

# TAIS Newsletter

Our 56th year

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Great Falls'**  
(Schreiner, 2016)

Chandler, Arizona

photo by Sue Clark, 2020

## President's Message

We missed touring Diane Tweedy's garden last year and now we're missing Diane and her many contributions to TAIS. My favorite birthday cards came from her with a well wish and of course iris. Thanks, Diane.

At last some life-giving rain and a dusting of snow. Many of my TB iris fans have 6" of that unmatched spring green growth. The spurias are looking good, too. And what will this year's seedling crop look like?

I'm eager to learn about the latest from Jim Hedgecock's hybridizing efforts at our next meeting. Zoom on.

- Kevin Kartchner

*"Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace." - May Sarton*

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## Upcoming Events

**Next meeting: February 13 at 1 PM via Zoom. Jim Hedgecock, hybridizer, owner of Comanche Acres Iris Gardens - Spurias, etc.**

**March 13: Zoom meeting, 1 PM. Darol Jurn - Spurias**

**Dues are due! Please submit them to Susan using the form in the email with this newsletter**

**AIIS Convention: postponed to April 2022**

## Birthday Wishes to:

<b>Greta Dunnigan</b>	<b>Dave Smith</b>	<b>Sam Wymer</b>
<b>Shirley Andrews</b>	<b>Sue Clark</b>	<b>Barb Nicholson</b>
<b>Stanna Schoepel</b>	<b>Judith O'Shea</b>	<b>Maureen Kelly</b>
<b>Candace Pappas</b>		<b>♥ to Shirley</b>



www.lovethepic.com



# January Meeting Minutes

Diane Tweedy



Long-time TAIS member Diane Tweedy passed away on Jan 2, 2021 of lung cancer. We will miss her smiling face and generous service, as well as the beautiful irises that she always entered in our show. Diane sent birthday cards to club members and shared Hospitality duties with Angela since at least Aug 2016 when Dave and I joined. See Diane's iris interview from the Feb 2018 newsletter (p. 5) [here](#). An [article](#) about the cancelled Master Gardeners' Tour from last April mentioned that Diane liked to plant native species in addition to roses and irises, and that she was a retired Master Gardener. Kevin spoke with Diane on Dec 21 and she agreed to her garden being on our Club's Open-to-Members Tour if her house has not sold by then. She asked me to pass this along: "I would like the Club to know how much I've enjoyed being a member. So many wonderful people! So much great information! Love you all. Enjoy."

9 January 2021 - 15 members and four guests tuned in for our Zoom presentation of "The Iris in Fine Art" by Sue Clark. Works by eighteen artists (and a few unknown ones from antiquity and the Middle Ages) were featured. This new presentation was well received. Kevin remarked that it was like being in an art museum without having to wear a mask.

September, which will be co-chaired by Joyce and Susan. Kevin, Susan and Sue will order rhizomes for the sale, probably approximately the same orders they made last year which were generously refunded by the growers when we had to cancel.

On the business end of things, Susan and Kevin have offered to open their gardens to TAIS members on a specified day in April. Any other volunteers? We will plan on an Iris Show in April, as well. It may be for members only and in someone's backyard. Tucson Botanical Garden and Harlow's are other possibilities. Kevin will chair with Susan's help. If we receive irises from Region 15 for an Auction, Sue will chair that, with assistance from Joyce and Linda. We should be able to hold our Rhizome Sale in

Eleven people attended the Board meeting. We've gained eight new members since August. Joyce has irises for door prizes. - SC, sec., photos by Dave Smith

Tributes from emails:

How very sad. - Rose

Diane was a hard worker and was always there to help out no matter the job. She will be missed. In Thanksgiving for her life. - Madeleine

Sorry to hear that Diane Tweedy passed away. She had nice thoughts and a giving nature even as passing came. I hope I can do as well when my time comes. Thank you for sending on her last words about our Iris group. - Shirley

Yes, so sad about Diane. Glad I got to talk with her a few times recently. She always sounded upbeat. - Kevin

Diane was always quiet and very helpful. When she volunteered to do anything she was always right there - birthday cards and water bottles available for events. She will really be missed. - Kristee

**Tune into our next two meetings to learn more about spuria irises!**

**We're on the web:**  
**[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)**

*Thank you for sending cards to Diane. - SC*

# More Tips for Flower Photography

Even though our irises have not bloomed yet, many of us have other kinds of flowers that we can photograph. Here are some tips to add to what we learned from Steve Buckley at our March 2020 meeting. Consider practicing some of these on other flowers, becoming well-prepared for the upcoming iris season or whatever comes your way!

- Avoid cluttered, busy, or otherwise unattractive backgrounds. One way is to walk around the blossom to see if you can shoot the picture toward a different direction that has a more attractive background. For instance, a shot toward the grassy part of my yard looks much better than one toward a dirt patch or toward the block wall. Sometimes I have to relocate a flower marker or label to a different spot temporarily so it does not detract from the scene. I often ask my assistant to hold a trifold display board behind my irises. I have a black trifold and a white one. Or use an uncreased portion of a large corrugated cardboard box.
- Purposefully compose the shot so that it is pleasing to the eye and that it features the blossom. Take the time to do this when possible. Placing the blossom slightly off center adds interest by way of asymmetry. Or you might choose to emphasize the perfect symmetry of flowers like irises.
- Besides attractive backgrounds, focus is crucial. On a cell phone camera, touch the part of the screen that displays the portion of the image you wish to have in the tightest focus. Allow the focus to adjust and then press the shutter button.
- Using the camera's display feature, look at the images you've taken to be sure you got what you wanted. Doing this soon after taking them allows you to reshoot and adjust as necessary. Sometimes I see my foot, my shadow, or a plant marker in the image and can redo the picture right then while the light is still perfect. I enlarge the image on the display to be sure that the photo is in sharp focus and to look for other mistakes!
- I often take my shots from higher up and angled downward somewhat to avoid things like the

sidewalk, the street, the neighbor's house. This has worked well for me when photographing the poppies in my front yard. (Photo below).

- The soft light of overcast days is perfect for photographing flowers because there are few shadows and no bright spots. The clouds are a built-in diffuser.
- Backlighting makes flowers appear to glow. Look for blooms with the sun lighting the petals from behind. I find that early morning is best for this.
- Because wind makes flower photography difficult, take pictures early in the day or pick a flower and bring it indoors for a photo shoot, perhaps in front of a white sheet. Outdoors, try using your reflector, diffuser, mat board, or umbrella to block the wind. An assistant is useful in these situations.
- Or embrace the wind! Use a slower shutter speed (1-2 seconds) for a dynamic and blurred image of flowers swaying gently to and fro.
- Get in as close as your lens will focus. See tips for how to do this with 35 mm cameras in the [article](#) about photographing flowers in our April 2020 newsletter. I have noticed that I can get closer in using my iPad's camera than with my Android phone's camera. And if my phone camera just won't focus on a flower, I have discovered that means that the setting got accidentally changed from Standard mode (icon with one pine tree) to Wide angle mode (icon with three pine trees).
- A reflector can add some light if needed. I use the sun-blocking screen from my car since it has a silver-colored surface. Using a reflector requires an assistant – ask him to hold the screen so that the sun shines on it and then to angle it to reflect that light onto your subject. A [5-in-1 reflector](#) is another inexpensive option with gold or silver for warmer or cooler images, along with white, black, and translucent, the latter for a diffuser.



- Flowers usually show up best when the shot is taken with a shallow depth of field. This lets them stand out from a soft, unfocused background. If using a 35 mm camera, use a wide aperture, perhaps f/1.4 or f/2.8. I recently discovered that the camera on my Android phone has a manual mode, and in the focus bar for that, there is a flower icon, indicating macro capability! This was a great find!
- Be sure that the flower, or at least the part of the flower that you want to feature, is in focus. A tripod is helpful. Or try a faster shutter speed if there is a breeze.
- Try shooting from above or below the flower. Or perhaps from an oblique angle to it. Sometimes this 'working the scene' will provide an interesting shot.
- A [plamp](#) (plant clamp) can make your life easier when it comes to photographing flowers, as it acts as a third hand. It will hold a stem steady (use foam to protect the stem), or hold your diffuser or reflector. Consider making one yourself with two clamps, about two feet of fairly stiff but flexible wire, and some zip ties or duct tape to attach a clamp to each end of the wire.
- Focus in on just part of the flower for a more abstract image that makes the viewer think and wonder. - SC

Sources: I used a combination of tips from these two articles and added in several of my own. <https://digital-photography-school.com/10-tips-for-improving-your-flower-photos/> and <https://improvephotography.com/30196/21-tips-creative>

- [flower-photography/](#), accessed 6 April 2020. I did not paraphrase all of their tips, especially the more technical ones in the second one, so consider taking a look at the articles. - SC



Left: 'Kathy Chilton' bloom with unattractive background. Flower not in focus. Right: Same with posterboard background and sharp focus.



Left: A NOID bloom in harsh light with busy, unattractive background. Right: Same flower, closer up and at a different angle.

Below left: The lighting is bit harsh. Note that the flower is the only thing in focus. Below: Poppy in soft morning light and at a more oblique angle.



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

Beginning Balance					\$5,716.00
Date	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
01/15/21		Debit		\$18.00	Renegade Classics – Logo
01/24/21		#1853		\$86.13	Clark – Newsletters, postage, AIS
01/24/21		#1854		\$500.00	Valenzuela – website
01/24/21		Debit		\$15.00	AIS – Juarez membership
Totals			\$0.00	\$619.13	-\$619.13
Ending Balance					\$5,096.87
					01/24/21 04:56 PM

The group's logo is finally complete. YAY!!! The ladies at Renegade have been extremely patient and very helpful throughout the whole process. Each member can now take their own shirt and select any 4 colors of their liking for their own personalized TAIS logo. Please, Please, Please, if you have any questions, direct them to me so as to not inconvenience them with any repetitious issues. They've had enough to deal with me. The price for each individual is \$13.00 per logo. As everyone knows, Iris come in a vast array of color combinations. Be creative with yours!!!

## Three Types of Irises to Extend the Bloom Season

TAIS member Margie Valenzuela submitted photos of her walking iris and African iris to our virtual show last April and I have included photos of my *Moraea* irises in this newsletter now and then. These three types will easily grow here in the desert. They are all members of the family Iridaceae, but not the genus *Iris*.

Walking irises, including *Neomarica northiana* and *Neomarica gracillis*, are known by several common names: North's false flag, poor man's orchid, fan iris, and Apostle plant (because they have twelve leaves - in fact, they will not flower until they have twelve leaves). They are native to Brazil and grow from rhizomes. After the fragrant flowers fade, plantlets develop at the end of the stem which then bends down due to their weight, and the plantlets take root in the ground. This habit led to the plant being called walking iris. Foliage is sword-like and forms clumps ranging from 18-36" tall. Each exotic-looking flower lasts one day, but the clump blooms throughout much of the year. It requires regular moisture during the growing season, and monthly watering when dormant in winter. Cut back in fall and fertilize in summer.

The African iris is also called fortnight lily, wood iris, and butterfly iris. It is in the genus *Dietes*, which has six species. A common one available in nurseries is *Dietes vegeta*, which sports 3" white flowers accented with blue and yellow. Another is *Dietes bicolor*, with a dark blaze outlined in orange. These do best with weekly watering. Feed in March, June, and August, and prune as needed. Both these and the walking iris benefit from mulching.

*Moraea* irises, also known as Cape tulips, are widespread across Africa, the Mediterranean region, and central and southwestern Asia. The corms of some of the 127+ species have been used as food although they are fairly small. Some taste unpleasant and some are poisonous. The species that I grow is *Moraea polystachya* ("many branched"). From southern-most Africa, it was described by Carl Thunberg in 1782. Its corm has a dark linen-like husk. The leaves resemble grass and it seeds freely. Although the dainty flowers are only 2" wide, it blooms from about October through April or May in my yard. Most of mine are in pots which receive spray from a sprinkler. I recently brought a stem inside and it presented us with nine blossoms, one or two per day. I have seen these growing at the Desert Botanical Garden and the Boyce-Thompson Arboretum. Mine are from my friend Jeanne, who occasionally gets overrun with them.

Why not give some of these iris cousins a try! - SC



From top: *Neomarica gracillis* (Etsy.com), *Dietes vegeta* (SFGate.com), *Dietes bicolor* (Etsy.com), and *Moraea polystachya* (in my own garden).



## TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2021

Kevin Kartchner - 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

Joyce Knill - Birthday cards

Susan Schaefer - Membership Chairperson

Dave Smith - Photographer

Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor & Publisher

## 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 Jurn, Sun Country Iris Society

Beginning on February 1 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 1-2 weeks mixed according to package directions. Irises are heavy feeders and need fertilizing to bloom and grow well in our climate.

\* See tip, below.



## Tip Exchange

TAIS member Susan said that she began weekly applications of Super Bloom on December 15, 2019 rather than on February 1, 2020 and had her best bloom season ever. So she is doing the same thing again to see if she can duplicate her success! - SC

Change the battery in your irrigation timer once each year to avoid any disruption in service (not to mention loss of plants!). Our hot weather takes a toll on batteries. Pick a date you can remember - perhaps Valentine's Day might work for we iris lovers?! - Joyce Knill

## Iris Haiku:

The day dawns softly,  
Morning chill yields to sunshine.  
The iris buds stir.

- Sue Clark

## Did You Know?

"Attracting beneficial pollinators is good news all around. The plants, animals, and people depend on and enjoy the resulting blooms, and fruit. Actually, that's why bees and other pollinators are considered keystone species - our ecosystem relies on their hard work." Source: Spring Hill Nursery email ad, 3 Jan 2021



*Iris sambucina*

Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1770-1840), Les Liliacées - Arrière-Gauche

**'Be good to yourself. Be excellent to others.**

**Do everything with love.'** - John Wolf

## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

We continue in the theme of horticultural art as an agent toward irises being recognized as garden-worthy plants. The Empress Josephine, Napoleon's first wife, was a bit of a catalyst in this process, as she loved her irises and roses so much that she commissioned Pierre-Joseph Redouté to paint life-size portraits of each of these plants in her garden. With her resources, Josephine likely had a truly first-rate collection of plants. For each of the portraits, Redouté added small drawings near the base of the painting detailing anatomical aspects of the plant. See example, above.

The charming Belgian-born Pierre-Joseph Redouté, 1759-1840, was the top botanical artist of the time. The official court artist of Marie Antoinette, he survived the French Revolution to serve as artist to both of Napoleon's wives and then to Louis Philipp's queen, Maria Amalia. Redouté collaborated with the greatest botanists of the day and always worked from live specimens rather than from dried herbarium ones. His illustrations were included in more than 50 publications - over 2100 plates of nearly 1800 species, many of which had not been rendered before. In Josephine's great estate garden alone, he painted 39 different irises. These appeared as prints in his large-scale folio book, Les Liliacées. Irises were considered part of the Lily family at that time, as were orchids.

Redouté perfected a stipple engraving technique consisting of dots of varying distances apart incised on copper plates. His assistants watercolored the resulting prints, which were automatically shaded in various gradations by these dots. The artists used Redouté's original paintings as color guides. Les Liliacées was published in eight volumes between 1802-1816 and is regarded as Redouté's masterpiece. He created another folio for Josephine, Jardin de la Malmaison (Gardens of Château de Malmaison). Redouté's book Les Roses was published in three volumes from 1817-1824. The original paintings of the latter were bought by Charles X of France for his widowed daughter-in-law.

Later, Redouté taught drawing to children of aristocrats and royalty, and painted for pleasure. Single Redouté watercolored prints turn up in auctions fairly often. The one shown above (21 x 14") is listed at [\\$9,500](#). - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin, 2020; Wikipedia article on Redouté; and [article](#) on Redouté and Les Liliacées