

TAIS Newsletter

Our 54th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Stairway to Heaven'
(an amoena)
(Lauer 1993)

Haas Memorial Chapel
Garden, Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2019

President's Message

I hope your garden appreciated our cool May weather. I enjoyed our May meeting iris culture panel discussion. It's great to learn what works and doesn't for other growers. I will be trying a few new things. What will you be experimenting with?

- Kevin Kartchner

"On this June day the buds in my garden are almost as enchanting as the open flowers. Things in bud bring, in the heat of a June noontide, the recollection of the loveliest days of the year - those days of May when all is suggested, nothing yet fulfilled." - Francis King

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Upcoming Events

Next meeting: August 17 at 1 PM. Tucson Botanical Garden - Region 15 Auction and Ice Cream Social.

Newsletters will continue through the summer, which is a good time to feature extra pictures. Please submit any photos of irises to taisnewsletter@yahoo.com and they will be published in a summer issue!

PAIS Rhizome Sale: July 27 in Prescott. 10 AM - 3 PM. Info at their [website](#).

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

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

Birthday Wishes to:
Diane Tweedy



illustration from 1719

May Meeting Minutes



Kevin welcomed four guests to our meeting and congratulated the group on the success of last month's show. A panel discussion about growing iris in the desert followed. (See article on p.5). Seventeen people attended.

The Board meeting began at 2:30 for the twelve individuals who stayed for it. Kevin reviewed two parts of the bylaws: there is a three-year limit to officer's terms, and that there is to be a monthly audit session in which a non-signatory officer reviews and initials the bank statement with the Treasurer. Bonnie and Martin will do this before each meeting. Kevin said that this will be in lieu of a year-end audit. Martin mentioned that he must have hard copies of all receipts submitted for reimbursement.

Upcoming programs and events:

August 17 - Auction

September 21 - Rhizome Sale

Oct meeting - Darol Jurn on spurias

Nov meeting - potluck, new officers

Our members-only auction will be held on August 17 at the Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG) at 1 PM. The room is available in the morning should we wish to set up then. Rhizomes will come from Region 15. These rhizomes were planted for the Spring Trek, and the auction proceeds benefit Region 15. Sue will chair this event and will find out the details

from Kristee or someone at Region 15. Bonnie will help Sue. The group voted to have a regular auction as opposed to a silent auction and that there be a minimum bid of \$5.

Our rhizome sale will be on September 21 at Harlow's Gardens. Susan, Sue, and Kristee have ordered rhizomes for this and Kevin asked for suggestions before he orders his portion. Martin offered to make a flier to advertise the sale. Tony and Melania will have it copied, as well as arrange advertisement as for each meeting. Tony, Melania, Bonnie, and Kevin have delivered fliers in the past. Bonnie suggested a coordinated effort to get the maximum exposure for the sale. Sue has the banner.

Membership report by Susan - we got four new members today and one last week, for a total of 20 "old" members and 34 new! Sue will add a line to the membership form asking them to write how they learned about TAIS.

TBG report by Sam - Michelle Conklin told him that this was the best year TBG has seen for iris bloom, and that she'd like the iris garden to expand and could even help with that. Adjacent areas to the east and west are available and could probably hold 20-30 irises, per Sam. Drip lines would need to be

installed there. Kevin mentioned that the TBG beds provide us with lots of publicity. Bonnie reported that the Garden now handles mulching, fertilizing, and grooming the irises. She motioned that we add rhizomes to fill in and expand the bed. We had decided in February to save 12-15 rhizomes from our sale for this purpose (or members can donate), so we will now need about twice that amount. And Kevin reminded us the Michelle has expressed interest in having some rebloomers. Bonnie mentioned that several irises are mislabeled. Kevin suggested that a reconciliation of names and flowers be done next year during bloom season. Bonnie reported that several of the plants will be ready to divide this fall. Sam has volunteered to keep our flier box in the iris bed full of fliers since he works at TBG. Sue created a flier for this purpose after the show, based on input from Sam. Martin requested a copy.

Shirts - Martin brought up the idea of ordering shirts with an iris logo on them. Bonnie thought that these would be useful for members to wear during our sale and show. Martin motioned that we order a group shirt. Susan seconded. Bonnie motioned that TAIS cover the set-up fees, and that individuals pay for their own shirts. Tony seconded. Martin motioned that the shirts be purple. Sue seconded.

Publicity report by Melania - advertising in the Desert Leaf, Arizona Star online, Lovin' Life in Tucson, Tucson Lifestyle magazine, and Tucson Happenings.

Miscellaneous - Kevin said that he has successfully planted irises in July on occasion. Sue mentioned that Cathy Pane-Scire plants her auction rhizomes in August with success, rather than let them sit unplanted until late September. Sam's 'Easter Bonnet' iris bloomed for three weeks!!!

The meeting ended at 3:33 PM.
- Sue Clark, secretary

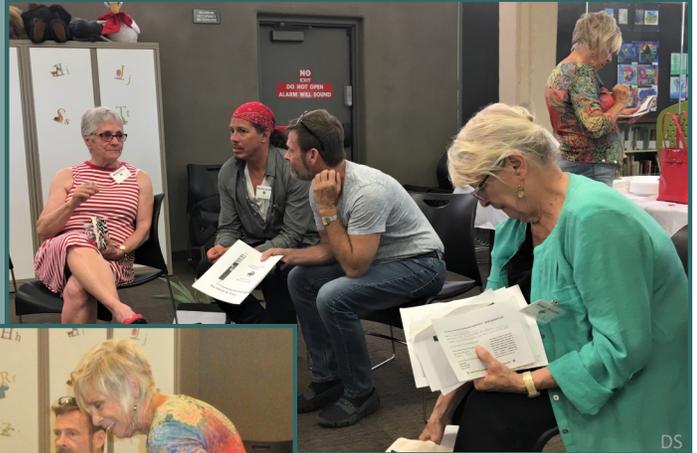
Watch for an
expansion of our iris
beds at TBG!

We're on the web!

Tucsoniris.org

TAIS May Meeting

**Photos by
Tony Kutz &
Dave Smith**



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

TAIS Treasurer's Report					
Beginning Balance					\$5,687.74
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
9-Apr	X	#1825		\$500.00	West-Iris4U bulbs
10-Apr	X	Debit		\$42.36	Juarez/UPS Store copies
16-Apr	X	#1795		\$72.50	Desert Leaf Mar/Apr ads (Kutz)
16-Apr	X	#1796		\$21.25	Kutz-copies
16-Apr	X	#1797		\$51.58	Kutz-VanLiere dinner
22-Apr	X	#1798		\$38.25	Desert Leaf May ad (Kutz)
27-Apr	X	#1826		\$21.00	Juarez - TBG thank you gift
Sub-Totals			\$0.00	\$746.94	
Ending Balance					\$4,940.80
(NEED RECEIPTS)					



'Kathy Chilton' photo by Kathy Chilton

TAIS Treasurer's Report					
Beginning Balance					\$4,940.80
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
11-May	X	#1827		\$336.25	Clark - Iris', copies, postage
11-May	X	#1828		\$57.23	Powers - supplies, cake
11-May	X	#1829		\$125.67	Tweedy - supplies, postage,
29-May			\$42.00		DUES & literature
Sub-Totals			\$42.00	\$519.15	
Ending Balance					\$4,463.65
Still need receipts/invoices from April (check #s 1825, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798)					



c. Pilmore Gardens



Bicolors: Variegatas, Amoenas, and Reverse Amoenas

Bicolor irises have standards and falls of two different colors. There are three types of bicolors in the iris world. **Variegatas** have yellow standards with falls of brown, red, or purple. **Amoenas** (uh mean' uhs) have white standards and contrasting falls. In **Reverse Amoenas**, it's the falls that are white. Kelly Norris, author of *A Guide to Bearded Irises*, says: "Bicolors make the world go round...[they] provide remarkable contrast with other companion flowers, creating possibilities for animated conversations in the garden. They can also stir up chatter that leads to full-on gossip - too much yakety-yak, amounting to visual noise instead of pleasant harmony. It's a matter of taste and style: the eccentric gardener will love them, the understated gardener will respectfully decline." And perhaps the rest of us will just have a favorite bicolor or two in our gardens.

Our club is fortunate to have a member with a variegata named for her! 'Kathy Chilton' (Kerr 2006) shines in the garden, with its yellow standards and velvety wine-colored falls (see photo). (If you attended our recent show, this is the iris that was shown as 'Witch's Cape,' having been mislabeled somewhere along its journey). This variety has won the Wister Medal. Kathy Chilton, who is an iris judge, told me that the variegata colors descend from *Iris variegata*, hence the name. She also mentioned that "Variegatas can range from palest yellow and lavender to dark orange and black."

Kristee from our club grows 'Calling Cadence' (Van Liere 2009) (see photo), a variegata that blooms mid- to late season. Its magenta falls are set off with a gold edge that draws the eye back to the golden yellow standards.

Melania grows several bicolors and their kindred patterns. 'Waiting for October' (Lauer 2003) is a white and peach reblooming amoena border bearded. 'PT Barnum' (Meek 1979), is tan with wine falls. 'Opposites' (Trio 2013) is classy-looking in white and blue-purple with yellow beards surrounded by a white blaze and is up for the Wister medal this year. It is available from [Shirley Trio](#) at Fleur de Lis Gardens. 'Optic Overload' ([Tasco](#) 2017) is yellow with plum-veined violet falls. 'Valley of Dreams' (Blyth 2013) is fetching in lavender and golden-brown. 'Secret Delight' ([Tasco](#) 2018) is coral with mauve-orchid falls, sweet fragrance, and eight buds per stem. 'Bud to Blossom' (Lauer 2014) is white with oxblood falls and a sweet fragrance.

Susan grows two bicolors, '[Bet the Farm](#)' (Schreiner 2015), white and dark purple with blue rim, fragrance, and 10 flowers per stalk and '[Vigilante](#)' (Schreiner 1991), black-maroon falls and golden caramel standards with 8-13 blooms on a stalk! Susan says, "I usually prefer selfs but these two are spectacular!!"

Next month's featured color pattern will be Plicata. - SC



© Schreiner's Iris Gardens



© Schreiner's Iris Gardens



www.sunshineirises.com.au

From top: 'Calling Cadence' photo by Kristee West, 'Opposites' and 'Secret Delight' from the Iris Wiki, 'Bet the Farm' from Schreiner's website, and 'Perfect Couple' (a reverse amoena). photo from Sunshine Acres website.

Growing Iris in the Desert, Part 1

Three TAIS members talked about what they do in their iris gardens: Kevin Kartchner (KK), Diane Tweedy (DT), and Susan Schaefer (SS). Kevin has grown irises for over 20 years, mostly on and sometimes off. Diane has been growing them for about 8 years, and Susan started over 25 years ago and then she started over about four years ago. Based on what these three bring to our show, they know lots of things about growing irises! Other members chimed in. See more local advice from our members in the [January 2019](#) and [February 2019](#) newsletters.



Garden overview

KK: grows about 200 varieties, all in beds in the ground.

DT: has a U-shaped garden of two tiers. The top tier holds about 75-80 irises and the bottom tier holds a butterfly garden.

SS: all irises growing in pots or horse troughs. The pots are on plant stands due to local bunnies who like to visit the garden. She planted 58 rhizomes last year.

MK (Melania Kutz): all irises in containers, mostly self-watering pots.



Soil

KK: has experimented by growing clumps of the same variety side by side in different soils. Conclusion - organic matter is essential in soil used for irises. He adds perlite, as organic matter breaks down too quickly. Irises need good soil and good drainage. He mentioned that Ben Herman's soil was soft, almost like potting soil, and that his own is not.

SS: uses soil from her landscaper on the bottom of the pots (a heavier soil), then sprinkles in Schreiner's iris fertilizer, then uses Miracle-Gro Moisture Control as a top layer.

AP (Angela Powers, Master Gardener): prefers Kellogg's potting soil. She mixes in perlite and vermiculite. She feels that the Miracle-Gro Moisture Control compacts too much.

BE (Bonnie Else): uses Miracle-Gro potting soil but mixes in an equal amount of cactus mix because she also feels that the Miracle-Gro compacts and holds water. She has no issues with rot.

SC (Sue Clark): uses Miracle-Gro moisture control potting soil with about a 2" layer of cactus mix on top for good drainage around the rhizome. Recalls Kristee saying that while the roots like being in wet soil, the rhizomes do not!

Watering

KK: most of his irises get overhead water from sprinklers. A few are on drippers, which he thinks is probably better. He tends to lose irises to rot during the monsoon season when the ground gets soggy. He mentioned that Ben Herman's irises were watered by drip tubing with holes drilled in every 6".

DT: beds started out with bubblers, which was not satisfactory, and then she hand-watered using a wand, which was a disaster (grubs, etc.). She now uses sprayer emitters from her dripline, as well as a sprinkling can. Currently the sprayers are on 25 min/day 3X/week (MWF). She will increase the time when it gets hot. Diane is considering increasing the time in the winter, too. This year, there were three snowfalls and her blooms were excellent. This has her thinking that perhaps putting ice on the ground before bloom time could mimic this.

SS: her drip system is set to water 15 min/day 3X/week (MWF). They come on at 6 AM. She can turn the emitters off individually.

SW (Sam Wymer): waters at 7 PM and has well-drained soil. He suggests not watering during the hours when you'd have to wear sunscreen (between approximately 10 AM and 4 PM).

WO'R (Wendy O'Rourke): uses clay cones and bottles of water to direct water toward the roots of her container-planted irises. These seem to deliver just the right amount of water.

MK: uses self-watering pots and waters from bottom only.

SC: mentioned that Kristee said that she runs her emitters into the bottom of her pots so the water is delivered to the roots.

Part 2 next month: Fertilizing, The Right Spot for the Right Plant, Planting, First-year bloom, Sun versus Shade, Rot, Pests - grubs, aphids, Grooming - SC

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 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.

Spring bloomers need fertilizer for 6-10 weeks after last bloom (until late June). Be careful that they do not receive any overhead water, or they will rot. It is best to water in the evening.

Move potted irises into shade for the summer.



Tip Exchange

Attention all of you budding hybridizers! Check out this [bibliography of hybridizing articles found in the Irises Bulletin](#) through 2008, compiled by Betty Roberts for AIS. - SC

A tri-foam board (foam presentation board that has three sections) is useful when photographing irises because it provides a plain background to emphasize the beauty of the flower. I bought a black one and a white one at Staples, and have only tried out the black one so far. \$17 each. - SC

Water the soil, not the plants. - Greta

Iris Limerick:

There once was a town called Tucson
And it baked all summer in the hot sun.
The people wanted some flowers
So they pondered for hours,
And then they all grew iris for fun!

- Sue Clark



Source: Iris Wiki

'W R Dykes' (Dykes 1926)

Did You Know?

"After flowering, a cascade of physical changes takes place within the [iris] plant, essentially powering it toward flowering the next spring. Rhizome buds increase in size due to rapid nutrient uptake, growing from small spikelets at the heel of the rhizome into a colony of new rhizomes...Flower buds also develop for next spring within these new increases. Most species and cultivars mentioned in this book typically undergo these changes within six to ten weeks after flowering and end up in pseudo-dormancy at some point in July or August.

- Kelly Norris in his book [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#)

"Flowers are not made by singing "Oh, how beautiful," and sitting in the shade." - Rudyard Kipling

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

"William Rickatson Dykes was creative, and his genius was unique. He was a man obsessed with irises. He mastered a scientific discipline - taxonomy - with no formal training. He labored to bring order from disorder, and to extract truth from Nature. He gave us knowledge and beauty. He is the person whose memory is most honored and revered in the world of irises. This is as it should be."

We've all *heard* the name W. R. Dykes, and this month we'll look at the man and his work. Educated as a classical scholar, he taught at the Charterhouse School in England for about 20 years, all the while growing and experimenting with irises on the side. Dykes' interest in irises stemmed from a visit to Sir Michael Foster (see the [Nov 2017](#) issue of this newsletter for Foster's story), who encouraged Dykes to research and write a comprehensive study of the genus. Foster gave Dykes one of each type of iris that he grew and Dykes, who had a green thumb, began breeding them right away. Although his interest was of a scientific nature, crossing every species with itself and with every other species, he introduced many beautiful varieties, including the first Louisiana iris, 'Fulvala.'

Dykes published his masterwork, [The Genus Iris](#) in 1913, after assembling and examining "the original descriptions of all supposed iris species - there were nearly seven hundred - and used the preserved type specimens to ascertain species rank validity. He relied on secondary sources only when primary sources could not be found." He traveled all over Europe to examine specimens and obtain information. The book contains 47 colored plates from watercolors, 30 line drawings, and a colored plate of seeds. Its information has stood the test of time, as well.

W. R. Dykes died in 1925 at age 48 after a car accident. One of his irises introduced the following year bears his name (see photo above). It was quite popular initially, but this has faded as purple streaks increasingly appeared on its falls. These are assumed to be from a virus - the same one that produces Rembrandt tulips. Thank you, Mr. Dykes for both organizing and sharing your genius of the genus with the iris world! - SC

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