

TAIS Newsletter

Our 57th year

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Promises Kept'
(Valenzuela, 2007)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2021

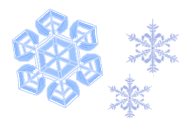
President's Message

Among plenty of other attributes, gardeners have hope, patience, perseverance, hard work, and for me - a bit of luck too. To minimize the luck involved in growing iris, please join us as we kick off the new year with a panel discussion. Learn what works, and doesn't, from some experienced TAIS growers as we're together again on January 8th. There's always room for improvement, so learn and try something different! See you at TBG.

- Kevin Kartchner

"Somewhere along the way, I realized that the new year doesn't begin for me in January. The new and fresh has always come for me in the Fall. Ironically, as leaves are falling like rain, crunching beneath my feet with finality, I am vibrating with the excitement of birth and new beginnings.... My year begins in Autumn."

- Betsy Cañas Garmon, blog post: "On birthday cake and pouring oil"



Inside this issue:

Index to 2021 TAIS Newsletters 2-3

Treasurer's Report 4

Juno or *Scorpiris* Iris article and photos 4

Data Call from the Reblooming Iris Society 5-7

What to do in the Iris Garden for January 8

Iris Limerick, Did You Know? 8

Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History 8

Upcoming Events

Next meeting: Saturday, January 8, 1 PM, TBG - a panel discussion on growing irises in the ground as opposed to in containers. In-person (with masks) & on Zoom

February meeting: TBA

Dues are due this month!

Birthday Wishes to:

Maxine Fifer

Kathy Windischman

Bonnie Else

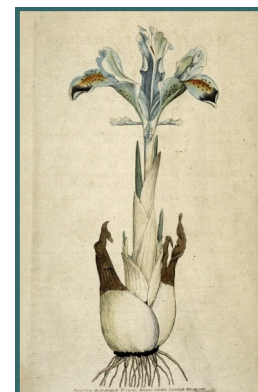
Nancy Hook

Marilyn Jensen

Michael Willing

Whitney Judd

Carol Gawrychowski



Iris persica

Source: The Botanical Magazine vol. 1, no. 1 (1792). Illustration by James Sowerby. Found on Wikipedia.



Index to 2021 TAIS Newsletters

January 2021 – Photo: ‘Scoonchee,’ **Gardening for Wildlife** article and photos, **Species Iris, Part V: Siberian Irises and Their Hybrids** article and photos, blurb on *I. chrysographes*, **Tips:** Clear dried leaves and debris and address crowding to reduce or prevent iris pests and disease; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Botanical Magazines as Agents for Promoting Irises as Garden Plants**, Limerick, Quotes: “Nature dances to a rhythm: In the way the sun rises and sets...” from Magnolia Journal and “Our vision of a celebrity is a transcendent baker or an expert iris grower” from Martha Stewart Living

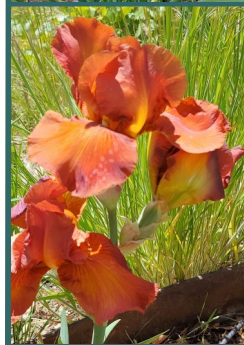
February 2021 – Photo: ‘Great Falls,’ January Meeting Minutes and photos, **More Tips for Flower Photography, Three Types of Irises to Extend the Bloom Season** article and photos, blurb on pollinators as “keystone species,” **Tips:** Start Super Bloom on Dec 15 from Susan and change irrigation timer batteries annually from Joyce; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Pierre-Joseph Redouté and Les Liliacées as promoting irises**, Haiku, Quotes: “Everything that slows us down and forces patience...Gardening is an instrument of grace” by May Sarton and “Be good to yourself. Be excellent to others. Do everything with love” by John Wolf

March 2021 – Photo: IB ‘Eleanor Roosevelt,’ February Meeting Minutes and photos, **Growing Spuria iris – Notes and photos from Jim Hedgecock’s talk, Diane Tweedy’s obituary, Intermediate Bearded (IB) Irises** article and photos, **Growing Irises handout by Kristee West, Tips: median irises are perfect for smaller gardens** – from Kelly Norris; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: plant catalogs as a means of promoting irises**, Haiku, Quotes: “This morning I wished for April But it was still March...” by James Stevenson, *Crocus* and “May the blossoms of springtime give you a sense of hope and great joy...” from Schreiner’s Gardens email

April 2021 – Photo: SPU ‘Sonoran Sunset,’ March Meeting Minutes and photos, **Companion Plants as Helpers** article, **Growing Spuria Irises – notes from Darol Jurn’s presentation, Species Iris, Part VI: Iris pseudacorus & its pseudata hybrids (SpecX)** article and photos, **Preparing iris stalks for a show, blurb on Rooftop irises in Japan and China; Tips:** Welcome Sign, Grass-B-Gone, Blue J Iris Gardens; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Ernst Von Berg from Germany, Marie-Guillaume (Paul) de Bure, and the Dowager Duchess of Portland and English irises**, Limerick, Quotes: “Regardless of the vintage...bearded irises own the scene in April and May...” by Kelly Norris and “...Studies have shown that being around plants can help reduce stress and boost creativity” by Martha Stewart in Living magazine, Jan/Feb 2021

May 2021 – Photo: ‘Blue Magic’ Dutch Iris, **Reports and photos from TAIS Show and Tours, Rooftop Irises in France, Dutch Iris: Iris x hollandica** article and photos, blurb on **planting by the moon** depending on if crops are above or below ground, **Tips:** Shade cloth and a source, spurias make excellent cut flowers, various iris and their flowering times in Chandler; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: 1860’s: horticultural journals, Wm. Robinson, and Veitch Nurseries**, Limerick, Quotes: “May and June. Soft syllables, gentle names for the two best months in the garden year...” by Peter Loewer and “Live in each season as it passes: breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit” by Henry David Thoreau

June 2021 – Photo: rust-colored NOID, May Meeting Minutes and photos, **Photos from April 24 TAIS Garden Tours, Species Iris, Part VII: Pacific Coast Native Iris & Hybrids** article and photos, **An International Iris Exchange**, blurb on **an ancient garden in Sigiriya, Sri Lanka, Tips:** fertilizing and growing tips from Susan Schaefer, bark mulch under pots from Sue; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Peter Barr, House of Vilmorin, Thomas Hogg and Japanese irises**, Limerick, Quotes: “Wisteria woke me this morning, And there was all June in the garden...” by Ann McGough, *Summons* and “Summer makes a silence after spring” by Vita Sackville-West



Index to 2021 TAIS Newsletters, continued

July 2021 – Photo: ‘My Little Wagon,’ photos of Terry Swartz’ Japanese irises, Other Irids: **Ferraria** article and photos, **More photos from TAIS Garden Tours**, blurb on iris are spectacular because their blooms are transient, **Tips:** Susan Schaefer’s potted irises are in plant stands and not on the superheated ground, as well as Susan’s fertilizing regimen; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: 1870s through 1890s: Leichtlin, GB Baker, Goos & Koenemann, and Japanese irises**, Limerick, Quotes: “I drifted into a summer-nap under the hot shade of July, serenaded by a cicadae lullaby...” by Terri Guillemets and “Live in each season as it passes: breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit” by Henry David Thoreau

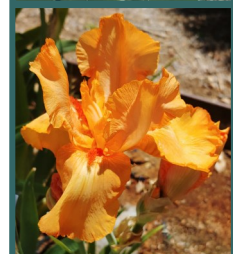
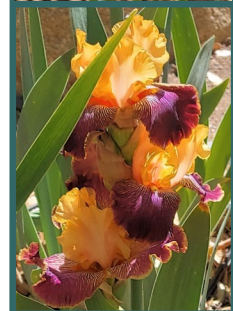
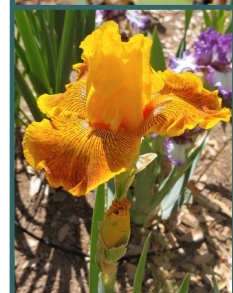
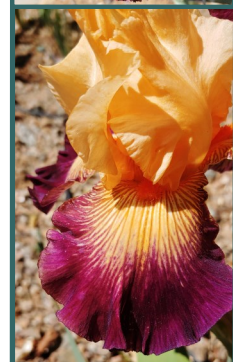
August 2021 – Photo: ‘Doctor Who,’ photos of irises in Prescott, **Species Iris, Part VIII: Iris versicolor & its hybrids** article and photos, **How You Can Help Pollinators** article, blurb on **Point system for garden irises**, **Tips:** How gardening supports well-being; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Sir Michael Foster**, Limerick, Quotes: “The brilliant poppy flaunts her head Amidst the ripening grain, And adds her voice to swell the song That August's here again” by Helen Maria Winslow and “The hum of bees is the voice of the garden” by Elizabeth Lawrence

September 2021 – Photo: ‘Calizona Gold,’ August Meeting and Auction Minutes and photos, **Median Irises, Part I: Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) and Intermediate (IB)** article and photos, blurb on **Chrysanthemums**, **Tips:** “Step over ants...” by Maria iram; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Van Tugergen and Regeliocyclis irises, Eduard von Regel and Regelia irises, and Carl Purdy and California irises**, Limerick, Quotes: “Golden in the garden, Golden in the glen, Golden, golden, golden. September's here again! ...” by Annette Wynne, and “Whatever July and August do not boil, September cannot fry”- a Proverb, two posters for our Rhizome Sale, poster for our Photo Contest

October 2021 – Photo: orange and plum NOID, Report from the Sale, **Handout and notes from Susan and Joyce’s presentation**, photos from the Sale, **Median Irises, Part II: Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB) and Border Bearded (BB)** article and photos, blurb on **petrichor, phenology, and oxygen and plants**, **Tips:** Add 1 T iris fertilizer to the hole when planting iris, the appearance of roots on purchased rhizomes; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: William John Caparne, Arthur John Bliss, R. Irwin Lynch and his History of the Irideae**, Diamonte, Quotes: “October's the month When the smallest breeze...” from Can Teach Songs and “As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas and colors enough to paint the beautiful things I see” by Vincent Van Gogh

November 2021 – Photo: orange NOID, October Meeting Minutes and photo, **Cultivation Notes from Meeting, Winning photos from our 4th annual contest, Iris Color Patterns: Celestar & Ghost Plicata** article and photos, blurb on **using two colors in flower arrangements and how to make them last longer by mixing your own flower preservative**, **Tips:** Labeling tips, Sharpie ink will fade, Kevin tills in compost; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: William Rickatson Dykes**, Limerick, Quotes: “I like spring, but it is too young. I like summer, but it is too proud...” by Lin Yutang and “I saw old Autumn in the misty morn Stand shadowless like Silence, listening To silence...” by Thomas Hood, *Autumn*, 1827

December 2021 – Photo: ‘Stairway to Heaven,’ Potluck: Report and photos, **Species Iris, Part IX: Iris aphylla** article and photos, blurb about **white gardens or moon gardens**, **Tips:** homemade weed killer using vinegar and dish soap; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: William Rickatson Dykes, continued**, Haiku, Quotes: “I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields...” by Louis Carroll in Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There and “A day is eternity’s seed, and we are its gardeners” by Erika Harris



Treasurer's Report for December - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance					\$6,468.54
Date	Paid	MOP	Deposits (Credits)	Expenses (Debits)	
12/29/21		#1924		\$25.00	Region 15 - silent auction
12/29/21		#1925		\$140.00	Region 15 - Septemer sale
Totals			\$0.00	\$165.00	-\$165.00
Ending Balance					6303.54
					12/29/2021

Wishing everyone a safe and happy 2022!

Iris Subgenus: Juno or *Scorpiris*

The Juno irises are a group of about sixty species that grow from bulbs. They were previously assigned to their own genus, but are now reclassified as the subgenus *Scorpiris*. Both names are still used. Junos are native to the Middle East and Central Asia (with the exception of China) and one species hails from the Mediterranean region. The irises are therefore adapted to summers that are hot and dry and winters that are cold and dry. Their growing conditions are quite similar to oncoyclus and regelia irises - the types used to create arilbreds. Junos prefer alkaline soils.

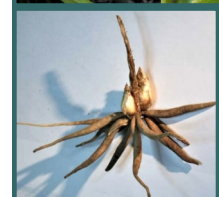
Some species have tall, leafy stems and look something like leeks. Others look like corn plants. The bulbs are typically small. Roots are thick and fleshy (see photo at right) and must be handled with care while out of the ground. It is thought that these roots help the plant to survive during its summer dormant season. Bulbs are best planted fairly quickly so that the roots don't dry out or get damaged.

Junos are deciduous, with leaves sprouting in mid-winter to spring. The two or more sets of leaves may be outlined in white and quite showy. Flowers are fragrant and often bloom before the leaves are fully developed. Standards are typically somewhat small and horizontal or pendulous, while the falls have a ridged crest down their centerline.

In [The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises](#), Geoff Stebbings mentioned that Junos are difficult to grow in garden settings. They must be protected from rains, which cause them to rot when water collects at the base of the large leaves. [Iris bucharica](#) is one species that is easier to acquire and to grow than most Junos. It can be planted outside under a glass roof to protect it from rain. Other names for *I. bucharica* are the Bukhara iris, horned iris, and corn-leaf iris. (See photo of a clump at top). Some other outdoor possibilities are *I. cycloglossa*, *I. magnifica* (buy seeds [here](#) and [here](#)), and *I. orchiodes*. The latter's falls have a channel to direct the pollinators, created by large "wings" on the hafts of the falls. (See bottom photo at right).

Junos prefer being planted about 3 1/2" deep in well-drained soil and sun. If growing them in containers, tall narrow pots will accommodate the fleshy roots. These pots are often called [long toms](#). Moist soil is required during the growing season, as well as a spring dose of slow-release fertilizer or regular applications of liquid fertilizer. Soaker hoses seem best for watering. The aforementioned Geoff Stebbings gardens in England, as did Ellen Willmott. (See her story and an iris named for her on p. 6). It seems that Junos are often grown in bulb frames, greenhouses, and at botanical gardens (including the Chicago Botanic Garden). - SC

Sources: [The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises](#) by Geoff Stebbings, 1997, Timber Press: Portland; AIS Wiki; Wikipedia article on [Iris, subg. Scorpiris](#), Etsy.com, and [ChicagoBotanic.org](#)



From top: *Iris bucharica*, *I. cycloglossa*, *I. magnifica* and its bulbs & roots, *I. orchiodes* (All photos from AIS Iris Wiki)

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 January:

Examine the bases of irises for aphids. Carefully squash them by hand or spray with water, insecticidal soap, or diluted dish soap.

If you are following Susan Schafer's method, begin fertilizing irises weekly with Super Bloom or equivalent (middle number 50 or higher) mixed according to directions on package. If you are following Adam from TBG's method, continue applying fish emulsion every two weeks and humic acid as desired.

Dream about what you want to grow...



Tip Exchange

You can make a worm composting tube in your iris beds or any garden beds. Drill a series of 3/4" holes in the lower 15-18" of a 30" long X 6" wide PVC pipe. Sink the tube into the soil to a depth of about 18". Paint the pipe green or brown if you wish to make it less conspicuous. Cover with a piece of screen or an inverted flower pot. This will keep flies and other pests out of the tube. Remove cover to add scraps of fruits and vegetables from the kitchen - anything you'd add to a regular compost bin. No meat. Add a bit of soil and compost with the scraps initially. Earthworms from the garden will crawl in to eat the scraps and leave to produce a 3-4'-wide zone of fertilized soil around the tube. Stanna Schoeppel from our club uses this method in her iris beds in Tucson. - SC

Source: personal conversation with Stanna Schoeppel and her husband, and "[Learn How to Make a Worm Tube](#)" by Mary H. Dyer

Iris Limerick:

There once was a rhizome so cold
that it dreamed up a plan quite bold:
"In spring I'll not cower -
I'll have a big flower.
And the medal I'll win will be gold!"

- Sue Clark

Did You Know?

The tiny petals that appear below the falls in many of the Juno irises are called **flanges**.

See them in the illustration at the bottom of p. 1 and in photos 1, 3, and 5 on p. 4. Sometimes the flanges look like tridents and sometimes spoons. I could find nothing about their function, and in fact could only find them mentioned in [The World of Irises](#), Chapter 1: Classification. - SC



Iris willmottiana (a Juno)

"One of the worst mistakes you can make as a gardener is to think you're in charge." - Janet Gillespie

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Ellen Willmott (1858-1934) collected and grew over 100,000 plant species and cultivars on her 33-acre property, Warley Place, in Essex, England. Her father purchased this estate in 1875 and the family created its gardens together. On Ellen's 21st birthday, he granted her permission to install a man-made gorge as part of their alpine garden. She inherited the estate upon her father's death. Warley Place featured a conservatory, glass houses, and even a cave made of glass to house filmy ferns. A lake, rock garden, and irrigation system rounded out its repertoire, along with drifts of tens of thousands of daffodils. Sir Michael Foster named a white tall bearded iris after her in 1910 - 'Miss Willmott,' and she used Juno irises as bedding plants.

Following receipt of a large inheritance from her godmother, Ellen purchased estates with extensive gardens in France and Italy. She also funded several plant-collecting expeditions to China and the Middle East. Over 60 plant species, including two new irises, were named after Miss Willmott or her garden, many of which were collected on these expeditions. See photo of one of the irises, above.

Ellen employed 104 male gardeners at Warley Place. She held some strong opinions, including that "Women would be a disaster in the border" and that finding a weed in the border was a just cause for firing the gardener responsible for the offense.

In 1897, Ellen Willmott won the Victoria Medal along with Gertrude Jekyll, and was elected a fellow of the Linnean Society in 1904. Her [Genus Rosa](#), with 132 watercolors by Alfred Parsons, was published in two volumes in 1910 and 1914. Only 260 copies sold, leaving her in the red.

A lifetime of prodigious spending left Ellen nearly bankrupt and she was forced to sell her French and Italian estates, as well as many of her personal effects. As time went on, she became eccentric and paranoid, to the point of booby-trapping her estate and scattering seeds of the giant prickly thistle [Eryngium giganteum](#) in her neighbors' gardens. This sea holly is known as "Miss Willmott's Ghost," as she carried the seeds with her and tossed them at will, presumably with malicious intent! - SC

Sources: "Prologue to 1920," by Bob Pries in *The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES*, AIS Bulletin, 2020; and Wikipedia articles on Ellen Willmott and [Eryngium giganteum](#)