

January 2020

TAIS Newsletter

Our 55th year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Anasazi Legend'
(F. Edwards 2008)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott

Photo by Sue Clark, 2019

New Year's Resolutions for Gardeners

1. Clean out the shed and go through old materials.
2. Take a risk, plant something new.
3. Add a new native species to your garden.
4. Plant something with a child.
5. Do some garden volunteering.
6. Learn something, teach something.
7. Plant a food you haven't tried before.
8. Go on a gardening excursion.
9. Treat yourself to a good gardening book.
10. Start something from seed.
11. Invite people over to spend time in your garden.
12. Document your garden.
13. If possible, ask your parents or grandparents what they grew in their garden. Or write down what you remember about that.
14. Build a compost bin and begin composting.

- Sources - www.hortmag.com/blogs/ and www.chicagobotanic.org/

There is nothing in the world more beautiful than the forest clothed to its very hollows in snow. It is the still ecstasy of nature, wherein every spray, every blade of grass, every spire of reed, every intricacy of twig, is clad with radiance.



- William Sharp

Inside this issue:

Message and musings from our former president	2
Index for 2019 TAIS Newsletters	3-4
Treasurer's Report for December	5
Color Pattern: Debby Rairdon - article and photos	5
What to do in the Iris Garden for January	6
Iris Haiku, Did You Know?	6
Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History	6



Upcoming Events

Next meeting: January 11, 1 PM - "Notable Cultivars in Iris History" AIS PowerPoint presentation, Murphy-Wilmot Library.

February 8th meeting: 1 PM - hybridizer Howard Dash on Arilbred irises. Murphy-Wilmot Library.

March 8th meeting: 1 PM. Murphy-Wilmot Library.

We'll be in the Large Room for these meetings. Doors open at noon.

Birthday Wishes to:

Maxine Fifer

Kathy Windischman

Bonnie Else

Karen Guss



Source: HIPS Notable Iris Cultivars PowerPoint

Message and Musings from our Former President

Amazing rains we've been having. I'm hoping this results in a better than average iris, and wildflower, show like we had in our wet Spring of 2019. It's time to fertilize our future flowers - refer to TAIS' website under "Culture, Tips, & Articles": <http://www.tucsoniris.org/articles/>.

Well, it's been almost two years since Rick Tasco spoke to TAIS about hybridizing. I followed his instructions to grow my crosses and was not expecting anything until at least spring 2020. But I had two stalks blooming for Christmas presents! I've included a photo of my favorite. It would be nice to have a real iris judge characterize it, but for now it's at least something only a father could love. It has five buds, is fragrant and laced, and is perhaps a rebloomer? (I don't know if one fall bloom makes it a reliable rebloomer?). Branching could be better.

Going into 2020, it is AIS (American Iris Society) our parent organization's centennial. The Centennial Convention, including a first AIS International Iris Competition, will be in New Jersey from May 19 – 23. See <https://www.irises.org/celebrate/>. And TAIS is turning 55 years old this year.

For our January meeting, I'll be presenting an AIS program on "Notable Cultivars in Iris History." Like so many aspects of history, it's good to get acquainted with the ancestors of the impressive flowers that we enjoy today. - Kevin Kartchner



Here is a photo of Kevin's Christmas surprise unnamed seedling. His first attempt at hybridizing certainly looks cheery and bright. Definitely worth covering up every evening to protect it from the nightly lows in the 20's! (He might disagree with this particular statement).

Hmmm...what would an iris judge look for in an iris show? Cultural perfection earns a bloom potential points in the following categories: color (15 points), size (5), substance (10), and form (15). Additional points are awarded for these attributes of the Stalk: open blooms (15), branch balance and bud placement (15). Condition and grooming (25) round out the points to 100.

Terms? Substance is "the inner tissue structure, which determines the durability of the flower." Form "must be typical of the variety" and loses points for any damage. Branching and bud placement "must be typical of the variety." This blossom looks to me like it might just score some high marks! - SC

(Source for criteria - trailsendiris.com)

Index to 2019 TAIS Newsletters - access them on our [website](#)

JANUARY 2019 – Photo: ‘Babbling Brook,’ **Why Irises are called “flags” – the reason revealed along with some legends, Iris Care in the Arizona Desert – Watering and Soil** - summarized from TAIS interviews (4 pages), blurb on **Iris as Pasta, Silver Irises** article and photos, Tips: digging and storing rhizomes via Shepard’s Iris Garden in Phoenix, Arizona, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Bertrand Farr continued**, Haiku, Quotes: “Nature has undoubtedly mastered the art of winter gardening...” by Vincent A. Simeone and “In the depths of winter I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” by Albert Camus

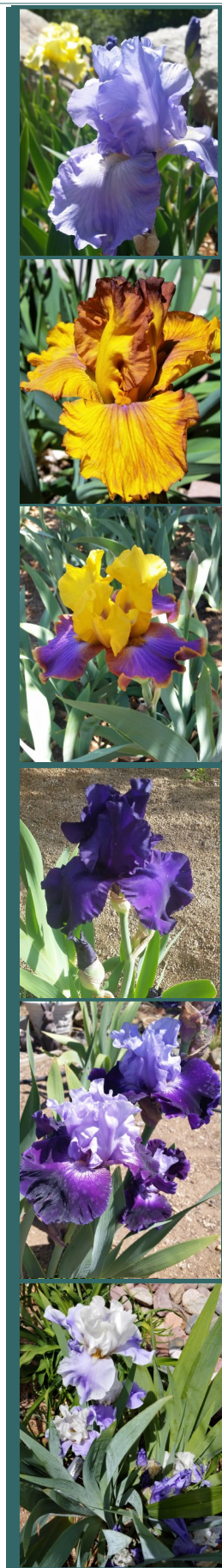
FEBRUARY 2019 – Photo: ‘Spice Trader,’ January Meeting Minutes and photos, article and photos of **Bronze, Brass, & Gold Irises, Iris Care in the Arizona Desert – Shade Cloth, Fertilizing, and Tips** - summarized from TAIS interviews (3 pages), blurb about **Iris florentina as the symbol of Florence**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: inexpensive plant markers and a non-fading paint marker, **History: the C. G. Van Tubergen Jr. nursery** in Holland, Haiku, Quotes: “If you wish to ensure an iris is available if yours would be eaten by a groundhog, ...” from the AIS Wiki and “The February sunshine steeps your boughs...” by William C. Bryant

MARCH 2019 – Photo: ‘Crooked Little Smile,’ February Meeting Minutes and photos, article - **Bob Van Liere Visits our Club** and photos of three of his irises, **Iris color pattern: Emma Cook** – article and photos, **Interview of Susan Schaefer**, blurb about **George Yeld and quality irises**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tip: New Online Source for Irises: Crafton Hills Iris Farm, **History: George Yeld**, Limerick, Quotes: “A light exists in Spring...” by Emily Dickinson and “Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.” by Lewis Grizzard

APRIL 2019 – Photo: ‘Dusky Challenger,’ March Meeting Minutes and photos, **Iris Color Pattern: Self** – article and photos, **Ready, Set, Showtime! For Irises, that is!** (2 pages about preparing for the show), blurb on **proportional harmonies** in nature by György Dóczi, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: two hybridizing tips from William Shear in The Gardener’s Iris Book, 1998 p. 156, **History: Fernand Denis**, poster for 2019 Iris Show, Limerick, Quotes: “Few things feel more like spring than blossoms...” by Bethany Douglass and “I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden.” by Ruth Stout

MAY 2019 – Photo: ‘Fabulous One,’ Report on our **April Iris Show, Photos of all irises in the show, Iris Color Patterns: Bitones, Reverse Bitones, Darktops, and Neglectas** – article and photos, blurb on the **Golden Proportion**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: garlic near irises for aphid prevention via Kristee, garlic in garden for cat prevention via Sue, move potted irises into and out of the sun via Sue, **irises form increases and buds for next year’s flowers during the six-week post-bloom interval** per Sunset’s Western Garden Book, **History: Millet et Fils (Millet and Son) nursery – Alexandre and Armand Millet**, Limerick, Quotes: “In colors ranging from almost iridescent pink to deep wine red, bearded iris are making a comeback in the garden...” in Better Homes & Gardens April 2019 issue and “Irises are the ultimate pass-along plant.” by Bob Van Liere

JUNE 2019 – Photo: ‘Stairway to Heaven,’ Minutes and photos of the May meeting, **Iris Color Patterns: Bicolors: Variegatas, Amoenas, and Reverse Amoenas** – article and photos, **Growing Iris in the Desert - Part 1 (garden overview, soil, watering)**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: [bibliography of hybridizing articles found in the Irises Bulletin](#) through 2008 compiled by Betty Roberts for AIS, use a tri-foam board (foam presentation board that has three sections) as background when photographing irises via Sue, water the soil not the plants via Greta, **History: William Rickatson Dykes**, Limerick, Quotes: “On this June day the buds in my garden are almost as enchanting as the open flowers...” by Francis King and “Flowers are not made by singing “Oh, how beautiful,” and sitting in the shade.” by Rudyard Kipling



Index to 2019 TAIS Newsletters, continued

JULY 2019 – Photo: ‘Pirates’ Den,’ **Photos of Wendy O’Rourke’s Irises** in Colorado, **Iris Color Patterns: Plicata** – article and photos, **Growing Iris in the Desert, Part 2** (Fertilizing, The Right Spot for the Right Plant, Planting, First-year bloom, Sun versus Shade, Rot, Pests - grubs, aphids, Grooming), blurb about the **Historic Iris Preservation Society** (HIPS), What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: dividing and planting irises via [Better Homes & Gardens](#), Angela Powers’ [television debut](#) as she talks about roses in the Demonstration Garden, plant rhizomes like a duck floating in water so that you won’t plant them too deep via Sheila in [The Gardens of Petersonville](#), **History: Grace Sturtevant**, Haiku, Quotes: “The linden, in the fervors of July, hums with a louder concert...” by William Cullen Bryant, *Among the Trees* and “I garden because I cannot help myself - but it’s the best kind of compulsion.” by Margaret Roach, poster for PAIS rhizome sale

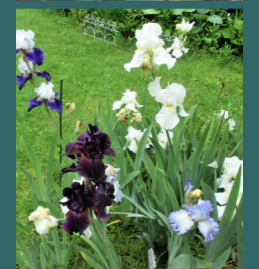
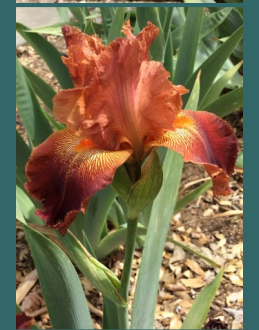
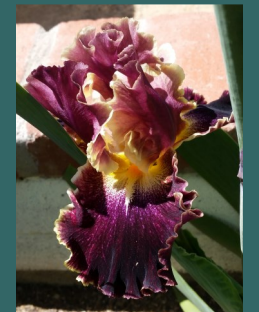
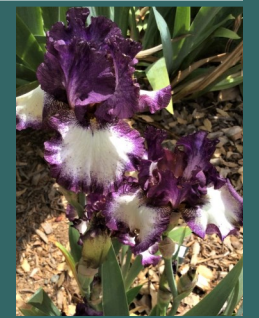
AUGUST 2019 – Photo: ‘Stepping Out,’ **Iris Photos** by Cathy Pane-Scire in Tucson, and by Cindy Turley, Shane Smith, and Linda Ammon in Pennsylvania, **Iris Color Pattern: Luminata Irises** – article and photos, blurb on **Growing tall bearded irises with other plants** by Kelly Norris in [A Guide to Bearded Iris](#), What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: cut back leaf-fans...by half...when planting irises via Molly Price in [The Iris Book](#), 1973 edition, and planting irises in an “instant” clump via W. Shear, in [The Gardener’s Iris Book](#), 1998, **History: Arthur John Bliss**, Diamonte, Quotes: “This was one of those perfect New England days in late summer...” by Sarah Orne Jewett in “The Courting of Sister Wisby,” 1887 and “If you saw a heat wave, would you wave back?” by Steven Wright

SEPTEMBER 2019 – Photo: ‘Exploding Galaxy,’ August meeting minutes and photos, blurb on **Dykes Medal Winner for 2019 - Mike Sutton’s ‘Bottle Rocket’ (2010)**, **Iris Color Pattern: Blend** – article and photos, **Preparing Rhizomes for the Sale**, blurb on **when to trim leaves into a fan shape and when NOT to**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: Press soil down firmly when planting rhizomes, or rot may be the result via Dennis Luebkin, dab of liquid soap on mosquito bite quells itch via Sue, Making a gardening apron [tutorial](#), **History: Arthur John Bliss continued**, Limerick, Quotes: “September days have the warmth of summer in their briefer hours...” by Rowland E. Robinson, *September Days*, Vermont and “September: it was the most beautiful of words, he’d always felt, evoking orange-flowers, swallows, and regret.” by Alexander Theroux, two posters for our Rhizome Sale

OCTOBER 2019 – Photo: ‘Arizona Redhead,’ **Report from the Sale**, Pictures from the Sale, **Iris Color Pattern: Zonal** – article and photos, blurb on **Spuria irises**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: remove pods caused by bee pollination to save plant’s energy via Dennis Luebkin and reading names on dried out iris leaves via William Shear in [The Gardener’s Iris Book](#), 1998, **History: E. B. Williamson**, Limerick, Quotes: “Whether it’s intentional or not, in the fall we start to shore up our footing...” by Joanna Gaines in *Magnolia Journal*, issue 12 and “Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.” by Albert Camus, poster for Photo Contest, photos for Auction Part II

NOVEMBER 2019 – Photo: Rose Clark’s Iris Garden in Beaver, Pennsylvania (all rescued iris and gifts), **Update on our iris beds at Tucson Botanical Garden**, October meeting minutes and photos, **Iris Color Pattern: Broken** – article and photos, **2nd Annual TAIS Photo Contest** – article and the winning photos, blurb about **Bearded Irises need to be split every 3 to 5 years** via Jim Hedgecock in Nov 2019 Comanche Acres Iris Newsletter, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: dose irises with balanced fertilizer in the fall via Ardi Kary, and Schreiner’s Iris Gardens ships this [6-10-10 Controlled-Release Iris Food](#) free via Susan Schaefer, **History: E. B. Williamson continued**, Limerick, Quotes: “Photography is a journey, an exploration towards our unconscious...” by Tamara Merino National Geographic Society photographer and “What a desolate place would be a world without a flower! It would be a face without a smile, a feast without a welcome...” by A.J. Balfour

DECEMBER 2019 – Photo: ‘Midnight Toccata,’ November meeting minutes and photos, **My Iris Toolkit – favorite tools and essentials** - article and photos, **Iris Color Pattern: Glaciata** – article and photos, blurb on **Mary Williamson and Table irises, now known as miniature tall bearded irises**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, Tips: **phenology (the study of the sequence of flowering)** via Kelly Norris, in [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#) p. 298, **History: E. B. Williamson continued**, Limerick, Quotes: “Kind hearts are the gardens, Kind thoughts are the roots...” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and “Where flowers bloom so does hope.” by Lady Bird Johnson



TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2020

- [Your name here...] - 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)
- Susan Schaefer - Membership Chairperson
- Dave Smith - Photographer
- Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor & Publisher

What to do in the Iris Garden for January:

- Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.
- Examine the bases of plants for aphids. Carefully squash them by hand or spray with water, insecticidal soap, or diluted dish soap.
- Check your drip system to be sure everything is working properly. Plan to fix it or have it fixed while the weather is cool!
- Redo all labels that have faded.
- Dream about what you want to grow...



Tip Exchange

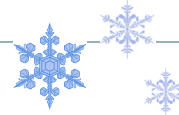
“Many historic TBs can tolerate a little shade if the overreaching limbs of taller trees grow overhead, particularly alongside that back fence that every garden seems to have; for whatever reason, these rugged old-timers can persist in these drier, shadier zones of the garden - the perfect solutions for a common challenge.”

“Find out what varieties do best in your area before investing in new additions to the garden.”

- Kelly Norris, in A Guide to Bearded Irises

Iris Haiku:

Frosty morning air;
 Snowflakes settle on iris leaves.
 A Tucson winter.
 - Sue Clark




Source: HIPS website

‘Fryer’s Glory’

Did You Know?

Irises were among the favorite flowers of artist Claude Monet. He grew many varieties in his garden at Giverny, including *Iris siberica*, *I. virginica*, *I. kaempferi*, and *I. ensata* (Japanese iris). These thrived in his front yard, along paths, as well as beside and in his lily pond. His head gardener published an article in a horticultural journal detailing the types of irises in Monet’s garden, including one named Mme [Madame] Claude Monet (Fernand Denis 1912), a cross between Ricardi X *Kochii* irises. Monet featured irises in more than twenty paintings.- SC

Sources: National Gallery in London website and the AIS Iris Wiki

*The wise gardener anticipates
 June in January. - Anonymous* 

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, we’ll look at the iris-filled life of Willis Fryer of Minnesota. Willis started his first nursery in the 1880’s while still a teenager. While initially he specialized in evergreens, fruit trees, and berries, his focus switched to flowering plants following a stroke in 1907. Irises were his particular favorite, and in 1918, he noted in the *Flower Grower* magazine, that “There is a particular charm about irises that appeals irresistibly to those whose task[s] lead them to seek close attention to them. They fairly outrival the orchid in the wide range of coloring...”

Mr. Mahan, the author of the book from which these anecdotes are summarized, points out that in the early 20th century, irises were often used as cut flowers, something that helps explain their rapid rise in popularity as garden flowers. Cut irises with their numerous buds were popularly used to adorn graves on what was then called “Decoration Day,” now known as Memorial Day. And someone had to supply that demand.

Although Fryer lost the use of his right hand and arm and had to walk using a cane after his stroke, he worked in his fields daily and even typed all of his own business correspondence with his non-dominant left hand. He grew diploid irises because that’s what irises were at this time, and these frequently set seed as a result of insect pollination. Fryer collected the seed pods and grew thousands of seedlings each year. Between 1915 and 1925, Willis introduced many irises, mostly variegatas (yellow standards and violet falls). Even though most of these were similar to varieties already on the market, they sold well because he advertised in national magazines such as the *Flower Grower*.

Willis’ favorite introduction was ‘Fryer’s Glory,’ from his “glory strain,” vigorous variegatas with reddish falls. ‘Madison Cooper’ was one of the most popular of this strain, and is still grown. Other accomplishments include ‘W. F. Fryer’ (1917), which when crossed by Dr. Loomis of Colorado Springs produced the first clear pink iris, ‘Sea Shell,’ progenitor of nearly all pink irises. Another surviving Fryer iris is a rapidly-increasing amoena, ‘Mrs. Andrist’ (1919), named for his mother-in-law. Inspiring, Willis! - SC

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