

# TAIS Newsletter

Our 56th year

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'My Little Wagon'**  
(Valenzuela, 2012)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2021

## President's Message

If at first you don't succeed, try again, and then try something else. If your tall bearded (TB) iris are struggling, how about Louisianas? We have TAIS members who successfully grow the following iris types: *Moraea*, Dutch, Japanese, Dwarf, Tall Bearded, Spuria, Louisiana, Siberian, *Pseudacorus* and others. In addition to raising your odds of growing success, diversifying can also extend your bloom season before and after the TBs. So try something new for your fall planting this year. Good luck and hope we have a good monsoon.  
- Kevin Kartchner

**“I drifted into a summer-nap under the hot shade of July, serenaded by a cicadae lullaby, to drowsy-warm dreams of distant thunder.”**

**- Terri Guillemets**



## Upcoming Events

**We do not meet in July**

**August 14 Auction & meeting: 1 PM, Tucson Botanical Gardens.**  
**Auction is for TAIS members only - rhizomes from Mid-America**

**September 18: TAIS Rhizome Sale, 9 AM to noon, Harlow Gardens nursery. We will set up at 2:30 the afternoon before.**  
**Final setup 8-9 AM on September 18th.**  
**Members-only discount hour 8-9 AM on September 18th. Presentation at 11 AM.**

**Volunteer opportunities are available**

**Birthday Wishes to:**

**Pam Court                      Nancy McKean**  
**Gary Carruthers          Randy Bixby**



Source: <https://ecotopia.ru/>

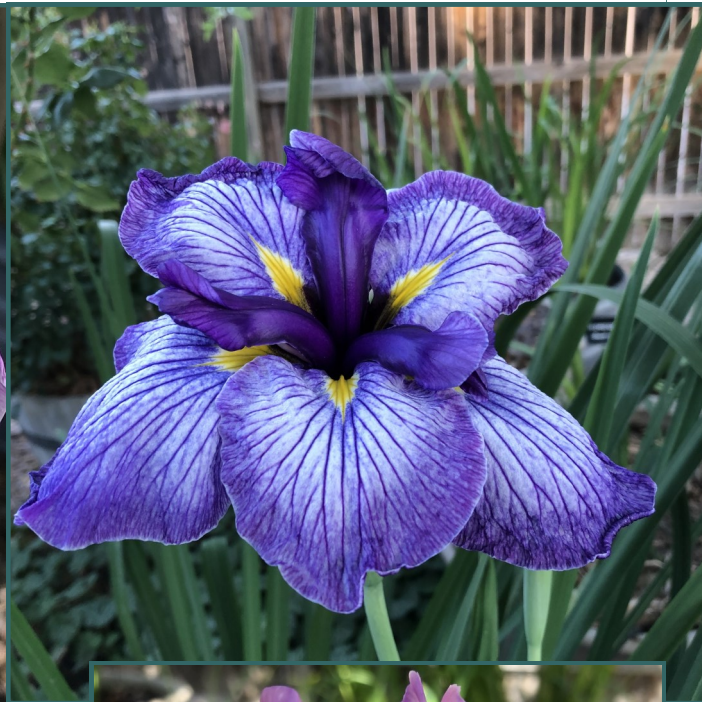
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## Japanese Irises in TAIS Member Terry Swartz' Garden



Clockwise from above: 'Saru Odori' (pre-1920), 'Dino' (Aitken 1993), 'Silken Charm' (Bauer and Coble 2010), 'Lake Effect' (Bauer and Coble 2004), and 'Queen's Tiara' (unknown origin). Photos by Terry Swartz.





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

Beginning Balance					\$4,993.10
Date	Paid	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
06/25/21	X		\$30.00		DUES *
06/25/21		#1859		\$22.46	Knill - Beverages/stamps
Totals			\$30.00	\$22.46	\$7.54
Ending Balance					\$5,000.64
					06/25/21 05:01 PM
* Fernandez \$10/#5067; MacWhinnie \$10/#2690; O'Rourke \$10/#140					

## More Irids, cousins of Irises

Irids are members of the family Iridaceae, along with 65 other genera. In the [February 2021](#) issue, we looked at species of two of these genera: *Neomarica* and *Moraea*, both from Africa. Another African genus is *Ferraria*, the spider and starfish iris. All are useful in the garden, as they extend our bloom season.

*Ferraria* grow from corms. Although corms look similar to bulbs from the outside, they are underground stems rather than layered fleshy leaf scales like bulbs. Each corm can produce two or three flower stems, and will increase by making little corms, called cormels.

*Ferraria* are named after the Jesuit botanist Giovanni Ferrari. They grow fleshy leaves during winter and bloom in spring or summer, depending on the species. The leaves will die back following flowering. Hold water during summer. Frost is fine, but protect from freezing, so these might best be grown in pots or in the greenhouse, or potted for the winter. Heavy mulching may protect them in the garden. One part soil to two parts coarse sand is suggested as a planting mix. *Ferraria* will need afternoon shade in summer. Plant corms in fall, about 2" deep. - SC



Clockwise from upper left: [Ferraria divaricata](#) - flowers 2" across, plants 18" tall. [Ferraria ferrariola](#), Spider Iris - sweet smell, flowers last one day but the clump will bloom for two months or more. [Ferraria crispa](#), Black Flag or Starfish Lily - flowers 2" across, some types smell sweet and others smell bad. [Ferraria uncinata](#) - flowers in late summer, plants 12" tall. Click on links to learn more.

Sources: [World of Flowering Plants](#) website for information and the photos at left, and [Strange and Wonderful Things](#) website for information and to purchase corms of *Ferraria crispa*, the Starfish lily or iris. This species is also sold by [Michigan Bulb](#) and [High Country Gardens](#).



# More Photos from the TAIS Garden Tours - by Joyce Knill





## 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 July:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

Leaves make food for the plant, so do not trim them off unless they are dead. No need to cut them into the fan shapes of old, which is harmful at this point in the plant's growth cycle.

Provide afternoon relief with shade cloth or by sheltering potted irises in the shade.

Continue to feed and water reblooming irises.



## Tip Exchange

Something to consider - TAIS member Susan Schaefer's potted irises are all situated on metal plant stands, which keep them elevated about the superheated ground. The stands range from 6" to 21" in height.

Susan Shaefer's fertilizing regimen: **mid-May through November:** fish emulsion every other week helps grow the leaves and rhizome. **December and January:** SuperBloom or similar (50+ middle number) every other week. **February through bloom season (mid-May):** SuperBloom or similar fertilizer: weekly.

## Iris Limerick:

There once was an iris so fine,  
That it might have come from a mine.  
Its color was gold,  
It was precious to hold;  
And oh, how I wish it were mine.

- Sue Clark



Source: AIS Wiki

## Did You Know?

"While we would not wish to decry marigolds, petunias, impatiens, and other season-long bloomers, it is well to remember that the spectacular bloom of our irises is in part spectacular because it is transient."

- ROOTS, the journal of the Historic Iris Preservation Society, Spring 2021 issue

'Loreley' (G&K 1909)

**"Live in each season as it passes: breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit."**

- Henry David Thoreau

## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

The 1870's through 1890's brought further developments to the iris world. Horticulturalist Max Leichtlin opened a botanical garden in Baden-Baden, Germany and sold irises from 1873 to 1905. *Iris leichtlinii* is one of the plants named for him. English botanist John Gilbert Baker furthered classification efforts of irises with his outline of the Genus *Iris* in *The Gardener's Chronicles* in 1876. He later worked at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and published, among other things, a guide to Iridaceae, a family of plants which currently includes 66 genera, including *Iris*.

In 1880's, Max Goos and August Koenemann started a nursery called Goos & Koenemann (G&K) in Germany. This business specialized in irises, peonies, dahlias, and other flowering plants. Goos and Koenemann began one of the first true iris breeding programs during the next decade, including working with dwarf irises. By 1899, their catalog offered the first of 78 new varieties of irises they would introduce over the next 40+ years, including dwarfs, intermediates (IB), and tall bearded (TB). They bought W. J. Caparne's entire stock of IB irises in 1905. His work had impressed the German team, who were breeding for similar qualities as Caparne. G&K was destroyed during WWI, rebuilt, and was permanently destroyed during WWII. Their lasting legacy is vigorous and rugged irises which are still valued in gardens on at least two continents. One of their most famous varieties is 'Loreley' (1909). See photo above. Read more about G&K and about Caparne in the [October 2018](#) and [December 2017](#) editions of this newsletter, respectively.

Japanese irises (JI) became ever more popular as time moved toward a new century. Louis van Houtte's catalog of 1881 offered 41 of his own named varieties of JI (all three-petaled types) and 64 TB. Peter Henderson offered the six-petaled-type of JI in his catalog by 1874. Japanese irises became as valued as TB in America by about 1890. They were sold in various large catalogs, including that of Louis Child. These often pictured more JI than TB. JI are not as easy to grow as tall bearded, though. Read more on JI in the [July 2017](#) edition of this newsletter. - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in *The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES*, AIS Bulletin, 2020, Wikipedia article on Max Leichtlin, and "[The Goos and Koenemann Irises](#)" article on the HIPS website.