

June 2023

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 58th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Coral Dancer'
(Edwards, 2008)

Marcusen Sculpture Garden,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2022

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President's Message

We had a great show, the best bloom season ever for me, and now the last of my spuria are finished. Time to start planning for next year. Were you satisfied with your bloom this year? If not, try something different. Due to my house move two years ago, I had to transplant all my rhizomes in June and July - the traditional "bad" months to transplant. But they thrived with very little rot and now need to be divided. So I'm going to repeat the hot month transplanting this year. What are you going to do differently?

- Kevin Kartchner

"June comes, and ours is so green a world that we quite forget the all but leafless days of January, so warm and beneficent a world that we can't quite remember those zero mornings when the land was white with snow and ice. Now it is June, it is warm, it is summer... Robins have found their voices and brown thrashers celebrate morning, afternoon, & evening." - Hal Borland, "The Green, Green World" in *A Countryman's Woods*, 1983

Upcoming Events

No meetings in June or July

Next meeting: August 12, 1 PM - TAIS Auction 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

Rhizome Sale: September 16 at Harlow's Gardens

Birthday Wishes to:

Rebecca Hill

Christy Lewalski

Paul Guengerrich

Olive Mondello



Bombus terrestris

UK, c. 1985. Source: Pinterest

May Meeting Minutes



May 13, 2023 - Prior to our meeting at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, eleven members enjoyed a wonderful video from the iris show in April.

In club news, Terry Swartz presented Kevin Kartchner with three awards from National AIS following our judged iris show (This is a big honor!): Section Medal Certificate for Tall Bearded entries, 'In the Loop' was Best Specimen of Show Certificate, and Silver Medal Certificate for Excellence in Exhibiting the Most Blue Ribbon Specimens. Congratulations, Kevin! And thank you, Terry, for chairing this event.

Door prize winners were Kevin Kartchner and Diane Pavlovich.

Kevin distributed 'Iris Bucks' to members who won blue ribbons during the iris show. We learned that \$390 was collected by selling nearly 50 potted iris in about 30 minutes. Some expenses of the show will be shared with the Rose Society.

Terry Swartz announced our next iris show will be **April 20, 2024** with the Rose Society. As we divide our iris this fall, Terry asks that we take the small rhizomes (which we may normally throw out) and pot them in 1-gallon

pots for the sale at April's show.

Kevin Kartchner has allowed one of his seedlings to be registered as 'Kelsey Rose' and it has been approved by AIS. Kelsey Rose is in honor of Linda Briggs' daughter, who passed last year. This beautiful iris is dressed in lilac, gold, & champagne (see p. 3).

If anyone has photographs of their Diane Tweedy Memorial Iris, please forward them to Kevin or to Sue Clark.

In new business, Kevin is still looking for someone to research the feasibility to obtain a 'Square' for credit card purchases during our sales. Possible names were suggested and Kevin is looking for a techy to help get this investigated and up and running if appropriate. Please help!!

Diane Pavlovich reported she is working on the October program, which will include the photo contest results, as well as our club officer selection. Diane is also working on a possible additional surprise, as well. Bonnie Else has once again agreed to host the November potluck at her home.

- Joyce Knill, substitute secretary

**PLEASE SAVE
1-GALLON
POTS FOR
US!**



We're on the web:

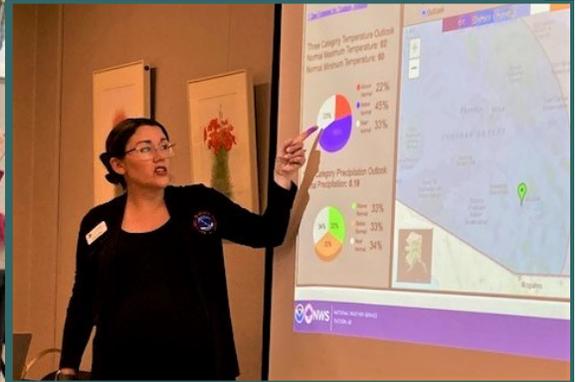
Tucsoniris.org

NWS Program Notes

Kate Guillet of the National Weather Service presented a program on the meteorologist's role here in the Tucson office. Their mission statement includes communicating information in order to protect life and property. Meteorologists are honed in on a 7-day forecast, and Climatologists are looking far forward in the future. We learned the five meteorologists in the Tucson office are responsible for emergency, aviation, and fire forecasts as well as maintaining a media partnership for radio and television for Pima, Cochise, Graham, and half of Pinal Counties. A staff of 19 assist these meteorologists. Kate proceeded to walk us through their website, where we can obtain a report or forecast to within 2½ km of our homes. That website can be reached by entering **NWS Tucson**, then click on Local Products. Alternately, you may enter www.weather.org and select what part of the United States or its territories you are interested in. It can be a little overwhelming researching all the information available, but when you select what part of the weather - forecasts or history, it will become easier to navigate. Also, if anyone is interested in reporting moisture *at your property* to the NWS, you may go to www.cocorahs.org for further instructions. If you ever wondered how much rain your neighbor received, or didn't receive, this is how it is entered into the records.

- Joyce Knill

May Meeting - photos by Joyce Knill



'Kelsey Rose' from AIS Iris Wiki - registered by TAIS member Kathleen Marron & hybridized by Kevin



Kathleen Marron

TAIS Iris Show 2023: Artistic Division - Photos by Dave Smith



TAIS Iris Show 2023 - Photos by Dave Smith and two by Sue





Treasurer's Report for May - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

Beginning checkbook balance (1 May 2023) 6123.95

FEB INCOME	THIS MO.	YEAR TO DATE
Dues-----	45.00-----	756.00
Plant Sales-----	0.00-----	0.00
Show- (plant sales) ---	425.16-----	425.16
Auction-----	0.00-----	0.00
Donation-----	0.00-----	0.00
Other-----	0.00-----	0.00
TOTAL-----	470.16-----	1181.16

FEB EXPENSES	YEAR TO DATE
Program-----	0.00-----
Plant (etc) purchases-----	0.00-----959.73
Show--(misc)-----	258.90-----362.90
Food, (etc)-----	371.00-----384.87
Admin-----	0.00-----642.70
TOTAL-----	0.00-----2350.20

Ending checkbook balance (26 May 2023) 5957.91

Petty Cash-----+8.70

Net Worth----- 6057.65

Monthly Change----- --166.04

1 Jan 2023 checkbook balance 7023.95

26 May 2023 5957.91

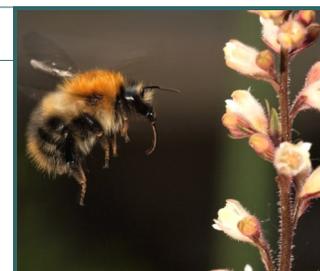
YTD CHANGE --1066.04



There are 250 species of bumblebees, including 49 in North America. Note the yellow pollen-filled *corbicula* on the hind leg of this bee.

Image: [Time.com](#) article

Data: [5 Facts About Bumble Bees—and How To Help Them • The National Wildlife Federation Blog \(nwf.org\)](#), and Wikipedia article - "[Bumblebees](#)"



Pollinators, Part III: More on Bumblebees (genus *Bombus*)

Bumblebees, with their fuzzy bodies and legs, are more efficient pollinators than honey bees. In their quest for pollen and nectar for food, they inadvertently transfer pollen to subsequent plants during their foraging rounds. They prefer tubular flowers, and some, like bottle gentian, have evolved in such a way that they do not fully open so that these beefy bees must push and pry their way down into the blossom, scattering pollen along the way. Other plants that they like include **strawberries, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, and squash**. A specialty of bumblebees is “buzz pollinating,” in which they grasp the pollen-producing bits of a flower and then beat their wings up to 130 times per second to loosen the pollen. This buzz is higher-pitched than their normal buzz. Crops produce more fruit if they are buzz pollinated. Females are the workers, and have a pollen basket called a *corbicula* on their hind legs. It looks like a yellow sack, the yellow being the pollen grains inside. Nectar is held in a structure called a *honeystomach* in the abdomen. Some of this is used as fuel during foraging missions and the rest is taken to the nest, turned into a bit of honey, and used as a food reserve. Pollen is fed to the young.

Due to their ability to fly in lower light conditions and in cooler temperatures than other bees, bumblebees are often the first types out in the spring. Consider growing flowers for them in at least three seasons. Some favorites - **lupines, California poppies, coneflowers, sunflowers, salvia, and asters**. Bumblebees shiver to raise their body temperature, or can warm up in even weak sunlight. They tend to bumble about after warming up on cool early mornings. Their bodies can regulate temperature somewhat and their fuzziness helps. You might find some that stayed out too late, got too cool, and snuggled up in a flower overnight. My mom often finds them sleeping in her **passionflowers** (*Passiflora incarnata*).

Bumblebees live in colonies of 50-500 near the ground - in stone walls, stumps, grass mounds, or in mouse burrows. Their nests are about the size of a baseball or softball. They bring collected pollen and nectar back to the nest to feed. The whole hive dies in the fall, except for the newly-mated queen, who eventually seeks nourishment from early blooming **fruit trees** and ephemerals. Females can sting repeatedly, but must be really provoked to do so - such as if someone is bothering their nest. If one raises its middle leg as a warning, back off.

Help bumbles by doing the following: avoid pesticides, especially neonicotinoids and other systemic ones; leave a bit of brush somewhere in your yard so bumblebees can nest safely; grow some of their favorite food sources; and report all bumble sightings [here](#). - SC

Sources: [10 Things You Didn't Know About Bumblebees | The Old Farmer's Almanac](#), [www.bumblebee.org Home Page](#), Wikipedia article: "[Bumblebee](#)," & see video - [Queen Laying Eggs](#)

From top: *Bombus pascourum* with proboscis (tongue) extended (Wikipedia, [by Stubbs](#)); slumber party on my mom's passionflower in PA (SC, 2017); a nest of red-tailed bumblebees, *Bombus lapidarius*, with whitish wax pots of honey (Wikipedia, [by Sanjoin](#)); *Bombus impatiens* in defensive posture ([bumblebee.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 during June:

Move potted irises into shade for the summer if you have not already done so.

Water the soil instead of the iris plants or they are likely to rot. It is best to water in the evening during hot weather.

Fertilize spring-blooming irises for six weeks after last bloom. This is when they set bloom.

Reblooming irises need water and fertilizer through summer to encourage bloom in fall.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.



Tip Exchange

Irisarian Nancy McDonald recommends making two labels for each iris plant. One is made on a plant marker and is designed to be read as you walk through the garden. The other is a safe-guard label which comes into play if the display label gets lost. This safe-guard label is written in #2 pencil on a cheap plastic plant marker [or a piece of old plastic mini blind]. It is buried at the bottom of the container in which the iris is growing or is buried in the ground under the plant. - 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 Limerick:

There once was a fuzzy bumblebee
Sipping nectar in a tree.

She got covered in pollen

In the tree, which was almond.

And so goes the life of a bee.

- Sue Clark

Did You Know?

The term **bumblebee** was first used in English in 1530 in a book, Lesclarcissement. An older term for the same insect is **humblebee**, used first in 1450 in Fysshyng wyth an Angle. Shakespeare used the same term in A Midsummer

Night's Dream in c. 1600 and Charles Darwin used it in The Origin of Species in 1859. Use of humblebee disappeared after World War II. An old provincial term for bumblebee is **dumbledor**, with *dumble* imitating the sound and *dor* meaning beetle. - SC

- Source - Wikipedia article: "Bumblebee"



'Caterina' (Foster 1909)

Source: AIS WIKI

“Mist in May, heat in June, Make the harvest come right soon.” – Proverb



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Sir Michael Foster is no stranger to this column and we revisit him this month. In the early 1880's, Kew Gardens received some *Iris cypriana* plants (as yet unnamed) from a Mrs. Kenyon who was traveling in Cyprus. Michael Foster, a physician and professor at Cambridge, acquired and grew some of these plants, which flowered in 1886. This is before he was Sir Michael. His excellent scientific notes indicate that he was using this new wild iris in his hybridizing experiments, probably the first person to do so. Foster's garden had shallow soil overlying limestone. It drained well and was slightly alkaline, which contributed to his success in growing *I. cypriana*, a species used to a summer dormant period and fall-winter rains and not England's summer rains and cold, damp winters. Foster did not register or introduce any of these crosses - he made them simply to see if it was possible. See more on Sir Michael in our newsletter of [Nov 2017](#).

So it came to be that the first introduced offspring of *I. cypriana* (and therefore the first introduced offspring of a tetraploid iris species) was '[Tamerlan](#)' in 1904 by the Vilmorin firm in France. This lovely red-violet bitone still graces many gardens. Read more on Vilmorin [here](#) and [here](#).

After Sir Michael Foster's death in 1907, five of his seedlings from crosses of *I. cypriana* and *I. pallida* were introduced by Robert Wallace, leading to *I. cypriana*'s extensive contributions to the development of modern tall bearded irises. Perhaps the most famous of the five was '[Caterina](#)' (Foster 1909). With its multi-budded and multi-branched 4'-tall stalks, this plant caused quite a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic. Its light bluish-lavender-violet flowers are almost selfs. 'Caterina' grows well across the United States. It was used as a parent by Grace Sturtevant and was the grandparent of Dykes winner '[Mary Geddes](#).' It was also grandparent to Hans Sass' Dykes winner '[Rameses](#).' Probably most importantly, 'Caterina' led to the development of better blues, whites, and yellows in the California gardens of William Mohr and Professor Essig. Another Foster seedling, '[Crusader](#)' (1913), was key in developing better blues, was a grandparent to Dykes winners '[Missouri](#)' and '[Chivalry](#),' and was instrumental in developing black irises. - SC

Sources: "The Tall Bearded Iris, a Manufactured Marvel," by Phil Edinger in The Early Years - Supplement 1 of 4 to IRISES, AIS Bulletin; and "[History of Iris Development](#)" - AIS Iris Wiki