

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 57th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Double Down'**

(M. Sutton, 2008)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,  
Prescott, Arizona

## President's Message

I'm still getting a few late (or re-blooming?) stalks. Of course in this heat the flowers are typically a bit fried. But they still smell like iris so that is enough for me.

**Pod Stats:** This spring I pollinated 110 flowers. That sounds like a lot but averages out to about two per day over the season. Of those only 27 took (successful pollination) for a 25% success rate. So try again if you didn't get a pod.

How often do bee pods (naturally-pollinated iris) occur? There are about 630 dried bloomed stalks in my garden. At about 4 flowers each, that's at least 2500+ flowers. There were 13 Bee pods (Interestingly 7 of those are on two Ruffled Goddess stalks). So I had about a 0.5% chance of a bee pod. Next time: what to do with those dried pods. - Kevin Kartchner

*"A red sun rising at morning With flame on his burning crest; A red sun sinking at evening, In the molten glow of the west; The air grown languid and drooping, On wings too heavy to fly; The voice of a drowsy locust That croons to a drowsy sky; And cool waves crisping and darkling Across the hot sands of July!"*

- Mary Elizabeth Blake, "July"

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## Upcoming Events

**No meeting in July. AIS Symposium - Vote for favorite TBs [here](#).**

**Next meeting: August 6, 1 PM, TAIS Auction at Tucson Botanical Gardens. Members may bid in person on rhizomes from Mid-America Gardens.**

**Diane Tweedy Memorial Irises will be distributed to members. When they flower, please plan to take photos and submit to Kevin to share with Diane's family and friends**

## Birthday Wishes to:

**Gary Carruthers Pam Court Evelyn Jacobs**  
**Randy Bixby Julie Pacquing Nancy McKean**  
**Candice Hill Crouch Jessamyn Stinchfield**



Source: *De floribus et fructibus Iraniae* (Paris, 1829), p. 10, pl. 10, fig. 10 (top).  
Becker, *Iranian Iris* (Tucson, 1988), vol. 2, *Quartus ordo* collectarum plantarum  
aestivorum, 1-201, fig. 1-1620

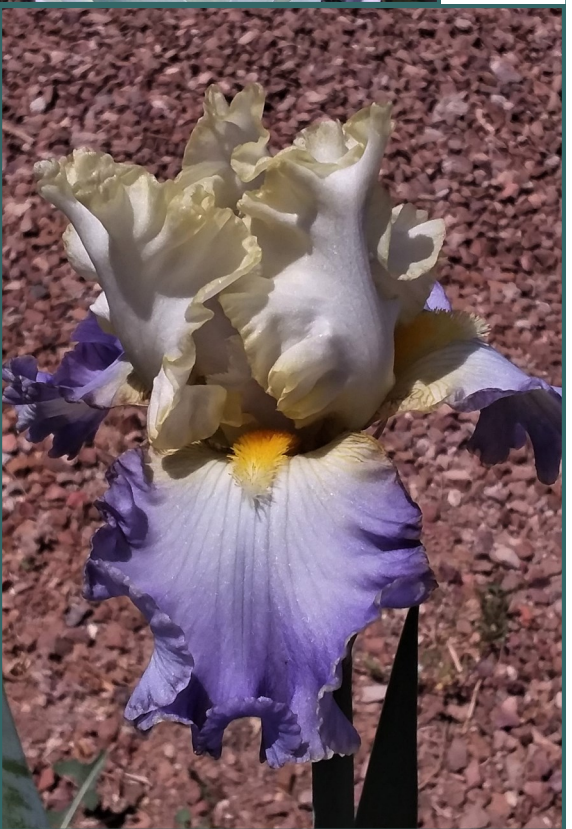


## A Peek at Gardens of TAIS Members, Part II: Diane Pavlovich's



Clockwise  
from upper  
left: 'Sisters of  
Loretto,'  
'Night Moves,'  
'Gilt-Edged  
Bond,' and  
'Scoonchee'

**TAIS on the web:**  
[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)





# Irises on the 2022 Master Gardeners' Home Garden Tour



The first three photos offer views of Diane Tweedy's garden, with Cindy sitting at the TAIS table of information. The next three photos show the garden of Chris Dickens (left), Diane's friend and next-door neighbor. Diane had been thrilled that her garden would be on the tour, but died before that happened. With permission of the new owners of Diane's house, Chris has tended both gardens through the pandemic until the tour could take place. Photos by Kevin Kartchner





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

Beginning Balance					\$4,728.70
Date	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses	
06/22/22		#1932		\$25.92	Else - storage supplies
06/22/22		#1933		\$47.77	Knill - hospitality F&B
Totals			\$0.00	\$73.69	-\$73.69
Ending Balance					\$4,655.01
Year-to-date (LOSS):					-\$1,648.53



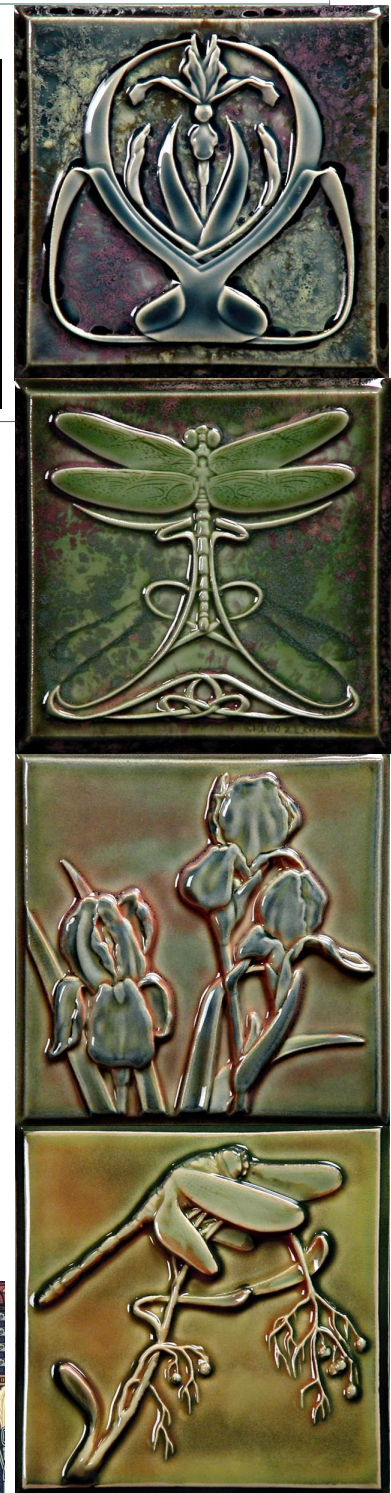
From left: Morris Iris II, Japanese Iris, Art Nouveau Waterlilies, all from [Mill River Rugs](#)

**The Iris as Symbol and Design Motif**

The strong sculptural form of the iris makes it easy to stylize. Its three standards are said to represent faith, valor, and wisdom. Irises symbolize luck, friendship, and the promise of love in various cultures. The Chinese word for iris means “purple butterfly” and this flower is associated with early summer there. The Greek Goddess Iris connects Heaven and Earth. I’ve mentioned in previous newsletters that a fleur-de-lys is a stylized iris blossom. It has represented France and the French monarchy since Medieval times. More recently, the opening up of Japan to trade in 1854 spread the fascination of aquatic motifs from Japan to Europe, and influenced these three movements: [Aestheticism](#) (c. 1860-1890), [Art Nouveau](#) (c. 1890-1914), and [Arts & Crafts](#) (c. 1880-1930 with revival in 1980’s through now). Irises and other members of their aquatic habitats - dragonflies, carp, and koi - figure as prominent motifs in these styles. - SC



Sources: “The Iris,” by Patricia Poore in *Arts & Crafts Homes and the Revival*, Summer 2015 issue, p. 72; Wikipedia articles on the three movements linked above; [Bradbury and Bradbury](#), [Lewellen Studio](#), and [Mill River Rugs](#) websites



At left: Bradbury and Bradbury [Fenway Iris wall-paper frieze](#) - Aesthetic Movement. Above from top: ceramic tiles from Lewellen Studio: Iris Nouveau One, Dragonfly Nouveau Two, Iris Five, and Dragonfly Six.





## Pollinator References and Resources for Tucson Area Iris Society

compiled by Deborah North, Pima County Master Gardener, May 2022

Pima County Master Gardeners: <https://extension.arizona.edu/pima-master-gardeners>

Arizona Sonora Desert Museum Plant Care Sheets: <http://www.desertmuseum.org/plantcare/index.php>

Native Seeds SEARCH: <https://www.nativeseeds.org/>

Selecting Plants for Pollinators: A Regional Guide for Farmers, Land Managers, and Gardeners In the American Semidesert and Desert Province:

<https://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/AmericanSemiDesert.rx8.pdf>

*Neonicotinoids: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, 12/2020 by Demian Nunez & Madeline Potter, University of Maryland: <https://entomology.umd.edu/news/neonicotinoids-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly>

*What is a Neonicotinoid?* Texas A&M Factsheet: <https://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/ipm/what-is-a-neonicotinoid/>

Tucson Audubon Society: [www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org)

National Wildlife Foundation, Habitat Certification requirements:

[https://www.nwf.org/CertifiedWildlifeHabitat?campaignid=WH22FSE&utm\\_source=certifypage&utm\\_medium=website&utm\\_campaign=GFW\\_May\\_2022&utm\\_content=FY22\\_certifypage](https://www.nwf.org/CertifiedWildlifeHabitat?campaignid=WH22FSE&utm_source=certifypage&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=GFW_May_2022&utm_content=FY22_certifypage)

From Tucson Organic Gardeners: Online resources for SE Arizona Pollinators and Gardening for Pollinators:

<https://www.tucsonorganicgardeners.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Arizona-Pollinators.pdf>

*[I added a couple more below from Deb's talk and an email message – SC]:*

University of Arizona Flower Planting Guide for the Low Desert (Document AZ1100):

<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1100a.pdf>

Make a bumblebee nest using a flower pot: <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/bumblebee-nests/#provide>



From our March meeting donation (in lieu of the speaker's fee)

Dear Tucson Area Iris Society,  
Thank you for supporting  
our vision of flowing rivers.  
It's so exciting to see talks  
of water harvesting expand into  
more communities.

Charlie Alcorn  
Program Manager and Educator

**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 &amp; Sally Vega - Programs &amp; Publicity

Joyce Knill &amp; Sandy Ellis - Hospitality/Door Prizes

Joyce Knill - Birthday cards

Susan Schaefer - Membership Chairperson

Dave Smith - Photographer

Sue Clark - Newsletter Editor &amp; Publisher

**What to do in the Iris Garden during July:**

Be careful to water the soil rather than the iris plants or they are likely to rot. During hot weather, it is best to water irises in the evening.

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 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**

Scents of certain plants are repellent to certain bugs. Try these to keep mosquitos away from outdoor seating areas: lavender, marigold, lemon grass, catmint, rosemary, basil, scented geranium, bee balm (Monarda), mint, floss flower (Ageratum), sage (the herb, not Salvia), and allium. Most of these are recommended by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the New York Botanic Garden, and PlantShed. We can grow many of these plants in our area, so give this tip a try! - SC

Source: Garden Design e-newsletter of [26 May 2022](#)

**Iris Limerick:**

Our iris season was late;  
We had to wait and wait.  
Then it lasted so long  
That we burst into song;  
Impatiently we learn to anticipate.  
- Sue Clark



'Cardinal' (Bliss 1919)

**Did You Know?**

Ladybird beetle is another name for ladybug. It's their larvae that really chow down on aphids, not the adults. The larvae are known as "alligators" because of their fierce looks and voracious appetites. When releasing live ladybugs to control aphids, there are several things you can do to encourage them to stick around long enough to lay eggs: release them in the cool portion of the day, mist plants so the bugs can rehydrate, and do repeat releases. Ladybugs may be purchased at nurseries. - SC: Source: Garden Design e-newsletter of 26 May 2022, [aphids article](#)

**"WITH FREEDOM, FLOWERS, BOOKS, AND THE MOON,  
WHO COULD NOT BE PERFECTLY HAPPY?"**

- OSCAR WILDE, *DE PROFUNDIS*, 1897

**A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History**

We have talked about [diploid and tetraploid irises](#) several times before. Tetraploids have twice the number of chromosomes as diploids, and therefore have bigger flowers and more possibilities of variations in color, frills, and wow factor. Starting in 1908, Bertrand Farr in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania was hybridizing and selling a huge variety of irises, likely all diploid, although these terms were not understood at the time. Farr also sold many types of Japanese irises. These tended to do best in the more acidic soils east of the Appalachians. As iris-lovers attempted to grow them west of the Appalachians, they did not do as well in those less-acidic soils, which was also not understood at the time. Hybridizer Sydney Mitchell of California credited Farr's iris collection and attractive catalog "primarily responsible for the interest in tall bearded irises that developed in America in the first quarter of the present [now previous] century." Visitors flocked to Farr's gardens from all over the United States.

Farr introduced the first American-bred Siberian iris, 'Grandis,' a 5-foot-tall violet beauty which became tremendously popular following World War I. He introduced the first American-bred spuria iris, 'Miss Tait,' which had blue flowers, as well as the first American-bred tetraploid irises, 'Tromagnifica' and 'Trosuperba,' which were Farr's only tetraploids. Both descend from *Iris trojana*. 'Trosuperba' with its pale blue-violet standards and darker red-violet falls, was used by Arthur Bliss to parent 'Cardinal,' "one of the most important and popular irises of the 20th century" (photo above). It is found in the parentage of most red irises. Read more about Bertrand Farr in previous TAIS newsletters: [Nov 2018](#), [Dec 2018](#), and [Jan 2019](#).

Grace Sturtevant began using the tetraploid *Iris cypriana* in her hybridizing after 1910, and the resultant seedlings attracted even more of the spotlight to irises. These seedlings had larger and more attractive flowers than ever seen, and people wanted them for their gardens.

There were American Societies for Roses (1892), Peonies (1903), and Dahlias (1915). The stage was now set for the creation of an iris society! - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin, 2020; [Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them](#) by Clarence E. Mahan