

TAIS Newsletter

Our 56th year

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



NOID

Haas Memorial Chapel,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2021

President's Message


Thanks to everyone for your contributions to our photo contest last month. A lot of work goes into making the contest a success and it's good to be reminded of what is to come in our gardens. After a soggy summer (and excessive transplanting for me) I'm enjoying the fans coming back to life. Probably no rebloom for me given the 100% transplanting. How grows your garden? We're back together again for the November potluck. See you there.

- Kevin Kartchner

Editor's note: Arizona hybridizer Francelle Edwards passed away in October. See her obituary [here](#).

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"I like spring, but it is too young. I like summer, but it is too proud. So I like best of all autumn, because its leaves are a little yellow, its tone mellower, its colours richer, and it is tinged a little with sorrow...Its golden richness speaks not of the innocence of spring, nor of the power of summer, but of the mellowness and kindly wisdom of approaching age. It knows the limitations of life and is content..." - Lin Yutang 

Upcoming Events

Next meeting: Saturday, November 13 at noon - Outdoor Potluck in Bonnie's yard at 5940 E. Avenida Arriba. Cathy is making eggplant parmigiana. Bonnie will provide a green salad and bread. Bring your mask and some food (desserts, drinks, or a favorite side) to share. Bring plants or seeds to trade or share if you wish. **RSVP to taisnewsletter@yahoo.com by 11/7 so that Bonnie knows how many tables and chairs are necessary.**

No meeting in December.

Birthday Wishes to:

Angela Powers Taffy Holvenstot
Susan Schaefer Ron Kelsen
George Vanovich



October Meeting Minutes



9 October - Thirteen members tuned into this month's Zoom meeting. The winning photos of our annual contest were revealed! And we voted to select a winner from an eight-way tie for third place in the single flower or stalk category and a three-way tie for third in the Miscellaneous category. See the winning photos on the following pages. Thank you to the 11 individuals who entered pictures and the 16 who voted. Competition was fiercer than ever this year!

Business meeting - Kevin thanked everyone who worked at the Sale. We made nearly \$1000 and were treated to an excellent presentation on growing irises in containers. Rhizomes from Region 15 arrived after our auction and so were presented to volunteers at the sale. Maureen motioned and it was a unanimous vote to donate \$10 per well-sized rhizome to Region 15, for a total of \$140. (The others they sent were small). Our potluck will be at Bonnie's on Nov 13 at noon. Please bring desserts, sides, or drinks to share. Everything else will be provided. RSVP to taisnewsletter@yahoo.com. Most officers and board members

agreed to serve another year. Sandy Ellis will help Joyce with Hospitality. Diane Pavlovich and Sally Vega will handle Programs and Publicity. Bonnie and Kathy mentioned that publicity must be arranged at least two months in advance, and that they will pass along their list of contacts. Susan and Kathy motioned to accept the slate of officers and board members. The group's ideas for future meetings: Pollinator Gardens, UA speaker on climate and water issues, micro-climates and soils within the Tucson area, cacti and succulents, and a panel discussion on growing irises. The latter could be on growing them in the ground, as Harlow's requested that we create a handout for them on this. Larry Lauer, Thomas Johnson, and Shirley Trio-Probst are possible hybridizers to contact to speak in February via Zoom (or in person?).

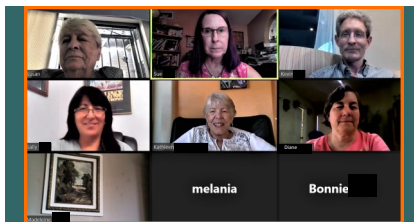
Board meeting - Ten individuals hung on for this portion. Kevin suggested that 2022 may be back to normal. We hope to have more meetings at the Tucson Botanical Garden. Our contract

with them is up for renewal soon. The AIS National Convention will be held in Las Cruces on April 11-16, with tours of six gardens (700+ iris varieties) on the 14-16th. The tour-only package costs \$175 + \$70 conference fee. Register [here](#). Joyce and Susan suggested that anyone who joins TAIS at the rhizome sale receive 15 months of membership rather than just three. This was met with approval and will begin now. Meeting ended at 2:25 PM.

- S. Clark, secretary

Cultivation Notes from Meeting

Kevin mentioned that leaves of his irises which had been growing in half-day shade sunburned upon transplant more than those that had been in a sunnier location. Susan uses drippers which can be turned on and off, but not adjusted otherwise. She applies fish emulsion every two weeks from June through December and mixes it according to the directions on the bottle. She said that it is important to apply it to moistened soil. Sally is still having trouble getting her irises through the summer. She has tried digging them up and refrigerating them, but they shriveled up. Her shade cloth lasted till the winds of the monsoon. She asked if the club could buy pecan mulch in bulk and sell it to the members. Susan has a bag from last year that she offered her. Sally mentioned seeing 5'-tall irises on a tour once, and the lady told her that the secret was applying her own compost which included manure. Kevin has found that irises in a bed amended with compost grew two times better than ones without. These were newly-purchased rhizomes planted at the same time. Sue had much better luck this summer - she watered *only* if moisture meter read DRY. Her irises did receive rain water several times. - SC



We're on the web:

Tucsoniris.org

4th Annual TAIS Photo Contest

Eleven individuals submitted 64 pictures in three categories this year: Single flower or stem (38 entries), Macro (15 entries), and Miscellaneous (11 entries). Winners were selected by popular vote via email and a couple of tie-breakers during our October Zoom meeting. All prizes are Iris Bucks. And the winners are:



Single Flower or Stalk

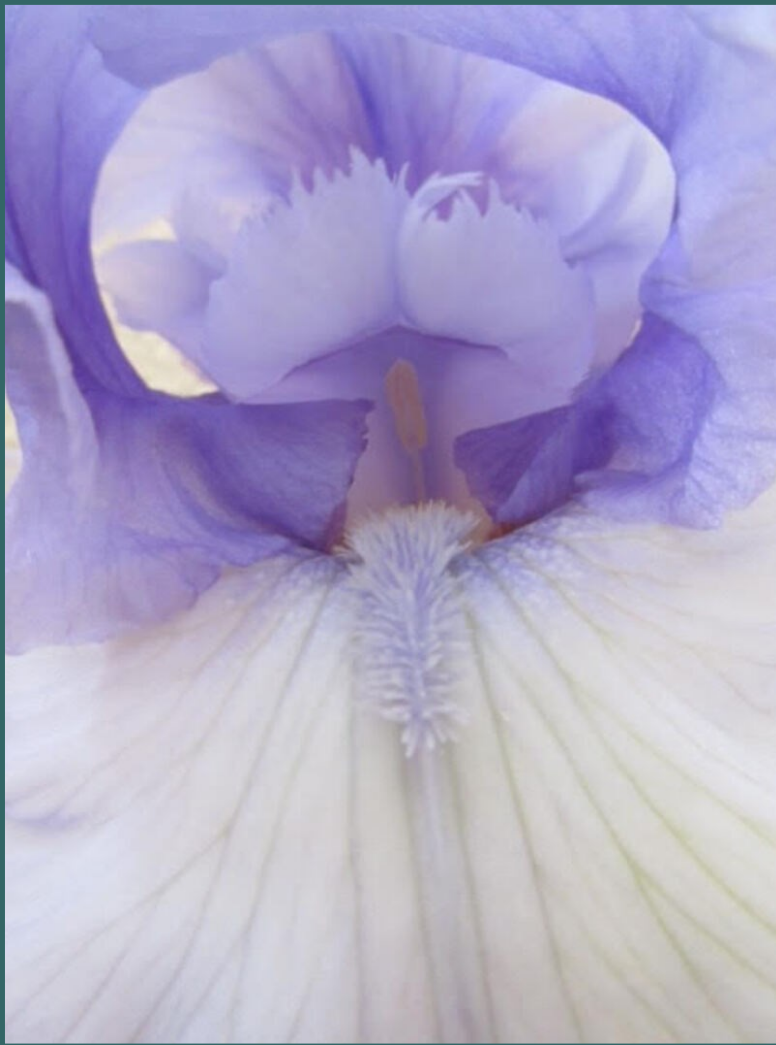
From top, left to right:

1st place - NOID by Christy Lewalski

2nd place tie - 'How Wonderful' by Kevin Kartchner and 'Sambuca' by Dave Smith

3rd place - 'Magic Show' by Sue Clark



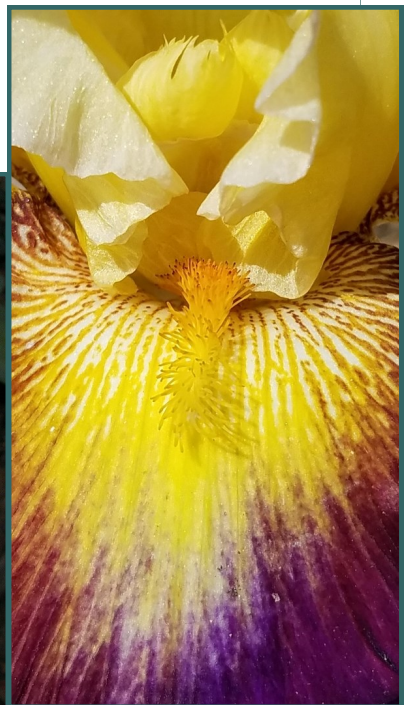
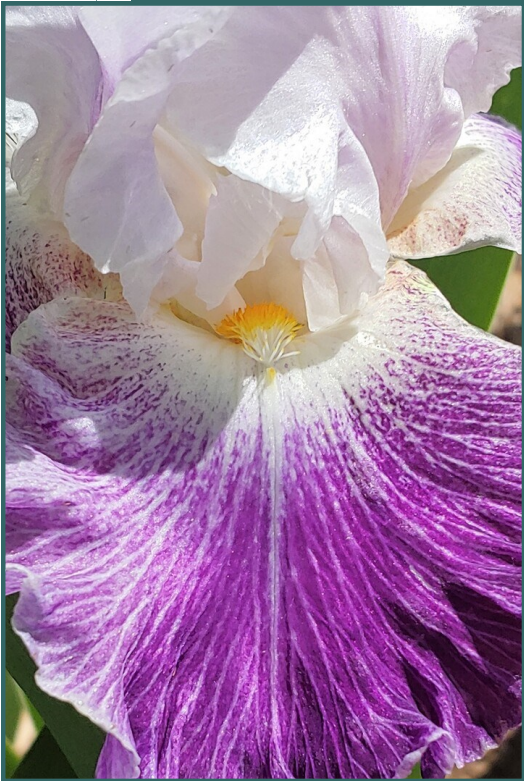


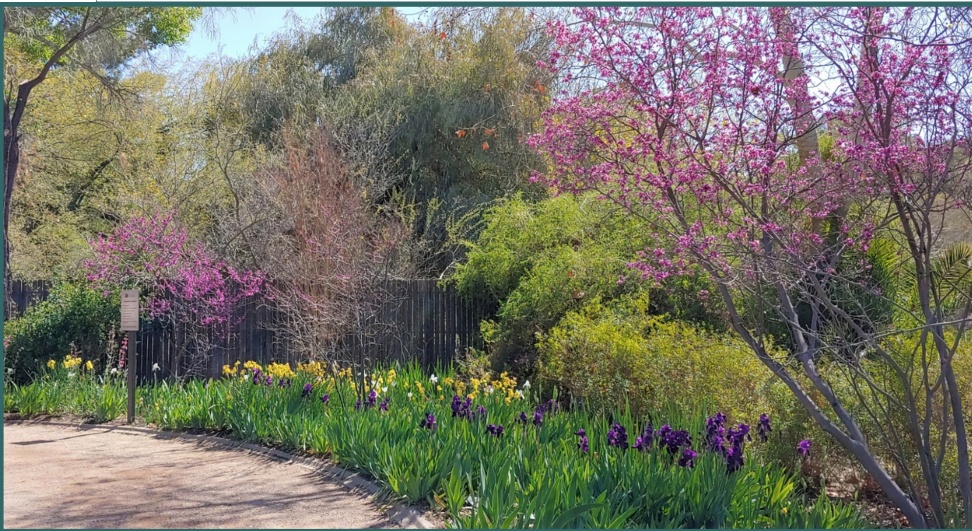
Macro Views

Above, from left: 1st place tie - 'Perfect Couple' by Wendy O'Rourke and NOID by Kevin Kartchner

Left: 2nd place - 'Hope Rises' by Sue Clark

Below and right: 3rd place tie - 'Conjuration' by Sally Vega and 'Shadow Bands' by Kevin Kartchner





Miscellaneous and Garden Views

Top and middle left: 1st place tie - Boyce Thompson Arboretum Garden View by Sue Clark and 'Sun Master' vs. 'Scoonchee' by Kevin Kartchner

Bottom left and center: 2nd place tie - 'Elizabeth Poldark' by Wendy O'Rourke and TBG by Kevin Kartchner

Below right: 3rd place - *Iris pallida* by Wendy O'Rourke



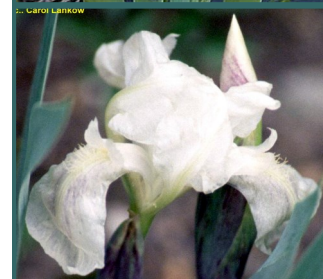
Note: The trees with the pink blossoms in the upper photo are [Western Redbuds](#).



Thank you to all who participated! We had exactly the same number of entries as last year, and more than twice as many photographers.

Treasurer's Report for November - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance					\$6,458.54
Date	Paid	MOP	Deposits (Credits)	Expenses (Debits)	
10/21/21	X		\$10.00		DUES - Smith #10477
Totals			\$10.00	\$0.00	\$10.00
Ending Balance					\$6,468.54



From left: Celestar pattern - 'Echo Location' and another 'Echo Location' with a bud visible to right of the central fall. Note the purple on the lower part of the bud (Photos from the AIS Wiki)

Iris Color Patterns: Celestar & Ghost Plicata

In the rhizomes for this year's auction, my attention was drawn to one named 'Bespoke' whose description included the words "Ghost plic," meaning Ghost plicata. I was intrigued by the term and began searching for more information.

The grandmother, so to speak, of this group seems to be an iris called '[Celestar](#)' (Larsen 1949). I could not find a picture of 'Celestar' but its description in the AIS Iris Wiki is as follows: "White with a flush of lavender-purple on one side of the falls only. This same purple is seen on the large buds - and is as if the color has faded through onto the flower. Made an exciting arrangement at the 1949 Salt Lake City iris show. Will make an exciting parent for plicatas and lemons. A large, full, well branched variety." And from the Fleur De Lis 1956 catalog: "A large, semi-flaring white with a flush of lavender on one side of the falls that fades away after opening, leaving the blooms a dusty white."

Another iris in the celestar pattern is '[Wild and Crazy](#)' (Black 2013). The Mid-America catalog description states: "What appears as a lovely peach and white glaciata [an iris with no purple anthocyanin pigment] morphs into a zany celestar pattern in which exterior surfaces of an opening bud exposed to sun activates anthocyanin pigment and thus turning those areas purple. Developing buds show dark peach standards emerging from purple backed falls. Purple segments can appear on upper surface of falls. Patterning is variable from flower to flower." See photos at upper right.

The border bearded iris '[First in Line](#)' (Black 2014) blooms for a long interval and sometimes has a purple edge in the celestar fashion.

Another iris in this pattern is the rebloomer '[Echo Location](#)' (Wilkerson 2005). See photos above. Linda Mann described as the "beautiful bud" iris because of the purple on the buds and backs of the falls (hort.net article A). '[Ostry White](#)' (Tankesley-Clarke 1994) (an *Iris aphylla*) has a purple bud, but a white flower. On cool days, the flower opens as light purple and the backs of its falls are purple. Hybridizer Sandy Ives of Ottawa recommends it as a parent due to the wide variance of its offspring (hort.net article B).

The Ghost plicata at our auction in August was 'Bespoke' (Black 2021). In the Mid-America catalog, it states, "The hazy anthocyanin (blue to purple pigments) over the lower falls of plicatas have been informally dubbed "ghost plics" because of their ethereal appearance. It is probably a variant of the Celestar pattern and can vary considerably in intensity and application...". Thomas Johnson responded to my email question and said that Paul Black was the originator of the term. More later if I can find out more... - SC

Sources: AIS Iris Wiki, two articles on www.hort.net: A - "[HYB: pigment - celstar \[sic.\] and glaciata pattern](#)" posted 7 June 2014, and B - "[Re: Re: Ostry White](#)" posted 1 Jan 2011; definition of glaciata from the AIS blogspot post of 15 Dec 2014 titled "Tall Bearded Iris Color Terms;" email message from Thomas Johnson; and the 2021 Mid-America catalog

From top: 'Wild and Crazy,' bud of 'Wild and Crazy,' 'First in Line' showing purple-edged falls, 'Ostry White' - note the purple rays on its bud (photos from AIS Iris Wiki), and 'Bespoke' (photo from Mid-America website)

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2022

Kevin Kartchner - President

Bonnie Else - Vice President

Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account

Martin Juarez – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary

Diane Pavlovich & Sally Vega - Programs & Publicity

Joyce Knill & Sandy Ellis - 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 November:

Make a label for each new iris. Try these [metal plant markers](#). Write on them with a #2 pencil, china marker, [paint marker](#), or use a [label maker](#) (see Tip, below).

Move potted irises to sunny spots for the cool season. Water with fish emulsion every other week until early January. Mix as on package.

Feed with a fairly-balanced fertilizer. The first number should be 10 or less to reduce risk of rot. [Schreiners iris fertilizer](#) ships free. Or try [this one](#) from Comanche Acres Iris Garden. When planting, put I T into the hole. For established irises, scratch fertilizer into the soil and then water it in.



Tip Exchange

Be careful not to lose the names of your irises, since identifying NOIDs is next to impossible. Sharpie marker's permanent ink *will fade* in our intense sun! I have had excellent results with a [Dymo LabelManager 160](#) using [Dymo Durable Labels](#). Make a map of the bed or your pots so you have a backup of the names. - SC

Kevin said that he tills compost into his new iris beds as he creates them. He also adds a thin layer of compost as a top dressing, as recommended by Adam from TBG. - via email

Iris Limerick:

There once was a man named Fred
Who got an idea stuck in his head.
“It’s irises I’ll grow,
I’ll dig and I’ll hoe,
And I’ll breed for the one true red.”

- Sue Clark



Iris spuria var. *maritima*

Source: AIS Iris Wiki

Did You Know?

Floral arrangements look stunning with flowers of two colors. Choose various shades of these colors to provide depth. Slice stems at 45° angles and re-trim them daily. All cut blooms benefit from some food and an antibacterial agent, so make your own batch of flower preservative to keep your newly-created arrangement fresh. Mix 1 t sugar, 1 t lemon juice, and 3 drops of bleach with 1 liter (34 oz) of water and pour this into the vase. Add flowers.

- Christina Stembel in October 2021 issue of Better Homes & Gardens and at [farmgirloffowers.com](#)

"I saw old Autumn in the misty morn Stand shadowless
like Silence, listening To silence..." - Thomas Hood, *Autumn*, 1827

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, we'll focus on a premiere irisarian named William Rickatson Dykes. W. R. Dykes was born on 4 Nov 1877 in London. His background is impressive: he studied in London, Oxford, and Paris, and was a "botanist, horticulturalist, schoolmaster, plant breeder, author, and the foremost authority on irises" (Pries, 2020). While at Oxford, Dykes studied irises under the tutelage of Sir Michael Foster. As Dykes' interest in the iris family soared, he visited Sir Michael and his garden at Shelford, and began to devote more of his time and attention to the plant. Dykes put in a large garden of irises at Godalming when he was a master at the Charterhouse school there. He taught Greek, Latin, and football.

Sir Michael had been preparing to write an extensive book on irises. After he died in 1907, his notes were transferred to Dykes, who utilized some of them to write his first book, [Iris](#), in 1909. This little book offered a balance of scientific information and the uses of the iris as a decorative garden plant. By 1910, Dykes was being called an "expert amateur" and a recognized authority on irises by *Garden Life* magazine. In his own garden, he grew an expansive collection of irises, which included as many of the known species as possible.

Dykes travelled to the South of France in 1911 in search of a certain iris that he had read about. While there, he discovered *Iris spuria* var. *maritima*, which he named and published in his masterwork, [The Genus Iris](#), in 1913. See photo above. As part of his research for this book, Dykes examined hundreds of iris specimens in five collections in England, as well as others in Germany, Austria, and France. He classified irises using Linnaeus' system, and was the first to do so.

Dykes hired one of his colleagues, F. H. Round from the Charterhouse school, to paint 48 watercolor plates for his book. A story survives in which Round related that Dykes would show up in his dressing gown at 5 AM during bloom season, iris in hand, and expect Round to paint the flower while it was still fresh. He also reported that illustrating the book for Dykes was "easy and comfortable to do." More next month... - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin, 2020 and Wikipedia article on William Rickatson Dykes