



September 2024

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 59th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Jurassic Park
(Lauer, 1995)**

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2024

President's Message

Invite them to the sale! Over a third of our customers learned about our rhizome sale last year as neighbors, family, and friends. The people I informed spent about \$500 at the sale. I also took orders from three people who couldn't make it to the sale and gave me about \$100 each to buy rhizomes of my choice. They were impressed when they bloomed. You know we have a great selection and fantastic prices. So give away a sale poster (from our website), email, call, take an order, and chat over the fence.

- Kevin Kartchner

Editor's note: Notice anything new up above? The logo was designed by Shane Smith, who is the son of Dave and I. The three of us have gifted it to TAIS. - SC

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"O month of fairer, rarer days Than summer's best have been; When skies at noon are burnished blue, And winds at evening keen; When tangled, tardy-blooming things From wild waste places peer, And drooping golden grain-heads tell That harvest-time is near." - Hellen L. Smith, "September Days"

Upcoming Events

Rhizome Sale: September 21, 9 AM to noon (or when we run out), Harlow Gardens, 5620 E. Pima. Members-only discount hour = 8-9 AM. Terry will speak at 10 AM on growing irises in beds

Photo Contest: September 20 to 27: submit up to 15 photos via email. See p. 7 for complete guidelines. **Voting:** Sept 30 to Oct 3

Next meeting: 1 PM, October 12 at Eckstrom-Columbus Library, 4350 E 22nd Street. Photo winners, Jim Walworth on fertilizing iris

Birthday Wishes to:

Lois Schoaf (August)

Dorra Bost

Carolyn Hatounian

Jane Parks

We are saddened to hear of the passing of Roger Osgood



Source: Michael Valetini, 1719

Chamairis, aka Iris lutescens

August Meeting Minutes



10 Aug 2024 - Twenty-five members, including three new ones, participated in our annual rhizome auction fundraiser. This is one of two members-only events; the other being the photo contest. Sue had prepared PowerPoint presentations with a photo and pertinent information about each iris in the auction. Fifteen individuals took home beautiful recent introductions from Mid-America, the Region 15 Spring Trek, and one that Joyce donated from Suttons. We also auctioned off several vases donated by Margie Valenzuela. George Van Ess and Dick Butler bid the highest and most often. We took in \$1560. Thank you to Cathy for clerking, Dave for bagging & organizing the purchases for pick up, and Jim for collecting money.

General meeting: Kathy Windischmann and Bonnie recruited volunteers for the upcoming Sale. Members reported how many varieties of rhizomes they plan to

donate so that Kevin can be sure to have enough containers to display them in. Terry said that Margie Valenzuela has irises to give away before she moves. Kevin suggested that the club do a Dig for her. Terry will check into the possibility. Margie also donated many more items to the club, which we may use as prizes. Terry passed out envelopes of iris seeds from Margie. Please consult the [June 2024 TAIS newsletter](#) (p. 7) for Kevin's directions on how to stratify, plant, and care for seeds and seedlings. Sue handed out a Club iris to each Board Member as a thank you for their service. We couldn't do it without the efforts of these individuals.

Board Meeting: Thirteen people stayed for this portion. Terry plans to bring a clump of irises to the Sale and will demonstrate how to divide and plant them during his presentation. Joyce clarified

what Harlow's requested be included in this year's presentation: how to amend soil when planting irises in beds and how to best water them. Terry will make a handout with directions for growing irises in beds and in containers.

Bonnie requested some leftover named rhizomes to pot up for future door prizes. Other excess and small rhizomes will be potted up to sell at the Show in April. Kevin asked for preferences on two types of pots that he bought from Amazon. The taller, non-shiny ones are favored by Terry and Joyce: Terry because he can easily write on them with a paint pen and Joyce because she prefers their taller shape. Anyone who plans to tend irises for the sale table at the Show can get pots and potting soil from Kevin.

Joyce, Bonnie, and Kathy are working hard on all details for the upcoming Sale. We will have lots of member-grown irises, as well as many from commercial growers Mid-America Gardens and Suttons. Cathy will be in charge of selling the landscape irises (our fancy name for NoIDs), as she has made that her specialty for the last several years. Susan, Pat, Cathy, Terry, and Kevin have rhizomes to donate, as do Dave and Sue after splitting her Mom's irises in PA.

- Sue Clark, secretary



**Do you have any
rhizomes that you
can contribute to
our Sale?**



**We're on the web:
Tucsoniris.org**

August Meeting - photos by Dave Smith and Sally Vega



Treasurer’s Report for August - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

Jim is out of town. The August report will be melded with September’s report.

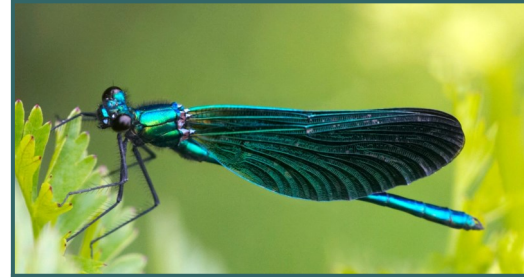
Beneficial Garden Insects, Part IV: Damselflies

Damselflies have been around since the late Jurassic Period, 145-161 million years ago. Closely resembling their relatives the dragonflies, damselflies have a more slender body and smaller compound eyes. The most notable difference, though, is that they tend to fold their wings along their bodies when at rest as opposed to dragonflies, whose wings are held flat and perpendicular to the body. Like dragonflies, they are found on every continent except Antarctica and their young are aquatic nymphs called naiads. Both are indicators of unpolluted water. Some species can tolerate high levels of zinc and copper in sediment, though. There are species that prefer acidic water such as in bogs, while others prefer water that is basic. Destruction of habitat by urban growth and conversion of wetlands to farmland threaten damselflies and dragonflies.

Fierce predators despite their delicate looks, adult damselflies prefer flies, mosquitos, and other small insects. They hover over grasses and low vegetation, picking their prey from stems, not on the fly like the dragonflies. Some damselflies are *crepuscular* (dawn and twilight) hunters and take advantage of newly-hatched aquatic insects while the dragonflies are at rest. The helicopter damselfly of South America plucks spiders or their prey from webs. And because there are few pools and lakes in their environment, they have adapted to breeding in water caught in bromeliads and broken bamboo stalks.

Male damselflies tend to be brightly colored and females much less so. Blues, teals, and green are the colors of choice. Besides their gorgeous colors, damselflies often have beautiful jewel-sounding names such as river jewelwing, ebony jewelwing, rubyspot damselfly, and willow emerald. Watch for some next time you are out in Nature! - SC

Source: Wikipedia: "[Damselfly](#)," [British Dragonfly Society](#), [U. of Florida](#)



From top: Damselfly nymph or naiad (Wikimedia, by [Charles Sharp](#)): note the three gills at rear; a Beautiful Demoiselle Damselfly ([by Martin Eager](#)), Azure Damselfly (by Derek Parker, source 2 of the article); Scarce Emerald Damselfly (by Ouwesok, source 2). The latter lives in vegetation near ditches and pools along the coasts of Essex and Kent in England, and tolerates brackish water. Not shown: the [Ebony Jewelwing](#) of Florida has opaque black wings (source 3)



Larry Lauer, iris hybridizer, passed away this summer. We have ordered rhizomes from his website, Lauer's Flowers, for some of our Sales. Larry introduced 164 tall bearded irises, as well as irises in many other sizes. Some outstanding ones include his Dykes-winning 'Stairway to Heaven' (1992) (left), 'Peggy Sue' (2006) (right), and 'Jurassic Park' (1995) (p. 1)



Iris Dig at Margie Valenzuela's Garden - photos by Lois & Terry

Long-time TAIS member and iris hybridizer Margie Valenzuela offered to give TAIS members her irises, and a successful Dig occurred on Friday, Aug 23. Cindy, LeeAnn, Lois, Terry, and Kevin unearthed rhizomes to their heart's content and gained some beauties for the Club and for themselves. Margie and her husband Dan plan to head for cooler climates sometime in the future and we wish them every success. - SC



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 **golf ball**, 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 or potted up to sell at our Show in April.
- 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 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 20 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)

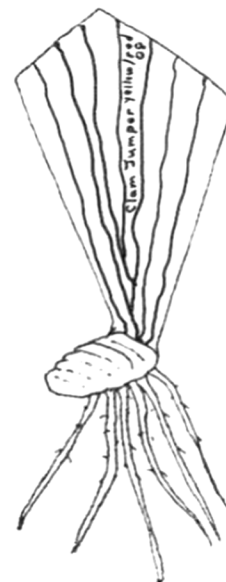
To locate the year of introduction, use the AIS Iris Encyclopedia: <http://wiki.irises.org/bin/view>.

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.



7th 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. 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 27**
 - 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. See all photos at 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 30 to October 3**

Winning photos in each category will be revealed during our October 12 meeting



TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2024

- Kevin Kartchner - President**
- Cindy Long - 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 (9:1 ratio). 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 surface of the rhizome will be buried about 1/2" to prevent rot caused by sun damage. Alternatively, some people prefer to leave the surface of the rhizome exposed. I like to stir a tablespoonful of fertilizer (from [Schreiner's](#) or [Comanche Acres](#)) into the bottom of the hole. 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

Plant new irises right away (after rehydrating and a diluted bleach soak). Rhizomes are not designed to be out of the ground for long intervals like bulbs. - SC

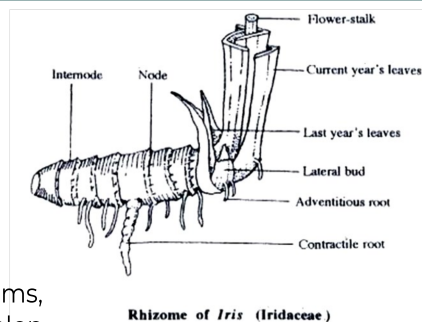
This is the month to divide irises. Crowding decreases bloom and increases chances of certain diseases due to poor air circulation. Trim leaves to about 6" so that the plant does not have to support so many leaves when starting to grow again. Trim roots to 0 - 1 1/2". These will die off and new roots will form. - SC

Iris Haiku

**As fall approaches,
We breathe a sigh of relief...
Cooler weather awaits.**
- Sue Clark

Did You Know?

Rhizomes are underground stems, rather than roots. They develop roots and shoots from nodes. Plants store nutrients in their rhizomes, including starches and proteins. These nutrients are used when the plant creates new shoots, roots, and rhizomes. [This process of new rhizomes growing out from old ones gives iris gardeners a plethora of plants to share with the Club for our Sale and with friends! - SC] Ginger, ferns, turmeric, snake plant, and Bermuda grass also grow from rhizomes. If stored, rhizomes may develop bacterial and fungal infections. Source: Wikipedia: "[Rhizome](#)"



Source: Pin.paste (Pinterest.com)

"PLANT SO YOUR OWN HEART WILL GROW." - HAFIZ



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Irises were more popular in the 1920's than ever before. The newly-created American Iris Society established a Registrar's Office, headed by Charles Gersdorff, with Ethel Peckham as Recorder. These two sent out countless letters requesting information about the "histories of nurseries, hybridizers, and irises." They assembled a collection of iris catalogs, as well as gleaned information about irises from books and journals, some of which dated to the Renaissance. The goal was to ferret out the original, legitimate name of each iris cultivar, and to move forward with a unique name for each newly-developed iris cultivar.

The culmination of all this research was a 1929 book called [The American Iris Society Alphabetical Iris Checklist](#). Edited by Mrs. Peckham, it contained 12,000 names of irises with coded descriptions, notes, and a color-based classification devised by F. X. Schreiner. The book was designed to make it easy for hybridizers to see what names were already assigned to other irises. Wister mentioned that anyone who persisted in using duplicate names was "ignorant, careless, or a deliberate deceiver."

Mrs. Peckham also edited the [The American Iris Society 1939 Alphabetical Iris Checklist](#), which contained 19,000 names, corrections, information on hybridizers, nurseries, and publications. The level of accuracy of this 600-page achievement is considered high to this day. AIS President Harry H. Everett described it as "a book of high adventure in the field of beauty, a record of hopes achieved, and a guide to Rainbow's end."

In 1953, [The International Code of Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants](#), spelled out rules for naming garden plants. Various groups focused on individual genera or portions of genera were designated as registrars. AIS took on the responsibility of International Cultivar Registration Authority for all non-bulbous irises in 1955 and still serves in this capacity. [Forms and guidelines](#) are available on the AIS website. One can type in a name and see if it has already been used. It costs \$15 to register an iris or to reserve a name for one. - SC

Sources: "The Origins of the American Iris Society Check Lists" by Anner Whitehead in *AIS 100 Years Bold*, Supplement 2 of 4 to *IRISES: the Bulletin of AIS*, 2020; [Iris Registration – American Iris Society \(irises.org\)](#)

The Tucson Area Iris Society Presents

2024 Rhizome Sale



Iris: Stairway To Heaven

Saturday, September 21, 2024

9 a.m. to noon

at Harlow's Garden Center

5620 E. Pima St.

Supplies limited. Come early for best selection.

Free presentation on growing irises at 10 a.m.