

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 59th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



NOID

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2024

President's Message

It's finally cooling off a bit (relatively speaking) and time to acquire the latest and greatest iris creations that are available at good prices to TAIS members at our August auction. We have a fun time bidding up that one we just have to own. See you there.

- Kevin Kartchner

"Pomona was the uniquely Roman goddess of fruit trees, gardens, and orchards, and her festival, which she shared with her husband Vertumnus, was always on August 13th. Pomona watches over and protects fruit trees and cares for their cultivation, and her name is from the Latin *pomum*, fruit. Pomona was among the *Numina*, guardian spirits of Roman mythology, who watched over people, places, or homes. Pomona protected and inspired the abundance of the fruitful gardens and orchards." - historyfilia: WordPress

Inside this issue:

Tributes to Gary Carruthers	2-3
Irises that Did Well in Tucson in 2024	4
Treasurer's Report, Dragonflies - article, photos	5
What to do in the Iris Garden during August	6
Iris Haiku, Did You Know?	6
Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History	6
Poster for TAIS 2024 Rhizome Sale	7

Upcoming Events

August 10: 1 PM, Tucson Botanical Garden's Education Room, Rhizome Auction for members only. Rhizomes from Mid-America Garden and the Region 15 Spring Trek

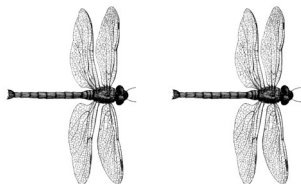
Rhizome Sale: September 21, 9 AM to noon (or when we run out), Harlow Gardens, 5620 E. Pima. Members-only discount hour = 8 to 9 AM. Do you have any excess rhizomes to contribute? You will receive Iris Bucks for them and then you can buy different irises!

7th Annual Photo Contest: coming up in September. Details to be announced. Begin selecting up to 15 of your best photos of irises. They do not have to be from your own garden and you do not have to know their names

Birthday Wishes to:

Kathleen Marron
Pat Olsen
Diane Pavlovich

Miriam Diamond
Juliet Westbrook
Rose Clark



Caerulean dragonfly

Gary Carruthers Tributes

Kevin received a text from Gary's daughter that he passed away on May 31. She thanked Kevin for bringing him to our meetings.

Aside from irises, Gary Carruthers was a long-time member of the Rose Society of Tucson. He told me that he and his wife loved flowers of all kinds. His garden was a great joy and he loved to have people stop by to see it.

He was very creative and was good at mixing companion plants for both his roses and irises. He once presented a program to the rose society on this topic. Gary was always positive and encouraging to all people in the gardening groups he belonged to as he was also involved in the Men's Garden Club for a time when it was still active in the 1980s and 90s. He would participate in the various groups' shows. Gary will be missed by many.

— Diane & Lou Pavlovich



Gary Carruthers was a French and Spanish teacher at Sahuaro for many years. He had numerous interests in addition to gardening including cars, languages, religious history, and much more. And like gardening, he had expert knowledge at whatever he did. I often visited him for tours of his garden and expert advice on what was growing. His yard was full of a variety of citrus; some were huge trees that he grew from seed. He always insisted I harvest some of his fruit. For several years I've been giving him rides to TAIS meetings and learning, among other things, what TAIS was like 20, 30, and 40 years ago. As I wrote in last month's newsletter, he was an inspiration to me.

- Kevin Kartchner

Gary Carruthers has long been an important advocate for gardening in the Tucson community. I first met Gary at the Men's Garden Club show that was being held at the El Con Mall, back in 1995, where he was assisting with their show displays of various plants and flowers. It was a beautiful exhibit and Gary was everywhere, meeting the public, assisting with the judging, answering questions about all things that could grow in the desert southwest. I called him the Human Encyclopedia because he could automatically pull up information from his brain about anything to do with plants and gardening! Gary was involved with several garden clubs in Tucson: the Rose Society of Tucson, the Tucson Area Iris Society, the Men's Garden Club and probably others I never knew about. Gary was also a Horticulture Judge...

(cont. on next page)

Gary Carruthers Tributes, continued

... for several garden societies which is a vital part of organized garden clubs because it contributes to our main mission of public education. He just enjoyed growing plants and that translated into helping other people as he shared his gardening passion. Gary was simply a good friend to have around and a selfless person who always found time for others. He will be greatly missed.

- Terry Swartz

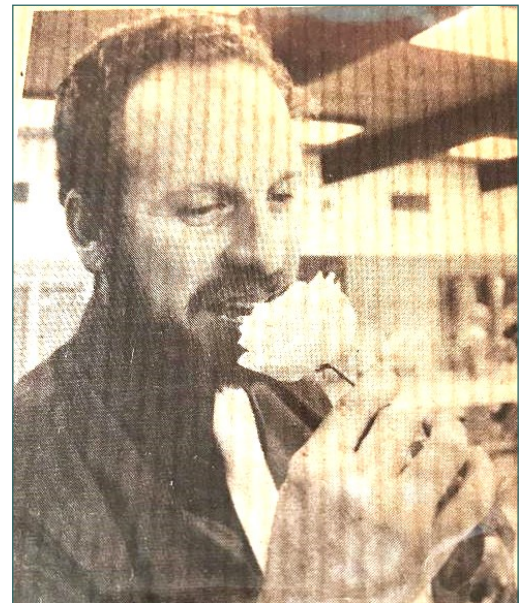
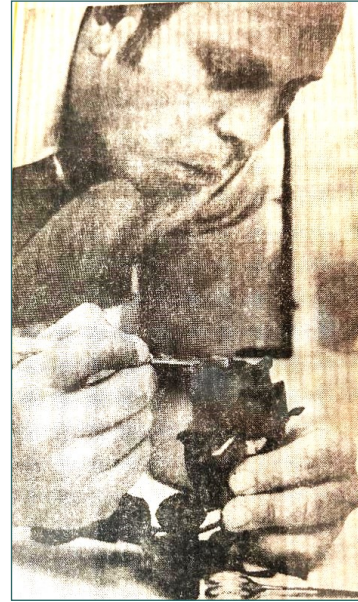
Although I was new to the club, Gary was always willing to offer me common sense advice in regards to everything from growing iris to the snacks I served while in charge of Club Hospitality. He just had the nicest, sweetest attitude towards this 'rookie,' and I so appreciated him. We lost a real treasure.

- Joyce Knill

I did not know Gary when he was younger, but would like to have. It is my understanding that he was quite knowledgeable regarding the growing of Irises and Roses, as well as having an interesting teaching career. However, over the last few years, I visited with Gary when he was able to attend our Iris meetings. He was always pleasant, took the time to talk with me, and inquired if Sue and I were doing well. Gary was one of the good ones, and will be missed and remembered by all who had the opportunity to know him.

- Dave Smith

In an article titled [The shows must go on \(tucson.com\)](http://tucson.com), it mentions that Gary's garden near Jesse Owens Park was to be featured in a tour in March 2011, which unfortunately was soon after a big freeze. Gary had kept his holiday lights on during the five-day cold snap and moved plants to warmer areas in the garden before the freeze. And he said something that I love: "My garden is so messy sometimes," admits the lifelong gardener, "but we have so many birds." - SC



Terry shared these vintage photos of Gary from the Rose Society scrapbooks.

Top: "Gary Carruthers, chairman of the rose show "Spring has a New Beginning," scheduled Saturday and Sunday by the Rose Society of Tucson, carefully brushes petals of one of the roses to be exhibited." [not dated]

Bottom: "Winner in a new classification, most fragrant rose, at the rose show sponsored by the Rose Society of Tucson last weekend was Lemon Spice, shown by Gary Carruthers..." Nov 1973 [Any theories about why he appears to be biting a petal of his rose?! - SC]



Iris names that did well in the Tucson area this year

Iris name (with link)	beautiful	many flowers	fragrant	performed well in wind/heat	comments	grower
That's All Folks		big ones!			large clumps, stands out in garden, good grower	Kevin
My Friend Jonathan	X	X	X			Dick Butler
Sparks	X	X		full sun	bloomed in Jan., Feb., and March!	Susan
Sparks	X	X				Sandy
Disco Eclipse	X			X		Bonnie
Dashing	X	X				Madeleine
Glitter Gulch	X	X				Madeleine
Javalanche	X	X	X	X		Sally
Fine Wine	X	X			great grower	Dan
Poppa John	X	X			great grower	Dan
Mesmerizer - Re	X	X				Linda
Believe in Magic				X		Cindy
Autumn Explosion - Re	X		X	X		Kristee
I'm Wicked	X	X			early bloom, fast increaser	Joyce
Bottle Rocket		X			one stalk bloomed for a long time	Diane
Spot On - Re	X	X		X		Leeann
Waves of Amber	X	X		X		Lois
Sisters of Loretto	X	X		X		Terry
Alabaster Unicorn		X		X		Cathy
Champagne Elegance		X		X		Cathy
Belle Fille		X		X		Cathy

Re = reblooming iris

Thank you to Joyce for suggesting this survey. It is helpful to know which irises are performing well for others in our area. Perhaps you'll get ideas of what to add to your shopping list for our upcoming rhizome sale! Each iris name is linked to its corresponding page on the AIS Wiki and most of the entries also have a photograph.

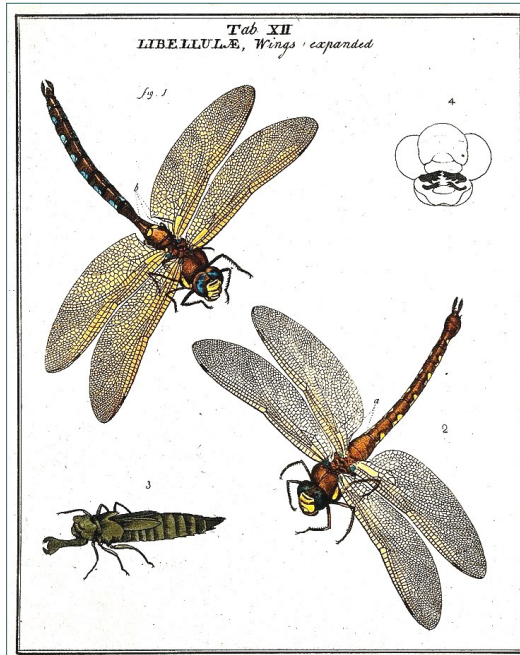
If you wish to add to this list, please send the information about your favorite performer in 2024 to taisnewsletter@yahoo.com.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

I had good luck with Louisiana irises here in Chandler. Last fall, Joyce gave me some that she planted in two 5-gallon buckets. We got five stalks from them this year! They are '[Great White Hope](#), '[Our Caroline](#),' and '[From this Moment](#).' - SC

Treasurer's Report for July - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

<u>DUES</u>	<u>YTD</u>	
INC	+595.00	TOTAL INC FROM DUES
EXP	-13.60	postage
	-36.00	refreshments
	-500.00	web
	-213.41	books
	-45.00	AIS
	-120.00	region 15
	-928.01	TOTAL EXP FROM DUES
		-293.01 ACT BALANCE
<u>SHOW</u>		
INC	539.27	square sales
	795.00	cash sales
	1334.27	
EXP	39.14	TAIS show expenses
	441.02	ROSE SOC
	480.16	TOTAL SHOW expenses
		+854.11 ACT BALANCE
<u>SALE</u>		
INC	+339.48	rhizome
EXP	-2944.25	rhizomes
	800.00	rhizomes
	-2944.25	TOTAL SALE EXPENSES
		-2944.25 ACT BALANCE
<u>AUCTION</u>		
INC	0.00	
EXP	0.00	
CHECKBOOK BALANCE 30 JULY 2024 \$9413.24		



Source: Two dragonflies (Libellulæ species): adults and larva. Coloured etching by Moses Harris, ca. 1766. Iconograph'ic Collections- Keywords: Moses Harris, found at Wikimedia via wellcomeimages.org

Beneficial Garden Insects, Part III: Dragonflies

There are approximately 3,000 species of dragonflies and they live mostly in the tropics. One species, the emperor dragonfly, is found on every continent except Antarctica. Dragonflies closely resemble their relatives the ancient griffinflies, which had 30" wingspans. The oldest dragonfly fossils date to the early Jurassic, about 200 million years ago.

Dragonflies lay their eggs in water or in punctures that they make in plants, and these hatch into nymphs or *naiads*. They live in the water for up to five years and feed mostly on aquatic invertebrates such as bloodworms and mosquito larvae, although some eat tadpoles and small fish. When they are ready to metamorphose into adults, they rise to the water's surface, stick their head out of the water, and gradually begin to breathe air. The naiad crawls onto a plant, splits its exoskeleton, and the adult dragonfly emerges. Dragonflies are voracious eaters and skilled fliers. Their eyesight is excellent. They devour mosquitos (30-100 a day), midges, flies, butterflies, moths, spiders, damselflies, and smaller dragonflies.

It seems like dragonflies would not be out and about in a desert environment like ours, but I've seen them in my backyard around our fountain, in our neighborhood during flood irrigation, hovering over the lake at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum near Superior, and dashing about near the Rio Flag in Flagstaff. There is a [dragonfly sanctuary pond](#) in Albuquerque. Some species are covered in a waxy coating called *pruinescence* to protect their body from heat. Dragonflies spend much of their time perching in order to find prey and mates, and sometimes just for a break. One source recommends installing upright bamboo stakes (3' tall) or stretching some horizontal cables over a garden for dragonflies to perch on. A small pond edged with flat rocks and sporting plants such as **water lilies, arrowhead plants, pondweed, and fanwort** will attract dragonflies and encourage them to lay eggs. Upright plants such as reeds, sedges, cattails, and probably [Equisetum](#) offer perching opportunities. **Shrubs** provide hiding and resting places. Dragonflies also like these plants: **black-eyed susans, coneflowers, asters, and borage**. And be sure to avoid pesticides. - SC



From top: dragonfly nymph or naiad underwater (by Vatalii Hudai, Shutterstock) and adult dragonfly (by Danele Nobile, Getty Images) (both from source #4)

Sources: Wikipedia article: "Dragonfly," [Are Dragonflies Good for the Garden? \(Pros and Cons\) - Gardenia Organic](#), [Why Are Dragonflies Important? | Sciencing](#), [8 Things You Never Knew About Dragonflies \(treehugger.com\)](#), [Grow These 7 Amazing Plants to Attract Dragonflies to Your Yard \(msn.com\)](#), [What Attracts Dragonflies? 17 Eye-Catching Plants to Try \(msn.com\)](#), [Dragonflies develop a waxy coating to withstand warmer climates \(msn.com\)](#), [One Dragonfly Can Eat 100+ Mosquitoes Daily. Here's How To Attract Them \(msn.com\)](#)

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 August:

Maintenance: Be sure irises receive afternoon shade. Monitor soil with moisture meter and water irises when it reads close to dry. Continue checking for aphids and other pests. Remove pests, weeds, and debris. Replace faded labels ASAP so you don't lose the names of your irises. Remove spent stems if you have not done so already. They can be a disease and pest vector. If grass has invaded your beds, try spraying it with [Grass-B-Gon](#), which should not harm the irises, but apply it with caution. Saturating the grass in full sun works best, and it may take a few applications before the grass is destroyed.

Organic care: Feed with fish emulsion every other week and with feather meal and alfalfa meal (or pellets) monthly. Apply humic acid as desired.

Non-Organic care: No fertilizer required till fall. Continue watering reblooming irises. - SC



Tip Exchange

A table fork can be useful when removing small weeds, especially in tight areas. Insert the prongs at the base of the weed, push down, and lift out the weed and its roots. Gloves will protect your hands and prevent blisters from this nontraditional garden tool. - [the spruce](#)

This summer, I am experimenting with my 1- and 2-gallon nursery pots of irises by placing them in the shade in large pots filled about 7/8s full of potting soil (from failed irises...). This way, they drain well and are not on the hot, hot ground. - SC

Iris Limerick

There was a young man in Chandler.
 He made candles (is that a candler?).
 He grew lots of flowers
 And spent many hours
 Gardening by candles in Chandler.
 - Sue Clark



Did You Know?

Five Irisarian Laws: **1.** A typical bloom season was experienced in 1956. There has been no typical bloom since that year. **2.** You can predict a rain storm more accurately than the weatherman by checking when the next Iris Show is scheduled. **3.** Irises and weeds are companion plants and should be grown together. (Many people refuse to believe this law, but end up practicing it anyway). **4.** The more you pay for an iris, the more likely it is to die. **5.** There are 3 types of iris growers: 1) the normal iris grower, 2) the iris nut, and 3) you. (You kid yourself, my friends!). [Do you have any laws to add to this list? - SC]

Source: AIS 100 Years Bold, Supplement 2 of 4 to IRISES: the Bulletin of AIS, 2020, p. 151, originally from Region 4 Newscast

"A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms." - Zen Shin

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

John C. Wister, who became the first president of the American Iris Society, began compiling a checklist of iris varieties in June 1919. Additional contributors to this original checklist were Robert Sturtevant (who became the first secretary for AIS) and E. H. Krelage (a noted Dutch nurseryman), among others. This typewritten list was to go through six revisions. The American Iris Society published a version of this list in its *Bulletin* number 4 in January 1922. The published checklist was pared down to those irises believed to be in commerce at that time, with a few known synonyms for them. It was prepared specifically for the Standardized Plant Names reference book put out by the American Joint Committee on Horticultural Nomenclature mentioned last month. You may recognize the names of some of the prominent iris growers who underwrote publication of the checklist for the AIS membership: Jennett Dean, Bertrand Farr, Grace Sturtevant, and Rainbow Iris Gardens. Others included Patterson Nursery and Lee Bonnewitz. AIS members submitted additions and corrections which were analyzed before publication of a revised checklist in October 1923 in the AIS *Bulletin* #8.

During the 1920's, many new and modern irises were introduced, irises were studied and classified, and books and papers were written. The first International Conference on the Iris was held in Paris in 1922. The AIS test gardens were installed at Cornell University. More next month... - SC

Source: "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

The Tucson Area Iris Society Presents
2024 Rhizome Sale



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.