

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 57th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Arab Chief'**  
(Whiting, 1942)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2022

## President's Message

Our auction was amazing, such an impressive turnout and participation. Everyone left with at least one rhizome. Thanks everybody.

Did you notice the beetle car that has replaced the SE shady corner of the iris beds at TBG?

How's the growing? A little rot for me here and there. Dousing with Comet. So much humidity and rain lately. Even one of my indestructible seedlings rotted...no big loss, still have hundreds left. Past time to thin the herd. Ugh.

On the bright side, I'm getting almost daily blooms from 'Hemstitched' and 'Zurich.' Not the most well-formed flowers in this heat, but it helps to be reminded why I expend so many resources on iris. I'm raising monarchs, too.

What have you been waiting for all year? Our rhizome sale, of course. We'll have some great ones from Mid-America Garden. Bring your extras to sell as well. The big show needs your big flowers. See you there.

- Kevin Kartchner

**"There are flowers enough in the summertime, More flowers than I can remember: But none with the purple, gold, and red That dyes the flowers of September!" - Mary Howitt (1799-1888)**

## Inside this issue:

Minutes from the August meeting & auction	2
Photos from the auction and meeting	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Annuals for Tucson gardens - article and photos	4
Preparing Rhizomes for the Sale	5
5th Annual TAIS Photo Contest details	6
What to do in the Iris Garden for September	7
Iris Poem, Did You Know? Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History	7
Flier for our Sale - please forward & distribute	8

## Upcoming Events

**September 17: TAIS Rhizome Sale, 9 AM to noon or whenever we run out of rhizomes, Harlow Gardens nursery. We will set up at 2:30 the afternoon before. Final setup 8-9 AM on September 17th. Members-only hour 8-9 AM on September 17th. Presentation at 10:30 AM: Growing Irises in Containers by Kristee West. Anyone who is donating rhizomes to the sale, including Club Iris increases, please submit the names and approximate count to [taisnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:taisnewsletter@yahoo.com). See p. 5 for instructions about preparing rhizomes for the sale**

**September 22-27: Photos can be submitted for our contest. See p. 6 for contest details**

**September 28-October 1: Voting for the photo contest is open**

**Next meeting: October 8, 1 PM. Murphy-Wilmot Library. Installation of new officers and Photo Contest winners**

## Birthday Wishes to:

**Dorra Bost Carolyn Hatounian Jane Parks**



*Iris ochroleuca*

# August Meeting Minutes



6 August - 30 individuals gathered at the Tucson Botanical Gardens for our annual iris auction, which serves as both a fund-raiser and an opportunity for members to buy new and recent releases with no shipping fees. Five new members joined us and one brought along his elementary-aged daughter, Edie, who won one of the iris door prizes! Other iris door prize winners were Rebecca, Susan (who gave hers to Rebecca), Bonnie, Diane, and Jamie. Thank you to Terry and Bonnie who cleaned out our storage shanty at TBG, washed everything, and packed it into new crates which are now stored in Kevin's garage.

**Show: 22 April.** Terry is organizing a judged show. Sally will secure a room at the library for that date and for set-up the afternoon prior, as well as find out if we can sell potted rhizomes. Things to consider: the judges will need a lunch, so will volunteers. Prizes could include AIS

certificates, ribbons, fertilizer (possible donations from Lowe's, Home Depot, Osmacote...?). Bonnie mentioned that the winners at the Orchid show return their ribbons which are then used the following year. Diane suggested that members might be asked to donate toward prizes for events.

**Sale: 17 September.** Susan passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers. Diane will advertise it on Facebook and make a flier to distribute. Sue will bring our banner. Joyce and Bonnie are waiting to hear if they can help with a dig in Las Cruces, that comes with the possibility of many additional rhizomes for the sale.

**Door prizes:** Susan has more potted irises for the future, and Joyce still has some potted spuria for when they resume growing in the fall.

**Finances:** We discussed raising dues. Other organizations' dues: Prescott Area Iris Society = \$25, Sun Valley Iris Society

= \$25, Rose Society = \$20/household, Family History Society of AZ = \$20 or \$25 for 2+ people in same household. We discussed Iris Bucks: reducing payment of them for donating rhizomes to the sale or possibly suspending their dispersal. Martin motioned that a fiscal or calendar year be designated for memberships, with possible pro-rating during the year. Diane seconded. We will vote on this at our next meeting.

**Positions:** Susan will finish her term as the Membership chair-person, and then we will need a new one. Thank you, Susan, for performing this service for several years!

**Diane Tweedy Memorial Irises:** Each member present received an iris in honor of Diane Tweedy, her life and love of irises, and her friends and family. These were purchased from Mid-America Gardens. Whomever spent the most at the auction got to choose first, and so on.

**Club irises:** 2022 introductions were given to the Board members and chairpersons as Thank You's for their service. Kristee began the Club Iris program while she was president. Recipients tend the plants and may keep one future increase, while all other large-walnut-sized-increases are to be donated to a future sale.

**Auction:** We auctioned off eight rhizomes from Mid-America Gardens and 64 for Region 15. Several inspired *ohhs* as their picture appeared on the screen and there were some spirited bidding battles. Thank you to all of the bidders for your generosity and good humor!

- Sue Clark, secretary

'Turn Back Time' &  
'Flamingo Fever'  
sold for the most



We're on the web:  
[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)



# Photos from the Auction & Meeting in August



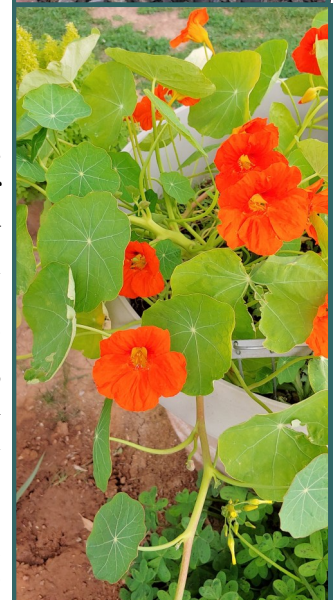
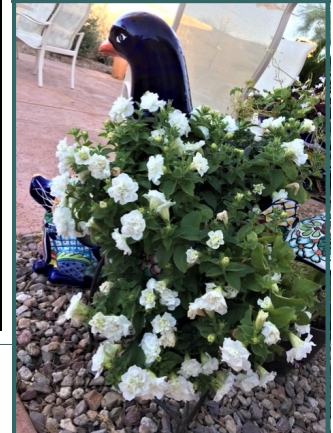
Photos by  
Dave Smith





### Treasurer's Report for August - submitted by Martin Juarez

Beginning Balance					\$4,655.01	
Date	Pd	MOP	Deposits	Expenses		YTD
8/4/2022	X	Cash		\$100.00		Change FOR 8/6 Auction
8/6/2022	X	#1934		\$862.64		Clark - Auction iris'
8/6/2022	X	#1935		\$14.99		Knill - Hospitality
8/10/2022	X	Cash	\$100.00			Change FROM 8/6 Auction
8/16/2022	X	Checks	\$20.00			DUES *
8/16/2022	X	Checks	\$774.00			8/6 Auction **
8/16/2022	X	Cash	\$607.00			8/6 Auction ***
8/16/2022	X	Cash	\$30.00			8/6 Silent Auction
Totals			\$1,531.00	\$977.63	\$553.37	-\$1,095.16
Ending Balance					\$5,208.38	
* Atkinson \$10/#204, Sliffe \$10/#5017						
** Vega \$10/#3144, Swartz \$25/#1194, Pavlovich \$25/#2731, Wilcoxon \$25/#7418, Windischman \$55/#1110, Schaefer \$80/#3745, Else \$87/#708, Kartchner \$100/#6046, Knill \$170/#4989, Juarez(Kelsen) \$197/#113.						
*** \$100 Iris Bucks						



From top: pansies and hyacinths in a bowl, wave petunias (photos by Joyce Knill), nasturtiums, and sweet alyssum (photos by Sue Clark)

### Annuals for the Tucson-area Garden, Part I: Cool-season by Joyce Knill

Now that the brutal heat of the summer is past, it's time to wander the aisles of your favorite nursery in search of the perfect annuals for fall and winter. Whether you plant in ground or in pots, Tucson has many microclimates which should influence your decisions. What may suffer a November freeze in your backyard may bloom all winter in a garden a half mile away. If you aren't sure of your property's minimum winter temperature, check out your neighbors - do they grow citrus or Ironwood trees, or have you seen bougainvillea blooming in December? If yes, then you are probably not in a deep freeze zone.

If planting in ground, adding compost, mulch, and a light sprinkle of fertilizer is the first step. Some annuals are easily grown from seed, such as **snapdragons, poppies, nasturtiums, sweet alyssum, and Johnny Jump Ups**. They will hold up to a light frost. Be sure to water your newly-planted seeds daily until they produce their true leaves, then back down on watering.

If planting in pots, try to replace about half the soil with a good potting mix. This will provide the proper drainage should we receive our winter rains, as well as give new plants a vegetative boost. An ornamental grass planted in the center of a pot surrounded by annuals is attractive through the winter, but **kale** or various **leaf lettuces** can be used as fillers, and are good to eat!

If you are planning for that first frost in November, consider **petunias, pansies, stock, or calendula**, but you may want to purchase these in small nursery pots during October, as they are difficult to start from seed. **Wave Petunias** are sold in pink nursery pots and will quickly spread and bloom through spring. Although bulbs are not considered annuals, most national gardening associations recommend treating **ranunculus** as an annual. These small bulbs perform very well in the Tucson area and should be planted in October for a showy display in the spring.

Fertilize with a balanced liquid fertilizer in September and October. Time-release fertilizer applied in the fall is not as effective as if applied in the spring, as it breaks down too slowly in the cool weather. Your flowers need Nitrogen, so liquid fertilizers are a better choice in the fall.

Most importantly, have fun planning and selecting annuals for a punch of color during the fall and winter months. - JK

Watch for an article on hot-season annuals in an upcoming issue.



## Rhizome Preparation - Pre-sale



- **If you are contributing rhizomes for our Sale, please refer to the preparation instructions in the box below, which are included here with kind permission from Judy Book of one of our sister clubs, the Prescott Area Iris Society. Note: Two exceptions to their directions - our club will *not* be holding a marking party and you are *not required* to write the year of introduction on the leaves.**
- **If your Club Irises have increases whose rhizomes are at least the size of a large walnut in the shell, please bring those to the Sale (keep one for yourself!). This is a minimum size for all of our rhizomes. Anything smaller will be combined with other smaller ones and sold in a bag at a substantially-reduced price.**
- **If you will submit a list of which varieties you intend to bring, we can look up and print out photos of them in advance. Photos help customers choose what to purchase. Please submit the list to [taisnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:taisnewsletter@yahoo.com) at least 2 weeks beforehand if possible. Better yet, submit with photos!**
- **Please deliver your prepared contributions to a club member at Harlow Gardens on Friday, September 16 between 2:30 and 4:00 PM. If this is not possible, arrange to deliver them to a club member in advance. Be sure that the rhizomes are dry or they will rot.**

### Steps for Preparing Rhizomes for the Sales

1. Dig and divide the clump as close to the event as possible or within 7-10 days of the marking party so rhizomes will still look fresh for the sale. Rhizomes should be healthy, showing no signs of disease or insect damage. It is important that the rhizomes be large enough to have the potential of blooming next year. Store the iris in a cool dry area with good circulation.
2. Trim leaves to about 6-8-inches long and into a fan shape (inverted V. See illustration.) Cut roots to 4 inches.
3. On the middle leaf print the required information with a black permanent marker (Sharpie). (See instructions below.)  
Avoid printing on the outside leaf since it is the first to turn brown and fall off.
4. After marking, wash all residual dirt from the rhizomes, roots and leaves. Swishing up and down in a 5-gal bucket of water is recommended. It is important to have clean plants.
5. Optional: Some people soak the rhizomes for 10 to 15 minutes in a bleach solution of 1/2-cup bleach to 1-gal water. If you do this, wear rubber gloves to protect your skin. Afterwards, it is necessary to rinse the irises well in clear water.
6. Let the rhizomes dry completely outside in the shade. Do not bring damp rhizomes to the marking party.
7. When the rhizomes are dry, store in a single layer in a cool, dry place. If the rhizomes are placed in a paper bag or box, the fans should be placed down and the roots up (up-side down) to avoid trapping moisture between the leaves. Never store in plastic bags as it holds moisture and can rot the rhizome.

### \*Marking Rhizomes

Marking pens will be provided. To help both the buyers and the sale workers, please mark the **middle leaf** of the iris as follows:

Rub off the white, waxy coating on the leaf with a paper towel or soft cloth before writing on the leaf.

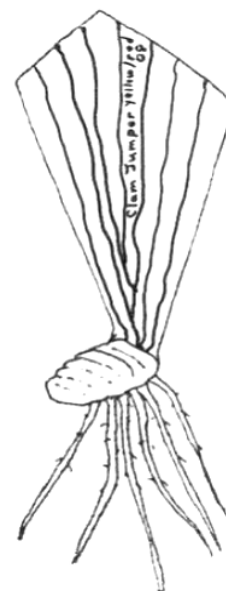
For all iris, write the name and year the iris was introduced. For other than tall bearded, also write the type: MDB, SDB, IB, BB, MTB, etc. Also indicate space age (SA), reblooming (RE)

To locate the year of introduction, use the AIS Iris Encyclopedia: <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view>. All members should learn how to use this valuable tool.

### Storing and Transporting Iris

Put rhizomes of a single variety in a separate box or paper grocery bag, one bag for each variety. (no plastic bags).

Write the name of the iris and the year of introduction on the box or bag.





## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual TAIS Photo Contest

Our contest will be online again this year. Our webmaster, Tim Valenzuela, has graciously agreed to handle submissions. Start searching for your best iris photos now!

### Categories

1. Single iris flower or stalk of irises
2. Macro (very close-up view of an iris)
3. Miscellaneous iris photos: garden, Photoshopped image, etc.



### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

- Current TAIS members may submit up to 15 pictures in groups of 1-3 to [submissions@tucsoniris.org](mailto:submissions@tucsoniris.org). Note: emailing more than three photos at a time may result in the message not going through.
  - Please include three pieces of information for each picture: your name, the category, and the name of the variety pictured. If you do not know the name, label it as a NOID, meaning no ID (no identification).
  - The photos must be in **final form**.
  - All photos must be your own, although they are *not restricted to your own garden*.
  - Please be sure that each photo fits the category that you select for it.
  - Winning entries from previous years are ineligible.
  - Submissions will be accepted between September 22 and 27.
  - Help make this a fun and successful event by participating!

### VOTING

- TAIS members may vote for **three photos per category** (for a total of nine votes) by submitting to [taisnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:taisnewsletter@yahoo.com). See all photos at [www.tucsoniris.org](http://www.tucsoniris.org). Please consider the *quality* of the photos (focus, composition, etc.), rather than the beauty of the iris(es) featured.
- Votes will be accepted from September 28 to October 1.

**Winning photos in each category will be featured during our October meeting.**



## 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 September:

Plant rhizomes starting late this month through October. Aim for at least six weeks before frost. Soak rhizomes for 30 min in water to rehydrate them. Sterilize new rhizomes for 5-10 minutes in a solution of 2 1/4 c water and 1/4 c bleach. There are two strategies for dried roots - keep them to stabilize the rhizome or remove them to allow the rhizome to contact the soil. **For planting in the garden:** Choose a spot that will receive afternoon shade *during the summer*. Good drainage is essential, as is good air circulation! Remember that block walls radiate lots of heat, which can be harmful. Dig a hole with enough depth so that the top of the rhizome will be buried about 2" to prevent rot caused by sun damage. Alternatively, some people prefer to leave the surface of the rhizome exposed. Leave a mound of soil in the center of the hole and fan any remaining roots over it. Press soil firmly over rhizome to remove any air pockets. Drip lines appear to be the best way to water irises in the desert. Emitters with adjustable flow will give you the most control. I use Raindrip Adjustable Full Circle Stream Bubblers. - SC



## Tip Exchange

Consider filling in bare spots in the garden with flowering annuals. They provide a long season of glorious color. Several will reseed themselves. Try pansies & bachelor buttons for the cool season. Some options for the hot season: zinnias, celosia, marigolds, sunflowers, nicotiana, & portulaca. - SC

Source: O F Almanac e-mail of [5 Aug 2022](#) & Joyce!

## Iris Poem:

Hooray, hooray! It's time for the sale!  
We can get more irises  
without waiting for mail!

We'll plant and we'll wait  
Till an April-like date,  
When masses of flowers we'll hail!

- Sue Clark

## Did You Know?

In a [post on World of Irises](#) blog, Jeff Bennett recommends potting all new irises as soon as they arrive or are purchased, unless beds are ready. After scanning them for any issues such as rot or bugs, he plants rhizomes in one-gallon nursery pots using good potting soil containing time-release fertilizer. He uses Moisture Control Miracle-Gro potting soil. Be sure to label the plants. Place pots where they can get some sun and water them once or twice a week. Jeff feels that the rhizomes can begin growing right away and that he can keep a closer eye on potted rhizomes. Transfer to beds or larger pots at appropriate planting time for your area. - SC

"When summer gathers up her robes of glory, and like a dream of beauty glides away." - Sarah Helen Power Whitman

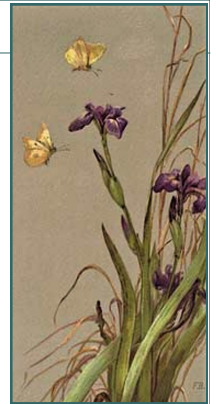
## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Much work had preceded the meeting which founded the American Iris Society. Besides several articles in horticultural journals and popular magazines, and the letter sent out to 400 horticulturalists by Henry Gleason, another important preparatory item was the drafting of a preliminary constitution for the Society. John Wister and Frank Presby, who was both a businessman and a horticulturalist, considered the legal and business aspects of the enterprise and drafted such a document, which was refined and polished during the meeting.

Many of the attendees were devoted fans of peonies, including Bertrand Farr who had an iris and peony nursery in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, Mrs. E. Harding who had just published a book on peonies, and Professor A. P. Saunders who taught chemistry at Hamilton College and edited the bulletin of the Peony Society. The Professor took the minutes at the iris meeting. Farr had led the establishment of peony trial gardens at Cornell University, as well as tackled and defeated the tangled mess of peony names, after which the plants could be "vigorously promoted" as garden flowers. The general feeling was that things that had been learned in this process could now be applied to irises - distinctive names, trial gardens, checklists, and a society, to name a few aspects.

It was decided that the Iris Trial Gardens would be located in Bronx Park, rather than at Cornell University. These were to be managed by Ethel Peckham, who later edited the Society's iris checklists of 1929 and 1939. Robert Sturtevant was elected AIS secretary, and he, Professor Saunders and Professor Beal of Cornell University completed the AIS Constitution. They decided that there should be six Regions of AIS, each led by a Regional Vice President. B. Y. Morrison was chosen as the first RVP of the Eastern States Region and John Wister as the first President of AIS, a role he held for 14 years. The newly-created American Iris Society was publicized via several articles written by Robert Sturtevant, and it quickly grew to over 250 charter members, all "thoughtful, industrious types." - SC

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





# 2022 Annual Iris Rhizome Sale

**Saturday, September 17**

**9 a.m. to noon**

**Harlow Garden Center**

**5620 E. Pima St.**

**Fundraiser for the Tucson Area Iris Society**  
*(Come early for best selection. Supply limited!)*



Special free  
presentation at  
10:30 a.m. on  
Growing Iris In  
Containers