

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 58th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Circus Stripes'
(Plough, 1994)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2022

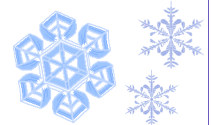
President's Message

Happy TAIS New Year! Looking back, we've enjoyed a lot of informative programs, a successful auction and sale, our hotly-contested photo contest, and a fun potluck. Kicking off the new year we'll be reviewing iris color patterns, hearing from a hybridizer, and as I keep reminding everybody - to prepare for our big show in April. So start fertilizing and get growing!

Healing thoughts to long-time TAIS member Tony Kutz who broke his leg in November. - Kevin Kartchner

"There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogs."

- Hal Borland



Inside this issue:

<i>Index to 2022 TAIS newsletters</i>	2-3
<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	4
<i>Iris wattii & I. confusa - article and photos</i>	4
<i>What to do in the Iris Garden in January</i>	5
<i>Haiku, Did You Know?</i>	5
<i>Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History</i>	5
<i>2023 Membership form</i>	6

Upcoming Events

Dues are due this month! See form on p. 6. Please make checks out to TAIS, rather than to the treasurer

Next meeting: Saturday, January 14, 1 PM - Kevin on Irises, Eckstrom-Columbus Library, 4350 E 22nd St. Please note the different location

February 11 meeting: 1 PM, Chad Harris of Mount Pleasant Iris Gardens on hybridizing Japanese Irises

Birthday Wishes to:

**Maxine Fifer
Bonnie Else
Marilyn Jensen
Whitney Judd**

**Kathy Windischman
Nancy Hook
Michael Willing
Carol Gawrychowski**



Iris wattii



Index to 2022 TAIS Newsletters

January 2022 – Photo: ‘Promises Kept,’ **Index to 2021 TAIS newsletters, Iris Subgenus: Juno or *Scorpiris*** article and photos, **Reblooming Iris Data Call and forms**; blurb on **flanges on Juno iris**, **Tips: make a worm composting tube**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Ellen Willmott and Warley Place**, Limerick, Quotes: “... the new year doesn't begin for me in January. The new and fresh has always come for me in the Fall...” by Betsy Cañas Garmon and “One of the worst mistakes you can make as a gardener is to think you’re in charge.” by Janet Gillespie

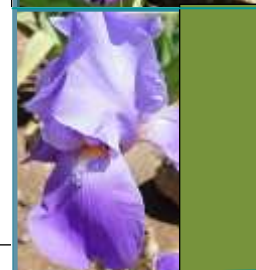
February 2022 – Photo: pink NOID, Meeting Minutes and photos; Notes from our panel on **Growing Irises in Beds in Tucson**, **Interview of Joyce Knill, *Iris unguicularis*** article and photos, blurb on **Frost flowers**, **Tips: Hummingbird food seasonal tweaks**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Henri Correvon and Bertrand Farr**, Limerick, Quotes: “The shortest day has passed, ... with a start of delighted surprise we realize that we can stay out of doors in a twilight lasting for another quarter of a precious hour.” – by Vita Sackville-West, and “Let us love winter, for it is the spring of genius.” by Pietro Aretino

March 2022 – Photo: ‘Queen’s Circle,’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Growing Japanese iris in Tucson** article and photos, **Preparing Irises for the Show, *Iris albicans*** article and photos, blurb on **Floriade in Holland**, **Tips: Commercial sources for Japanese Iris**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Grace Sturtevant**, Limerick, Quotes: “It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade” by Charles Dickens, and “One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides.” - by W E Johns

April 2022 – Photo: ‘Almond Berry,’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Water Harvesting** article and diagram; **More Irids – Iris Cousins, Part III – *Moraea***; blurb on **Irises by the numbers**, **Tips: Some of the positive effects of gardening**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: the Van Tubergens, Dutch iris, and Willis Fryer**, Limerick, Quotes: “Oh Flowers! They speak of Spring...” by The Hayes Lithographic Company, 1910 and “Every spring is the only spring - a perpetual astonishment.” by Ellis Peters

May 2022 – Photo: ‘Your Highness,’ Report and photos from the **Iris Show**; Report of the TAIS iris tours; **Iris Cousins, Part IV: *Iris domestica*** article and photos; **Photos of Kevin’s iris garden**; blurb on **neem oil as an organic pesticide**; **Tips: using neem oil safely**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Frederick Law Olmstead and the plant classification mess**; Limerick; Quotes: “They say motherhood is like gardening: It takes patience, care, practice, and it’s usually at least a little messy...” from Missouri Star Quilt Company email and “The butterfly is a flying flower, the flower is a tethered butterfly.” by Ecouchard Lebrun

June 2022 – Photo: ‘Blue Rhythm,’ May Meeting Minutes and photos; **Notes on Hybridizing Iris, Good Companion Plants for Irises** - article and photos, **Attracting Pollinators** – notes and photos; blurb on using the **Thriller, Filler, and Spiller technique** to plant fabulous containers; **Tips: weeding**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Jennett Dean and the Dean Iris Gardens**, Limerick, Quotes: "A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay. A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon. A swarm of bees in July is not worth a fly." English Saying and “It was June, and the world smelled of roses.” by Maud Hart Lovelace



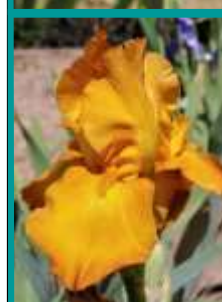
July 2022 – Photo: ‘Double Down,’ **Photos of Diane Pavlovich’s garden; Photos of Diane Tweedy’s and Chris Dickens’ gardens** from the Master Gardeners’ tour, **The Iris as a Symbol and Design Motif** - article and photos, **Resources and References about Pollinator Gardening from Deb North**; blurb on **ladybug larvae and aphids**; **Tips: fragrant plants to repel mosquitos**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Farr and Sturtevant and tetraploidy**, Limerick, Quotes: "A red sun rising at morning With flame on his burning crest..." by Mary Elizabeth Blake and "With freedom, flowers, books, and the moon, who could not be perfectly happy?" by Oscar Wilde



August 2022 – Photo: ‘Coral Dancer,’ **Photos of Joyce Knill’s garden, Photos of Iris Seeds and Seed Pods in Martin Juarez’ garden, Eight Ways to Protect Birds in Your Yard and Garden** article and photo, blurb on **dragonflies**, **Tips: for snails and slugs** – diatomaceous earth around plants, use marigold and thyme as sacrificial trap plants, sink small container of cheap beer; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Founding meeting of the American Iris Society**, Limerick, Quotes: "All Nature helps to swell the song And chant the same refrain; July and June have slipped away And August's here again" by Helen Maria Winslow and "August creates as she slumbers, replete and satisfied." by Joseph Wood Krutch



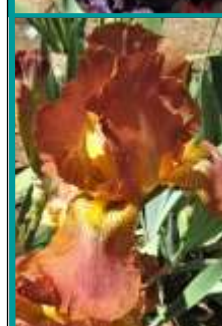
September 2022 – Photo: ‘Arab Chief,’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Annuals for the Tucson-area Cool-season Garden by Joyce Knill** - article and photos, **Preparing Rhizomes for the Sale** article, blurb on **potting iris upon purchase**, **Tips: more on hot- and cool-season annuals in Tucson**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: Founding meeting of the American Iris Society** (continued), Poem, Quotes: "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!" by Mary Howitt and "When summer gathers up her robes of glory, and like a dream of beauty glides away." by Sarah Helen Power Whitman



October 2022 – Photo: ‘Dracula’s Kiss,’ Sale Notes and photos; **Stinking Iris** - article and photos, blurb on **Scarier Creatures in the Garden**, **Tips: add 1 T Schreiner’s Iris Garden’s fertilizer to the hole when planting iris, Cathy Pane-Scire starts all new rhizomes in shallow pans to best control watering**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History and Botany: Style arms and reproductive parts of the iris**, Haiku, Quotes: "Fall tends to introduce itself with a delicate subtlety.... The turning pages of a calendar serve as a sort of signpost for us – carrying us along and pointing to what’s ahead..." by Billy Jack Brawner and "Night sky, you’re a symphony of starlight. Oh the moon and all my wishes are at your command." by unknown



November 2022 – Photo: ‘Copper Frills,’ October Meeting Minutes and photos; **Crested Irises: Iris tectorum (the Japanese Roof Iris) and I. milesii** - article and photos, winning photos of our 5th-annual photo contest, blurb on **Lloyd Austin’s 1951 iris poetry contest**, **Tips: labeling iris in the garden – Sharpie will fade and labels will not – try the Dymo Label Manager 160 and Dymo Durable Labels**, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: John Caspar Wister, first president of AIS**, Limerick, Quotes: "In slack wind of November The fog forms and shifts. All the world comes out again When the fog lifts." by Christina Georgina Rossetti and "Notice that Autumn is more the season of the soul than of Nature." by Friedrich Nietzsche



December 2022 – Photo: ‘Interpol,’ **Some Memories of Greta Dunnigan (1932-2022) and Lucille Skerston (1927-2022)**, photos from the November potluck; **Crested Iris: Iris japonica** - article and photos, blurb on **black flowers including black irises**, **Tips: try O’Keeffe’s Working Hands cream** for day and night, What to do in the Iris Garden this Month, **History: B. Y. Morrison and the AIS seal**, Iris poem, Quotes: "Yule is when the dark half of the year relinquishes to the light half..." by *Yule Lore* and "The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world’s joy." by Henry Ward Beecher



Treasurer's Report for December - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

Beginning Balance: \$8498.95
 No activity this month: \$0.00
 Ending Balance: \$8498.95

Species Irises, Part XV: More Crested Iris - *Iris wattii*, *I. confusa*

Over the past few months, we've looked at three Crested Irises: *Iris tectorum*, *I. milesii*, and *I. japonica*. A fourth Crested iris, known as *I. wattii*, the Bamboo iris, or Himalayan iris, is another type that will thrive in a greenhouse. It is native to China, India, and Myanmar, where it grows in grasslands, meadows, and riverbanks. This iris was named after George Watt, who collected the original plant in India in about 1879.

The Bamboo iris grows from light green rhizomes that range from 1/4 to 1/2" wide. Stems are said to be bamboo-like. The sword-shaped leaves grow in fans of about ten, and vary from approximately 1-3" wide and 12-35" long, making it the tallest of the Crested irises. Leaves have ten ribs. At 3", its flowers are some of the largest of the group. They are typically found in shades of blues and purples, with yellow crests surrounded by white in the center of the falls. Petals have ruffled edges, while the style arms end in fringed or jagged edges. Individual plants can have 50 flowers over an interval of 8-10 weeks in the spring. *I. wattii* grows fairly quickly and forms attractive clumps, but is not considered invasive, making it useful as a landscape iris in certain areas.

I. wattii can be grown in Zones 8-10 or inside a cool greenhouse, although it can survive light frosts if well-mulched. It prefers rich, well-drained soils and medium light. It may be planted under trees and shrubs, as it is shade-tolerant. This plant can be cultivated in borders or containers as long as there is no standing water. Pests include snails and slugs. A yearly feeding and mulching is enough to keep *I. wattii* happy, along with regular moisture and non-alkaline soil.

Another species of Crested iris, *I. confusa*, is also called the Bamboo iris. It grows in western China from stout rhizomes along the edges of forests, in grasslands, and on rocky slopes. Both the stem and the rhizome resemble bamboo, in that they are cane-like. Flowers are usually white or soft shades of lavender and blue. They are about 1.5-2" across with an orange or yellow-orange crest surrounded by spots. Although each blossom is short-lived, the plant will bloom for weeks because it is loaded with up to 75 flowers. *I. confusa* is hardy in Zones 8-10. It is reported to over-winter outdoors in parts of California, Australia, and the UK, but may be brought into a cool greenhouse for the winter. This plant will thrive in sun or partial shade and prefers humus-rich, well-drained soil. It grows easily from seeds and will form attractive clumps. From the photo at right, it appears that the leaves can get battered, so a greenhouse might be best. - SC

Sources: [The Gardener's Guide to Growing Irises](#) by Goeff Stebbings, 1997; articles on *I. wattii* from: [Wikipedia](#), [Plant Lust website](#), [Missouri Botanical Garden website](#), [iGarden website](#), article on *I. confusa* from Wikipedia, and photo from [GrowPlants website](#)



From top: *Iris wattii*: at the University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley in Oakland (by Stan Shebs, Wikipedia), whole plant in Sydney, Australia (iGarden website), *I. confusa*: at Kew Gardens in Richmond, UK (by Hans Hillewaert, Wikimedia), and a shot of the whole plant (GrowPlants.org)

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2023

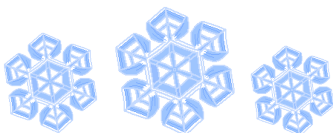
- Kevin Kartchner - President
- David Sliffe - Vice President
- Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account
- Jim Wilcoxon – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary
- Diane Pavlovich & Sally Vega - Programs & Publicity
- Cindy Long, Linda Briggs, Kathleen Marron, and Evelyn Jacobs - Hospitality
- Bonnie Else and Susan Schaefer - Door Prizes
- Taffy Holvenstot - Membership
- Dave Smith - Photographer
- Sue Clark - Newsletter

What to do in the Iris Garden for January:

Examine bases of irises for aphids. Carefully squash them by hand or spray with water, insecticidal soap, or diluted dish soap.

If you are following TAIS member Susan Schafer’s method, begin fertilizing 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 method, continue applying fish emulsion every two weeks and humic acid as desired.

Dream about what you want to grow...



Tip Exchange



Our new puppy, Maddy, likes to jump into this flower pot. My sister said that maybe I don't need to grow irises when I have something this beautiful. That could work for me, since I am not doing so well with the irises! Except with *Moraea* irises - I can grow those! - SC

Garden Haiku:

**A New Year’s moonbeam
Glimmered, shimmered, and sparkled
Across frozen gardens**
- Sue Clark



Did You Know?

Dew, frost, fog, and clouds are related to one another. They all depend on something called the *dew point*, the temperature that airborne water vapor condenses at the same rate that it evaporates. This is not a specific temperature because it varies depending on air pressure. If the temperature is *lower* than the dew point, dew forms on surfaces because the water vapor condenses faster than it can evaporate. Dew that freezes is called frost. Dew or condensed water vapor in the air is fog or clouds, depending on whether it forms along the ground or up higher. Clear nights with their associated infrared cooling of the Earth’s surface are conducive to the formation of dew or frost. - SC Sources: Wikipedia articles on [Dew](#) and [Dew Point](#)

“And now let us welcome the new year, full of things that have never been.” – Rainer Maria Rilke



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Last month, we looked at the original AIS seal which was designed, or as he reported, “compiled” by B. Y. Morrison. Use of this seal must have fallen off during the succeeding decades, because by 1957, members were suggesting that AIS have a seal. Then-president Marion Walker mentioned such requests in the October Bulletin of that year. He also announced that a committee had been formed to “make better use of the AIS seal.” This committee, headed by Hubert A. Fischer, a Chicago businessman with spectacular iris gardens on his estate, somehow changed their focus to recommending a design for a completely new seal.

In an article from the January 1970 issue of the Bulletin, Mr. Fischer recalled how this seemingly straight-forward assignment became anything but so when sketches of ideas came pouring in, with each person wanting the design to feature his favorite type of iris. One even featured the creator’s six favorite types of irises! Mr. Fischer realized that the motif must be simple and striking, so he asked his brother, a newspaper artist, to fashion a generic type of iris for the seal. The brother’s design was chosen with minor changes at the AIS Convention in Syracuse in 1958, although his name was not recorded. Two quick searches on Ancestry.com and one on Google told me that his name was Richard Fischer. Hubert also mentioned that the artist at the Baily Hortorium at Cornell helped prepare the final drawing. The staff artist there was Miss Mitsu Nakayama, so it is probable that it was she who set the iris motif into a double oval with the name of the society and the year of AIS’ founding.

The new seal was approved on 4 June 1958 and appeared for the first time in AIS’ second book, Garden Irises. The year shown within the oval outline of the design was incorrectly listed as 1921 instead of 1920. This was amended soon afterward. The simple, elegant design of the new AIS seal is as modern-looking today as it was in 1958. See above.

AIS itself changed after WWII, by now serving as the International Cultivar Registration Authority for all non-bulbous irises, revising the awards, and establishing a formal classification for garden irises. - SC

Sources: “The American Iris Society Seal” by Anner Whitehead in *The Early Years* - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin, 2020; and AIS Iris Wiki for the image itself

Tucson Area Iris Society 2023 Membership Application – www.tucsoniris.org

Name(s) _____

Street, City, State, Zip _____

e-mail address _____ Phone _____

Birth month (for mention in our newsletter) _____ How did you learn about TAIS? _____

Do you grow or intend to grow irises in containers or in the ground? (circle one)

Monthly newsletters will be sent to your e-mail address.

Please select membership category:

Single or family \$15 (emailed newsletters) Youth \$3

Single or family with B&W paper copies of newsletters mailed to you \$25

Please mail this form and your check (payable to TAIS) to:

Taffy Holvenstot
8769 E Corte del Sol Bonito
Tucson, AZ 85715

TAIS holds a Spring Iris Show and a Fall Rhizome Sale. We usually meet on the second Saturday of each month, with no meetings in June, July, or December. Meetings consist of presentations, an annual photo contest, members-only rhizome auction, and November potluck. Meetings may be via Zoom on occasion. Newsletters are emailed monthly.

We would love for you to join us!



Consider giving gift memberships to your gardening friends!



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