1981), **'Rip City'** (Schreiner 1999), and **'Bev'** (Richardson 2008), a bubbly copper red.

Reds in my own garden include **'Red Riches'** (Schreiner 2011), a rich ruby red with dark yellow beards on large ruffled flowers, **'Schortman's Garnet Ruffles,' Ravishing Ruby,' Lady Friend,'** and some red NOIDs from my son's neighbor in Pennsylvania. The NOIDs were blooming when I was there last May, so I took a chance and wrote to the neighbor to see if she would trade a few rhizomes with me. She and her husband kindly mailed me three reds and two blue and white irises. Never hurts to ask! I have an order in to The Shady Spot Iris Gardens for **'Sultan's Palace'** (Schreiner 1974), a great-growing deep red; and for another **'Lady Friend'** since mine is not thriving.

The Schreiner family has been on a quest for over 35 years to "reintroduce the vigorous genes of *Iris reichenbachii* into our line of red bearded Iris: **'Warrior King,' 'Chief Quinaby,'** and **'Vitafire.'**" One of their superb results is **'Fortunate Son,'** in whose description the quoted material was found.

Something to keep in mind is that red irises rarely photograph true-to-color, often looking rather pink. So it is best to grow some so that you can see them in person! They are sure to attract some attention in your garden. - SC (for more on reds, see pages 5 and 6).

Right, top to bottom: **'Red Hot Mamma'** (photo from garden.org/), **'Dynamite'** from schreinersgardens.com, and **'Sultan's Palace'** from theshadyspotiris.com.



TAIS iris grower's interview #12

Diane Tweedy lives in the southeast portion of Tucson, which she says is a bit higher and cooler than midtown, so her irises bloom a few weeks later. Diane has grown irises for about five years. Going to an iris sale, an iris trek, and then to a TAIS meeting were what sparked her to grow the flowers intentionally. She bought many rhizomes of a purple iris, which she planted in a corner. These gave her great pleasure when they bloomed en masse.

About three years ago, Diane dug up all of her plants and rearranged them into a garden with two tiers. The top tier, with its 70-75 irises, reigns over the lower tier which has six types of plants to attract butterflies, including Gregg's Mistflower. Diane said that the irises are still sulking about their relocation and have not bloomed since the move. The big clump of purple irises has been split up, but Diane is considering recreating the drama of having them all together. She does not have any irises in containers.

Diane bought garden soil from Tank's Green Stuff but added Miracle-Gro soil after realizing that the garden soil did not drain well enough. This mixture seems ideal and Diane has not changed it in three years.

Fertilizing is something that Diane has experimented with. This year, she will apply Ferti-Lome Blooming and Rooting fertilizer (9-59-8) in early February. She sprinkles Super Phosphate around her rhizomes in the Fall and works it into the ground, with repeat applications in February and after bloom time. She's also used Bloom Booster in March.

Watering is another area of experimentation. Seeking to get it just right, Diane started with bubblers, changed to hand watering, and then switched her bubblers to sprayers, which seem to be working well. She waters two to three times per week currently, but will water daily when it gets hot.

Diane has not had to worry about dividing her irises, as they are still trying to reestablish

their clumps after being relocated. Does she still buy irises? "Oh, yes," she admitted, laughing, "I can't resist!"

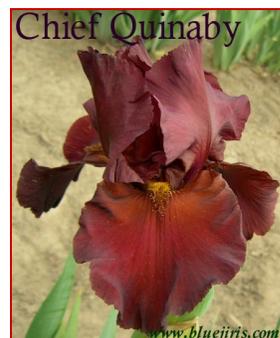
Diane has not discarded any irises that are not performing well. Not yet, she said. There is one plant that she has growing in her iris beds - rain lilies in three colors.

Diane's only iris disaster stems from when she was watering her irises by hand with a watering wand. Not only did the water cause the rhizomes to "cook" in the heat, but somehow it made the perfect conditions for grubs. She unfortunately lost many irises that year.

Her best tip? **"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. **Please volunteer! It only takes about 15 minutes.** - SC

More Red Iris Photos (Schreiner's website)



Above left: 'Code Red.' Below: 'Red Riches,' 'Fortunate Son'





TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2018

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 Publisher

Iris Limerick:

There once was a man who loved red.
 “A red iris!” went ’round in his head.
 He tried and he tried,
 And his brain nearly fried,
 Till a red iris he finally did bred!
 - Sue Clark

Did You Know? More on Red Irises!

Richard Ernst and Dr. Tony H. H. Chen of Oregon State University have been trying to genetically engineer a red iris. Dr. Chen has attempted to introduce genes from coral lilies, tiger lilies, and red peppers into irises for their red pigment. This follows years of traditional hybridizing for reds by Mr. Ernst, who has spent 14 years and over \$1 million on the genetic project! And he is not the only hybridizer setting his cap on red. Donald Spoon of Winterberry Gardens in Virginia has been crossing irises for over 20 years for the illusive true red. As are the Schreiners and many others. - SC

- Barbara Whitaker, New York Times, 27 June 2006, “The Hunt Continues for the Holy Grail: A Red Iris”

“There is a privacy about winter which no other season gives you ... Only in winter...can you have longer, quiet stretches when you can savor belonging to yourself.”

Ruth Stout, How to Have a Green Thumb without an Aching Back

What to do in the Iris Garden for February:

From January through April, iris plants put up 90% of their growth, so they will need more water during this active growth period.
 - from Darol of Sun Country Iris Society

Beginning on Valentine’s Day, apply a fertilizer high in phosphate, such as **SuperBloom** (12-55-6) or **Ferti-Lome Blooming and Rooting** (9-59-8) every two weeks according to directions on package.



Tip Exchange

When dividing a clump of irises, **be sure to trim the foliage back by at least half.** Besides making the plants easier to handle and creating less mess, trimming allows the plant to recover more quickly. Even without a fully functioning root system, the plant must maintain all of its leaves, as well as grow new leaves. Trimming the foliage, however, eases the photosynthetic load on the developing root system. - Kelly D. Norris, in [A Guide to Bearded Irises - Cultivating the Rainbow](#), 2012, Timber Press: Portland, Oregon, p. 81.

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

You have probably noticed that we have been bouncing back and forth between France and England while following the history of iris development. This month, the story of the Verdier family returns us to France. Victor Verdier learned the art of gardening from his uncle, Henri Antoine Jacques (featured in the May 2017 newsletter), at Neuilly, King Louis-Philippe’s estate in Paris. Verdier helped Jacques rescue many of the irises, roses, and peonies from the estate before it was burned during the Revolution of 1848. Verdier likely sold these plants at his Paris nursery, and he inherited his uncle’s collection of plants, as well. Verdier’s specialty was breeding roses, but his iris and peony collections were also renowned within horticultural circles. Verdier’s son Charles was part of the family business, while his other son Eugene opened a nearby nursery. All three men played a unique role in the history of irises. After a quick flame-up of interest in the irises bred by de Bure, Jacques, and Lémon in the 1840’s (see the April, May, and June 2017 newsletters), French gardeners turned to other plants, and irises were popular only as cut flowers. The Verdiere were the largest suppliers of irises to the Parisian flower markets in the last half of the 19th century. Although other nurseries sold collections of unlabeled irises during this interval, Charles and Eugene marketed only labeled rhizomes in their catalogs, many of them Lémon’s irises. One of Charles’ introductions, ‘Crépuscule,’ is “one of the most important ancestors of the extraordinarily beautiful “black” irises we have today.” At least three of Eugene’s introductions were popular in both Europe and the United States, including ‘Mme Jenneaux.’ Following Eugene’s death, Philippe Lévêque de Vilmorin purchased the complete Verdier iris collection in 1903, and introduced several of them to the market over the next decade. “Perhaps the most valuable gift to the world of irises by the Verdiere was to preserve the irises developed in the early years of the 19th century,” and then de Vilmorin’s prescience ensured that they were preserved into the 20th century. Without this genetic material, modern irises would not exist. Three cheers for these four plantsmen!!! - 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

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

The Tucson Area Iris Society Presents

Rick Tasco of Superstition Iris Gardens: “Iris Hybridizing – My Way”

Saturday February 10 at 1 PM
Murphy Wilmot Library, large room
530 N Wilmot in Tucson
Room opens at noon



Rick has hybridized, registered, and introduced 123 iris with the American Iris Society and has won numerous medals for his efforts.



Please join us!

**Invite all of your
iris-loving friends!**