

TAIS Newsletter

Our 53rd year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Yaquina Blue'

Hummingbird Iris Gardens,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2018

President's Message

After a Spring of thriving, it's time for rhizome surviving. I'm trying a little shade cloth this year in an attempt to beat the heat. Let's compare notes in the Fall to see what works (and doesn't) for you.

- Kevin Kartchner

"In June, as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them."

- Aldo Leopold

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Upcoming Events

TAIS meetings will resume in August.

TAIS newsletters will continue through the Summer. It's a good time to feature photos of our members' gardens.

Please submit them to:
taisnewsletter@yahoo.com.

June 16: Iris sale at Hummingbird Iris Gardens in Prescott, 10:30 AM. Close-out on many varieties. See their Facebook page for more info.

Birthday Wishes to
Diane Tweedy



Michael Valentini - Viridarium Reformatum, seu Regnum Vegetabile: Krauter Buch), 1719

May Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

May 19th - I presented a slide show of the AIS Region 15 Spring Trek, which was held in Phoenix on April 21. Four gardens were filled with guest irises of 21 hybridizers from within and beyond our Region, as well as the garden owners' own irises. The photos ranged from views of large sections of the gardens so that people could get a feel for the overall look of the gardens, as well as close-ups of individual irises. While most of the irises were tall bearded, there were a couple of Louisianas and five spurias. In one of the gardens, the irises were surrounded by companion plantings of verbena, globe mallow, cosmos, roses, alyssum, and Oriental poppies. In others, it was larkspur or lobelia.

For your planning needs, our upcoming meetings will include these activities: August - Region 15 Auction (fundraiser), September 22 - rhizome sale at Harlow Gardens nursery, October - 1st annual photo contest (submit up to 15 pictures via email), and November - potluck.

Kathy asked for input on

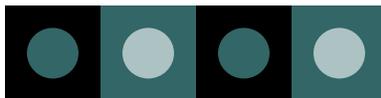
watering irises during the heat and a discussion followed with several different ideas, including not watering from overhead when it is above 85°.

Guests included Marilyn, a new member, and Martín, who has come to our show and sale in the past few years. Total attendance was 12. Four potted iris door prizes were won by Melania, Marilyn, Kathy and me. Kevin won an iris hat, I missed who won the iris note paper, and Tony won the remaining cake. Thanks to Greta for lending the four potted plants - reimbursement to follow in some fashion.

Board meeting from 2:30-2:43: Kevin mentioned that the website announcements of our meetings should be clear that the room opens at noon and the meeting begins at 1:00 PM. Clarification is needed on Club iris versus Two-year test iris. Are they the same or different?

- Sue Clark, substitute secretary

See you at the
August meeting!



We're on the web!

Tucsoniris.org

Blue Irises - more on page 4



From top: 'Just for Kicks' (Black 2005) (space-ager) in the Hummingbird Iris Gardens in Prescott and two views of 'Blue Coyote' (Margie Valenzuela 2012) in the Marcusen Sculpture Garden, Prescott. Photos by Sue Clark, 2018.

TAIS May Meeting



Photos by
Tony Kutz



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

Date	Debits/Checks	Deposits	Balance	Details
	#1776	\$300.00		Napa Iris Gardens Club Iris Order
	#1777	\$90.58		Tweedy (Postage, Cards and March Refreshments)
	#1778	void		
	#1779	\$10.27		Kutz (Show Posters)
	#1780	\$10.36		Kutz (Refreshments)
	#1781	void		
	#1782	\$65.89		Powers (April and May Refreshments)
		\$477.10		Pending Uncashed Expenses Total
31-May			\$4,585.03	Bank Balance
			-\$477.10	Pending Uncashed Checks
31-May	CASH ON HAND		\$21.00	Donations and sale of handouts
31-May			\$4,128.93	TAIS Balance

Blue Irises

“Iris lovers heart blue. Actually, I think people heart blue. We’ve been long lost on a quest for true blue in nature, and when we do encounter it, it holds us in deep rapture, Fortunately for iris lovers that rapturous experience storms the garden each spring, laden with ruffles and sassy, audacious flowers,” - Kelly Norris in his book [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#). He goes on to point out that blue irises have won the Dykes Medal 18 times in the years between 1935 and 2012. Examples include ‘Victoria Falls’ (Schreiner 1977), ‘Yaquina Blue’ (Schreiner 1992) (shown on p. 1), and ‘Sea Power’ (Keppel 1999), a ruffled medium-blue self. During the 1930’s through 1950’s, many blues appeared on the iris scene, descendants of “Great Lakes’ (Cousins 1938), ‘Blue Rhythm’ (Whiting 1945) and ‘Cahokia’ (Faught 1948). These were crossed with whites such as ‘Snow Flurry’ (Rees 1939) and ‘Purissima’ (Mohr-Mitchell 1927). Besides a sea of blues, Paul Cook discovered the amoena (white standards and colored falls) pattern and by incorporating two species irises, *Iris reichenbachii* and *I. imbricata*, developed the standard dwarf bearded class. Cook won the Dykes medal for “Whole Cloth’ (1958) and for ‘Emma Cook’ (1957), which he named for his wife. ‘Allegiance’ (1958) is recognized as his finest iris. It was developed, like the others, in his quest for a true blue iris which was free of shades of purple. The Schreiners lead the pack when it comes to blue irises, though. A quick search of their [website](#) shows 169 irises in the blue category! ‘Blueberry Bliss’ (2004), a royal blue self, stood out to me. I discovered an azure blue reblooming self called ‘Double Bubble’ at [Napa County Iris Gardens](#). Napa also offers a reverse amoena or “dark-top” blue - ‘Alpenview.’ With its blue standards, white falls, and greenish-yellow hafts, it is sure to catch the eye in the garden, as is the true blue self ‘Ocean Pacific’ (Ghio 1987).

In an AIS blog post from 18 July 2012, Renee Fisher surveyed her gardening friends, who nominated these as their favorite blues: ‘Babbling Brook’ (Keppel 1969) and ‘Victoria Falls’ top of the list, although the latter usually requires staking. Both are rebloomers, as is the medium-dark blue ‘Deep Pacific.’ Of the irises in this survey, the rebloomer ‘City Lights’ (Dunn 1990) also comes highly recommended by our own Carol Peterson, In the light blue range, ‘Queen’s Circle’ (Kerr 2000), the ruffled rebloomer ‘Cloud Ballet’ (Fort 1988), and the top-choice of this pool - ruffly sky-blue ‘Absolute Treasure’ (Tasco 2006). I grow all three of these in my garden, as well as other blues, since I love blue almost as much as green.

Anybody feeling the need to add some blues to your garden this Fall? Search for some at our rhizome sale on Saturday, September 22 at Harlow’s Gardens Nursery!



From top: ‘Victoria Falls,’ ‘Babbling Brook,’ and ‘Allegiance.’ Photos by Sue Clark, Marcusen Sculpture Garden, Prescott, May 2018

Miriam Diamond's Louisiana Irises, 2018 - photos by Miriam



Miriam Diamond's Louisiana Irises, 2018 - photos by Miriam



The Search is on for the Irises of Don Shepard

The Prescott Area Iris Society is looking for the following irises of Don Shepard to add to the Sculpture Garden in Prescott, Arizona to honor Arizona Hybridizers. If you have any of the following Tall Bearded Irises, please contact Dennis Luebkin at dluebkin@q.com or 623-980-6627.

Tall Bearded: 'Apricot Chiffon', 'Apricot Fizz', 'Arizona Redhead', 'Arizona Warrior', 'ASU Jazz', 'Bad Betty', 'Becky Ann', 'Belinda's Lace', 'Benita', 'Berry Twist', 'Big Duke', 'Blue Sateen', 'Blue Spikes', 'Blueberry Skies', 'Bobbie's Peach', 'Bold Prince', 'Brassy Lassi', 'Bright Lady', 'Bruiser', 'Burgundy Love', 'Burnt Sugar', 'Bursting Violet', 'Caramel Bandito', 'Curly Blue', 'Debutante's Dress', 'Delightful Twist', 'Dizzy Love', 'Don's Other Love', 'Dotted Dove', 'Easter Morning', 'Flamboyant', 'Fragrant Beauty', 'Frizzle Frack', 'Frosty Rum', 'Gold Heaven', 'Golden Raspberry', 'Grape Desire', 'Grape Fiesta', 'Griffin's Pride', 'Hoity-Toity', 'Hot Diva', 'Hot Pizzaz', 'Irish Butter', 'Jalapeno', 'Korena', 'Lemon Cream', 'Ma Moo Jack', 'Marbled Sundae', 'Mona Lorraine', 'Moondust Magic', 'Noreen's Delight', 'Panchita', 'Phoenix Fiesta', 'Raspberry Whispers', 'Roman Lady', 'Royal Occasion', 'Royal Stance', 'Sabrina', 'Spaced Out', 'Sparkling Grape', 'Splash of Blue', 'Sweet Sunshine', 'Wild Touch'.



'Kathy's Carnival' (on the left) and 'Blushing Cherry' (on the right), both hybridized by Don Shepard and growing in the Marcusen Sculpture Garden in Prescott. Photos by Sue Clark, May 2018.



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 Editor

What to do in the Iris Garden for June:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests. Carefully remove all spent stalks.

Reblooming irises need water and fertilizer through the summer, or they will not bloom in the Fall. Water the *soil*, not the plants.

Spring bloomers do *not* need any fertilizer during the summer. Be careful that they do not receive any overhead water, or they will rot.

Move potted irises into shade for the summer.



Tip Exchange

A thin bamboo skewer (the kind for shish kabobs) makes a useful watering guide for your irises. Just stick it all the way into the soil. When you pull it out, it will be moist to the depth that the soil is moist. Water accordingly. Either throw the skewer away or let it dry out for garden use on another day. - Bob Buchwald, on the Region 15 Spring Trek

Tall bearded irises often will not reach their advertised height when grown in the desert. - Kathy Chilton, on the Region 15 Spring Trek

Iris Limerick:

There once was an iris so blue.
It belonged to a young man named Hugh.
It made him so happy,
He gave one to his Pappy.
Then Hugh and his Pap yelled 'Woo Hoo!'

- Sue Clark



'Fairy'
(Kennicott 1905)
- story below

Did You Know?

"*Iris Germanica* has been cultivated in Europe since classical times. Linnaeus called it 'German' because Strabo, a ninth-century German monk, recorded growing it."

- from The Principles of Gardening by Hugh Johnson, 1979, p. 58.

"I've always felt you can't do much wrong in a garden providing you enjoy it." - David Hobson. Canadian garden writer

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

The first American-bred iris was 'Fairy,' an opal-white variety with subtle violet plicata markings which are more pronounced when the bloom season is cooler than normal. 'Fairy' was bred by Amasa J. Kennicott, a Chicago nursery-owner. Another Chicago nurseryman, William A. Peterson, lists 'Fairy' in his 1905 catalog. It is still grown and reaches 40" in height.

Let's look at the making of this iris-creator a bit. Four Kennicott brothers headed into the newly-opened \$1.25-an-acre farmland in Illinois after soldiers returning from the Black Hawk War in 1832 told tales the fertility of the land. One of the brothers was a lawyer, two were dentists, and the youngest, John, was a doctor (and was Amasa's father). Apparently all of them were innovators: they built sawmills and general stores, founded the Illinois State Dental Society, and began the practices of capping teeth and using gold fillings. John Kennicott loved plants, and collected native trees and plants while on his rounds as a frontier doctor. He opened a business, The Grove Nursery & Garden, one of the first plant nurseries in the Midwest. Recognizing that the frontier diet of fatty meats and more fatty meats was the probable cause of the frontiersmen's numerous digestive issues, John became a "one-man campaign to get people to eat more vegetables and fruits." He wrote articles, edited the *Prairie Farmer* magazine, and established the Illinois State Agriculture Society and the State Board of Education. He lobbied extensively for the proceeds of the sale of western lands to be used to establish and operate universities. John's seven children worked in the family nursery as part of their extensive education. Amasa's older brother Robert, a biologist, worked at the Smithsonian, was an Arctic explorer, and catalogued many of the native species in Illinois. There are two fish, an owl, and a grasshopper named after him, as well as a glacier, river, and ghost town in Alaska. In fact, it was Robert's reports on Alaska that William Seward used to convince Congress to purchase Alaska in 1867. And it was not only the men in this family who were naturalists: Robert's sister Alice has a thrush named for her.

In 1881, Amasa Kennicott and his brother Flint started the first wholesale nursery in the Midwest, known as the Kennicott Brothers Company. They initially sold flowers to florists in the Chicago area, and rapidly expanded their market throughout the Midwest and South. In fact, this employee-owned company is still in business, with 18 locations in seven states!

There are unfortunately no records about Amasa's 'Fairy' iris - its parents, whether or not it was intentionally hybridized or was a happy accident created by bees, who named it, etc. Amasa Kennicott's specialty and true love was peonies. He grew over 30 acres of them at The Grove, his family's farm in the Glenview area near Des Plaines and Chicago. He was even known as the "Peony King." When Amasa died in 1907, his parting words were, "Well, boys, I wish I could have stayed long enough to get those peonies started." These were nearly identical to the final words of his grandson Harrison. Amasa's great-grandson Red and Red's son Steve own a company with peony farms in Arkansas, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The force of Nature is strong within the Kennicott family! Their farm is preserved as The Grove National Historical Landmark in Glenview, Illinois. "It's a place where learning comes to life - a setting for a rare modern-day adventure..." - SC

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