

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 57th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Coral Dancer'

(Francelle Edwards, 2008)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2022

President's Message

Showtime already? Thanks to Terry Swartz's past, present, and future efforts we are going to have a judged flower show next spring. The show will need your flowers. Our August auction will be a great place to start your future flowers (rhizomes) and collect some decorative iris items. The highest bidder also gets first pick of Diane's memorial rhizomes. See you there. - Kevin Kartchner

"All Nature helps to swell the song And chant the same refrain; July and June have slipped away And August's here again." – Helen Maria Winslow (1851–1938)

Upcoming Events

Next meeting: Saturday, August 6, 1 PM - TAIS Auction at Tucson Botanical Gardens. Members may bid in person on rhizomes from Mid-America Gardens. *Cash and checks only.* Diane Tweedy Memorial Irises will be distributed to members during the meeting. When these flower, please plan to take photos and submit to Kevin to share with Diane's family and friends as a Thank You for their generosity

September 17: 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: Growing Irises in Containers by Kristee West

Birthday Wishes to:

**Kathleen Marron
Pat Olsen
Diane Pavlovich**

**Miriam Diamond
Juliet Westbrook
Rose Clark**



Source: Plate 175 from American Medicinal Plants, "Iris versicolor," Charles Frederick Millspaugh, 1887, <https://archive.org/details/americanmedicinal00mill>

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A Peek at Gardens of TAIS Members, Part III: Joyce Knill's



TAIS is on the web!
Tucsoniris.org



Iris Seeds and Seed Pods in the Garden ofTAIS' Martin Juarez



**Top row: ripening iris pod in the garden; this pod has dried and split open, revealing the seeds
Bottom row: pods harvested and collected in a cup to finish drying, iris seeds. Photos by Martin Juarez**

Treasurer's Report for July - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance					\$4,655.01	
Date	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses		
Totals			\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Updated:
Ending Balance					\$4,655.01	7/28/2022 7:40

**Eight Ways to Protect Birds in Your Yard and Garden**

- 1. Reduce or eliminate use of pesticides and herbicides in your yard.** A 2019 article in *Science* shows a 53% decrease in the numbers of grassland songbirds in America, due to loss of habitat and increase in pesticide use in their breeding and wintering areas. America's most-used pesticides are Neonicotinoids, applied especially to corn and soybeans. Pesticides in our own yards have similar effects.
- 2. Create and/or protect water sources in your yard.** Birds need water for drinking and bathing. Birdbaths, fountains, or ponds - keep them clean to reduce chances of disease and mosquitos. Our fountain is visited almost continuously during the day by birds (photo above).
- 3. Identify the non-native invasive plants in your region and work to remove them.** And avoid planting any new invasives. They do not provide the food and habitat that our gardens visitors need most. I have three remaining clumps of fountain grass to dig up and dispose of, since it is now classified as "[especially invasive](#)."
- 4. Make your windows visible to birds to prevent collisions.** According to an article in *Birds & Blooms Extra* magazine, window strikes are one the highest causes of bird deaths (cats are the other). Since windows reflect the scenery of the outdoors, birds think that they can fly through them. A few large decals pasted on the outside of windows are not enough. Try the highly effective [BirdTape](#) from the American Bird Conservancy. Other strategies are screens and lowered blinds.
- 5. Let your yard be a bit messy.** A dead tree is an excellent roosting place and a brush pile serves as shelter in a storm. Bougainvilleas and other shrubs also provide cover for birds.
- 6. Close blinds at night and turn off lights which are not in use.** Some birds use constellations as guides while migrating and can be thrown off by bright lights.
- 7. Plant native plants.** Their fruit, nectar, and seeds provide food for birds, and these plants provide cover for bugs and spiders (who are also important garden friends).
- 8. Attract hummingbirds with sugar-water feeders and tubular flowers.** Keep feeders clean, fresh, and full. Place them out of sight of each other to reduce territoriality issues. Avoid using red dye in hummingbird food. - SC

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 during August:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

No need to trim leaves into fan shapes unless you demand that they look tidy through the summer or are replanting the rhizome. Dead leaves can help by shading the rhizomes.

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

Continue to feed and water reblooming irises.

Redo any faded names on plant markers.



Tip Exchange

Snail and slug tips

Diatomaceous earth can be used as a natural barrier around plants. Snails and slugs do not like crossing this powdered material.

Marigolds and thyme can serve as trap plants which attract snails and slugs, thus keeping them away from your more precious plants. Remove and destroy trap plants as needed.

Sink a small container of cheap beer in the ground, or apply nematodes to the soil. - SC

Source: O F Almanac [e-mail of 11 June 2022](#)

Limerick:

There once was a dragonfly named Lou,
Who had simply an incredible hue.

His gossamer wings
Were stunning things,
And his body a deep iridescent blue.

- Sue Clark



AIS Seal by B Y Morrison

Did You Know?

Dragonflies love to eat mosquitos! So do their cousins, the damselflies. 325 million years ago, ancient dragonfly relatives had 30-inch wingspans. Dragonfly larvae, called nymphs, live in water for up to five years. Adults of various dragonfly species live from five days to ten weeks. They can be attracted to the garden by a pond and I have seen them at our fountain. Their 360° vision comes in handy for catching those mosquitos! - SC Source: [Dragonflies](#) in Old Farmer's Almanac email of 7/10/22 and [Dragonfly](#) article on Wikipedia.

"August creates as she slumbers, replete and satisfied."



- Joseph Wood Krutch

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Upon their return from serving in World War I, the team of John Wister, Robert Sturtevant, and B. Y. Morrison got right to work on establishing an iris society. Their first step was placing an article calling for such a society in all journals of a horticultural nature. Their next step was recruiting the Assistant Director of the New York Botanical Garden, Harry Gleason, to write letters of invitation to over 400 horticulturalists with a list of proposed goals. B. Y. Morrison published an article on irises in the upscale *Country Life* magazine, 16 oversized-pages long and filled with lovely watercolor illustrations, many from Dykes' book, *The Genus Iris*. Morrison sent other iris articles to *The Garden Magazine* in 1919. Grace Sturtevant wrote about "The Proposed American Iris Society" in the *Flower Grower* in early January 1920, including this bit: "It is high time that some central body should gather together information on Iris matters whether it is the history of our garden favorites, the records of our present varieties, or the opportunities for the future."

Response to the letters was enthusiastic. Issues that people wanted tackled included iris classification, registration, and judging. Weeding out of inferior varieties was advised by Arthur J. Bliss from England, as well as the society being an international one. Bliss went on to help set the standards of excellence for irises. Read more about him [here](#) and [here](#).

Jennett Dean from California urged that some trial grounds be in the west, and not all in the eastern part of the country. Other individuals expressed interest in a checklist of iris varieties, while someone suggested that a section of irises be grown in every botanical garden to generate interest.

All of this effort culminated in a meeting of iris lovers at the Museum of the New York Botanical Garden at 11 AM on Jan 29, 1920. Despite arctic-style weather, illness of the instrumental Harry Gleason, and the excesses that might precede the first day of Prohibition (also Jan 29, 1920), over 60 people came to the meeting from around the country. They had a productive and successful day. To be continued... - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in *The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES*, AIS Bulletin, 2020; and "Founding of the AIS: A New York Story," by Anner Whitehead in the same issue