

TAIS Newsletter

Our 54th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Dusky Challenger'
(Schreiner 1986)

Hummingbird Iris Garden,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

President's Message

The blooms, they're here! At last the iris fireworks are popping in my garden. Shoot your iris flower photos: single, macro, and in the garden/miscellaneous. Select your favorites and try some hybridizing. Simply enjoy them. See you at the April 13th show putting yours on display for all to see.

- Kevin Kartchner

"Few things feel more like spring than blossoms. After months of barren-looking landscapes, specks of color finally start to appear, reminding us that despite the chilly winds and brief daylight of winter, Nature has been diligently at work all along."

- Bethany Douglass

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Upcoming Events

TAIS Iris Show: April 13, 9 AM-3 PM, Murphy-Wilmot Library. Set up on Friday April 12 4-5 PM & on April 13, 8-9 AM. Please share the poster on p. 8 with your gardening friends!

TAIS meeting: May 11, 1 PM, Murphy-Wilmot Library. Topic TBA.

Tucson Master Gardeners Plant Sale: April 6, 8 AM-11 AM, 4210 N. Campbell Ave.

Tucson Master Gardeners Tour: April 13, 9 AM-3 PM, tickets and info [here](#).

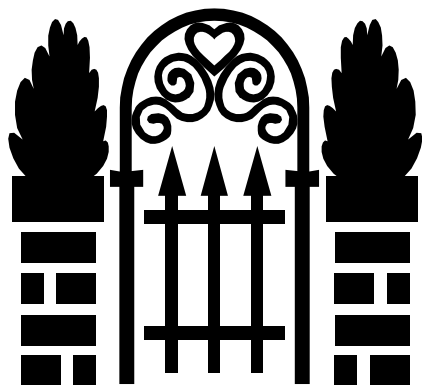
Prescott Area Iris Society's Spring Iris Exhibit and Potted Iris Sale: May 4, 10 AM-3 PM, Mortimer's Nursery, Prescott. Info: Dennis at 623-980-6627.

Birthday Wishes to:

Kathy Chilton Clyda Murray
Carol Peterson Susan Oates



March Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

There were 21 individuals in attendance today, including four guests. Two of them came to learn about growing irises and the other two to hear the presentation about Longwood Gardens. They heard about the meeting in the Desert Leaf and in Tucson Happenings. Kevin brought an orchid in flower, and mentioned that the Orchid Show is always the first weekend of March at Mesquite Valley Growers, and that the Orchid Society meets the first Wednesday of each month.

TAIS Iris Show: Saturday, April 13 in the large room of the Murphy-Wilmot Library from 9 AM to 3 PM. Kevin will arrange for us to enter at 8 AM for additional set up. Initial set up will be on Friday from 4-5 PM. Several members will rally at TBG at 2:30 PM that day to transport items from our storage compartment there to the library. These include Kathy, Bonnie, Kevin, and Nancy Hook. Kathy has received permission from Matt at TBG to cut the gigantic tarp in the storage area, so that it takes up less space. Susan and Madeleine will work from 8 to noon. Diane and Sue will cover the noon to 3 shift. Nancy McLean and Bonnie signed up for the take-down committee. Others may sign up at the event.

We held a contest to name the show. New member Jim Willcox won \$10 in Iris Bucks with "Iris Eyes are Smiling." There were 13 other entries in the Name Game today, so thanks to everyone who contributed!

Door prizes: two recent iris introductions were won by guests Connie West

and Jinou Naval, another by Susan, and pots of Easter lily cacti from Sue were won by Nancy Hook and by guest Sharon Eisenhower.

Presentation: Sue offered a visual tour and history of Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, along with Ten Lessons from Public Gardens. Of special note is a free on-line course about orchids. Register at <https://longwoodgardens.org/events-and-performances/events/everything-about-orchids-online-open-class> by May 6.

The Board meeting: began at 2:30 for the eight people who stayed for it. Melania has requested that Darol Jurn of the Sun Country Iris Society talk to us about spuria irises on October 12. He was unavailable for our May meeting. Kevin mentioned that he himself grows about six kinds of spurias, but that he is no expert.

TBG iris beds report by Kathy, TBG liaison: she now has two keys to the storage compartment, including hers and one that had been Kristee's and then Cathy had it. She is looking forward to getting that tarp cut, as it takes up so much space in the unit.

General business: Melania and Tony will be reimbursed by the club for the Van Liere's portion of the dinner following Bob's program last month. Kathy motioned and Bonnie seconded. Kevin requested \$30 for the Society's annual affiliation fee with the American Iris Society. Susan moved and Bonnie

seconded. Kristee will be out for the next several months with family events.

Membership report by Susan, Membership chair: there are 32 members who have renewed. There were 49 on our previous list. Martin motioned that only those who have paid Susan be considered members (along with the life members and two women whom we had talked to at the sale who never received anything when they joined the previous year. We had voted on the latter at the January meeting). Kathy seconded. The main perks of membership are the Auction in August and the Members-Only Discount Hour before our sale, and current members will be eligible for these. Susan will revise the list and send to officers and Diane. Susan mentioned that someone who had joined at the 2018 sale mailed her a rhizome and said that she actually needs *basic gardening* lessons, rather than iris lessons, so she will not be renewing. Officers do not have to pay dues, per Kevin.

Treasurer's Report by Martin: he was able to pare the signatories on the bank account to himself, Sue, and Madeline, as requested in January. He is fine with bank statements coming to his home address, so did not investigate PO Boxes. Each subsequent Treasurer may decide his preference regarding mail.

Sale: Susan, Kevin, and Sue will order rhizomes again this year. Kristee will reserve the venue for the third Saturday in September. More planning to follow.

Correspondence Report by Diane: she sends out Birthday cards to members and sometimes Get Well cards. These come in packages of eight cards for \$7. Diane asked for input from members about continuing to receive cards if they cost about \$80/year. There was general support and approval from the group. Martin motioned that current members continue to receive cards and Susan seconded. Note that we do not know everyone's birthdays. These can be submitted to taisnewsletter@yahoo.com. Only your name and the birth month will appear in the newsletter to protect privacy.

Meeting ideas: Sue requested a speaker on flower photography, particularly tips for using cell phone cameras. Martin said that his niece is a professional photographer. She lives in Austin. Sue would also like to have a section of each meeting dedicated to questions and answers about growing irises. This would help both guests and members. Perhaps this could occur during Snack Time.

Meeting closed at 3:06. Martin motioned and Bonnie seconded.

- submitted by Sue Clark, secretary



Show off your irises!
TAIS Iris Show on
April 13 from 9-3

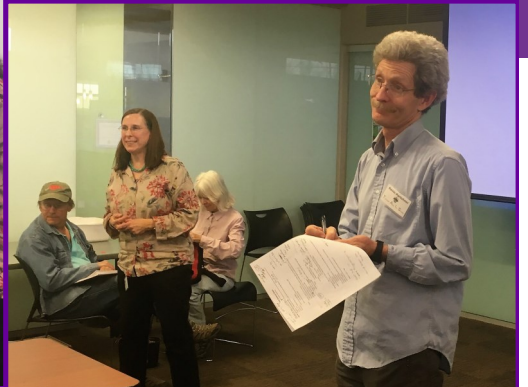
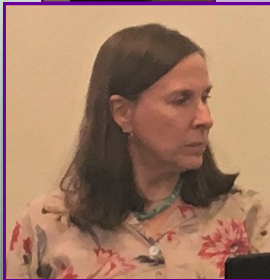
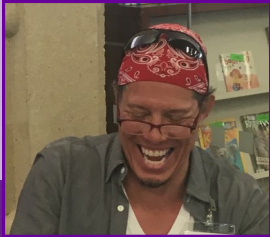
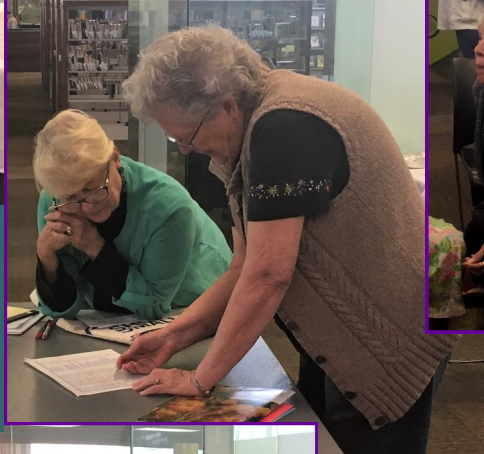


We're on the web!
Tucsoniris.org

TAIS March Meeting



**Photos by
Dave Smith**



Treasurer's Report for March - submitted by Martin Juarez, Treasurer

TAIS Treasurer's Report					
Beginning Balance				\$5,713.90	
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
9-Mar	X	#1822		\$16.16	Clark-copies, postage
9-Mar	X	#1823		\$30.00	Else-AIS
9-Mar		#1824		\$30.00	Kartchner-AIS
22-Mar	X		\$30.00		DUES
Sub-Totals			\$30.00	\$76.16	
Ending Balance				\$5,667.74	
3/26/19 7:03					

Iris Color Patterns: Self

Irises that are one single color are called "selves." In a true self, even the beard is the same color as the petals. Although there are newer and fancier color patterns, many people prefer selves. In a garden, a clump of them draws the eye and gives it a place to rest. Kelly Norris put it like this: "Nothing beats the audacity of unblemished color in full force in late spring."

Selves are beloved by Kristee of our club, who said that she is particularly fond of purple and blue ones. Her favorites are 'Violet Music' and 'Monday Morning Blues.' She grew 'Violet Music' (Mahan 1990) at her previous home in Las Cruces, New Mexico, as well as in her current garden in Green Valley, and reports that it reblooms for her. It is also a very early bloomer. (See photo). 'Monday Morning Blues' (Van Liere 2011) blooms in mid to late season.

Madeleine of our club grows several selves in her garden in Marana. The first, 'Mesmerizer' (Byers 1990), is a favorite of mine with its big space-age flounces. This lovely iris won the Dykes Medal in 2002. It blooms in midseason and is available from [Iris4U](http://Iris4U.com). 'Zurich' (Byers 1989) is another white ruffled self. 'Blue Moonlight' (Byers 1989) is palest blue. Both it and 'Zurich' rebloom for Madeleine. Buy 'Zurich' at [BlueJ Iris](http://BlueJ Iris.com). 'Summit Gold' (1977) and 'Summit Sweetie' (1983) were both bred by Carl Jorgensen at the Colorado State University test garden. Madeleine is fond of his irises, which she discovered when she lived in Colorado. 'Glitter Gulch' (Burseen 2008) glows in cadmium orange and has flouncy spoons that reach for the sky. (See photo at right). It blooms in early midseason and is a child of 'Mesmerizer.' It's available at [C and T Iris Patch](http://C and T Iris Patch.com). Some other members recommend the following: Susan grows 'Well Endowed' (Ghio 1978), a bright yellow self with 8" flowers, Melania has had success with 'Mesmerizer,' 'Dusky Challenger' (Schreiner 1986 - see photo on front page) with 8" flowers and a chocolate scent, and 'Corn Harvest' (Wyatt 1974), the latter a rebloomer. Diane grows two reblooming selves: 'Peggy Sue' (Lauer 2006) and the aforementioned 'Zurich.' Bonnie has enjoyed a deep purple self NOID for years. These oldies-but-goodies bloom their hearts out! And they were a gift.

The popularity and growth habits of selves are reflected in the number of times they have won the Dykes Medal: 'Dusky Challenger' in 1992, 'Silverado' in 1994, 'Yaquina Blue' in 2001, and 'Paul Black' in 2010, just to name a few. 'Beverly Sills' which won it in 1985, grew so well for our club member Shirley that she was giving its increases away. This coral pink beauty is still sought after, likely because it is a fast grower and heavy bloomer. Photo at right.

If you want something brand new, Schreiner's has several 2019 introductions that are selves, including '[Pinking of You](http://Pinking of You.com)', delightful in pure pink with shrimp-colored beards. (See photo at right). And selves have something to offer you fragrance-lovers - 'Coup de Soliel' (Cayeux 2007) is the color of orange sherbet and has a light fragrance. Ruffled 'Swingtown' (Schreiner 1996) is the color of berry pie and smells like lavender. And Kevin reports that 'Orange Popsicle' (G. Sutton 1987) smells just like...well, an orange popsicle! Next month, we'll look at bicolors. - SC



From top: 'Violet Music' (photo by Kristee West), 'Mesmerizer,' 'Glitter Gulch,' 'Beverly Sills' (photos from AIS Iris Wiki), and 'Pinking of You' (Schreiner's website)



Ready, Set – Showtime! For Irises, that is!

Do's:

- Choose a stalk with at least one bloom
- Present the stalk well – see Tips and Tricks, below
- Opt for a candelabra stalk for tall bearded varieties – flowers held well away from stalk, with branches on each side of stalk
- Select a stalk with a gentle “S-curve” if possible for TB, IB, and BB varieties
- Aim for flowers on the upper 2/3's of stalk (the 2/3's rule)
- Show many varieties, including older and newer ones – only one stalk per variety, though

No No's:

- Water spots – water the soil only
- Petals touching stalks – use a piece of Styrofoam plate cut into a rectangle with a V notch at each end. Put in place five days before the show to help adjust the positioning. Slide it down daily to widen the gap.
- Flowers touching each other – see use of Styrofoam plate above
- Bugs, dirt, or debris – carefully remove with a moist Q-tip
- Tears and blemishes – tiny tears ok
- Missing flower parts
- Dead or closing blooms – remove these carefully and unobtrusively
- Fingerprints on the stalks – handle stalk by very bottom – can brush on talcum powder lightly to hide fingerprints
- Poor presentation – presentation is just as important as a beautiful and perfect blossom

Tricks and Tips!

Flowers which have opened naturally in the garden are best.

Consider bringing your irises in loose bud to the show the night before so that they will open overnight and be in excellent condition.

An almost-open bud can be slowed down by pinning a paper towel around it before transporting it to the show the night before. Remove towel upon arrival.

Slow a bud down in the refrigerator.

Hasten a bud with watering, especially if it has been dry.

Hasten a bud with warmth and bright light, perhaps on top of a water heater, with a nearby lamp.

Cut early if high winds are forecast. Or rain. Always cut early or late in day (most water, etc. in stalk).

Cut stalk at its base in the garden and trim it at the show, if necessary.

Transport irises with utmost care:

Use a bucket with pieces of PVC pipe or rolled newspapers to hold the stems upright. Be sure to add water.

Use PVC pipe and PVC glue to create a carrying contraption - a grid with uprights for the stems and water.

Use a deep basket or crate with vases or wine bottles.

At the Show:

You must use a vase that has been provided. Fill out and attach a label.

Cut stem if need be so that flowers are on upper 2/3's of stalk.

If stalk is too short, a piece of stalk may be used beneath it to raise it up. Be sure water reaches upper stalk.

Wedge stalks discretely with bits of foam.

Center the main stalk so that it is directly over the vase.

Turn the stalk so that any damaged (torn, broken, or creased) petals are in the back.

Tidying - remove up to 1/4" of damaged foliage, following natural contour of leaf.

- remove spent terminal blossoms and brown sheaths at base of flowers, if necessary. Trim them neatly.
- if there are two blooms per socket, trim one away. Same if there is a bud touching the flower.

Be sure that the best side of the flower stalk is facing forward and that blossoms are not blocked by a leaf. Carefully attach the label to the vase to indicate the front of the stalk.

Collections – the stalks should have similar branching, curves, and number of blooms. They need not be the same cultivar.

The irises you bring do not have to be perfect. Part of our mission is to entice and educate the public about irises. And to have fun!!! You must have grown the irises that you show, though. (And that is a big part of the fun)!

Sources: Two PowerPoints: "Grooming," by Scarlett Ayres of the Mesilla Valley Iris Society, New Mexico, and "Stalking for the Best of Show," by AIS. Modified and summarized for this handout by Sue Clark for TAIS, 2018.

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2019

Kevin Kartchner – President

Bonnie Else - Vice President

Sue Clark – Secretary

Martin Juarez – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary

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 April:

As your irises bloom, verify the flower against the name to be sure it is correct. (Try the [Iris Wiki](#)). Redo labels if incorrect or faded. Re-map the bed. Inspect and repair drip line.

Carefully remove spent flowers for maximum visual impact. Trim flower stalks at their base after they finish blooming, using scissors to help protect the rhizome from injury.

Continue applying a fertilizer high in phosphate for up to two months after bloom time.



Tip Exchange

Since some of our members are trying their hand at breeding new varieties of iris, here are a few tips:

- Some hybridizers break the falls from a flower that they have pollinated to eliminate landing platforms for bumblebees. In this manner, the bees cannot contaminate the cross with pollen from other irises.
- Other hybridizers place a small paper bag over the flowers they have pollinated until the cross has “taken” [two hours for completion according to Rick Tasco’s talk last year]. Avoid bagging on a windy day, though.

Source: William Shear in [The Gardener’s Iris Book](#), 1998, p. 156

Iris Limerick:

There once was a man named Paul,
And his irises they were all tall.
They grew in raised beds,
Were always well fed,
And in bloom were a sight to enthrall!

- Sue Clark



‘Mme. Chobaut,’ 1916

Historic Iris Pres. website

Did You Know?

“If we look closely at a flower, and likewise at other natural and manmade creations, we find a unity and an order common to all of them. This order can be seen in certain proportions, which appear again and again, and also in the similarly dynamic way all things grow or are made by a union of complimentary opposites.”

- György Dóczi, in [The Power of Limits: Proportional Harmonies in Nature, Art, and Architecture](#)

“I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose
I would always greet it in a garden.” - Ruth Stout

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, we take a peek at the iris-filled life of Fernand Denis, who was born in France in 1858. Fernand became enamored with plants while a student listening to lectures by the famous botanist, Durieu de Maisonneuve. Although Denis was an engineer by profession and directed two factories, it is his work with irises that stands out. He lived with his wife and children in southern France, an area with the twin benefits of vast fields of irises and a delightful climate moderated by the Mediterranean. Denis “amassed an extensive iris collection” of many species. An iris that he used often in breeding was ‘Ricardi,’ which was later determined by his acquaintance W. R. Dykes to be a form of *Iris mesopotamica*, a tetraploid iris. ‘Ricardi’s’ offspring were considerably larger than other irises of the time, both in flower size and plant size. Many of them share its trait of revulsion to wet summers, but some are able to flourish in such climates.

Fernand Denis created more than 50 new varieties of irises. He saved their seeds and sent them to commercial plant nurseries for them to introduce once enough stock had grown and multiplied. ‘Demi-deuil’ (1912) is one of his irises that survives to this day. The name translates a ‘half-mourning,’ and is also the name of a butterfly. The flowers, which are on the small side, are dark red-violet with veining in that color over white centers of the falls, which are edged in the main color. ‘Mme. Chobaut’ (1916) is another of his distinctive varieties (see photo above). It smells like clover, has yellow standards edged in light red-violet, and the falls have a white ground veined in red-violet. ‘Mme. Chobaut’ survives in historic display gardens and was a particular favorite of John Wister. The term “variegata-plicata” was coined by Robert Sturtevant for this iris.

Denis’ irises appear in the pedigrees of countless varieties, including four in ‘Conjuration’ (Byers 1988), which won the Dykes Medal in 1998. Most blue irises today are descendants of ‘Ricardi’ by way of its child ‘Blanc Blueté,’ including Dykes Medal-winners ‘Missouri,’ ‘Chivalry,’ and ‘Blue Sapphire.’

In 1927, Fernand Denis wrote an article predicting that reblooming irises could be created by crossing dwarf and tall bearded irises because they bloomed at such different times. *Oui oui* for visionaries such as Mssr. Denis! - SC

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

The Tucson Area Iris Society presents:

“Iris Eyes are Smiling” Iris Show

April 13, 9 AM - 3 PM

Murphy-Wilmot Library, 530 N Wilmot Road

