

TAIS Newsletter

Our 55th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Afternoon Delight'

(Ernst 1983)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2019

Howard Dash is Coming to Speak to us this Month!

Howie is the president of the Aril Society International and serves on the Board of Directors of the American Iris Society. He is co-chair of the AIS 2021 National Convention. Named "Iris Enchantment," this will be held in Las Cruces, New Mexico between April 12 and 17, 2021.

Howie breeds iris and introduces them through Picacho Mountain Iris, which he owns in Las Cruces. He mostly hybridizes tall bearded iris and has also begun hybridizing arilbreeds. His first arilbred introduction is 'Chihuahua Night' (2019). See it on p. 8.

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream." - Barbara Winkler

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Upcoming Events

Dues are due! See membership form on p. 7.

Next meeting: February 8th at 1 PM - hybridizer Howard Dash speaking on Arilbred irises. Murphy-Wilmot Library, Large Room. Doors open at noon. Invite all of your gardening and flower-loving friends and family! Please share the poster on p. 8.

March 14th meeting: 1 PM - Steve Buckley of Jones Photo speaking on flower photography. Murphy-Wilmot Library.

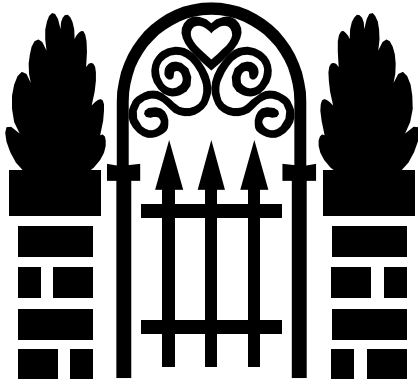
Birthday Wishes to:

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

Sincere condolences to Gary Carruthers on the recent loss of his wife, Roxy



January Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

11 Jan 2020 - Eighteen people including one new member enjoyed a slideshow from the Historic Iris Preservation Society titled "Notable Cultivars in Iris History." About 135 years of iris breeding were condensed into approximately 100 slides, from Jean-Nicholas Lémon's efforts in 1840 through Ben Hagar's 'Vanity' in 1974. The blue 'South Pacific' (K. Smith 1954) caught my attention not only because of its color, but because it was listed as a superb bloomer and grower! 'Emma Cook' (Cook 1959) with its blue-bordered falls is another iris that I would love to see growing in my garden! And 'Rippling Waters' (Fay 1961), too...

Martin reported that Kristee has suggested a closer relationship with the Tucson Botanical Garden (TBG) and he will attempt to get more details from her.

Bonnie brought our signed

contract with TBG. They would like one or more of our members to give three to four talks about growing irises. This is not a condition of the contract, but a suggestion. We also discussed having some of our members volunteer to chat with visitors to the iris beds there during bloom time.

Kevin offered to be acting president until our election in October. Thank you, Kevin! He brought the iris that he hybridized so that we could see it, and also brought some of his orchids to show.

Susan and I have been tending several irises for door prizes and three of these were given out today. Angela won 'North Rim,' Bonnie won 'Aviator Wings,' and I won a lovely azure blue confection called 'Nestucca Rapids.'

Nearly everyone stayed for the Board Meeting. I will

**Come learn from a
professional iris
grower and
hybridizer on Feb 8!**



**We're on the web!
Tucsoniris.org**

investigate why Mary Ann, Joyce, and Wanda are not receiving their newsletters. Joyce brought a sumptuous cake from Safeway which was decorated with icing irises! Bonnie has secured speakers for this year and she thanked Melania for all of her years of arranging and publicizing programs. Susan reported that we currently have 56 members and that dues are due this month. Please see the membership form on p. 7 for how to pay. Joyce suggested that three or four members might open up their gardens on a certain day in bloom season and that others members could come and gaze upon the beauty. Kevin agreed that this could be arranged. He mentioned that our affiliation with AIS allows us to show presentations downloaded from their website.

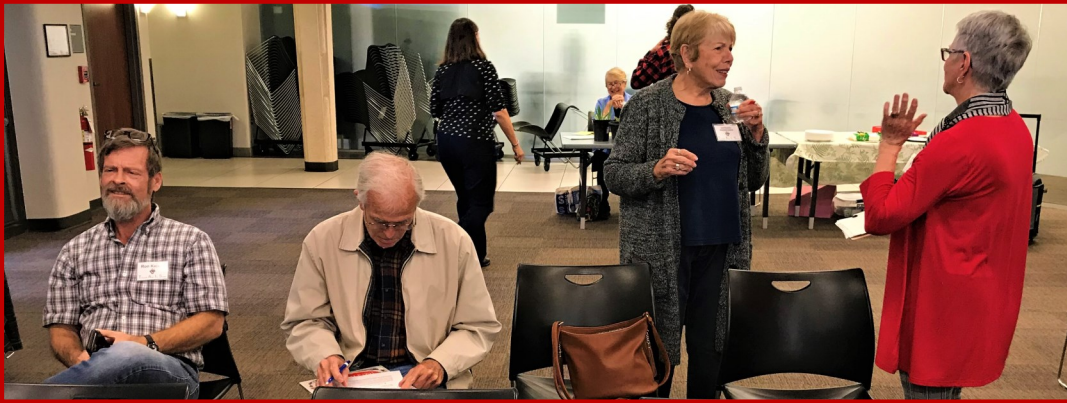
I wish to acknowledge Sam for keeping the iris information box at TBG stocked with fliers containing information on iris culture in Tucson, as well as dates for our next four meetings and our website address. He provides about 40-65 of these every two months. Thank you Sam for your initiative!

The meeting ended at 2:20 PM.

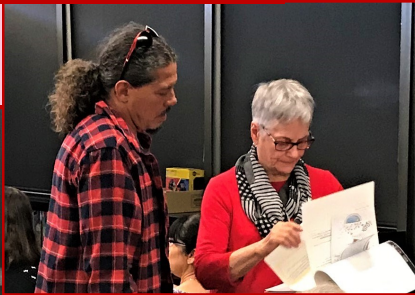
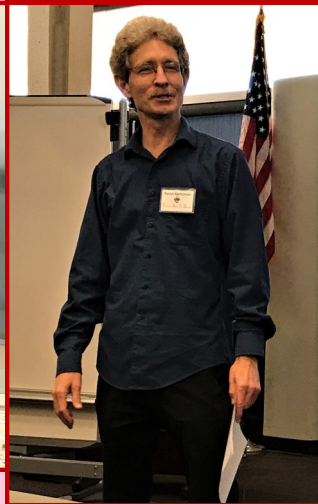
- Sue Clark, secretary



TAIS January Meeting



Photos by
Dave Smith



Treasurer's Report for January - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance				\$6,859.60	
	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
11-Jan	X	#1837		\$46.57	Clark - AIS, Postal, Copies
11-Jan		#1838		\$300.00	Kartchner - Probst iris'
24-Jan			\$184.00		Dues *
24-Jan		Debit		\$15.00	Juarez - AIS
Sub-Totals			\$184.00	\$361.57	
Ending Balance				\$6,682.03	1/24/2020 22:31
* Dues - Schaefer (cash: Carruthers, Powers, Windischmer, Cromwell) #3565, Modaffs (2) #8059, Knill #4887, Else #2706, Clark/Smith (2) #1506, Pane/Scire (2) #287, Tweedy #2499, Elliott #472, Juarez (Kelsen/Atkinson) #1404, Bentley #3520, Macwhinnie #2610, Glaser #6216					

Iris Form - difference in the details

Form is one of the characteristics upon which irises are judged. It is determined by the shape, structure, and position of the petals. Good balance and proportion earn high marks. I was hoping for something straightforward, perhaps like this: three kinds of arrangements for standards and three kinds for falls, giving us a matrix of nine forms. It's a bit like that, but with more variables.

The standards or upright petals can be arranged in several ways. The **domed** form is most appealing to me. Schreiners refers to this shape as globular, with the standards forming a sphere-like shape above the falls. (I think that their root word is likely "globe" and not "glob"). Another form is **open**, with standards that seem to reach out, rather than curve together. Still another arrangement is referred to as **conical**, with nearly vertical standards. Standards may also be **closed**, **erect**, or **overlapping**. Whatever their arrangement, the standards must be held firmly in position and not flop. The structural nature of midribs is a solid asset in a blossom's form, providing strength against wind and rain.

The falls also contribute to a flower's form and must be proportioned correctly to balance the standards. Falls may be **wide**, **narrow**, or **pinched**. In modern iris form, wide falls are favored greatly over narrow, and pinched is shunned. Wide falls offer places for additional bursts of color. Even the shape of the falls can vary between **rounded**, **oval**, and **triangular**. And the falls can be held at different angles from the hafts: **flaring**, **hanging**, or **tucked**, with flaring ones preferred. Strong midribs play key roles with falls, too. (Source: AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials, 6th edition).

Besides the forms discussed here, there are some novelty forms including space age and flatties. We'll start looking at those next month. - SC, who is not a judge



L to R: **Flaring falls** - Dykes-winning 'Mesmerizer' (Schreiners website). **Rounded**: 'Presbys Crown Jewel.' **Narrow**: Dykes-winning 'Wabash' (these 2 from HIPS website)

From top: **Domed standards** - 'Rum is the Reason' and 'June Krause.' **Open** - 'FX Schreiner' (these 3: Schreiners website) and 'Crooked Little Smile.' **Erect** - 'Fill up my Senses' (these 2: Iris4U website)

Pineappling

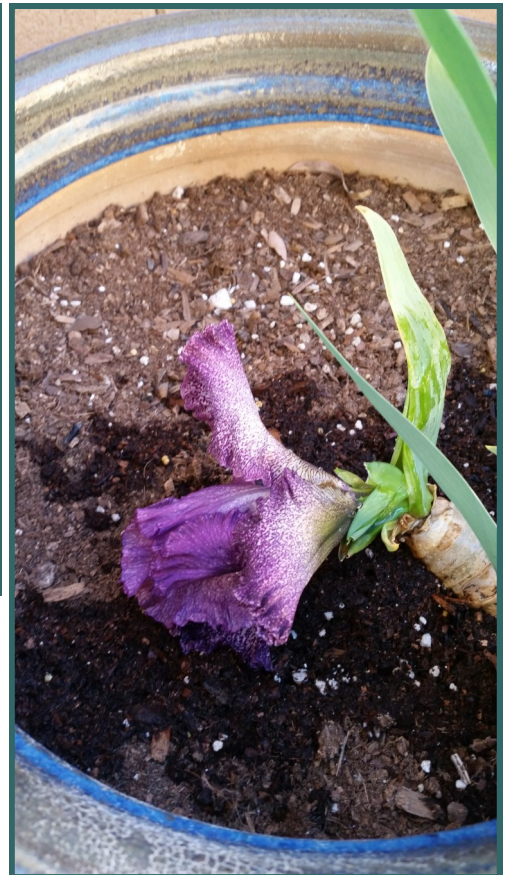
With our warm days and cold nights, this seems like a good time to talk about something called "pineappling." Have you ever noticed leaves on your irises looking wrinkled or wavy? Stems looking bent or otherwise deformed? Flowers blooming way down in the fan with barely any stem at all? All of these are referred to as pineappling. This phenomenon is not considered a disease, and the rhizomes usually produce normal growth the following year.

So what's the deal? What causes a plant to pineapple? One of our sister societies, the Prescott Area Iris Society, featured an article on it in their [April 2018 newsletter](#). The author quoted a noted irisarian, Chuck Chapman from Ontario, Canada, who explained that pineappling is "involved with the start of growth combined with having appropriate amount of 'chilling.' Plants are programmed for flowering. A number of genes are involved in sensing environment and promoting growth. A fine balance can get disrupted when one signal says 'grow' and another says 'I'm not ready yet.' This happens when weather conditions are outside normal parameters. The genes are tuned for normal or usual weather conditions. Basically this phenomenon is an imbalance inside of plant signaling - and has nothing to do with insects, viruses, bacteria, etc. Both irises and daylilies show this effect. We don't know if some iris cultivars are more prone to pineappling than others." It certainly seems like this needs more study!

A Schreiners [blog entry](#) credits pineappling to unusual weather such as alternating mild temperatures followed by sudden freezes. They point out that as long as the rhizome remains healthy and firm, the plant is not dead. Let me know if you get lots of pineappling this year.

On a totally unrelated but perhaps useful note, pineappling also appears to be a way of [arranging one's hair](#) into a loose bun or ponytail at the top front of one's head and then sleeping with it like that in order to wake up with one's style basically intact. Who knew?

Below are some photos of my irises pineappling in various ways. - SC



Left: The emerging leaves are tightly wound and seem overly stiff, while leaves on the increases are normal. Note the difference in color. My friend Jane grew this one in Gilbert, Arizona and gave it to me last month. She lives along a lake.

Center: The middle leaf of 'Penny Lane' is wrinkled in January 2020.

Right: A pineappled 'Autumn Explosion' blooming without a stem in early March 2018. The flower opened normally and I was able to get some wonderful photos which disguised the fact that it was 1" above the soil. Two of these won in that year's photo contest. So don't give up during pineappling!



TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2020

Kevin Kartchner - Acting President

Bonnie Else - Vice President

Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account

Martin Juarez – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary

Bonnie & Kathy - Programs & Publicity

Joyce & Mary Ann - Hospitality/Door Prizes

Diane Tweedy - Birthday cards (temporary)

Dave Smith - Photographer

Susan Schaefer - Membership Chairperson

Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor & Publisher

Iris Limerick:

There once was an iris that pineappled,
And it happened during a cold snapple.
Its leaves were all wrinkled,
And folded and crinkled,
As it thrived in the shade that was dappled.

- Sue Clark



Source: Iris Wiki

'Ann Page'

Did You Know?

The ancient Egyptians used irises in their version of toothpaste! A recipe found on a papyrus document from the 4th century AD calls for dried iris flowers, salt, grains of pepper, and mint to be mixed together and used for "clean and perfect teeth." The Egyptians seem to have been ahead of their time, as iris has recently been determined to be effective against gum disease. - SC

Sources: <https://listverse.com/2016/10/29/10-fascinating-facts-about-hygiene-in-ancient-egypt/> and <https://creation.com/a-tale-of-ancient-toothpaste>

"February, when the days of winter seem endless and no amount of wistful recollecting can bring back any air of summer."

- Shirley Jackson, *Raising Demons*

What to do in the Iris Garden for February:

From January through April, iris plants put up 90% of their growth, so they need more water during this active growth period.

- from Darol of the Sun Country Iris Society

Beginning on Feb first or 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 one to two weeks mixed according to directions on package. Susan and I apply it weekly. Irises are heavy-feeders and need fertilizing to bloom and grow well.

It is fine to snip off brown or yellow leaves to improve the plant's appearance.



Tip Exchange

"If the information is available, a description of the branching habits of the varieties is very useful, since more branches mean more buds, and more buds mean a longer season for that variety."

"It's easy to go overboard with iris catalogs... My advice is to start with perhaps no more than a dozen or so carefully selected varieties, rather than to find yourself swamped with plants and out of time to care for them properly."

- William Shear, *The Gardener's Iris Book*, p. 32, p. 37

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month we feature Sir Arthur Fenton Hort of Hertfordshire, England, just north of London, a "transitional hybridizer whose major contribution as an iris breeder was to accelerate the conversion of tall bearded irises from diploids to tetraploids." Arthur Hort was a scholar of Greek and Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1888, he began a 38-year teaching career at Harrow as classics master and Housemaster of Newlands House. A charming and gentle man, he was genuinely fond of his students, even those who finished at the bottom of their class, such as Winston Churchill.

A friend of Sir Michael Foster, Arthur named his seedlings after Shakespearean characters, beginning with the females; and since he was attached to *all* of his creations, on into the male characters. Out of all of them, though, 'Ann Page' (1919) seems to be his only surviving iris. It was the first tetraploid that gained favor with gardeners, who appreciated the fact that its flowers were so much bigger than other irises. This violet-colored variety was popular in both Europe and America through the 1920's and 1930's. (See photo above). Two other Hort introductions are notable, but likely have been lost to time. 'Leonato' (1922) had an intense fragrance and large blooms with pale lavender standards and slightly darker falls. John Wister, first president of the American Iris Society, asserted that "there was nothing in the world more beautiful than the flowers of 'Leonato.'" The intermediate bearded 'Theseus' (1923) was white with eye-catching gold reticulations on the falls. Robert Wayman, a knowledgeable nurseryman, proclaimed it "a great show flower" and it remained popular throughout the 1920's and 1930's.

Hort translated an ancient text on plants as well as Linnaeus' botanical works. In 1928, he wrote a book now considered a classic: The Unconventional Garden. This charming five-chapter book devotes an entire chapter to irises. Arthur wrote it with "the limited aim of suggesting to the owners of small flower-gardens some ways in which their efforts might come to possess a variety of interest." His wife completed his second book after his death in 1935: Garden Variety. Well done, Sir Arthur! - SC

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

Tucson Area Iris Society 2020 Membership Application – www.tucsoniris.org

Name(s) _____

Street, City, State, Zip) _____

e-mail address _____ Phone _____

Birth month & day ___/___ (for receiving a card) **How did you learn about TAIS?** _____

Monthly newsletters will be sent to your e-mail address.

Please select membership category:

Single \$10 Dual \$13 Youth \$3

Please mail this form and your check (payable to **TAIS**) to:

Susan Schaefer
6561 E Dorado Blvd
Tucson, AZ 85715

TAIS holds a Spring Iris Show and a Fall Rhizome Sale. We usually meet on the second Saturday of each month, with no meetings in June, July, or December. Meetings consist of presentations, an annual photo contest, members-only rhizome auction, or potluck. We would love for you to join us!

 **Consider giving gift memberships to your gardening friends!** 

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 **Consider giving gift memberships to your gardening friends!** 

The Tucson Area Iris Society presents:

**Howard Dash
of Picacho Mountain Iris in Las Cruces, New Mexico
speaking on Arilbred irises**

**Saturday February 8, 2020 at 1 PM
Murphy Wilmot Library, large room
530 N. Wilmot in Tucson
Room opens at noon**

Howard has been growing irises since the 1980's and hybridizing them since 2010. He introduced his first arilbred iris, 'Chihuahua Night,' in 2019.

Two of Howard's creations:



Arilbred 'Chihuahua Night'



Tall Bearded 'Ay Chihuahua'

Please join us and bring your iris-loving friends!

**Arilbreds can extend the bloom season of your iris garden
and add interest to any garden.**