

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 58th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Making a Splash'**  
(Margie Valenzuela, 2006)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2023

## President's Message

Most of my iris are looking pretty fried now, especially a couple of Louisianas. At least the recent storm soaked things well. Trust me, this crazy heat will end and our iris will return. And why not return with something new? Iris seem to have almost an endless variety of color patterns. That's why I can't resist the latest and greatest creations of the hybridizers, as there is always something different to grow. To continue your quest for the latest and greatest iris, don't miss our August auction and our September sale. - Kevin Kartchner

**"And from the hot field's farthest edge  
The cricket's soft refrain With mellow  
accent tells the tale That August's here  
again." - Helen Maria Winslow (1851-1931)**

## Inside this issue:

<i>A Peek into the Garden of Joyce Knill - photos</i>	2
<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	3
<i>Hummingbirds - article and photos</i>	3
<i>A Peek into the Garden of Linda Ammon (Sue's sister) - photos</i>	4
<i>What to do in the Iris Garden during August</i>	5
<i>Iris Haiku, Did You Know?</i>	5
<i>Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History</i>	5



## Upcoming Events



**Next meeting: August 12, 1 PM - TAI\$ Rhizome Auction Fundraiser at Dove of Peace Church, 665 W Roller Coaster Road (River and Oracle area). Please park in back. Members may bid in person on rhizomes from Mid-America. Payments accepted in cash or check**

**September 16: TAI\$ 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**

**Begin selecting up to 15 of your iris photos to enter in our contest!**

**October 22: David Toth, hybridizer, talk in Phoenix, 2 PM**

## Birthday Wishes to:

**Kathleen Marron  
Pat Olsen  
Diane Pavlovich**

**Miriam Diamond  
Juliet Westbrook  
Rose Clark**



*Iris trojana*



## A Peek into the Garden of Joyce Knill

Row 1: 'Blinded by the Light,'  
'Umakemecry,'  
'My Sweetness'

Row 2: 'Oh Carol,'  
'Straight Laced'

Row 3: a general view,  
'Prague'



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

Beginning checkbook balance (1 July 2023) 5949.21

JULY 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-----	0.00-----	0.00
Donation-----	0.00-----	0.00
Other-----	0.00-----	0.00
<b>TOTAL-----</b>	<b>0.00-----</b>	<b>1181.16</b>

JULY EXPENSES	THIS MO.	YEAR TO DATE
Program-----	0.00-----	0.00
Plant (etc) purchases-----	0.00-----	959.73
Show--(misc)-----	0.00-----	362.90
Food, (etc)-----	0.00-----	384.87
Admin-----	0.00-----	642.70
<b>TOTAL-----</b>	<b>0.00-----</b>	<b>2350.20</b>

Ending checkbook balance (27 JULY 2023) 5949.21

Petty Cash-----+8.70

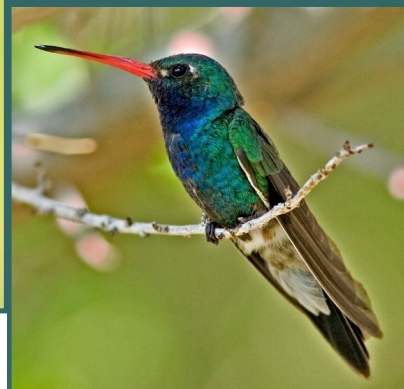
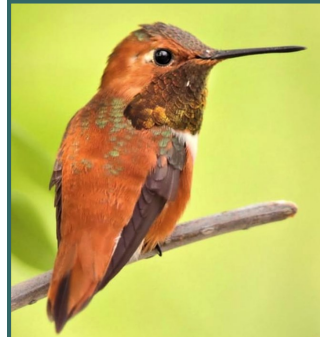
**Net Worth----- 5957.91**

Monthly Change-----0.00

1 JAN 2023 checkbook balance 7023.95

27 JULY 2023 BALANCE 5949.21

YTD CHANGE --1074.74



## Pollinator of the Month, Part V.I - Hummingbirds

There are between 328 and 366 species of the tiny powerhouses we call hummingbirds. Their family, Trochilidae (from the Greek *trochilos*, a small bird), is full of superlatives: smallest bird (the bee hummingbird of Cuba at 2"), fastest heartbeat, highest metabolism of any animal, most dexterous flyers (forwards, backwards, hovering, upside down - you name it!), most wing beats per second (the bee hummingbird at 80/sec), and fastest (usually 20-30 mph, but triple that during courtship displays during which they withstand up to 10 g of gravitational force. Compare this to trained fighter pilots who can manage 9 g for 1-2 seconds). Their visual and auditory senses are strong, as is the ability for vocalizations.

Hummingbird's diversity of colors is greater than that of *all other birds combined*, per a study in *Communications Biology* in 2022. Their myriad colors are a result of prism-like structures called [barbules](#) and [melanosomes](#) at the outer edges of their feathers. Changes in the angle of feathers produce brilliant changes in their color. This is especially noticeable in the gorget (throat) and head. Feather coloration has evolved and intensified over millions of years to help males capture the attention of females, per Darwin's sexual selection theory.

These descendants of dinosaurs split off from their closest relatives, the swifts and treeswifts, about 42 million years ago. Two primitive hummingbird fossils dating back to the early Oligocene (34-28 million years ago) have been found in Germany, with at least four others being found in France and Poland. All are assigned to the genus *Eurotrochilus*. Modern hummingbirds are thought to have originated in South America, and species currently live only in the Americas, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

Many nectar-bearing flowers have developed along with hummers in what is known as a plant-bird mutualistic network. We can cultivate nectar flowers to encourage hummingbirds to visit and pollinate our gardens! Next month: torpor, territoriality, tips for attracting hummingbirds, and the best feeder. - SC

Sources: Wikipedia articles "[Hummingbird](#)," "[Eurotrochilus](#)," and "[Feather](#);" [What's the maximum speed a human can withstand? | BBC Science Focus Magazine](#); "The Essence of Iridescence" in *LivingBird* magazine, Summer 2023 issue; *Birds & Blooms* website [article](#) by John Shewey dated 22 Apr 2021; [Tucson Hummingbird Project](#)



[Some Tucson-area hummingbirds](#) (all male), from top: Anna's hummingbird ([Etsy](#)), broadbilled hummingbird ([melodyrevnakphoto, Etsy](#)), black-chinned hummingbird ([beyourownbirder](#)), and Costa's hummingbird ([eBird.com](#)). Two others at left: Broad-tailed and Rufous ([AllAboutBirds](#))

# A Peek into the Garden of Linda Ammon in Darlington, PA



## 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 August:

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.

Leaves make food for the plant, so do not trim them off unless they are dead. No need to cut them into the fan shapes of old, which is harmful at this point in their growth cycle.

Provide afternoon relief with shade cloth or by keeping potted irises in the shade.

Continue to feed and water reblooming irises.

Redo any faded names on plant markers.



## Tip Exchange

Irisarian Nancy McDonald recommends immediately potting *all* new irises. Her main reason is to baby them - with excellent soil, the right amount of water, and ease of moving into shade in the summer. She prefers 1- or 2-gallon nursery pots, which she sinks into her Michigan garden during the winter. When its time to go into the ground - during the next growing season or after they bloom - she advises digging a hole to generously accommodate the whole root mass, adding amendments, gently teasing apart the roots, and planting. - SC

Source: "This Could Work: Tips & Tricks for the Iris Gardener" in ROOTS: Journal of the Historic Iris Preservation Society, Spring 2023, p. 24-25

## Iris Haiku:

Fleur-de-lis flowers,  
Irises sway gracefully,  
Tickled by a breeze  
- Sue Clark

## Did You Know?

"A [variety](#) is not to be confused with a [cultivar](#), which is something else entirely.

The name of a cultivar can be recognized because it includes an epithet that is written with initial capital letters, in a different font and is set in single quote marks as shown in this example: *Helleborus foetidus* 'Wester Flisk.'" More on cultivars next month.

Source: Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



*Iris trojana*

Source: AIS Iris Wiki

*"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time." - John Lubbock*

## A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

During the past few months, we have examined some of the species of wild irises whose genetic material contributed to improving the size, heft, branching, and flowering of garden irises of the late 1800's, mostly via crosses made by Sir Michael Foster and introduced after his death. You may recall that the typical irises grown in gardens of that time were *Iris pallida* and *I. variegata* (and natural crosses between them), the former species bearing pale blue blooms and the latter only reaching heights of about 16-28." *Iris cypriana*, via its offspring 'Caterina' and 'Crusader' led to better blues, whites, yellows, and blacks. *I. kashmiriana*, via Foster's 'Kashmir White,' is in the family tree of nearly every white tall bearded iris since 1919.

This month, we'll look at [Iris trojana](#) and its contributions to the gene pool of tall bearded irises. Paul Sintenis collected this species near the site of the ancient city of Troy in the western reaches of Turkey. He sent the plants to the Vienna Botanic Garden and they were named and introduced by Anton Kerner in 1887. *I. trojana* is much less fussy about its growing conditions than *I. cypriana* and *I. kashmiriana*, and thrived in continental Europe and in England. Besides bearing large purple flowers, the plant is tall, robust, and well-branched. Vilmorin-Andrieux et Cie of France introduced '[Isoline](#)' in 1904, likely the first child of *I. trojana*. This triploid, with its 36 chromosomes, parented the well-branched '[Rhea](#).' Sir Arthur Hort of England introduced six offspring from *I. trojana*, including '[Ann Page](#)' (1919) whose other parent was 'Caterina.' In the USA, the species was used in hybridizing efforts by William Mohr, the Sass brothers, and Grace Sturtevant with no lasting success. However, J. Marion Shull of Maryland crossed *I. trojana* with 'Lent Williamson' to get the lovely wine-red '[Morning Splendor](#)' (1923). Paul Cook used 'Morning Splendor' to create a line of reddish irises in the 1940's, making it the basis of all of today's reds. Fred DeForest used it to breed his rich brown '[Casa Morena](#)' (1941), which earned an Award of Merit in 1946. Hans Peter Sass crossed 'King Tut' and 'Morning Splendor' resulting in the charming rose-lavender and yellow plicata '[Tiffany](#)' (1938) with its big fluted flowers. Next month, the mysterious 'Trosuperba'... - SC

Sources: "The Tall Bearded Iris, a Manufactured Marvel," by Phil Edinger in The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin; AIS Wiki for cultivar specifics and links