

# TAIS Newsletter

Our 54th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Stepping Out'**  
(Schreiner 1964)

Dykes Medal 1968

Hummingbird Iris Garden,  
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2017

## President's Message

It's great to see all the new faces at our recent meetings. Welcome to the Tucson iris world. It's time for everyone to be thinking about adding to your iris collection. Join us at our August 17th rhizome auction at 1 pm at TBG (Tucson Botanical Gardens) to add to your next spring's blooms and to our flower show.

- Kevin Kartchner

**"This was one of those perfect New England days in late summer where the spirit of autumn takes a first stealing flight, like a spy, through the ripening country-side, and, with feigned sympathy for those who droop with August heat, puts her cool cloak of bracing air about leaf and flower and human shoulders." - Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Courting of Sister Wisby," 1887**

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## Upcoming Events



**Next meeting: August 17 at 1 PM. Tucson Botanical Garden - Rhizome Auction for members and an Ice Cream social.**

**Rhizome Sale: September 21 at Harlow's Gardens. Consider trading your extra rhizomes for Iris Bucks so you can buy different rhizomes!**

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

**Region 15 Fall Meeting: Oct 12, 2019, San Marino. Speaker = Thomas Johnson.**

**Region 15 Rhizome Auction will be in the fall.**

### Birthday Wishes to:

**Dian Curran                  Miriam Diamond  
Glenda McCulley**

**Condolences to Kristee West on the recent passing of her mother.**



by Maria Sibylla Merian, late 1600s

# Photos by Cathy Pane-Scire



**Top row: 'Kathy's Carnival' (Shepard 2005), NOID, 'Frills and Chills' (Burseen 2012)**

**Middle row: 'Kathy's Carnival,' 'Pumpkin Cheesecake' (Niswonger 1995)**

**Bottom row: 'Stop the Music' (Schreiner 1985)**

## Photos by Cindy Turley in Pennsylvania (Sue's cousin)



## Photos by Shane Smith in Pennsylvania (Sue & Dave's son)



All NOIDs

# Photos by Linda Ammon in Pennsylvania (Sue's sister)



Bottom right corner: at the local Wal-Mart. The rest are in her yard. All NOIDs.



**P. S. She said that she just plants them and enjoys them. Period. No fertilizing, no watering, no fussing...**



## Treasurer's Report for July - submitted by Martin Juarez, Treasurer

Beginning Balance				\$4,463.65	
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
16-Jul	X		\$10.00		Dues: Pappas
Sub-Totals			\$10.00	\$0.00	
Ending Balance				\$4,473.65	7/26/19 9:42



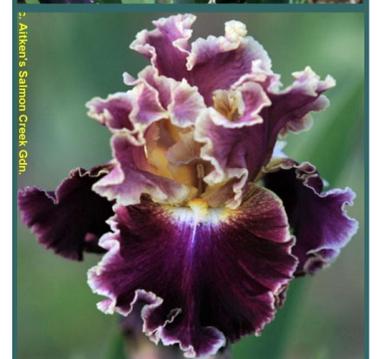
## Luminata Irises - Lit from Within

This month we'll look at luminatas. Irises with this color pattern seem to glow from within due to their pure white or yellow hafts and overall veining. Kelly Norris notes, "Like blends, their presence in garden vignettes never goes unnoticed, and with so many colors contributing to their composition they converse well with other plants, aesthetically speaking." Luminatas are genetically related to plicatas, and they are most often purple from the anthocyanin pigment in their cell vacuoles. The first luminata was 'Moonlit Sea' (Sass 1942) in shades of purple with white hafts and veining. (Source: [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#)). This prototype variety was a surprise resulting from crosses made by the Sass brothers in their plicata line. More Sass luminatas followed. 'Pretty Pansy' (1949), a child of 'Moonlit Sea,' glows in white and violet with a pure white blaze across the top of the falls. It blooms late in the season. 'Fairy Fancy' (1953) descends from 'Pretty Pansy' and it possesses a touch of yellow along the sides of the falls at their uppermost edges as well as yellow beards. It blooms in midseason. In early days, these types were called "Moonlit Sea' plicatas," "fancies," and "true fancies," before settling into the name "luminatas." (Source: [The World of Irises](#), 1978, Bee Warburton, editor).

Other irises in the striking luminata line include the following. '[Mind Reader](#)' (Keppel 1994) and its sibling '[Spirit World](#)' (Keppel 1994) both have a pronounced sweet scent, and the latter won a Wister Medal. These two varieties have a thin rim or "wire" of pale lavender on all six petals, which enhances their attractiveness. The Dykes-Medal-winning '[Montmartre](#)' (Keppel 2007) charms with raisin-purple petals heavily ruffled and rimmed with a white wire. Its early to midseason bloom might suit us here in the desert. '[Elizabethan Age](#)' (Baumunk 2005) blooms during that same interval. Its apricot and lavender standards almost read as mauve. It won a Wister Medal, just one step below the Dykes. One of its parents, '[Flights of Fancy](#)' (Keppel 1992), has a similar look, but blooms early and smells sweet. '[Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine](#)' (Baumunk 2007) is purple and white and blooms in early midseason. On a more recent and slightly different note, '[Luminager](#)' (Stout 2016) has apricot standards, apricot yellow hafts, and violet falls with white veining. It offers an added bonus of some space-age features, which vary between horns, spoons, and flounces of a somewhat unpredictable nature.

Schreiners offers eleven luminatas on their [website](#), including their own '[Tanzanite Twinkle](#)' (2017), whose bright purple and white glow is sure to attract attention wherever it is planted. They mention that '[Moonlit Water](#)' (Keppel 2005) is one of the first tall bearded to bloom in their garden. And you *know* how we all anticipate that first bloom!

Next month's pattern will be blends. - SC



From top: 'Moonlit Sea,' 'Spirit World,' 'Montmartre' (all from the AIS Iris Wiki), and 'Moonlit Water' (from Schreiner's website).

## 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 August:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

No need to trim leaves into fan shapes unless you need them to look tidy or are planting. Dead leaves help by shading the rhizomes.

Provide afternoon relief with shade cloth or by keeping potted irises in the shade.

Continue to feed and water reblooming irises.



## Tip Exchange

“Before rhizomes are reset [replanted], cut back leaf-fans...by half...to reduce the loss of water from the plant until roots take hold again.” - Molly Price, in The Iris Book, 1973 ed.

For an “instant” clump, draw a triangle with sides of 20-24”. Plant a rhizome at each of the bottom corners with their fans facing outwards and plant one at the top vertex with its fan facing toward the center of the triangle. Draw the next triangle upside down, and orient the rhizome at the bottom so that the fan faces the center. - W. Shear, in The Gardener’s Iris Book, 1998.

## Iris Diamonte:

iris  
regal, luminous  
growing, blooming, delighting  
blossoms, beards, roots, scales  
waiting, creating, nurturing  
humble, underground  
rhizome

by Sue Clark



Source: AIS Iris Wiki

‘Dominion’

## Did You Know?

“Growing tall bearded irises with other plants is the most fashionable advice I can give you; alone, while elegant and regal in their own right, they lack pizzazz. Looking lonely just isn’t in the cards for a clump of tall bearded irises, so matching them up with other late spring perennials and shrubs will guarantee the most value and enjoyment. But while I obviously recommend overlapping your various plant loves into one garden to grand effect, the power of a bulked up row of bearded irises in full flower will delay your guests, coming or going.” - Kelly Norris, in A Guide to Bearded Iris

“If you saw a heat wave, would you wave back?” - Steven Wright



## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

We venture back to England this month for a look at the iris-filled second career of a man named Arthur John Bliss. Born in 1860, Bliss worked as a surveyor in New Zealand and a mining engineer in South Africa before returning to England when he was 40. Forced to retire due to deafness, he settled in Kent and began to breed irises, daffodils, and gladiolus in 1902. Bliss began a mission to produce a crimson iris, so much so that he paid little notice to whatever else was produced by his crosses. In the way of children, though, his niece Phyllis Bliss *did* notice one seedling in particular and informed him that it was the best iris in his garden. This was the iris that would later be named ‘Dominion’ (photo above).

The story of that seedling’s journey to becoming ‘Dominion’ begins with Robert Wallace, a nurseryman who was so impressed with some of Bliss’ irises at Wisley in Surrey, the garden of the Royal Horticultural Society, that he arranged to come to Bliss’ garden during the next bloom season. By this time, Bliss had relocated to Morwellham in Devon to be close to his brother, T. S. Bliss. Arthur, a bachelor, lived in the 16th-century Ship Inn and grew his plants in a nearby allotment. He noted that the seedling grew much better in the hillside allotment of gravel and silt than it had in Kent, and by the time of Wallace’s visit had increased to 12 large clumps of 80+ rhizomes. Wallace bought them all, obviously agreeing with ten-year-old Phyllis about their quality! Wallace named this seedling ‘Dominion’ and sold it from his nursery in Colchester. The bitone purple iris with yellow beards has large velvety flowers with excellent form and substance. Wallace, perhaps one of the cleverest marketers of his day, put all of his efforts into figuring out how to sell irises to British gardeners during World War I when not many people were thinking about spending money or growing new flowers. He wrote a glowing description, included a photo of the flower, stated that stock was scarce, and offered ‘Dominion’ up for 98 times the going rate for an iris! He got so many orders that it took him years to grow enough rhizomes to fill them! It’s all about perceived supply and demand! To be continued... - SC

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