

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 58th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**Bb 'Sierra Sunrise'**  
(Tasco 2022)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2023

## President's Message

Remember? Way back in February, I passed out selection coupons for Sutton's rhizomes for the sale. This is the first time that I can remember when TAIS members got to choose some of the rhizomes that will be offered in the sale. A reminder of your choices will be sent out. In addition to member rhizome donations, we're going to have an excellent selection from Sutton's and Mid-America. I'm getting my beds ready for the new arrivals and some cooler weather. See you at the sale. - Kevin Kartchner

*"But now in September the garden has cooled, and with it my possessiveness. The sun warms my back instead of beating on my head ... The harvest has dwindled, and I have grown apart from the intense midsummer relationship that brought it on." - Robert Finch*

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## Upcoming Events

**September 16: 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 16th. Members-only hour 8-9 AM on September 16th. Open to the public at 9 AM**

**September 20-25: Submit entries for our photo contest. See p. 6**

**September 27-October 3: Vote for your favorite photos. See p. 6**

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

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

## Birthday Wishes to:

**Dorra Bost Carolyn Hatounian Jane Parks**



'Dominion'

# August Auction and Meeting



12 August 2023 - Twenty members gathered at the Dove of Peace Church for our annual fund-raising auction. Cindy belongs to this church and kindly arranged for us to meet there. The room was large and comfortable.

Sue had prepared a Power-Point presentation showing and describing each of the 40 rhizomes from Mid-America Gardens. Everyone had fun and got some great deals on 2022 introductions. We took in \$793 for the rhizomes, for a profit of \$343. Some of the payments were made with Iris Bucks. We auctioned off three items which Margie Valenzuela had given us in 2019 and these brought in \$25. Cathy kept records, Dave bagged and collated purchases, and Jim collected payments. All in all, an excellent auction!

**Meeting** - Adam from the Tucson Botanical Garden contacted us to say that they would like our help in relocating their irises to a new bed, and they will give

us the excess rhizomes. Adam mentioned that Sam has been diligent in correcting the mislabeled irises in the collection. The move is not till after our sale, so we will pot the rhizomes and sell the plants at our show on April 22.

In more business about the Show, Terry believes that we can easily sell 100 potted irises, which would bring in enough to cover the costs of the show! Kevin priced 1-gallon nursery pots for 50¢ each on Amazon. Diane will check on the cost of pots from a cactus nursery which would be by bid. About five members said that they each could donate 10-12 pots.

Terry presented Kevin with a Silver Medal from AIS for earning the most blue ribbons at our show. Congratulations!

Kevin solicited volunteers for the upcoming Sale. Kristee will present “Growing Iris in Containers” at 11 AM during the event. Five individuals said that they each plan to

donate 10-20 rhizomes to the Sale. Terry has about 50 to donate. Kevin will compensate donors with \$2 in Iris Bucks per named rhizome.

Half of the purchased rhizomes for the Sale will be from Sutton’s and half from Mid-America.

**Board Meeting** - Diane reported that she advertises our events on the Tucson Backyard Gardeners Facebook Group, which has about 55,000 followers.

Kevin mentioned that someone is working on a Square device so that we can handle credit card purchases.

Sally reported that it is harder and harder to find a place to hold our meetings. The Wilmot Library offers computer classes in our old room at our timeslot, so they are out. And they only allow booking two months before, and have even cancelled a booking she made. Sue mentioned that Bookman’s has a community room, Jim said that the Masonic Hall does, too. Pima County Community College rents their rooms out. **Does anyone else have any ideas about where we can meet?**

We decided to make a \$50 donation to Dove of Peace Church for the use of the room today, and Jim presented Cindy with a check.

- Sue Clark, secretary



**ANY IDEAS  
ABOUT A  
MEETING  
SPOT?**

● ● ● ●

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

# August Auction and Meeting - photos by Dave Smith



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

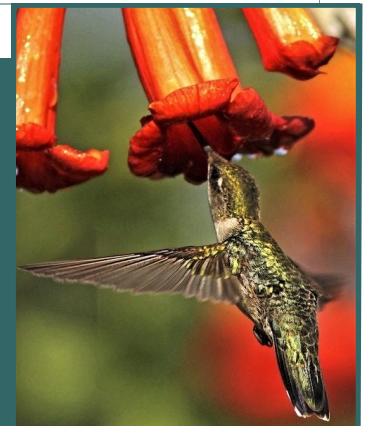
Beginning checkbook balance (1 Aug 2023) 5949.21

AUG INCOME	THIS MO.	YEAR TO DATE
Dues-----	0.00-----	756.00
Plant Sales-----	0.00-----	0.00
Show- (plant sales) -	0.00-----	425.16
Auction-----	492.00-----	492.00
Donation-----	0.00-----	0.00
Other-----	0.00-----	0.00
<b>TOTAL-----</b>	<b>492.00-----</b>	<b>1673.16</b>

JULY EXPENSES	THIS MO.	YEAR TO DATE
Program-----	0.00-----	0.00
Plant purchases-----	0.00-----	959.73
Show-----	0.00-----	362.90
Food, (etc)-----	0.00-----	384.87
Admin-----	0.00-----	642.70
Misc-----	78.88-----	78.88
<b>TOTAL-----</b>	<b>78.88-----</b>	<b>2429.08</b>

Ending checkbook balance (21 AUG 2023) 5912.33  
 Petty Cash-----+8.70  
**Net Worth----- 5921.03**  
 Monthly Change-----36.88

1 JAN 2023 checkbook balance 7023.95  
 21 Aug 2023 BALANCE 5912.33  
 YTD CHANGE --1111.62



## Pollinator of the Month, Part V.II: More on Hummingbirds

There are many ways to make your garden more attractive to hummingbirds. They prefer habitat of partly open areas with partly shrubby areas for shade and shelter. Make your garden a refuge from pesticides. A large portion of a hummingbird's diet (80% during breeding season) consists of arthropods, mainly insects like mosquitos and gnats, and arachnids like spiders. Add in some nectar flowers: **lavender, lupine, nicotiana, nasturtium, salvia, lantana, milkweed, lobelia, zinnia, penstemon, columbine, trumpet vine**, and others. Supplement their diet with a hummingbird feeder. Birding experts Kenn and Kimberly Kaufman highly recommend the [Aspects HummZinger HighView](#). I suggest combining it with the [Perky Pet Ant Guard](#). Make your own nectar by boiling and cooling 1/4 c cane sugar and 1 c water. Do not add red dye. In summer, change food out every couple of days or only fill the feeder part way so that the food does not spoil. Keep feeders clean and mold-free. Hummingbirds are also attracted by the moving water of a fountain.

With their high metabolism, sources of food, whether natural or man-made, are crucial and are often closely guarded. Consider placing another feeder out of sight - either around a corner or on the other side of the house. This is not foolproof, though. My friend Connie saw a male hummer zip over the top of her house to guard the feeder there, too! Don't worry about feeders being emptied while you are on vacation. The hummingbirds will find a new food source, just as they do if a clump of flowers stops blooming. Don't be alarmed if you see hummingbirds hanging upside down. They can slow their metabolism way down to conserve energy if it is too cold for them or even too hot. This state is known as torpor. You may see them hanging by their feet from a feeder or a branch.

Although hummers may nest in some of your garden's shrubbery, they seem to prefer nesting in a high-profile area, such as on a vine or strand of fairy lights on your front porch or on a branch along a sidewalk, driveway, or path. Their tiny cup-shaped nests are made of small bits of vegetation like leaves, moss, and lichens bound together with spider webs so they can stretch as the babies grow. The nest by Kevin's front door last month seemed to be made mostly of lint. Two pinto-bean-sized eggs hatch in about two weeks, and the mother spends her days finding food to regurgitate into her babies' throats. Hummers fledge after about two to three weeks. Research has shown that hummingbirds return to the place where they hatched, and that they have strong visual acuity and spatial memory, which helps them find and relocate feeders and nectar-bearing flowers. Invite some hummers into your garden and prepare to be dazzled! - SC

Sources: [Good Natured in St. Charles: Hummingbirds prefer native plants over sugar-water feeders - Shaw Local](#), <https://www.almanac.com/building-pollinator-garden>, [12 FAQs About Feeding Hummingbirds - Birds and Blooms](#), [Top 10 Vines to Grow for Hummingbirds - Birds & Blooms \(birdsandblooms.com\)](#), [22 Jaw-Dropping Hummingbird Facts - Birds and Blooms](#), [Expert Picks for the Best Hummingbird Feeders - Birds and Blooms](#), [Are Hummingbirds Territorial at Feeders and Flowers? \(birdsandblooms.com\)](#), [Hummingbird Nests article](#), and [bean photo](#). **Worth seeing:** [Nature | Costa's Hummingbird Dances to Woo Mate](#), [Hummingbird Spot YouTube](#), [Tucson Hummingbird Project](#)

From top left: Lavender (from Dennis' 7 Dees [article on Hummingbird gardening](#)), Trumpet vine, Aspects HummZinger High View feeder, [Mini-HummZinger feeder](#) (from Birds & Blooms articles), and a nest with two eggs by Kevin's front door (photo by Kevin Kartchner). Note: Saucer feeders do not drip.

## 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 irises or 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.

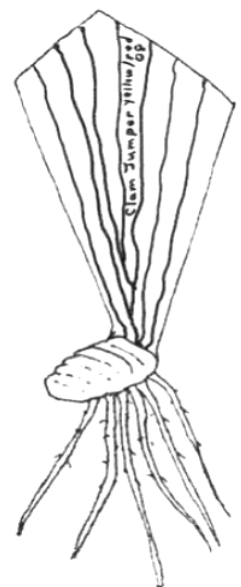
For all iris, write the name and year the iris was introduced. For other than tall bearded, also write the type: MDB, SDB, IB, BB, MTB, etc. Also indicate space age (SA), reblooming (RE)

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.



## 6<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 20 and 25**
  - 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, lighting, etc.), rather than the beauty of the iris(es) featured
- Votes will be accepted from **September 27 to October 3**

Winning photos in each category will be revealed during our October 14 meeting



**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 September:**

Plant rhizomes starting 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! Consider 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. Create 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** 

Douglas Everett of the [Hummingbird Market of Tucson, Arizona](#), spent considerable time researching and perfecting what he considers to be the healthiest nectar mix for hummingbirds. It is available at many Ace Hardware locations and nurseries in the Tucson area, which may also carry his favorite feeders. Everett uses a pure form of sucrose (made without being filtered by bone char), pharmaceutical-grade fructose, and glucose. This mix carefully matches the content of nectar from flowers. Read more about it [here](#).

**Iris Limerick:**

There was a young man from Dunhale,  
Who came to our iris sale.  
He bought many rhizomes,  
Then rushed off to go home  
To plant in his garden in Dunhale.  
- Sue Clark



'Amas'

**Did You Know?**

"A cultivar is a variant of a plant that has been selected for planting and sale because it has certain characteristics. It keeps its traits when it is propagated because they are inherited. Usually, cultivars are given a name which is not related to their biological taxon. There is a system of naming run by the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (the ICNCP), commonly known as the Cultivated Plant Code." Source: [Cultivar - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

"We come from the earth, we return to the earth,  
and in between we garden." — Alfred Austin 

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

Last month, we looked at how *Iris trojana* contributed to the gene pool of tall bearded irises, using its extra chromosomes to add height, branching, substance, and larger flowers to the garden irises of the late 1880's. An iris named 'Trosuperba' sounds as if it is descended from *I. trojana*, but its roots remain shrouded in mystery. It yielded several superb and important irises when crossed with 'Dominion'.

You might recall Robert Wallace's masterstroke of marketing 'Dominion' (Bliss 1917): rather than pricing it at the typical 10 shillings, he mentioned *limited supply* and tagged it 10 times higher at 5 pounds (~\$18 in 1918 = \$444 today). This of course caused a frenzy and 'Dominion' flew off the shelves! A Mrs. Samuel Taft in Ohio had a standing order of ten of each new hybrid introduced by Wallace's nursery, and imagine her surprise at a \$180 bill for 'Dominion' alone! Part of what made this rich violet bitone so special was its wide velvety falls and heavy substance. It was parented by 'Cordelia' and 'Macrantha'/'Amas' and it was Arthur Bliss' crowning glory. [More here](#).

To backtrack a bit, in 1885 Sir Michael Foster received iris plants from a collector in eastern Turkey. When they flowered, he called them *Iris germanica* 'Amas' in honor of Amasia, the ancient name of their homeland. Plantsman Max Leichtlin of Germany received irises from Persia, which he called *I. germanica macrantha* ('large flowered') after they bloomed. In 1897, it was determined that 'Amas' and 'Macrantha' were one and the same, but by then, their names appeared in the lineages of various irises. This important iris was, unlike *I. germanica*, winter-dormant and fertile. It grew in areas with wet or dry summers and warm or cold winters. Stems were of moderate height, but well-branched. Flowers were large and showy, and led to varied and more intense colors as breeding continued. - SC

Sources: "The Tall Bearded Iris, a Manufactured Marvel," by Phil Edinger in *The Early Years - Supplement I of 4 to IRISES*, AIS Wiki article on [The Drama of Iris Development](#), [Classic Irises](#) by C. E. Mahan, 2007



# 2023 Annual Iris Rhizome Sale

**Saturday, September 16**

**9 a.m. to noon**

**Harlow Garden Center, 5620 E. Pima St.**

**Cash or checks only!**

**Fundraiser for the Tucson Area Iris Society**

*(Come early for best selection. Supply limited!)*



Special free  
presentation  
at 11 a.m.  
on Growing  
Fabulous Iris