

TAIS Newsletter

Our 56th year

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



NOID

Haas Interfaith Chapel Garden
Embry-Riddle University
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2021

President's Message

Well, my iris are done for now. As usual some success and some not so successful but I like to think I'm always learning. Now it's time to survive our summer. This summer I get to move all my iris (selling the house) which will add to the survival challenge. Embrace your challenges and learn from them.

- Kevin Kartchner

"Wisteria woke me this morning, And there was all June in the garden; I felt them, early, warning Lest I miss any part of the day. Straight I walked to the trellis vine. Wisteria touched a lifted nostril: Feelings of beauty diffused, to entwine My spirit with June's own aura."

- Ann McGough, *Summons*

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Upcoming Events

We do not meet in June or July. Newsletters will continue through the summer. You are invited to submit photos of irises to feature in the summer issues. taisnewsletter@yahoo.com

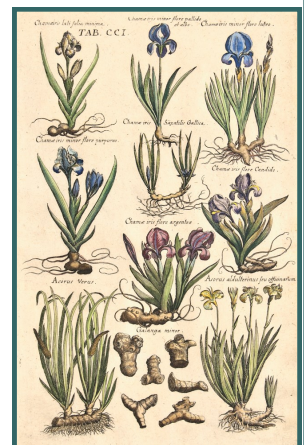
August 14 Auction & meeting: 1 PM, Tucson Botanical Gardens. Auction is for TAIS members-only

September 18: TAIS Rhizome Sale, 9 AM to noon, Harlow Gardens nursery. We will set up the afternoon before. Final setup 8-9 AM on September 18th. Members-only discount hour 8-9 AM on September 18th. Volunteer opportunities available

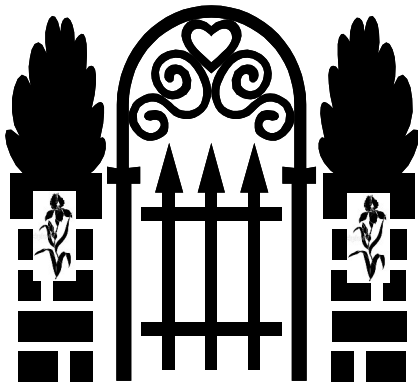
Birthday Wishes to:

Olive Mondello

Christy Lewalski



May Meeting Minutes



We ♥ Irises

8 May 2021 - Sixteen TAIS members tuned in for a Zoom meeting about Louisiana irises.

Business first - Several people commented on how good it was to hold and see a real flower show, as well as to tour some gardens. Three hours seemed to be an adequate amount of time for the four tours. Terry's Ikebana arrangement in the iris show sparked some conversation about arrangements in previous shows. Kevin reported that there were typically five or six in TAIS shows of 10-15 years ago.

There was discussion that some of us are growing iris *leaves* and not getting many (or any) flowers - and we *are* fertilizing them. Susan, one of our champion growers, stated that the middle fertilizer number must be 50 or higher, that irises cannot be crowded, and that they do best with morning and early afternoon sun and late afternoon shade. Her other tips were to

water in the evening and be aware of reflected heat from walls.

Kevin reported that our speaker from February, Jim Hedgecock, is recovering from heart bypass surgery. We wish Jim well.

We watched the final 25 minutes of [AIS webinar #13 on Louisiana Irises](#). Presenter Patrick O'Connor discussed how hybridizers have bred for embellishments on this type of iris, showed photos that several hybridizers submitted to him of their favorites, suggested tips for growing, and efforts at preservation. He mentioned two places to buy Louisianas: [ilsplants.com](https://www.ilsplants.com) and [cindyslouisianairis.com](https://www.cindyslouisianairis.com). An iris that Patrick recommended as an excellent grower is 'Acadian Sky.' He posed a question: are hybridized forms with all of their embellishments better than the graceful species forms, or should both types be pursued? In regards to growing Louisianas,

remember that they need consistent moisture and must be fertilized. With regard to planting, he said to avoid tree roots because they suck up moisture. Patrick grows his Louisianas in mortar-mixing tubs without holes drilled in the bottom. He places bricks along their edges by his walkway to present a clean border and puts mulch between the tubs. Water is from sprinklers. Mild alkalinity is fine.

Following the video, we continued the conversation. Joyce & Sue grew Louisianas this year and Mary Ann started some last year. Joyce planted hers in a galvanized wash tub, Sue used big pots, and Mary Ann created a bog in a stock tank - hers had great success and increases.

Board meeting - Six individuals stayed connected for the Board Meeting. We still have outdoor space reserved for our Auction in August at TBG, and are hoping that the virus will have subsided enough to be able to use the adjacent room. Joyce has reserved Harlow's for Sept 18 for our Sale. Susan will speak on iris culture at 11 AM. Joyce requested info on what was ordered for the Sale so she can prepare cards for the bins. Based on prior sales, color & rebloom are top priorities in what our customers seek. There is no news yet on when the library will reopen. Susan continues to receive dues from new & current members. - SC

**Louisiana irises
can grow in
Tucson**



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

More Photos from April 24 Garden Tours (& one that should have been...)



Photos by Joyce and Kevin



Treasurer's Report for May - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance					\$4,991.31	
Date	Paid	MOP	Deposits	Expenses		
05/28/21				\$31.21		Clark – copies, forms, stamps
05/28/21			\$33.00			DUES *
Totals			\$33.00	\$31.21	\$1.79	
Ending Balance					\$4,993.10	05/27/21 10:55 AM
* Kelly \$10/338; Schaefer (Albano) \$10/3644; Marron/Hutchinson \$13/3398						

Species Iris, Part VII: Pacific Coast Native Iris & Hybrids

This month, we'll focus on native irises from California, Oregon, and Washington. It is unlikely that we could grow them in Arizona, but since they are from places we might happen to venture to, we might come across them sometime. Eleven or twelve species compose this group. The reason for the differing numbers are that many people consider that twelfth one a hybrid rather than a species. These have been arranged into three groups, because humans just love to classify and organize things. The first group consists of five species that have long perianths (floral tubes - the part of the flower that is between the ovary and the petals). Perianths range from 1.5" to 3.5" or longer in this group. The second group of three species have perianths of 1" or less. The three remaining species don't play by the perianth rules - the arrangement of their spathes (leaf-like bracts along the stem near the ovary) is what defines them.

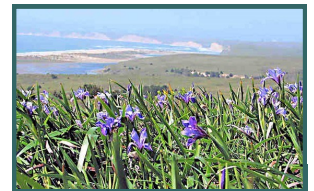
Pacific Coast Natives (PCN) are beardless irises with flowers similar in shape to Dutch irises. They range in color from white to yellow to purple. Some of them prefer sunny grasslands and meadows, while others prefer shady forests. Some grow near the ocean and others only exist at 6000' or 7000' feet in the mountains.

The most widespread of the PCN species is *Iris douglasiana*, which was originally collected around Monterey by botanist David Douglas in about 1830. This iris hugs the Oregon-California coast for about 700 miles. Its flowers, which are usually purple, are borne on stems with two or three branches. It is so successful that some ranchers consider it an aggressive weed. See the first two photos at right, as well as one of a clone of the species.

PCN species easily cross with one another to make lots of natural hybrids. *I. douglasiana* is valued as a parent in intentional, human-directed hybridization. It is also widely sold in species form. According to the Society for PCN Iris, "Hybridizers are part artist, part craftsmen, with living systems as their canvas, palette and materials. By thoughtful crossings from parents with desirable features, they work to develop offspring ready to fill the landscaper's needs." There are over 1000 hybrids of PCN. See photos of three at right. In the garden, these irises need excellent drainage foremost, with lots of organic material and a slight to moderate acidity. Avoid watering in the heat of the day. They seem to grow best from seeds, which must be washed to remove growth inhibitors. Cold stratification is not necessary. Feed in spring, avoid dividing for several years since they resent that, and mulch them to protect from cold and heat. They bloom about 20 days before the tall bearded.

View Pacific Coast Native irises at places such as the Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden, the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, [University of California Botanical Garden at Berkley](#) (the fifth largest botanical garden in the world), and others. PCN tend to peak in April. - SC

Sources: [Society for Pacific Coast Native Iris](#), [Pacific Coast Irises \(fs.fed.us\)](#), AIS Iris Wiki



From top: Scene with *Iris douglasiana* (SPCNI website), *I. douglasiana* (Herbert 1841), a clone of the latter: 'Mendocino Banner' (Grant 1992), & hybrids: 'Claremont Bluebird' (Lenz 1979), 'Gold Dusted' (Jenkins 1990), and 'Xewe' (Ghio 1995) (from AIS Iris Wiki)

An Upcoming International Iris Exchange

I recently received a message (below) from the Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS). I know that the tastes of most of our members run toward the modern tall bearded irises, but thought I would pass this along just in case someone may have any of these varieties that they would be willing to share with a garden in Switzerland. And I thought that you might find it interesting. The rest of this article has been copied from their email message of May 27, 2021. Please note that their reply deadline is May 30, but perhaps they would accept a response even if it is a day or two late. - SC

“One of the joys of growing irises is sharing them with others. HIPS is assisting our friends in Switzerland in their quest for some specific irises to add to the large collection at Merian Garten in Basel. They are also helping us search for some long-lost cultivars that might still be growing in Europe.”

“We're planning a shipment of iris rhizomes to Basel in mid to late July. This is a list of irises that our members report growing, but we haven't been able to locate yet. If you live in the US or Canada and have any of these irises and are confident they are correctly named, we'd love to know! If you can spare a few rhizomes this summer, wonderful - we'll contact you and work out the details. If you have an iris but it's not ready to divide, please let us know anyway - we can at least confirm it is growing here. “

“International iris exchanges are one important way we can bring back missing cultivars. Please help! Email us at outreach@historicirises.org by Sunday, May 30 with anything you can share, now or in the future. (Apologies for the short notice!)”

These are the irises that they are looking for:

<u>Cultivar</u>	<u>Breeder</u>
Bengal Beauty	Muhlestein
Blue Mountains	Schreiner
Bright Cloud	O. Brown
Bryce Canyon	Kleinsorge
Celestial Glory	Reckamp, Br. Charles
Champagne Music	Fay
Chinese Coral	Fay
Christmas Time	Schreiner
Columbine	Murrell
Courtier	Hall, David
Cross Country	Knocke
Dame Blanche	Cayeux
Dancing Rill	Schreiner
Dark Boatman	Cook
Dresden Candleglow	Reath, David
Edenite	Plough
florentina coerulea	Macoun
Garden Flame	Sass, H. P.
Gingersnap	Schreiner
Golden Blaze	Mitsch
Golden Delight	Smith, E.
Golden Flare	Insole
Grace Mohr	Jory
Grand Rapids	Tompkins
Gypsy Jewels	Schreiner
Imbricata	species
Java Dove	Plough
Lula Marguerite	DeForest
Tristram	Bliss

Photos from left: 'Christmas Time,' 'Bryce Canyon,' 'Dark Boatman,' & 'Lulu Marguerite' (AIS Iris Wiki)



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 June:

Move potted irises into shade for the summer if you have not already done so.

Spring bloomers need fertilizer for 6-10 weeks after last bloom. Be careful that they do not receive overhead water, or they are likely to rot. It is best to water in the evening.

Reblooming irises need water and fertilizer through the summer, or they probably will not bloom in the fall.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.



Tip Exchange

Our Susan Schaefer has started using [Miracle-Gro Bloom Booster Specialty Formula](#) (10-52-10), which she has found to be about half the price as similar products.

Other tips from Susan: Irises *do not* like to be crowded, so every fall she divides them and only replants the biggest rhizome of each variety - one to a pot. Water irises in the evening. Provide afternoon shade in summer.

I put bark mulch under my iris pots this summer in an attempt to insulate them from the hot ground. - SC

Iris Limerick:

The summer, it's so very hot;
Causing some of our rhizomes to rot.
We'll think of September
And always remember -
Plant iris when hot it is not!
Sue Clark

Did You Know?

Some of the oldest landscaped gardens in the world are found in the ancient city of Sigiriya, Sri Lanka, atop a mesa that juts 660' into the air. King Kashyapa chose this rock as the site for his capital city. Created in about 480 AD (CE), the gardens consist of three types: a water garden with pools, causeways, and still-functioning fountains fed with water from underground conduits; a boulder garden with paths and pavilions; and terraced gardens that ring the massif. Sigiriya represents "one of the best-preserved examples of ancient urban planning." Source: Wikipedia article on [Sigiriya](#).



Japanese Iris

"SUMMER MAKES A SILENCE AFTER
SPRING." - VITA SACKVILLE-WEST



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

We've been exploring various ways that gardeners, both amateur and professional, became aware of irises as garden-worthy flowers via lists, catalogs, beautiful folio books, and horticultural journals. Nurseries also began stocking and selling many types of irises.

In their London nursery, Peter Barr and sons offered over 100 cultivars of bearded irises by the mid-1860's. Read more about Barr in the [Oct 2017 edition](#) of this newsletter. Barr categorized his iris stock into several "species," including [Amoena](#), [Neglecta](#), [Plicata](#), [Sambucina](#), [Squalens](#), [Variegata](#), and [Pallida](#). With further study over time, it was determined that only the latter two are actually species - their seeds will grow into plants with flowers exactly like their parents. Some of the other names that Barr bestowed have continued on as names of iris color patterns.

In Paris, the house of Vilmorin offered many kinds of irises by the mid-1860's. This many-generational family business sought to improve garden irises by planned hybridization. Read more about them in the [April](#) & [May](#) 2018 editions of this newsletter.

After Japan was opened up to outsiders in 1853-1854, goods began to flow in and out of that country, including Japanese irises in about 1869. Thomas Hogg, Jr. may have been the first importer of these graceful flowers. He gave a collection of them to Doctor Thurber, the editor of *The American Horticulturalist*. Hogg is also notoriously remembered as the importer of the extremely invasive Kudzu vine, "the vine that ate the South." In alternate versions of the Japanese iris story, they were first imported by Hallock & Thorpe of Queens. Whomever imported them, Americans soon fell in love with these plants. Much confusion in their nomenclature still exists, originating from this early period when their Japanese names were being translated. - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in *The Early Years* - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin, 2020. Information in the included links has its own source lists.