

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 58th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



## President's Message

I'm enjoying our great rains lately, although I could do with a little less cold. Though the rains started a bit late, we might yet get a good wildflower crop this spring. My African Daisies are still okay through the low 20s every morning this week.

There is always something to learn at our meetings. We are fortunate this month to have hybridizer Chad Harris speaking to us.

As always, keep doing whatever you do for fabulous blooms for our April Show.

- Kevin Kartchner

### 'Backdraft' (Stout 2009)

Haas Chapel Garden,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2022

*"Today is the first of February, snowy, brilliant, but dripping with the sound of spring wherever the sun lies warm, and calling with the heart of spring yonder where the crows are assembling. There is spring in the talk of the chickadees outside my window, and in the cheerful bluster of a red squirrel in the hickory." - Dallas Lore Sharp, The Atlantic Monthly, February 1908*

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## Upcoming Events

**Next meeting: February 11, 1 PM, Chad Harris of Mount Pleasant Iris Farm, Zoom presentation on hybridizing Japanese Irises. Murphy-Wilmot Library**

**March 11 meeting: 1 PM at the Ward 6 Council offices, 3202 E 1st St (south of Speedway, east of Tucson Blvd. - note different location). Topic: AIS Show information**

**April 22: TAIS Iris Show**

### Birthday Wishes to:

**Sam Wymer  
Shirley Andrews  
Stanna Schoepel  
Candace Pappas**

**Dave Smith  
Sue Clark  
Maureen Kelly  
Thomas Modaff**

**David Sliffe  
Barb Nicholson  
Marie Radecki**



*Iris variegata*

# January Meeting Minutes



14 Jan 2023 - 21 members met at the Columbus-Eckstrom Library to hear TAIS President Kevin Kartchner speak about iris color patterns and forms. (See p. 5). Kevin, Cindy Long, and Sue Clark won door prizes of named iris varieties.

Kevin reminded everyone that annual dues were due at the beginning of the year. It was suggested that the membership form be updated to include a spot to mark if someone *does not* wish to have their contact information shared with other members. That would allow our contact list to be distributed within our club.

Finding a room for meetings has been more problematic lately. Cindy offered to ask her church if we might meet there sometimes.

Kevin requested that everyone who received a Diane Tweedy Memorial Iris please email him photos of its flowers this spring.

**Auction:** Sally will call TBG for a room. Kathleen and the Hospitality Crew will be in charge of the event.

**Sale:** Sally will book this with Debbie at Harlow's. Kevin will lead the event and **needs a co-chair**.

**Photo Contest:** Kathleen will count the votes.

**Show:** April 22 - Terry will chair this event with Bonnie as co-chair.

He explained the Schedule, which contains the rules and a list of categories, amongst other information. The three broad categories are horticulture (the irises: TB, AB, etc), arrangements (RSVP necessary to allow for adequate space), and [English Box](#) (a specialized grouping of six iris flowers). Terry has made plans for the local Ohara Ikebana Society to display arrangements that will include irises from his garden. Taffy and Sally will handle Entry and Placement duties. Pat and Diane will be Clerks. Publicity will be by Diane and Sally. Set-up and Take-down will be a group effort. **Still needed: a Hospitality chair and helper(s) to provide coffee and pastries for exhibitors and judges and a light breakfast and lunch for the judges (all reimbursable).** Kevin will inventory our AIS tag supply and Terry will order the AIS prize ribbons and rosettes. Sally will call the Wilmot Library on Jan 22 for the Apr 22 room reservation. She will inquire about access to the room the afternoon before for set-up and about early entrance on the day of the Show. Our March meeting will feature someone to explain details

about displaying irises in an AIS-sanctioned show so that everyone feels more comfortable with the how-to's. - SC

## Board Meeting: (14 people present)

Sue will ask Tim to update the calendar on our website. Diane will ask Martin to add her to the Facebook page administration so that she can keep the calendar there current. Next month, we'll be at the Wilmot library, then in March, we'll meet at the [Ward 6 offices](#) (3202 E 1st Street across from the Loft Cinema and behind Walgreens). Our speaker will be Chad Harris of Mount Pleasant Iris Farm via a Zoom session, which Sue will set up. Kevin requested approval to spend \$100 on additional baskets and bins for rhizomes at the Sale. Sue motioned and Taffy seconded. He reminded the four officers that they must be AIS members, and that it will be reimbursed by TAIS (\$15). Kevin will print new nametags as needed. The plastic holders can be freed up by removing nametags of former members. The Hospitality Crew will be in charge of nametags. Region 15 has asked TAIS to host the Fall Trek in 2024. This was tabled until we see how we do managing our upcoming show. Jim has access to our bank account now and is moving forward with the Treasurer's position. This position has the most difficult transition because of the bank.

Kevin brought an 'Autumn Breeze' that is blooming now. His 'Zurich' bloomed for five months straight from August through December. He also brought some orchids to show. Susan has 'Zurich' and 'Sparks' blooming now. - Sue Clark, secretary

**OUR 2023  
THEME: IT'S  
SHOW TIME!**



**We're on the web:**

**[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)**

# January Meeting



Photos by  
Dave Smith



## Treasurer's Report for January - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

Beginning balance	1 Jan 2023	7203.95
INCOME	dues	491.00
	TOTAL	7694.95
EXPENSES	potting soil	16.18
	turkey	13.87
	web master	500.00
	rhizomes	100.00
	office supplies	1.40
	AIS membership	15.00
	stamps	6.30
	<u>petty cash</u>	<u>8.70</u>
	TOTAL	661.45
CHECKBOOK balance		7033.50
	petty cash	8.50
	<b>TAIS WORTH</b>	<b>7042.20</b>



Above: *Iris gracilipes* f. *alba* (Keeping It Green Nursery Website). It bears numerous thumbnail-sized flowers from April through June.



## Species Irises, Part XVI: Crested Iris - the final four species

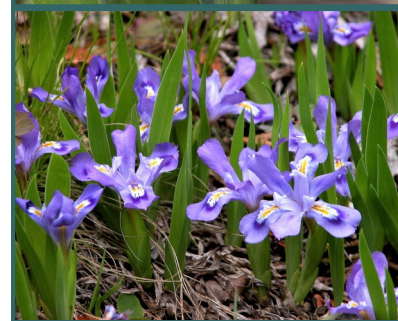
This month, we'll take a look at the remaining species of Crested iris. The first of these is the Taiwan iris, *Iris formosana*. It originates in northeastern Taiwan, where it grows at forest margins and on hills and mountainsides from 1600-3300' in elevation. Its 3-4" flowers come in whites and shades of pale purples and blues. (See photo at top right). This is another iris for the greenhouse since it will tolerate no frost and since it prefers to be shady and moist during the growing season.

The Japanese Dwarf Iris, *I. gracilipes* or *I. henryi* is hardy in Zones 4-9. It is covered in dainty bluish-purple, white, or yellow flowers the size of a thumbnail. (See photos). Foliage is grass-like and deciduous. This plant prefers partial shade with moist, humus-rich soil. Keeping It Green Nursery in Washington sells [purple](#), [purple with double flowers](#), and [white](#) varieties. They advise not letting it get crowded out by larger plants.

The last two species of Crested irises are native to North America. *I. cristata* (from the Latin *crista*, meaning crested), is also known as the Dwarf Crested Iris. It grows in woodlands and along hills, mountains, and streams in the eastern, north-central, and southeastern United States. I found it interesting that this iris only grows south of the maximum reach of the last ice sheet to cover parts of North America during the Wisconsin glaciation of about 11,000 years ago (although this was not expanded upon in the Wikipedia article, just noted). *I. cristata* is hardy in Zones 3-9. Like all irises, it prefers well-drained humus-rich soils and is poisonous. Unlike most, it does best in semi-shade. The 1-2" flowers may be white or shades of purple and blue, and rarely pink. (See photo). *I. cristata* grows from rhizomes and spreads by both stolons (runners) and seeds, making it useful as a ground cover in the right conditions. Plants are available [here](#) and [here](#).

*I. lacustris* (from the Latin *lacus*, meaning lake), is also called the Dwarf Lake Iris. It is found along the shores of the Great Lakes in both Canada and the United States, in areas that were glaciated. It is hardy in Zones 4-7 and is the state wildflower of Michigan, where it is protected due to habitat loss. *I. lacustris* has one or two 2" flowers per plant during the bloom season, and often reblooms in the fall. Leaves are about 2" long and grow to 6" after flowering. This plant and *I. cristata* were thought to be the same species, but have been found to have different chromosome counts. And *I. lacustris* blossoms a week to ten days earlier than *I. cristata*. A white form is occasionally seen. - SC

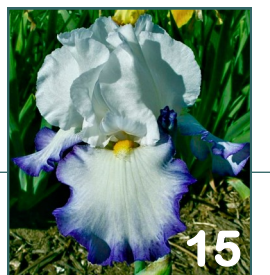
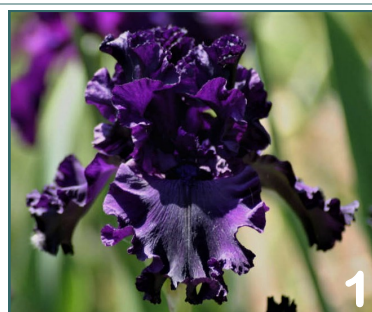
Sources: Wikipedia articles on [Iris formosana](#), [Iris henryi](#) (*Iris gracilipes*), [Iris cristata](#), and [Iris lacustris](#); Keeping It Green Nursery [website](#); North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox article on [Iris cristata](#); Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder article on [Iris cristata](#); SIGNA: The Species Iris Group of North America; Buy Perennials Online [website](#); TN Nursery [website](#); and [Iris lacustris](#) ([usda.gov](#))



From top: *Iris formosana* (by Suchihfen on iNaturalist), *I. gracilipes* (Keeping It Green website), *I. cristata* (Native Wildflowers website), and *I. lacustris* (by Joel Trick, USFWS)

### Iris Color Patterns - a review

1. **Self** - standards and falls are the same color ('All Night Long')
2. **Bicolor** - standards and falls are different colors ('Rebel Rouser')
3. **Amoena** (ah-MEE-nah): standards are white and falls are another color ('Around My World')
4. **Reverse Amoena** - falls are white and standards are another color ('Belgian Princess')
5. **Bitone** - standards and falls are different shades of the same color, with the standards being lighter ('About Town')
6. **Reverse Bitone** - standards and falls are different shades of the same color, with the falls being lighter ('Orange Temptation')
7. **Neglecta** - a special coloration of bitone, with lighter blue or purple standards and darker blue or purple falls ('Northwest Passage')
8. **Reverse Neglecta** - a special coloration of bitone, with darker blue or purple standards and lighter blue or purple falls ('Crowned Heads')
9. **Variegata** - a special coloration of bicolor, with yellow standards and red, maroon, or brown falls ('Kathy Chilton')
10. **Blend** - two or more colors are intermingled on the standards and falls. Common in Japanese irises (TB 'Cranfils Gap')
11. **Plicata** - light-colored falls are edged in a darker color in a stippled, dotted, or stitch-like pattern. Standards may also be edged in a similar fashion, Plicatas come in all colors ('Mariposa Autumn')
12. **Luminata** - the flower seems to glow from within. Falls are light-colored with a darker color washed over it ('Volcanic Glow')
13. **Glaciata** - bright, glowing irises of white, yellow, orange, or pink with no purple anthocyanin pigment ('Snow Lion')
14. **Broken Color** - an irregular pattern of color streaked or splashed across the standards and falls ('Cheetah Cheese')
15. **Emma Cook** - falls have a darker ring of blue or purple around a white center ('Queen's Circle') - SC



## TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2023

Kevin Kartchner - President

David Sliffe - Vice President

Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account

Jim Wilcoxon – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary

Diane Pavlovich & Sally Vega - Programs & Publicity

Cindy Long, Linda Briggs, Kathleen Marron,  
and Evelyn Jacobs - Hospitality

Bonnie Else and Susan Schaefer - Door Prizes

Taffy Holvenstot - Membership

Dave Smith - Photographer

Sue Clark - Newsletter

## What to do in the Iris Garden in February:

From January through April, iris plants put up 90% of their growth, so they need more water during this active growth period.  
- from Darol Jurn

If you are following Susan Schaefer's method, fertilize 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 organic method, continue applying fish emulsion every two weeks and humic acid as desired.

Remove dead leaves, debris, and any aphids.



## Tip Exchange

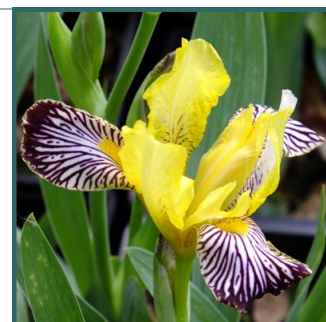
If the soil around irises is wet, such as during our recent rainy winter, Susan Schaefer waits until it dries out a bit before she fertilizes with liquid fertilizer. Waiting a few days or a week to fertilize won't be detrimental to future flowering.

Crafton Hills Iris Farm in California is open for sales via their [website](#). Shop early for best selection. They offer many rhizomes in the \$8-\$10 range, including one of my favorites, 'Queen's Circle.' - SC

## Iris Limerick:

There was a young lady from Leigh  
Who loved to say "Fiddle-dee-dee."  
Her soil was grand  
Since she added sharp sand,  
And her irises grew tall as a tree.

- Sue Clark



*Iris variegata*

Source: Dorset Perennials

## Did You Know?

"Humus is the dark organic matter in soil that is formed by the decomposition of plant and animal matter...It is rich in nutrients and retains moisture in the soil." Humus comes from the Latin *humus*, meaning soil or ground. It can also refer to compost collected from woodlands or other sources. "Humus is different from decomposing soil organic matter. The latter looks rough and has visible remains of the original plant or animal matter. Fully humified humus...has a uniformly dark, spongy, and jelly-like appearance, and is amorphous; it may gradually decay over several years or persist for millennia. It has no determinate shape, structure, or quality." Source: Wikipedia article on Humus

"Surely as cometh the Winter, I know there are Spring violets under the snow." - R. H. Newell (1836-1901), American poet

## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

My eye was recently caught by an article titled "The Tall Bearded Iris, a Manufactured Marvel." How intriguing. Even though I understand that idea on some level, the title laid it out so boldly - and rather bluntly.

Many wild irises are native to Europe and Eurasia, in lands 35° to 50° north of the equator. Irises are mentioned in Greek and Roman records as being used in medicine and for scent. In northern Italy, irises were cultivated to be ground into orris root for use in perfume.

Two species were crucial to the development of the Tall Bearded iris, *Iris variegata* and *I. pallida*. Carolus Linnaeus named and described *I. variegata* in 1753. This species displays lovely, colorful flowers on a plant about the size of a modern border bearded iris (16-27"). Standards can be yellow or tan, with falls of purple, bronze, or reddish, which may be veined or solidly-colored. See photo above. *I. variegata*, also known as the Hungarian iris, is native to central and southern Europe, including the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, the Balkans, Romania, and Bulgaria. These areas have cold, snowy winters and rainy summers. *I. variegata* is deciduous, with its leaves dying back in winter.

The other foundational species for Tall Bearded irises, *I. pallida*, was named and described by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck in 1789. Its traits incline to the opposite of *I. variegata*: it is tall and hails from areas with very hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters (Greece and the Balkans). Leaves tend toward looking shabby in summer and perky in winter. Flowers are a uniform pale bluish-purple. This is the plant grown in Italy for orris root.

Because both species grow in the southern part of Austria and the spine of the Balkan peninsula, they cross-pollinate to create natural hybrids. A couple species that are closely-related to *I. pallida*, namely *I. cengialtii* (a subspecies of *I. pallida* named after Mount Cengialto in northern Italy) and *I. illyrica* (the Illyrian iris from the Balkans), also contributed to the "genetic background of the first wave of catalogued irises." More on the Manufactured Marvels next month! - SC

Source: "The Tall Bearded Iris, a Manufactured Marvel," by Phil Edinger in *The Early Years - Supplement I of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin, 2020*; Wikipedia