

# TAIS Newsletter

Our 54th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



## President's Message

I enjoyed the rhizome auction and hope you did too. Lucky #11 was my winning ticket multiple times. Thanks for letting me win. For improved odds at getting your newest favorite, join us at our rhizome sale and fundraiser Sept. 21 at Harlow's nursery. The members-only sale begins at 8 am with the general public at 9 am. Tell your friends and neighbors where to get quality rhizomes cheaper than the dried up ones at the big box stores. See you there.

- Kevin Kartchner

### 'Exploding Galaxy'

(luminata)

(Ghio 2016)

AIS Region 15 Spring Trek in  
Phoenix, AZ

Photo by Sue Clark, 2018

*"September days have the warmth of summer in their briefer hours, but in their lengthening evenings a prophetic breath of autumn. The cricket chirps in the noontide, making the most of what remains of his brief life; the bumblebee is busy among the clover blossoms of the aftermath; and their shrill cry and dreamy hum hold the outdoor world above the voices of the song birds, now silent or departed."*

- *September Days* By Rowland E. Robinson, Vermont

### Inside this issue:

Minutes from the August Auction	2
Treasurer's Report, Three Medal Winners	3
Schedule of Volunteers for the Sale	3
Article and Photos of Iris Blends	4
Information about our Rhizome Sale	5
What to do in the Iris Garden for September	6
Iris Limerick, Did You Know? Tips, Bit of Botany	6
Posters for the Sale	7-8

## Upcoming Events

**Annual Rhizome Sale: Saturday, September 21 at Harlow's Gardens Nursery, 5620 E. Pima Street, 9 AM to 1 PM. Members-only Discount Hour at 8 AM. Set-up on Friday from 2:30 to 4:30 PM. If you are donating rhizomes or bringing them in exchange for Iris Bucks, please drop them off at this time. Schedule of volunteers is on p. 3. More are welcome! All sales are cash or check only. Please share the posters on p. 7-8.**

**October 12 meeting: Darol Jurn on Spurias. 1 PM. Murphy-Wilmot Library.**

**Region 15 Fall Meeting: October 12, 2019, San Marino.**

**Start selecting your iris photos for our contest at the November 16 meeting! Single flower or stem, macro, and garden. Potluck.**

### Birthday Wishes to:

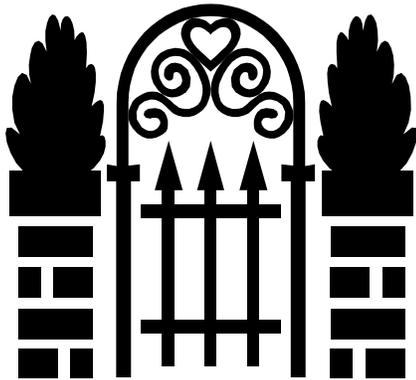
**Lenore Mackey**

**Roger Osgood**



<http://humblibutton.blogspot.com/search/label/iris>

# August Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

**17 Aug 2019** - 22 attendees, including two new members and Sandy representing her sister Susan. Sam reported that Michelle at Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG) continues to support the partnership with us having a bed at TBG. She wishes to expand it and wants to meet with someone from our club in the next two weeks to discuss where the extension should be, etc. She also wants to meet to renew our contract with them. Bonnie and Kathy will handle both of these items. Sam also reported that Michelle indicated that the plants are to remain in clumps (i. e., not be divided) since this is a display garden and that no rhizomes are to leave TBG. Some conversation followed about decline in bloom and health when the rhizomes become overcrowded. Michelle donated an attractive watercolor painting of an iris to the club.

Bonnie proposed that we raffle this painting at our Sale. Dave suggested a ticket price of \$3 or two for \$5. Bonnie will run the raffle.

Kathy requested approval to order plant markers for the TBG beds at \$30. Kristee motioned, Bonnie seconded.

We passed around a sheet for individuals to sign up to work at the Sale on Sept 20-21, and a sheet to indicate who is planning to donate rhizomes to the Sale in exchange for Iris Bucks.

Kevin requested that someone volunteer to be president, as his term is up in October and he is at the term limit. We will need other officers, as well, to replace Angela, Melania, and Sue in her role as secretary. Sue will still write the newsletter. Please consider a leadership role for the upcoming year.

Kevin explained the following: AIS, Region 15 (10 clubs), and Spring Treks.

See you at our  
Rhizome Sale on  
September 21!



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

Sue began the Auction at 1:45. Rhizomes in the first portion were from the Virtual Spring Trek by the Inland Region Iris Society of Riverside, CA. They organized this event since there was no Spring Trek this year. Proceeds from these go to Region 15 as a fundraiser. We had voted in May that the minimum bid would be \$5. After viewing photos of the irises and their information, some lively bidding ensued. 'Orangelo' (M. Sutton 2008) and 'Crystal Blue Persuasion' (Hedgecock 2013) were a couple of the more contested and coveted varieties.

The second portion of the Auction featured rhizomes from Bob Van Liere. Kristee ordered these when Bob was our speaker in February. Some spirited bidding set the stage for this section. Much laughter involved *Kevin* getting several rhizomes for *eleven* dollars each. Proceeds go to TAIS.

The final portion of the Auction involved Club Irises presented to Officers and Board members as tokens of appreciation for their service. Melania, Kevin, and Sue received an additional Club Iris for their duties. Club Irises were also from Bob Van Liere.

Margie Valenzuela donated several items which we will auction off at a future meeting.

The auction went quite well except for a chaotic ending at the collection and bagging point. One rhizome was not found in the bin until afterwards and another went missing but was discovered later. A detailed plan will be in place for next year! - SC

**Treasurer's Report for August - submitted by Martin Juarez**

Beginning Balance				\$4,473.65	
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
17-Aug	X	#1830		\$15.96	Tweedy - Refreshments
22-Aug	X		\$488.00		Auction
Sub-Totals			\$488.00	\$15.96	
Ending Balance				\$4,945.69	8/28/19 14:17



Tie for the 2019 Payne Medal (for Japanese irises): 'Cascade Rain' (Harris 2007) and 'Indigo Angel' (Bauer and Coble 2011). - SC  
Source: AIS blog, 27 Aug 2019.

**Dykes Medal Winner for 2019**

Mike Sutton created a stunner when he made the crosses which resulted in 'Bottle Rocket' (2010). This colorful beauty has recently been announced as the recipient of the 2019 Dykes Medal. It blooms in early mid-season, reblooms, and offers up a slightly musky scent. Kathy Chilton said that this bicolor grows well for her and that it carries lots of color impact in the garden. Perhaps that is to be expected of an iris with "Let's Boogie" in its lineage! Purchase one from [Mid-America Gardens](#) for \$9 plus shipping (minimum order \$35). Sutton's Iris Gardens has already sold out!- SC

Photo source: World of Irises AIS blog, 12 Aug 2019



**TAIS Rhizome Sale: Schedule of Workers**

**Friday 20 September** - 2:30-4:30 PM set up: Kevin, Sue, Susan, Maryann, and Lenore will meet at Harlow's and start setting up tables. (They may be using their tables for an event at TBG, so if you have a table, will you please bring it?). Bonnie and Dave will meet at TBG to retrieve items from storage, and then come to Harlow's. We will organize all of the rhizomes into bins with their photographs.

**Saturday 21 September**

**8 AM (NOT 7:30 - per Debbie @ Harlow's)** - Last minute set-up and preparations - Cathy, Kevin, Sue, Susan

**8-9 AM - Members-Only Discount Hour AND final set-up as needed** - Angela, Cathy, Diane, Kevin, Kristee, Madeleine, Maryann, Melania, Sue, and Susan; Sam and Tony as Cashiers

**9-11 AM** - Cathy, Diane, Kristee, Kevin, Madeleine, Sue, Susan; Sam and Tony as Cashiers

**11 AM** - Kristee will speak on how to grow iris in the desert and in containers

**11 AM - 1 PM** - Cathy, Kevin, Kristee, Sue, and Susan, with \_\_\_\_ as the Cashier

**1-3 PM** - take down and clean up - Bonnie, Cathy and John Scire, Kevin, Sue, and Susan





Top Row: 'Kissed by a Rainbow' (Van Liere 2015) (Martin won this at auction), 'Mayan Mysteries' (Van Liere 2011) (photos from Iris4U).

Bottom row: Historic blends - 'Grand Canyon' (HIPS website), 'Eldorado,' and 'Rose Garland' (Iris Wiki photos).



From Top: 'Kathy's Carnival' (Sue Clark photo taken in Marcusen Sculpture Garden, Prescott, AZ), 'Photogenic,' 'Rainbow High,' and 'Rite of Passage' (photos from Kathy Chilton).



### Blend Color Pattern - Part of the Rainbow in an Iris

Blends are irises with at least two colors “mixed, overlaid, or swirled into each other...a succinct way of describing an otherwise indescribable iris, one that is, ideally, a tantalizing visual feast. Flamboyant, dramatic, and over-the-top, these irises definitely inspire options!” (Kelly Norris in A Guide to Bearded Irises). Apparently not everybody has always shared Kelly’s enthusiasm for the blend color pattern. “In the early days of hybridizing, many violet and rosy violet flowers had a great amount of yellow at the haft or incompletely blended into the flower. As breeders worked to clarify the colors and to develop more pure “selfs,” the blends fell into disfavor. Interest in the blends as a class has recently reawakened.” (Melba B. Hamblen and Keith Keppel in The World of Irises, 1978). Note that “recently” was in reference to 1978. “Many of the early Sass blends, such as Rameses’ which won the 1932 Dykes Medal, and ‘Matala’ and ‘Midwest Gem’ are in the ancestry of the best pink, rose, or red blends.” (ditto source).

A blend with Arizona origins is Kathy’s Carnival.’ (See photo above). It is a favorite of Cathy Pane-Scire of our club, and I was surprised to find out the story behind the name. Kathy Chilton, who belongs to our club and who has an iris named after her, actually has *two irises* named after her! She told me that she was in Don and Bobbi Shepard’s Phoenix iris gardens for Judge’s Training, and that she made a fuss over this seedling’s first bloom. The Shepards’ named the iris for her when they introduced it in 2005. (There may be some at our Sale)! Kathy sent me pictures of some other blends shown here, including ‘Photogenic’ (Ghio 2005), Rainbow High’ (Keppel 2008), and Rite of Passage’ (Ghio 2007).

I recently bought ‘Grand Canyon’ (Kleinsorge 1941) during the Historic Iris Preservation Society’s online sale. I like the blended look of it as well as its name, and think it will look good beside ‘Lady Friend.’ I also love the aptly-named Grand Canyon Sunset’ (Schreiner 2011), with its apricot standards and lavender falls edged in darker apricot, and am on the lookout for a rhizome of this blend for my garden. Perhaps there will be one at our upcoming Rhizome Sale!

Some other blends include ‘Eldorado’ (Vilmorin 1910) and ‘Rose Garland’ (Wills 1952). Note the almost dainty form of these older irises (above) as compared to the newer ones in the pictures at right and at top, which are anything but dainty!

Next month’s color pattern will be Zonal. - SC



## Rhizome Preparation - Pre-sale

- **If you are contributing rhizomes for our Sale, please refer to the preparation instructions in the box below, which are included here with kind permission from Judy Book of one of our sister clubs, the Prescott Area Iris Society. Note: our club will *not* be holding a marking party and you are *not required* to write the year of introduction on the leaves.**
- **If your Club Irises have increases whose rhizomes are at least the size of a walnut, please bring those to sell (keep one for yourself). This is a minimum size for all of our rhizomes. Anything smaller will be combined with other smaller ones and sold in a bag at a substantially-reduced price.**
- **If you will submit a list of which varieties you intend to bring, we can look up and print out photos of them in advance. Photos help customers choose what to purchase. Please submit the list to [taisnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:taisnewsletter@yahoo.com) at least 2 weeks beforehand if possible. Or better yet, submit their photos!**
- **Please deliver your prepared contributions to a club member at Harlow Gardens on Friday, September 20 between 2:30 and 4:30 PM. If this is not possible, arrange to deliver them to a club member in advance. Be sure that the rhizomes are dry or they will rot.**

### Steps for Preparing Rhizomes for the Sales

1. Dig and divide the clump as close to the event as possible or within 7-10 days of the marking party so rhizomes will still look fresh for the sale. Rhizomes should be healthy, showing no signs of disease or insect damage. It is important that the rhizomes be large enough to have the potential of blooming next year. Store the iris in a cool dry area with good circulation.
2. Trim leaves to about 6-8-inches long and into a fan shape (inverted V. See illustration.) Cut roots to 4 inches.
3. On the middle leaf print the required information with a black permanent marker (Sharpie). (See instructions below.)  
Avoid printing on the outside leaf since it is the first to turn brown and fall off.
4. After marking, wash all residual dirt from the rhizomes, roots and leaves. Swishing up and down in a 5-gal bucket of water is recommended. It is important to have clean plants.
5. Optional: Some people soak the rhizomes for 10 to 15 minutes in a bleach solution of 1/2-cup bleach to 1-gal water. If you do this, wear rubber gloves to protect your skin. Afterwards, it is necessary to rinse the irises well in clear water.
6. Let the rhizomes dry completely outside in the shade. Do not bring damp rhizomes to the marking party.
7. When the rhizomes are dry, store in a single layer in a cool, dry place. If the rhizomes are placed in a paper bag or box, the fans should be placed down and the roots up (up-side down) to avoid trapping moisture between the leaves. Never store in plastic bags as it holds moisture and can rot the rhizome.

### \*Marking Rhizomes

Marking pens will be provided. To help both the buyers and the sale workers, please mark the **middle leaf** of the iris as follows:

Rub off the white, waxy coating on the leaf with a paper towel or soft cloth before writing on the leaf.

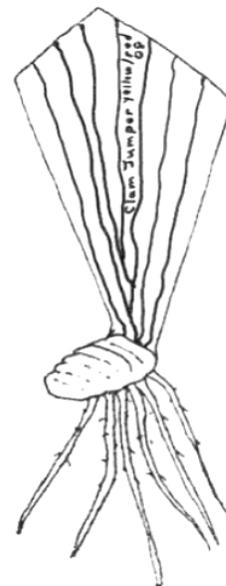
For all iris, write the name and year the iris was introduced. For other than tall bearded, also write the type: MDB, SDB, IB, BB, MTB, etc. Also indicate space age (SA), reblooming (RE)

To locate the year of introduction, use the AIS Iris Encyclopedia: <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view>. All members should learn how to use this valuable tool.

### Storing and Transporting Iris

Put rhizomes of a single variety in a separate box or paper grocery bag, one bag for each variety. (no plastic bags).

Write the name of the iris and the year of introduction on the box or bag.



**TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2019****Kevin Kartchner – President****Bonnie Else - Vice President****Sue Clark – Secretary****Martin Juarez – Treasurer****Susan Schaefer - Membership Chairperson****Melania Kutz - Programs & Publicity****Madeleine Glaser - Asst. Program  
Chairperson & 2nd Signatory on Account****Angela Powers - Hospitality & Door Prizes****Diane Tweedy - Birthday Cards & Hospitality****Tony Kutz - Photographer****Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor & Publisher****What to do in the Iris  
Garden for September:**

Plant new rhizomes starting late this month through October. Sterilize new rhizomes for 5-10 minutes in a solution of 2 c water and 4 T (1/4 cup) bleach. There are two strategies for dried roots - remove them to allow the rhizome to contact the soil or keep them to stabilize it. Choose a spot that will receive afternoon shade during the summer. Good drainage is essential, as is good air circulation! Remember that block walls radiate lots of heat. Dig a hole with enough depth so that the top of the rhizome will be above the surface of the ground. Leave a mound of soil in the center of the hole and fan any remaining roots out over it. Drip lines appear to be the best way to water irises here in the desert. Emitters with adjustable flow will give you the most control. I use Raindrip Adjustable Full Circle Stream Bubblers. - SC

**Tip Exchange**

Press soil down firmly when planting rhizomes, or rot may be the result.  
- Dennis Luebkin, talk at PAIS rhizome sale,  
27 July 2019

If you have an itchy mosquito bite, apply a dab of liquid soap to quell the itch. - SC

Make your own gardening apron after watching this [tutorial](#). - SC

**Iris Limerick:**

The ninth month of the year is September,  
Let's make it a month to remember!

We'll all buy more rhizomes

Even here in the hot zone

Where the ground can feel like an ember.

- Sue Clark



www.historicirises.org

'Clematis'

**Did You Know?**

"It's a bit of gardening folklore that at the slightest sign of browning leaves, gardeners should rush out with sharpened implements and pare their bearded irises back into tidy little pitched fans. Sure, if the foliage for some reason has completely died back or become severely dry, it isn't hurting anything to cut it back. It keeps things looking tidy and less unsightly. But you only really need to cut back the foliage during transplanting or dividing. In fact, trimming the foliage back in the middle of the season actually breaks an iris's dormancy, kick-starting foliar [leaf] production. This can take away from root mass accumulation and even from reserves meant to support flowering the next spring. I've traced consistently poor flowering in some gardens to regular foliar butchering the previous summer more than once on a help call at our nursery. On a natural cycle, new foliar growth often begins during periods of cooler temperatures in mid-autumn. - Kelly Norris [he's a horticulturalist], in [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#)

"September: it was the most beautiful of words, he'd always felt, evoking orange-flowers, swallows, and regret."

- Alexander Theroux

**A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History**

This month we resume the story of Arthur John Bliss, English iris breeder and grower of 'Dominion.' This particular iris grew from one of only two seeds from Bliss' cross. It took two years to germinate and two to bloom. Bloom's meticulous records list the parents of 'Dominion' as 'Cordelia' and 'Asiatica,' but these rotted soon after the pod set and their replacements looked much different than the originals. Some speculate that 'Amas' (also known as 'Macrantha') and 'Black Prince' were actually the parents. Whatever its parentage, Bliss used 'Dominion' to breed some of the most important ancestors of modern varieties. These include 'Cardinal' (1919) and 'Mrs. Valerie West' (1925). His 'Grace Sturtevant' (1926) was named after the American hybridizer with whom Bliss had corresponded for years. This variety was especially popular in the United States where Miss Sturtevant was a legend in the iris world. Bliss' 'Clematis' (1917) had six light violet falls and no standards [a "flatie"], and people either loved it or hated it. 'Clematis' received a Certificate of Merit from the 1922 iris conference in Paris. 'Tom Tit' (1919) is another Bliss iris. It was originally classified as a tall bearded iris, but is now classified as miniature bearded. 'Susan Bliss' (1922) was the closest thing to pink for its time and this lovely iris is still grown in many historic collections. 'Marsh Marigold' (1919) a variegata with yellow standards and deep purple falls edged in yellow, was considered the finest of its type, and it was a grandparent to Fernand Denis' 'Evolution,' "one of the most important stud irises of the 20th century."

A story survives about John Wister's visit to Bliss in 1919. Following Tea with strawberries and Devonshire cream, the men wandered out to the allotment where Bliss grew his flowers. Wister was shocked to see outstandingly beautiful irises intermingled with inferior ones. Whenever he pointed these out, Bliss responded with something akin to "Not to worry. That one was discarded years ago." Wister eventually concluded that "Bliss's idea of discarding an iris did not mean actually digging it up and throwing it away. It meant that it was his *intention* to dig the iris and throw it away when he was in better health or when he could get a helper." Certainly many of us have felt like that from time to time!

Hybridizer and garden writer Sydney Mitchell wrote some interesting tidbits after his visit to Bliss in 1930 - that Bliss still tore around the countryside on a motorbike at age 70, and that Mitchell's wife no longer chastised him for being the worst-dressed gardener alive after meeting Bliss!

Arthur John Bliss was awarded the Foster Memorial Plaque by the British Iris Society in November 1930. He died three months later. His lovely iris creations live on to beautify our world. Thank you, Arthur! - SC

Source: [Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them](#) by Clarence E. Mahan

# Tucson Area Iris Society's

*Annual*

## *Rhizome Sale*

**September 21, 9 AM to 1 PM**

**Harlow's Gardens Nursery  
5620 E. Pima Street in Tucson**

**A wide selection of rhizomes for tall bearded irises will be offered, including many reblooming varieties. Cash or checks only.**

***Our knowledgeable members will be on hand with advice.***



**11 AM – Kristee West of TAIS will speak on  
“How to Grow Iris in Arizona”  
(including growing them in containers)**



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