

# TAIS Newsletter

Our 54th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Spice Trader'

(Painter 2010) (AM, HM)  
Hummingbird Iris Garden,  
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2018

## President's Message

It starts with the green. At long last the iris fans are showing themselves. My records say I should see some blooms in mid-March. I'm hoping for a great bloom season and looking forward to seeing what hybridizer Bob Van Liere has to share with us at our February 9th meeting.

- Kevin Kartchner

P. S. Have you seen the irises blooming in front of Mesquite Valley Growers?

...*If you wish to ensure an iris is available if yours would be eaten by a groundhog, sharing is a good idea. You may want a piece back someday*...  
- from the AIS Wiki

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## Upcoming Events

**February 9 meeting - Iris breeder Bob Van Liere of Iris4U Gardens in Denver will speak at 1 PM. Doors open at noon. Members are asked to bring a finger food to share and to help set up at noon. Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library, 530 N Wilmot Road, large room. All are welcome.**

**March 9 meeting - Sue Clark presenting a visual tour of Longwood Gardens at 1 PM. Murphy-Wilmot Branch Library, 530 N Wilmot Road, small room.**

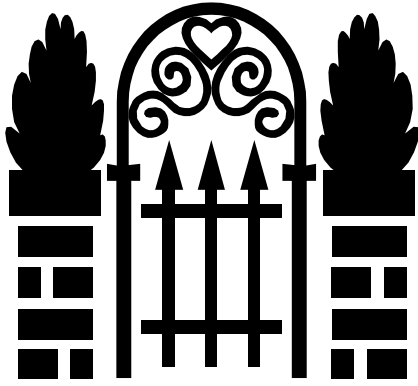
**April 13 - TAIS Iris Show, Murphy-Wilmot Library, 9 AM. Set up on Friday, April 12.**

## Birthday Wishes to:

**Greta Dunnigan    Dave Smith    Sam Wymer  
Shirley Andrews    Sue Clark    Barb Nicholson**



# January Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

Greg Starr's presentation on the flora and fauna of Madagascar drew 31 members and guests. His PowerPoint presentation offered photos of such oddities as baobab trees, giraffe beetles, and long-winged kite spiders. Mr. Starr reported that 80% of the island's plants and animals are found nowhere else in the world! He brought four pieces of *Echinocereus pentalophus* for door prizes, complimenting the three pots of 'Blurred Vision' IB iris (Tyson 2018) which were won by Mary McArthur (a guest from Montana), Sam, and Kathy. Gary brought bags of blood oranges and mandarins from his garden, and these were also given as door prizes.

The board meeting began at 2:25 for the 12 individuals who stayed for it. Upcoming meetings will include the following: **Feb 9** - Bob Van Liere from Iris4UGardens, **Mar 9** - Sue Clark presenting a visual tour of Longwood Gardens, and **April 13** - our Iris Show, with set up occurring the previous day.

Martin issued blanket approval of \$50 for publicity (per publication) or other membership-increasing activities. No Board approval would be necessary. He reported that he and Sue went to Chase Bank in December and arranged to be signatories on the TAIS account. The Board voted that the two of them and Madeleine

be signatories and that anyone else be removed, unless Kristee wishes to still be on the account. He and Kristee will meet soon to go over items for the Treasurer position. Martin asked about a PO Box for the society for bank statements, etc. This was tabled. He also mentioned that guests may have come expecting a program on irises, and that perhaps an announcement might have been made about it being otherwise. Susan said that she had heard four guests say that they came specifically for this presentation.

Susan has received dues from 25 individuals so far.

Melania advertised today's meeting in the Arizona Star, Love & Life Tucson, Tucson Lifestyle Home & Garden, AARP website, and Tucson Happenings website.

Kristee reminded **officers to register as e-members with AIS, and that Martin will reimburse the \$15 dues.**

Sue reported that she called Carol to check on her since her newsletters kept bouncing back. Carol has had a heart valve replaced, and she has a new email address.

Kevin brought an orchid to show.

Bonnie motioned that the meeting close at 2:50 PM. Kevin seconded.

- Sue Clark, secretary

Members - please  
bring a finger food  
for next month's  
meeting

We're on the web!  
Tucsoniris.org

## Bronze, Brass, & Gold Irises



© Schreiner's Iris Garden

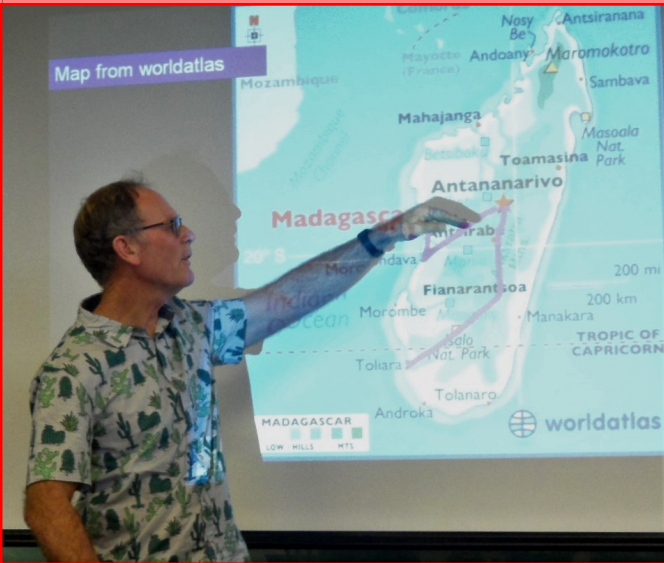
From top: 'Golden Panther' (photo by Sue Clark, 2016, Tucson Botanical Gardens), 'Polished Bronze,' and 'Urban Cowgirl' (both from the AIS Iris Wiki). See p. 7.



# TAIS January Meeting



Photos by  
Tony Kutz




## Iris Care in the Arizona Desert – Shade Cloth, Fertilizing, and Tips - summarized from TAI\$ interviews

individual	shade cloth	fertilizing	tips
<b>Kristee</b>		When getting ready to plant in the fall, Kristee soaks her new rhizomes in Super Bloom or Bloom Booster (10-52-10 or 9-56-9) or water or root stimulator while preparing her pots or plots. This gives the rhizomes a kick-start. She puts 1 Tablespoon of Triple Super Phosphate (0-45-0) under each rhizome and sprinkles a balanced fertilizer (10-10-10) around them. Starting on Valentine’s Day, she applies Super Bloom or Bloom Booster (10-52-10 or 9-56-9) every two weeks, mixed according to the directions on the package. She stops application one week after bloom time. Since Kristee is the one who gives the How-to talks on growing irises, many of us are following her methods.	Kristee also gives a quick soak to all new rhizomes in 1 part bleach to 9 parts water before planting to prevent any unwanted organisms from being ferried into her garden. She plants garlic and onions nearby to keep thrips and aphids away from her irises.
<b>Sue</b>	no	If any new rhizomes do not root after about a month, Sue soaks them in water (only the bottom side is in water) and has had rootlets develop within 48 hours. Starting on Valentine’s Day, she waters with Super Bloom or Blooming and Rooting every two weeks until one month after the last bloom. She fertilized with a rose fertilizer (9-13-8) in November 2018, placing it on the soil surface, scratching it in, and then watering it in. She adds worm castings when planting new rhizomes.	Disinfect new rhizomes in a solution of 10% bleach: 2 c water and 4 T bleach. Dip for about 5 minutes, rinse thoroughly, and let dry. After a rain, use a rock under one side of pots to help them drain. Ask questions and keep learning from others! Relocate pots to shade in the summer.
<b>Janet</b>		When planting rhizomes, Janet uses Miracle-Gro potting soil over a layer of rocks. She has not amended the soil yet, since the plantings are fairly recent. Janet added Osmocote fertilizer in with the rhizomes when she planted them. In the Spring, she applies Bloom Booster (9-56-9) once a week.	Keep learning! And try moving containers around to see if the irises might thrive in a different spot in your garden.
<b>Kevin</b>	2018+	When planting in the fall, Kevin uses a general-purpose fertilizer and is careful not to plant the rhizomes too deep. Beginning in January, he applies a general-purpose fertilizer about once a month. He does not use Super Bloom or Triple Super Phosphate.	He has noticed that his dark varieties crisp along their edges after one day in the sun, so believes that they would prefer some afternoon shade.

<b>Madeleine</b>		<p>When planting new rhizomes in the fall, Madeleine sprinkles Triple Super Phosphate around each one. For an additional boost, she sprinkles it around them both before and after bloom. Each time, though, she waters the beds the day <i>before</i> and the day <i>after</i>, which will help prevent the roots from getting burned by the chemicals. She does not use Super Bloom or any foliar feeding.</p>	<p>Dosing iris plants before bloom time with soapy water from a sprinkling can will help keep aphids away. And Madeleine planted some onions to ward off aphids.</p>
<b>Carol</b>		<p>When planting in the fall, Carol adds Osmocote (the regular yellow-orange type) to the lower portion of the pot. Starting in mid-February, the irises get a dose of Miracle-Gro Bloom Booster once each week. Reblooming varieties are dosed for about six months, and the others for about two months.</p>	<p>She places a single variety in each pot. Some particular favorites include <i>City Lights</i> (she has six pots of it!) and <i>Again and Again</i>, a rebloomer. Both of these grow and flower well for her.</p>
<b>Shirley</b>		<p>Although she does not add any fertilizer when planting her rhizomes, Shirley begins dosing her irises with Super Bloom (or equivalent) on Valentines' Day and continues to do so every two weeks throughout the bloom season.</p>	<p>Shirley recommends planting irises with the fans facing east to start the day with the morning sun. As well, she recommends joining the American Iris Society for interesting and helpful advice on how to care for irises in your area. She notes that her irises do better in isolated beds, and best on the north side of her house in front of bougainvillea.</p>
<b>Kathy</b>		<p>When planting her rhizomes, Kathy sprinkles Osmocote around each one and waters it in. She begins dosing her irises with Triple Super Phosphate in late January or early February to encourage them to bloom. She used to apply regular Miracle-Gro at half strength, but has switched to the Triple Super Phosphate.</p>	<p>An entomologist at the University of Arizona recommended applying diatomaceous earth to the beds to get rid of grubs. Kathy prefers to grow her irises in isolated beds. She grew wildflowers with them one year, but felt that they shaded the irises too much.</p>





<b>Greta</b>		In February, Greta sprinkles a multi-purpose fertilizer (such as Miracle-Gro) around her irises, works it into the soil, and then waters.	Try this as an experiment: Don't trim iris leaves into 6" fans. Probably just the outer two leaves will yellow and die back and the others can continue to photosynthesize.
<b>Cathy</b>	2019+	Cathy does not fertilize when planting. She applies Super Bloom every two weeks from the last frost until all plants have flower stalks.  	Cathy's Karnival is a favorite, which not only blooms no matter what or where, but is lovely as well! She treated her grubs with Triazicide Insect Killer, but had better luck with diatomaceous earth, which was recommended by a Harlow's employee during our sale.
<b>Pam</b>		Pam has had success with Miracle-Gro All Purpose plant food. She doses her irises with the solution from March through bloom time. There is also chicken manure in the soil which her husband bought for her at a farmers' market.	Her beds are situated so that the irises receive shade in the afternoons.
<b>Diane</b>		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.	A big clump of irises has a certain drama to it.
<b>Bonnie</b>		Bonnie's fertilizer of choice is Super Bloom. She sprinkles the dry powder directly on the soil around each plant, works it in, and then waters. The timing of her fertilizing routine is every other week from Valentine's Day until a month or two after the last bloom has faded away.	Don't let your irises' labels fade away – check them periodically [and/or make a map – SC]. Be persistent and be careful not to kill them with kindness!



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

Beginning Balance				\$6,815.32	
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
3-Jan	X		\$23.00		DUES
12-Jan	X	#1811		\$21.99	Powers - January snacks
	X	#1812		\$46.30	Clark - AIS, HIPS, copies, postage
	X	#1813		\$75.00	Starr - January speaker
	X	#1814		\$0.00	VOID
	X	#1815		\$22.80	Tweedy - supplies & Nov snacks
	X	#1816		\$35.52	Clark - copies & postage
14-Jan	X		\$103.00		DUES
	X	Debit		\$14.98	VistaPrint
15-Jan	X		\$10.00		DUES
	X	#1792		\$27.00	(Kutz) Desert Leaf ad
	X	#1793		\$9.24	Kutz - copies
29-Jan	X		\$20.00		DUES
30-Jan		#1794		\$27.00	(Kutz) Desert Leaf ad
Sub-Totals			\$156.00	\$279.83	
Ending Balance				\$6,691.49	

**NOTICE: TAIS Board Members**  
It is crucial to our status as a nonprofit organization that all Board Members are members of AIS. The e-membership option costs \$15, for which Martin will reimburse you. You may print a mailable form here: <http://www.irises.org/pdf/AISmembershipform2016.pdf> or join from the AIS website: <http://www.irises.org/ppal/OnlineAISJOIN.html>, in which case they will email you your log-in information in a day or so. Or we can help you on Feb 9. Bring a credit card. - SC, MJ

### Bronze, Brass, and Gold Irises - more sparkle for the garden

We finish up our series on color with irises in the metallic shades of bronze, brass, and gold. Several of these come from the Schreiner family. 'Tijuana Brass' (1967) is the oldest iris that I found in this color group. Its falls look like polished brass, and it won an Honorable Mention. 'Neon Rainbow' (1971) has bronze-gold standards and copper falls with a violet blaze. It blooms in late midseason and also won an Honorable Mention. 'Bohemian' (1988) caught my eye with bronze standards offset by golden falls with wide red-violet blazes. Its blooms appear in early midseason. Schreiners newer offering in bronze is 'Urban Cowgirl' (2013), whose white standards glow with gold beams and hafts, and are set off by ruffled bronze-brown falls rimmed and backed in gold. See photo on p. 2.

A variety recommended by Terry Johnson in his [Heritage Iris blog](#) is the richly-colored, but slow-to-increase 'Maple Treat' (Brown, 1995). Photo at right. This reverse bitone blooms in midseason. It's a bit hard to find, but is available from [Blue J Iris](#), [Cayeux](#), and [Amazing Iris Garden](#).

One golden-bronze iris has won the Dykes Medal - Rick Tasco's 'Golden Panther' (2000). Our club grows this ruffled beauty in our beds at the Tucson Botanical Gardens. It pushes up stems with many buds and I remember noting that its flowers had lots of substance. You may buy 'Golden Panther' from Superstition Iris Gardens, [Blue J](#), [Schreiners](#), [Iris4U](#), or [Napa Country Iris](#).

Other irises in this color range include 'Spice Trader' (Painter 2010), a midseason-blooming child of 'Golden Panther' (see photo on p. 1 of this newsletter); 'Golden Tower' (Attenberger 2001), the most golden of the bunch; 'Polished Bronze' (Markham 2008), an attractive and ruffled self; and 'Witching' (Blythe 1991), which bewitches with its sky blue-lavender standards and bronze and golden falls. Its violet beards are tipped in bronze, and 'Witching's' very early to early bloom season might make it a good choice here. This fast grower makes an impressive clump and is available from [Blue J Iris](#). Blythe's 'Gaelic Jig' (2000) is similar, but with somewhat deeper colors. It flowers very early to early and it has a sweet scent. It is available from [Iris4U](#). 'Dodge City' (Lauer 1995), is bronze-tan with melon overtones and a slightly sweet fragrance. Since it flowers early, it might be a good variety for us in the desert. Next month, I'll begin featuring some color patterns that irises exhibit, such as the Emma Cook look. - SC



From top: 'Bohemian' (Walking-P-Bar website), 'Maple Treat' (Historic Iris blog), and 'Witching' (AIS Iris Wiki)



## 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 & Signatory on Account

Angela Powers - Hospitality & Door Prizes

Diane Tweedy - Birthday Cards & Hospitality

Tony Kutz - Photographer

Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor & Publisher

## Iris Haiku:

An iris so fine  
Planned a surprise for bloom time,  
Both lovely and sublime.

- Sue Clark



Source: AIS Wiki

## Did You Know?

'Cythe' (Van Tubergen)

In Florence, *Iris florentina* is planted around graves and its flowers are used in churches in honor of St. Reparata's appearance in the middle of a battle in which the Goths had Florence under siege in 405 AD. Holding a banner of a white iris on a red ground, he quickly turned the tide of the battle in favor of the Florentines, who later adopted the symbol as their coat of arms. The colors were reversed in the 13th century after another battle, and this remains the symbol of Florence.

Source: Wikipedia article about *Iris florentina*.

"The February sunshine steeps your boughs and tints the  
buds and swells the leaves within." - William C. Bryant

## 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 **Super Bloom** (12-55-6) or **Ferti-Lome Blooming and Rooting** (9-59-8) every two weeks according to directions on package.



## Tip Exchange

Idea for inexpensive plant markers and a non-fading paint marker to write on them:

- Bond #342 Re-useable 8" T-markers, available at Lowe's, about \$2 for a package of 25. [10" ones available from Amazon for \$5.99 for 25 - SC].

- Forney #70819 Black Paint Marker, available from Amazon for \$6.48, or at auto parts stores.

Source: Kristen Hart, in ROOTS, v. 31, #2, Fall 2018



## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, we travel to Holland to learn about the C. G. Van Tubergen Jr. nursery in Haarlem, founded in 1868. Cornelius Van Tubergen and his two nephews, John and Thomas Hoog, became players in the iris-breeding world. Although they have been mentioned in only one of five books titled The Plant Hunters (and not in two others with quite similar titles), their particular plant hunters discovered and introduced scores of plants into commerce, including many unknown types of irises. Their nursery developed the classic Dutch irises [which I am tempted by every time I am in Trader Joes!] by breeding "Xiphium iris species and species from Spain, Portugal, and Morocco." These bulbous beauties are important in both the florist trade and in the garden, where they bloom early and have been available for over a hundred years. (While mine are all blue and purple, they can also be found in shades of yellow and white).

Van Tubergen was also responsible for creating and introducing arilbred irises, a cross between aril irises which they had collected from the deserts of the Middle East and Central Asia, and bearded irises. The cross was made because arils thrive only in arid regions, and rot at any sign of summer rain. But their hybrids can grow in various climates, while still reflecting the unusual forms and colors of the aril irises. One of their most famous arilbreds is 'Ib-Mac,' a cross between *Iris iberica* and *Iris germanica macrantha* ('Amas'). Its blue flowers are 6" across and possess the arilbred's characteristic black spot in the center of the falls. 'Ib-Mac' was used to breed many, many offspring, one of the most famous being 'Esther, the Queen' (Hunt, 1968).

All Van Tubergen arilbreds were omitted from the AIS alphabetical checklists of 1929 and 1939, so their names were subsequently used by other breeders for other hybrids, thus creating confusion and relegating the Van Tubergen firm to the shadows of history. Even 'Ib-Mac' is often confused with a variety that is red-violet rather than blue-violet. Another variety never registered with AIS is 'Cythe,' whose deep red-violet veins make it look like a zebra-striped iris. (See above). Thank you to the Van Tubergens and Hoogs for their efforts to bring further beauty to the world! -SC

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