

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 58th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**AB 'Shaman's Magic'**  
(Tasco 2014)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2023

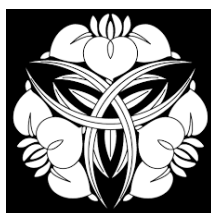
## President's Message

Wow! Sale of this century. It was only 11:30 AM and we looked at each other in disbelief as we were sold out of rhizomes. I was telling our customers they should have arrived earlier to pick from 1,000 rhizomes. Only later when I added up all our rhizome purchases and donations did I realize I was not exaggerating. And a little TAIS history: on 9/11/23 our first credit card transaction of \$5 went to our bank account. We were expecting a handful of card purchases at the sale. 56 card swipes and over \$3000 later and we are firmly in the card business. The total sales amount was just over \$6,000. Thank you, thank you to all the volunteers for your ideas, time, rhizomes, and especially our customers. - Kevin Kartchner

**“O** suns and skies and clouds of June, And flowers of June together, Ye cannot rival for one hour October's bright blue weather; ... When comrades seek sweet country haunts, By twos and twos together, And count like misers, hour by hour, October's bright blue weather. O sun and skies and flowers of June, Count all your boasts together, Love loveth best of all the year October's bright blue weather.” - Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885), from “October's Bright Blue Weather”

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## Upcoming Events

**October 1-3: Vote in our photo contest - 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 click on pictures to reveal full image**

**October 7: Iris dig at Tucson Botanical Gardens, 9 - 11 AM. [RSVP](#)**

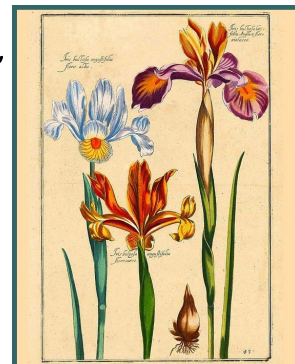
**Next meeting: October 14, 1 PM, Columbus-Eckstrom Library. Photo contest winners revealed**

**October 14: [Master Gardeners Plant & Garden-Art Sale](#), 8-11 AM, Demonstration Garden: 4210 N. Campbell. [List of available plants](#)**

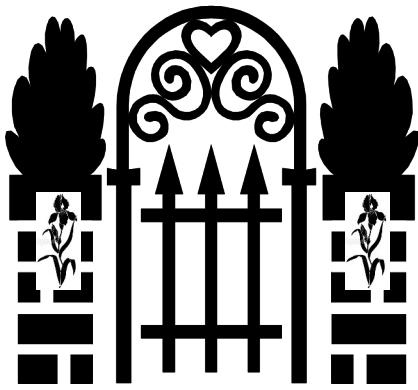
**October 22: Hybridizer David Toth talk, Valley Garden Center, 1809 N. 15th Ave, Phoenix, 2 PM. See map [here](#)**

## Birthday Wishes to:

<b>Jeff Atkinson</b>	<b>Linda Briggs</b>	<b>Faith Holland</b>
<b>Sally Vega</b>	<b>Melania Kutz</b>	<b>Howard Crawford</b>
<b>John Scire</b>	<b>Tony Kutz</b>	<b>Pam McConaughy</b>
<b>Barbara Barnes</b>	<b>Terry Swartz</b>	<b>Sheila Barry-Harris</b>
<b>Mary Ann Albano</b>	<b>Glenn Summers</b>	



# Report from the Sale



We ♥ Irises

15 and 16 September — Another successful Rhizome Sale! Several members helped set everything up on Friday afternoon at Harlow’s Garden nursery. Kevin was chairperson this year, and was assisted by Joyce and Bonnie. He and Sue each ordered \$600 in rhizomes for the sale. His half (115) were from Sutton’s and my half (140) were from Mid-America. Additional rhizomes were donated by Kevin, Cathy, Diane, Susan, Terry, Linda, Cindy, and non-member Louise Grabell from Saddlebrook, who each received \$2 in Iris Bucks for every named variety. NOIDs were welcomed and were marketed as “landscape irises.” These increased our earnings substantially! Harlow’s is always generous and in addition to letting us use their space, allows us to borrow their tables to supplement our own, as well as highlights our sale in their weekly email blast.

Members-only discount

hour was from 8-9 AM on Saturday, as well as some final set-up. Rhizomes cost \$8, or buy five and get one free. Members paid \$7. This was the first event in which our new Square device was utilized - now we can accept credit card charges.

Helpers not already mentioned included Cathy, Kathleen W., Sam, Jim, Kristee, Cindy, Martin, Kathleen M., Pat, Susan, Pam, Mary Ann, and Rebecca. If I neglected to mention the name of any of our excellent volunteers, I apologize.

Fifteen rhizomes were pulled from the Auction and Mid-America Sale orders to give as Club Irises to the Board members as a thank you for their service to TAIS this year. We request that increases from Club Irises be donated to future TAIS rhizome sales, with one to be kept by the TAIS member/grower. - Sue Clark, secretary



**POTLUCK AT  
BONNIE'S -  
NOV 11, NOON**



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



From top: Kevin’s car was stuffed to the gills with the rhizomes he ordered and the ones he donated. (Top two photos by Kevin). Past-President Kristee instructed an audience as to the best ways to grow irises in containers in the desert. (Bottom two photos by Martin). More Sale pictures on p. 3-4.

# Photos from the Rhizome Sale - by Joyce Knill



# More Photos from the Rhizome Sale - by Joyce Knill



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

Beginning balance (1 Sep 2023) 5912.33

SEP INCOME	THIS MO.	YEAR TO DATE
Dues-----	45.00-----	801.00
Plant Sales-----	6219.86-----	6219.86
Show (plant sales) -----	0.00-----	425.16
Auction-----	0.00-----	0.00
Donation-----	0.00-----	0.00
Other-----	0.00-----	0.00
<b>TOTAL-----</b>	<b>6264.86-----</b>	<b>7446.02</b>

SEP EXPENSES	THIS MO	YEAR TO DATE
Program-----	0.00-----	0.00
Plant (etc) purchases--	600.00-----	1559.73
Show--(misc)-----	0.00-----	362.90
Food, (etc)-----	0.00-----	384.87
Admin-----	0.00-----	642.70
Sale supplies-----	224.42-----	224.42
<b>TOTAL-----</b>	<b>824.42-----</b>	<b>3174.62</b>

Ending balance (25 Sep 2023) -----11,307.77

Petty Cash-----+8.70

**Net Worth-----11,316.47**

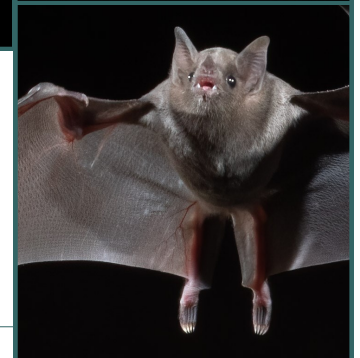
1 JAN 2023 checkbook balance 7023.95

25 Sep 2023 11,307.77

YTD CHANGE +4283.82



Above: Mexican long-nosed bat coated in pollen (from [SlantedMedia](#)). The leaf-like structure on the nose is thought to aid in echolocation, the ability of many types of bats to emit ultrasonic sounds to produce echoes and receive, in turn, information about their surroundings as they fly in the dark.



## Pollinator of the Month, Part VI - Bats

There are more than 1,400 species of bats, making them the second-largest mammal group after rodents. Bats comprise approximately 20% of mammalian species. They were referred to as *fluttermice* in Old English and old Germanic languages, with the word *bat* first recorded in 1570. Bats do not fossilize well since their skeletons are rather delicate, so it is not quite known when they developed. The oldest-known bat fossils date to the early Eocene, about 52 million years ago, and were found in the Green River Formation of Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah.

Like hummingbirds, bats can enter a state of torpor, which reduces their energy consumption by 50-99%. Torpor is necessary because bats use high amounts of energy when feeding, they depend on unreliable food sources, and they have little ability to store fat. They might enter torpor if they are too hot or too cold and when hibernating.

Many bats are insectivores, but some eat nectar, pollen, and fruit, and they transport pollen from one flower to another in the process. This type of bat is referred to as a *nectivore*. Because they eat fruit, they also spread seeds. About 500 species of flowering plants depend on pollination by bats, and thus bloom at night when bats are out and about. Many tropical plants are pollinated solely by bats, and numerous plants here in the southwest are bat-pollinated. Nectar-eating bats have elongated muzzles and long tongues. Some of the latter are so lengthy that they curl up inside the rib cage.

There are at least 28 species of bats in Arizona, including two of the three nectar-eating bats in the United States - the lesser long-nosed bat and the Mexican or greater long-nosed bat. Both live in southern Arizona during the early spring and summer when they give birth to and raise their pups. Females usually have a single pup per year. Both species pollinate columnar cacti such as **saguaro**, **cardon**, and **organ pipe**, as well as **agaves**. Biologists have estimated that these plants would decrease by 97% without the efforts of bats. The Mexican long-noses frequent other plants as well, including certain flowering trees and shrubs. Pollen provides needed protein for bats. They are also well known as nighttime robbers of hummingbird feeders throughout southern Arizona. Bonnie from our club has caught them in that very act at her feeders. They cannot hover, so they fly up, slurp the nectar, and then fall away. The bats spend their days in caves near Tucson. Lesser long-noses are about 3" long with a 14" wingspan. They weigh about an ounce, as much as a pencil. Mexican long-nosed bats are endangered due to habitat loss and vandalism of their roosting caves.

Show bats some love, by leaving them alone and by growing some of their favorite plants. - SC

Source: Wikipedia articles: [Bat](#) and [Greater long-nosed Bat](#), UA Cooperative Extension [article on Bats](#), and [Nectar Feeding Bats! - Foothills Clusters Wildlife](#)

From top: Three lesser long-nosed bats - note pollen dusting head and feet, sharp teeth for eating pollen, long tongue for eating nectar (from Foothills Clusters article), and a Mexican long-nosed bat feeding (Pinterest, [by Paul Bratescu \(@Bratescu\)](#))



## 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 during October:

[Divide](#) and plant iris rhizomes early this month, if you have not already done so. This will allow roots to establish before it gets cold.

Be sure that the plants get enough water, since they will be growing and increasing until next bloom time. Soil should be damp, but not moist. Use a moisture meter or finger to determine if soil is dry 2" below surface. Water if so. Do not water from overhead if it is above 85° though, or the rhizomes may rot. **Give soil around each rhizome a dose of fertilizer - either [Schreiner's](#) or balanced.** Water it in.

Keep area free of weeds, leaves, and pests.



## Tip Exchange

Biologists who research mosquitos offer the following tips - wear light clothing because mosquitos are more attracted to dark colors, wear long sleeves [and long pants], and use DEET, which they report is safe when applied as directed (and it also repels ticks). Studies indicate that coconut-scented soaps deter the insects. You may need to try other soaps if the coconut doesn't work, as it's the combination of personal skin smell and soap that either attracts or deters mosquitos. - SC

Source: "[You Really are a Mosquito Magnet.](#)" National Geographic email newsletter of 17 June 2023

## Limerick:

There once was a man named Matt  
Who went out of his way to see bats.  
He grew saguaros for their flowers,  
Watched through the night hours,  
And caught lots of glimpses of bats.

- Sue Clark

## Did You Know?

In a 1928 issue of *National Geographic*, a woman named Margaret Bodine was reported to be feeding hummingbirds. Inspired by this, Lawrence Webster of Cambridge, Massachusetts called upon colleagues at MIT to manufacture a blown-glass feeder to his specifications. The Websters hung 30 feeders in their extensive flower beds, and ruby-throated hummingbirds appeared in droves. After this feeder was featured in the August 1947 issue of *National Geographic*, readers began clamoring for feeders that they could buy to attract hummingbirds to their own gardens. Mr. Webster had 1000 more feeders made, which he sold for \$10 each. In 1950, Audubon Novelty Company released the first commercially-available hummingbird feeder and called it "the Webster Hanging Feeder." At \$3 each, they sold out within a month. Later, the Hummingbird Market of Tucson had them re-made and offered them for \$50 each. Although the hummers loved them, they dripped, were hard to clean, and the bees loved the easy access to the nectar. Source: "[Webster Hummingbird Feeder](#)" article from the website of the Hummingbird Market of Tucson, Arizona. Their [blog](#) includes many hummingbird-related articles.



*Iris mesopotamica*

Source: World of Irises blog entry of 8 Jan 2018

**"After the keen still days of September, the  
October sun filled the world with mellow warmth..."**

- Elizabeth George Speare

## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

We have been examining the ways that the typical garden irises of the late 1800's, namely *Iris pallida* and *I. variegata*, were improved upon by crossing them with various species of wild irises to increase their size, height, branching, and flowering. We've looked at *I. cypriana*, *I. kashmiriana*, and *I. trojana*, and now we turn our eye toward *I. mesopotamica*.

Michael Foster was the first to use *I. mesopotamica* in breeding. W. R. Dykes noted that this plant was imported from Mardin in eastern Turkey, a place with very hot, dry summers and snowy winters. Dykes mentioned that he struggled to keep *mesopotamica* alive in his garden, whose British climate was decidedly un-Turkey-like. In 1906, a hybrid of it and *I. pallida* 'Dalmatica' was exhibited by Dykes' colleague J. W. Marshall. This hybrid, '[Carthusian](#),' appeared in catalogs in both England and the United States into the 1920's.

Jennett Dean of California fared much better than Dykes. In her 1914 catalog, she described *I. mesopotamica* as an exceptionally strong grower, with massive flowers on 4-5' stems. She introduced the first cross of *I. mesopotamica* in the U.S., '[San Gabriel](#)' (1921), which still thrives throughout southern California. It smells like lilacs to match its lilac-colored blooms.

William Mohr and Sidney Mitchell also had great success using *I. mesopotamica* as a parent, leading eventually to better blues, darks, and blue-bearded irises, as well as the first winner of the Dykes Medal, the iris '[San Francisco](#)' (1927).

'Ricardi' is another mystery iris. Although Dykes believed it to be a form of *I. mesopotamica*, others thought it was a form of *I. cypriana*. It was collected near Jerusalem and sent to a Mons. Ricard in France. He gave it to his friend Fernand Denis, who named it '[Ricardi](#)' (1913) and grew it in his garden on the sunny Mediterranean coast. Denis crossed 'Ricardi' with various colors of diploid irises to create "a race of giants." These were used as parents by other breeders including Lionel Millet and Dr. Kleinsorge. Many 'Ricardi' offspring sported rather rectangular flowers with drooping falls, but Millet's '[Souvenir De Loetitia Michaud](#)' (1923) changed this with its more compact shape and bit of flare. The pale blue Dykes winner '[Helen McGregor](#)' (Graves 1946) came from the 'Ricardi' line. - SC

Sources: "The Tall Bearded Iris, a Manufactured Marvel," by Phil Edinger in The Early Years - Supplement I of 4 to IRISES, Wikipedia article on [Iris mesopotamica](#), Iris Wiki: J. W. Marshall and 'Carthusian' entries