

TAIS Newsletter

Our 54th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



Rose Clark's
Iris Garden
in
Beaver, Pennsylvania
(all rescued iris and gifts)

photo by Rose Clark, 2019

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Message from our TBG Liaison

I'm very happy to report that between our fabulous volunteers (Bonnie, Diane, Madeleine, Susan, and myself), we planted over 80 new iris at the Tucson Botanical Gardens on October 24. That included more than 50 rhizomes donated by our generous club members and others purchased by TBG, including many rebloomers. All named iris are now labelled. Adam Farrell-Wortman, the Garden's horticulturalist, was on hand and explained the focus that TBG has for the garden. He helped us plant, as well as divide the overcrowded clumps. It was a great morning and really showed our commitment to the TBG Iris Garden.

- Kathy Windischman, TAIS Liaison to TBG

"Photography is a journey, an exploration towards our unconscious, a tool of self-knowledge and personal exploration that allows us to be children again because it gives us the ability to be amazed."

- Tamara Merino, National Geographic Society photographer

Upcoming Events

November 16 meeting: Potluck, installation of new officers. Murphy-Wilmot Library, Large Room. 1 PM with set up at noon. Please note that this is the third Saturday of the month rather than the second. This is due to the previous weekend being the Veterans Day holiday weekend.

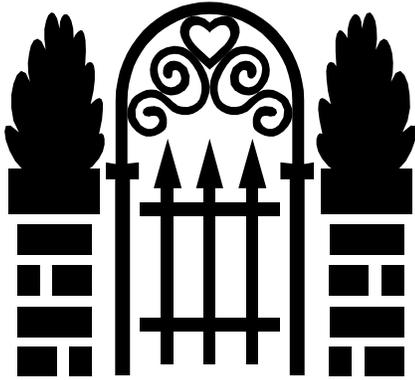
No meeting in December.

Birthday Wishes to:

Angela Powers Mary Ellen Stinski
Susan Schaefer Bonnie Colby
Tracy Salvemini



October Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

October 12, 2019 - During our second annual photo contest, 22 people were tasked with selecting nine winners from many gorgeous pictures of irises. Thank you to Cathy and John for tallying the votes. See more on p. 5, including all of the winning images.

The next part of the meeting was devoted for electing officers and committee chairs for the coming year. Although no one has stepped up to be president yet, the nominated slate for the others was motioned for acceptance by Lucille, and seconded by Mary Ann. See the list on p. 6. A president will be elected next month.

Sue auctioned off fifteen rhizomes for Region 15 while projecting their pictures and statistics. Dave exhibited the rhizomes using his best Vanna White style. Profits from raffling the painting for TBG were used to purchase several rhizomes for the iris garden there.

Congratulations to Pam, Sam, and Martin, who won the door prize rhizomes today!

Eight individuals attended the Board meeting. Kevin asked for comments about the Sale, which he thought went well.

Perhaps we need to order 600 rhizomes for next year, since we sold out of just over 500 by 11:15. Sue suggested that when the rhizomes are ordered, that we specify that we do NOT want current introductions and that we *do* want introductions mostly from the current decade. Harlow's kindly publicized the Sale in their email newsletter. Angela mentioned that the Master Gardeners promote our Sale. Tony drove fliers to 13 libraries. Kevin noted to bring the PA system for Kristee's talk next time. Bonnie suggested a raffle again next year - perhaps gift baskets of 4-5 rhizomes, etc. Martin asked if we want a detailed inventory of how many rhizomes we start with and sell, and where they come from. Sue offered to send him the sheets that came with the orders. He also requested a registry of Iris Bucks in order to track them.

Melania consented to share her knowledge and experience with Bonnie and Kathy as they take on the program chair duties. Diane agreed to stay on

as Birthday Card Sender temporarily to help out Joyce and Mary Ann. Angela will mentor them, as well, as they take on the Hospitality chairs.

Diane reported that her garden will be on next year's Master Gardeners' (MG) Home Garden Tour on April 4 from 9AM to 3 PM. It may be possible for us to set up an information table and have a presence there since her irises should be blooming then. The MGs would print copies of our literature and we could give it away, not sell it. Diane collected copies of it, since it must be approved. Sue motioned that we take advantage of this opportunity and Bonnie seconded. We will need volunteers to man the table if the request is approved. - SC



Join us for a Potluck
lunch on Nov. 16!



We're on the web!

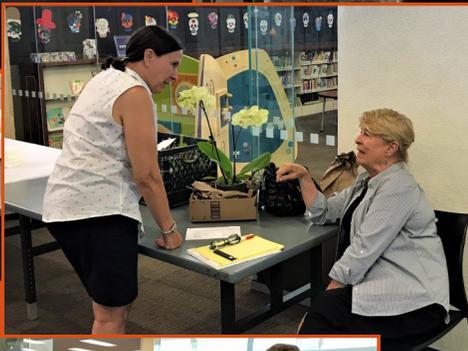
Tucsoniris.org

Pictures from the Sale by Tony Kutz

TAIS October Meeting



**Photos by
Dave & Tony**



Treasurer's Report for October - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance				\$7,287.41	
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
12-Oct	X	#1833		\$37.76	Powers - snacks
12-Oct	X	#1834		\$16.36	Clark - printing
15-Oct	X	#6205	\$20.00		Glaser - Sep Sale
15-Oct	X	Checks	\$90.00		Region 15 Auction
15-Oct	X	Cash	\$76.00		Region 15 Auction
17-Oct	X	#1835		\$520.00	Deaton-Region 15
Sub-Totals			\$186.00	\$574.12	
Ending Balance				\$6,899.29	10/24/19 9:55

Broken Color Pattern - Fun and Fancy

Irises with the Broken Color pattern are decorated with streaks and splotches of color, giving them a look reminiscent of batik cloth. This cloth is prepared using liquid wax to mask areas before another color is applied. After the wax is removed at the end of the process, a beautiful design emerges. Broken Color irises are often additionally blessed with fun names, such as 'Peekaboo Zebu,' 'Anaconda Love,' and 'Jumpin' Jack Flash.' Each flower is different, even from others on the same stalk, for reasons not totally understood. According to Mike Unser, "a genetic instability causes the colors and/or patterns of the iris to express irregularly, giving a flower that is splash-splashed in a more or less haphazard fashion. No two blooms are ever just alike, and they can create a very lively and exuberant effect in the flower garden." (Source: World of Irises blogspot, [26 Nov 2012 post](#)). The AIS Iris Wiki mentions that this pattern has become so popular that perhaps it should not be considered with the Novelty iris anymore. They have posted a [list](#) with links to all Broken Colors in the Wiki. These appear across all categories of irises, not just in Tall Bearded.

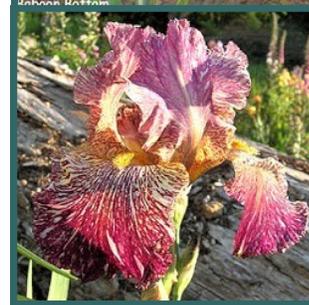
Although Brad Kasperek and Allan Ensminger are considered top breeders of Broken Colors today, the pattern actually emerged back in the 1840's with Jean-Nicolas Lémon's 'Victoire Lemon,' named for his mother. This lovely purple and white amoena has blotches of purple on the white standards. It is now known as 'Victorine.' Another early Broken Color iris is 'Loreley' (Goos & Koenemann 1909), whose yellow standards are emblazoned with shards of the falls' colors as well as their striped pattern. This hardy iris is widely grown and respected for its ability to survive neglect. These two might show up in the HIPS online sale.

'Batik' (Ensminger 1986) could be considered the quintessential Broken Color variety. It sports large blossoms in royal purple streaked, splashed, and splotched all over with white. It won the Knowlton Medal in 1992, the highest award for border bearded.

Brad and Kathie Kasperek and their Zebra Gardens in Utah have introduced many irises of this pattern, all sporting tickle-your-fancy names. Brad bought his original stock from Alan Ensminger in 1987 (Deseret News, 25 May 2009, by L. Sagers). 'Tiger Honey' (1993) is honey-colored splashed with white and has an elegant classical form. This variety recently took first place for Kevin in our Photo Contest. 'Baboon Bottom' (1994) is rose-pink with white splotches. 'Bewilderbeast' (1995) is an excellent grower and bloomer, establishing a clump in short order which is sure to stop any passers-by for a lingering look.

Some Kaspereks that I have on my own wish list are 'Cheetah Cheese' (2001) and 'Millennium Falcon' (1998), both for their names and their looks. Blue J Iris offers 79 types of Broken Color irises on their [website](#), and I might be shopping there in the Spring for these. [Scott's Iris Gardens](#) also carries many Broken Colors. Breck's sells a "[Renowned Batik Iris Collection](#)" of six Broken Color irises, which I recently received as a gift from a friend.

Next month, we will look at the glaciata color pattern. - SC



From top: 'Victorine,' 'Loreley,' 'Batik,' 'Baboon Bottom,' and 'Bewilderbeast' (all from AIS blog). See photo of 'Tiger Honey' on p. 5.

2nd Annual TAI5 Photo Contest

Eight individuals submitted 84 pictures in three categories: Macro (21 entries), Garden view (12), and Single blossom or stem (51). Participants included Cathy, Kevin, Kristee, Melania and Tony, Sue, Susan, and Wendy. Entries were displayed in three PowerPoint presentations put together by Kevin and the winners were chosen by popular vote. Competition was stiff this year! Thank you to all who participated and to Kevin for his preparation.

Prizes: 1st place - a 2019 rhizome, 2nd place - \$20 in Iris Bucks, and 3rd place - \$10 in Iris Bucks.

And the winners are:



1st place Macro - Kevin - 'Tiger Honey'



2nd place Macro - Sue - 'Valley of Dreams'



3rd place Macro - Wendy - 'Bright Hour'



1st place - Garden - Kevin - 'Can Can Dancer'



2nd place tie - Garden - Kevin
- bouquet in the garden



2nd place tie - Garden - Melania - various



1st place - Single blossom or stem -
Melania & Tony - 'Valley of Dreams'



2nd place 3-way tie - Single blossom or stem -
Sue - 'Queen's Circle' and 'Opposites' and Melania - 'Ice Cream Sundae'

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2020

[Your name here...] - President

Bonnie Else - Vice President

Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account

Martin Juarez – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary

Susan Schaefer - Membership Chairperson

Bonnie & Kathy - Programs & Publicity

Joyce & Mary Ann - Hospitality/Door Prizes

Diane Tweedy - Birthday cards (temporary)

Dave Smith - Photographer

Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor & Publisher

What to do in the Iris Garden for November:

Finish planting rhizomes early this month so that they can commence growing before it gets cold.

Make a label for each new iris. Try [these ones](#). Write with #2 pencil, china marker, or [paint marker](#). Draw a labeled map of the iris beds.

Divide crowded clumps. See how [here](#) and [here](#).

Move potted irises to sunny spots for the cool season.

Feed with a fairly-balanced fertilizer. The first number should be 10 or less to reduce risk of rot. See information about one from Schreiners in the Tip, below. Or try [this one](#) from Comanche Acres Iris Garden. Be sure to scratch fertilizer into the soil and then water it in.



Tip Exchange

Irises are starting to perk up and grow again now that it's a bit cooler! Ardi Kary of our sister club in Phoenix recommends a dose of balanced fertilizer in the fall. - SC

Schreiner's Iris Gardens offers a low-nitrogen fertilizer formulated for growing iris. Apply one month before and one month after bloom. Give newly-planted rhizomes a boost with this [6-10-10 Controlled-Release Iris Food](#). The 1-lb bag covers approximately 25 newly-planted iris when applied as directed. \$9.99. Ships free! Our club member Susan Schaefer recommends this natural-based fertilizer. - SC

Iris Limerick:

There once was an man named Jules
Who just loved it when the season turned cool.
He could work outside
And not have to hide
Inside his house or his pool!

- Sue Clark



Source: HIPS website

'Lent A. Williamson'

Did You Know?

"Bearded irises need to be split every 3 to 5 years. The number one question I get every week is, why don't my irises bloom anymore, or why did I lose many of my irises. When an iris rhizome blooms, that rhizome is now finished except to produce more increases or new babies. When those new increases start growing, the original rhizome starts dying. If you do not divide your irises every few years, those old rhizomes start rotting. This rot can, and does, also cause your good new plants to rot." - Jim Hedgecock in Nov 2019 Comanche Acres Iris Newsletter

"What a desolate place would be a world without a flower! It would be a face without a smile, a feast without a welcome. Are not flowers the stars of the earth, and are not our stars the flowers of the heaven." - A.J. Balfour

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Last month, I mentioned that E. B. Williamson used *mixed pollen* when he hybridized and that other breeders were horrified at the very thought! Williamson, his children, and sometimes local schoolchildren collected pollen from his irises and mixed it in small pillboxes. It was usually his daughters Mary and Jane who brushed it on flowers of their father's choosing. They were directed to fertilize every flower of every stalk of the selected varieties to accomplish his goal of producing many seedlings. Although nearly every beardless iris seedling looked identical to its pod parent, one did not. Also unique was that it was not brushed with mixed pollen, or even pollinated by bees (who usually beat the girls to pollinating the irises). E. B. named this variety after his mother, 'Dorothea K. Williamson' (1929). It was the first hybrid Louisiana iris. Its large bright royal purple flowers sit upon 30" stalks, are quite fertile, and it's still around today.

Probably E. B.'s other most-famous variety is named after his father, 'Lent A. Williamson' (1918). (See photo above). He recorded its story in his 1922 nursery catalog. As he grew discontent with both the arils and the beardless irises, E.B. became more attracted to bearded irises which he considered more charming and easier to grow. In 1910, he decided to pollinate every blossom (500+) of every plant of 'Amas' which grew in a 40'-long row in his garden. In the past, 'Amas' had refused to set seed, but during this particular year, *one seed* formed in one of several pods. This seed (and it was a giant) became 'Lent A. Williamson,' which www.historiciris.org describes as "the most commonly found NOID in the US, by some estimates. Found across the country, often thriving in neglect." This early bloomer was also one of the first tetraploid irises bred in America, and went on to father many outstanding new varieties in red, pink, yellow, tan, and plicata colorings.

Williamson established his Longfield Iris Farm in Bluffton, Indiana in 1918, the year that he introduced 'Lent A. Williamson.' Two years later, a local mail carrier named Paul Cook joined him as a partner. (This is *the* Paul Cook who later hybridized the beautiful iris 'Emma Cook').

'Lent A. Williamson' rocketed E. B. Williamson to iris superstardom. It won a Certificate of Merit from the Societe Nationale d'Horticulture de France in 1924 and an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1929. Even by 1919, Country Life magazine was extolling its virtues as an "iris for all gardens."

Williamson himself bred further outstanding cultivars from 'Lent A. Williamson,' including the stunning 'Dolly Madison.' More on that next month! - SC

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