



February 2025

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60<sup>th</sup> year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Vance George'**  
(Valenzuela, 2009)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2024

## President's Message

Ready to arrange? Need some ideas for your arrangements in our show? Cindy Grimm, with over 30 years of professional floral arranging experience, will be sharing her insights and tips and demonstrating some of them at our February meeting. Cindy also has iris in her heritage as her great-grandmother grew iris commercially on several acres in Oregon. So come with your questions and learn from an expert.

- Kevin Kartchner

**"When February sun shines cold, there comes a day when in the air the wings of winter slow unfold, and show the golden summer there." - PHILIP SAVAGE (1868-1899)**

### Inside this issue:

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## Upcoming Events

Annual dues are due! \$15/household. Form and details on our [website](#)

**February 4:** Lynda Miller, hybridizer, speaking at the Sun Country Iris Society meeting, 7 PM. Meet & Greet at 6:30 PM. The Valley Garden Center, 1809 N. 15th Ave, Phoenix (two blocks north of McDowell)

**Next meeting:** February 8, 1 PM. Cindy Grimm on Floral Arranging, Columbus-Eckstrom Library, 4350 E 22nd Street

**March 8 meeting:** Tips for presenting at the Iris Show. Schedule [link](#)

**TAIS Iris Show:** April 19 in combination with the Rose Society Show

**April 25-26:** Region 15 Spring Trek, information [link](#)

### Birthday Wishes to:

- Maureen Kelly    Dave Smith    David Sliffe**
- Shirley Andrews    Sue Clark    Barb Nicholson**
- Stanna Schoepel    Sam Wymer    Candace Pappas**
- Thomas Modaff    Marie Radecki**



*Iris anglicana*

Source: Basilius Bessler, 1620

# January Meeting Minutes



11 Jan 2024 - Seventeen members gathered at the Eckstrom-Columbus Library for a Zoom presentation by Chuck Chapman from Canada on Broken Color Irises and Variations. See my notes on p. 5.

**General Meeting:** Kevin thanked Bonnie for hosting our excellent potluck in November and mentioned that he loves the plant- and seed-sharing part of it. Susan's shoulder is doing much better, but now she has pneumonia. We hope that she will get well soon!

Our calendar is set for this year. Committee chairs include: Show - Terry, Auction - Kevin and me, Sale - Pat and Joyce, Photo Contest - me. The 60th-Anniversary Committee consists of Linda, Bonnie, Joyce, and Kevin. They have decided upon a free rhizome (up to \$20 value [later upped to \$26]) for active members and a catered meal possibly in Kevin's iris garden during peak bloom. Members voted for lunch rather than

brunch, possibly on April 25. An email will go out soon to RSVP for a rhizome and tentatively RSVP for the luncheon. Some ideas for our 60th anniversary were too limiting and too expensive - \$1700 for a van to Prescott for 14 people. Service projects can be separate events and may be planned later.

Pat is chair of our Region 15 2026 Fall Conference (Trek). Kevin, Lois, Bonnie, and Cindy offered to help her. The following details will need planning and budgets - location, food & beverages, speaker, raffle and auction, and door prizes. Typically 50-60 people attend. Proceeding with the Trek was approved by a show of hands. We will need a tagline for it, and the committee will start meeting in March. Pat's research shows that it usually costs about \$6000 to host a fall Trek, of which the hosting club recoups approximately \$4500-\$5000.

If you would like to  
be interviewed  
about irises,  
contact [Sue](#)



We're on the web:  
[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)

Joyce has booked Harlow's for our Sale on September 13. Kevin and I will each order \$800-worth of rhizomes for the sale. I will also order \$450-worth for the Auction and the Club Irises for the Board Members.

Dan, Dave, and Kevin won the door prizes of irises. Kevin donated his to Lois and Dave gave his to me.

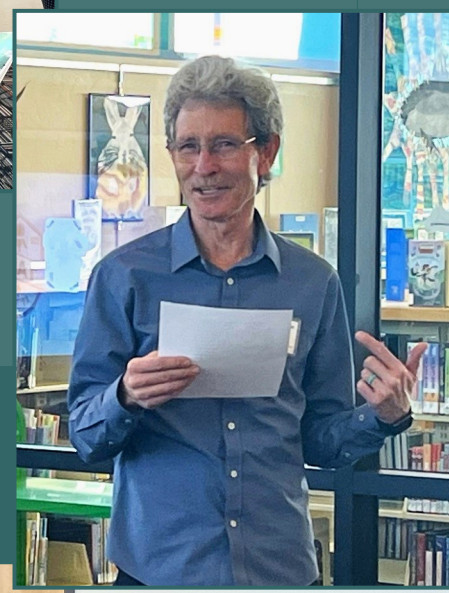
Do you know of a garden club that might want to learn more about irises? Kevin is presenting to the Patio Garden Club on January 21. This might be a great way to raise interest in growing our favorite flower.

**Board Meeting:** We have about \$15,000 in our account. Kevin presented two slides of projected expenses totaling \$5075. Bonnie motioned to approve these and Cindy seconded. Motion carried by show of hands. Expenses include rhizomes for Auction and Sale, fees for speakers, Show, AIS, Zoom, etc. Pat created a Zoom account for us that can be turned on as we need it. She will prepare a budget for speakers for 2026 so that she doesn't have to have them approved monthly. She is planning to book more hybridizers and irisarians for next year.

And I will again take up interviewing TAIS members about their iris-growing history and habits for the newsletter.

- Sue Clark, secretary

# January Meeting - photos by Dave Smith



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

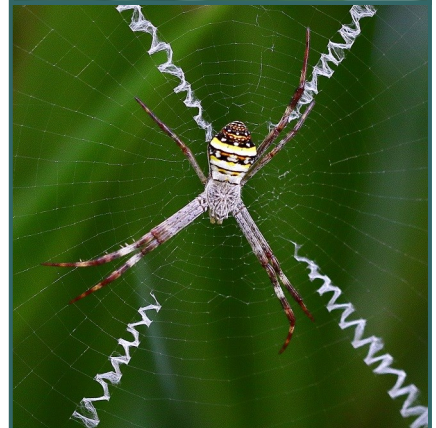
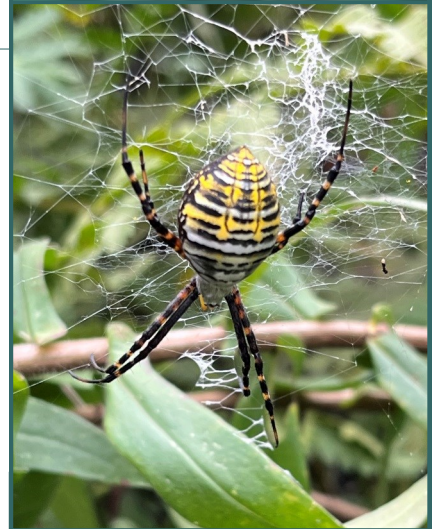
## BEGINNING BANK BALANCE

1 JAN 2025	15,000.52
<u>JAN INC</u>	<u>192.00</u>
	15,192.52
JAN EXP	<u>2,262.19</u>
31 JAN 25 BAL	12,930.33



Images: Alvegaspur (left), Jorozko (right) - Wikimedia Commons

Above: two views of the banded garden spider that lives in Arizona. It is 3.5" from leg tip to leg tip. View on left is from below, right is from above



## Beneficial Garden Arachnids, Part I: Garden Spiders

Although much maligned, spiders are important predators in the garden. They have been catching and devouring insects and other spiders since they first appeared in the Carboniferous Period over 300 million years ago. With just two body segments, the cephalothorax and abdomen, spiders differ from insects which have three segments. Spiders have no antennae, and their heart and respiratory organs reside in their abdomen. Limbs are extended by hydraulic pressure because they contain no extensor (straightening) muscles. The 52,309 species of spiders can be divided into three large groups based upon their strategy for capturing prey: web builders, ambushers, and stalkers.

Orb-weaver spiders are the most common type of web-building spiders. They are found all over the world, except for Antarctica. Spiders extrude silk from special organs called spinnerets near the end of their abdomen. (See photo). This silk is made of protein. First, a line of silk is floated on the wind. After this strand reaches another surface, the spider secures the line, drops from the center of this strand while extruding a silken strand to create a "Y," and then adds many more silken radii before applying a final spiral of special silk covered with sticky droplets in which prey will become entangled.

Of the over 3,100 species of orb-weavers, one of the most striking and valuable spiders in the garden is the aptly-named garden spider. Highly visible due to its yellow and black body and fairly large size, the garden spider eats mostly insects, especially flying ones. One species is known to occasionally catch and feed upon small bats.

Garden Spiders create a design in their web, called a *stabilimentum* or web decoration, which leads to one of their other names, the writing spider. As you might guess, this was the inspiration for the book Charlotte's Web. Another name for the garden spider is the Steelers spider, a favorite name for those of us who grew up near Pittsburgh. The stabilimentum is often a zigzag line, an "X," or even a spiral. Its purpose is unknown (except to the spider itself). Garden spiders typically are positioned in the center of their web with their head facing downwards. Their legs tend to pair up and are arranged in an "X." (See photos). When threatened, they may dart to the edge of their web, stay in the center and make the web bounce like a trampoline, or drop off the web completely.

One species of garden spider resides in Arizona. The banded garden spider is black, yellow, and white and creates a zigzag stabilimentum in its web.

Spider webs themselves were used in the past to bind wounds. The vitamin K in them has been found to help clot blood, explaining why they worked as an early Band-Aid. And webs are important components of hummingbird nests. So both spiders and their webs are all-around valuable! - SC

From top: 1. Close-up of spinnerets of Australian garden orb weaver spider (by Jason 7825). The rest of the photos show various garden spiders and their stabilimenta: 2. In my mom's garden in PA, photo by me, 3. by Summerdrought, and 4. by Akio Tanikawa

Sources: Wikipedia articles: [Orb-weaver spider](#), [Argiope \(spider\)](#), [Spinnerets](#), [Stabilimentum](#); [Spiders: Their Webs and Myths](#), and a [link](#) to photos and descriptions of spiders in Arizona

## Broken Colors in Irises - My Notes from Chuck Chapman's presentation

Chuck Chapman lives in Ontario, Canada in Zone 4. He owns [chapmanirises.com](http://chapmanirises.com) and has been hybridizing and selling irises for over 30 years. A top interest is broken color - **uneven and irregular random distribution of color with the pigment distribution being different in each flower.** (See photos). It is controlled genetically and not by disease or chemical. Broken color is not a new thing. '[Victorine](#)' (Lémon, 1840) and '[Loreley](#)' (Goos and Koenemann, 1909) are early examples. Allen Ensminger set out to hybridize broken colors. He registered 25 broken colors which are still used extensively in breeding other broken colors. Some of Ensminger's broken color irises are '[Batik](#)' and '[Peach Jam](#),' which is a re-bloomer. Brad Kasperek of Zebra Gardens hybridizes many broken colors with unusual names, including '[Baboon Bottom](#),' '[Gnus Flash](#),' and '[Tiger Honey](#).'

Paul Black has developed some broken color irises that are not plicatas. His '[Wizard of Odds](#)' is, atypical for this color pattern, cold hardy. Another of his is '[I'm Not Stable](#).' George Sutton's '[Peggy Anne](#)' is frequently used by his son Mike in hybridizing other broken color irises. Mike has several dark broken colors, including '[Spiced Up](#),' which is dark red with gold streaks. David and Anna Toth bred '[Blueberry Smoothie](#),' '[Sheer Panic](#)' (which won an Award of Merit), and '[Shattered Illusions](#)' (wine red on medium purple).

Some other reasons that colors might be broken up in an iris are frost damage, developmental errors, and disease, including the mosaic Iris virus which causes lots of mixed colors. There are at least six mosaic viruses that affect irises. '[Az Ap](#)' was introduced as a fairly solid purple iris, but now has blotchy color, rough edges, and crepey texture, all caused by the virus. '[W R Dykes](#)' was a clear yellow, but got red-purple splotches from a mosaic virus.

RoundUp can change the color of irises if sprayed on them. It disrupts the amino acids in the benzene rings in the purple pigment, affecting both color and texture. Usually just the terminal flowers are affected, and just for that one season.

Two kinds of iris pigments are *carotenoids* which are found in cell walls, and are responsible for the

colors yellow, orange, and red; and *anthocyanins*, which are found in cell vacuoles. The latter are water soluble and create the colors red, purple, blue, and black. *Delphinidin* is a type of anthocyanin that is a bluish-purple and is in most of the broken color irises. *Transposons* or "jumping genes" cause the random variation in broken color irises because sections of DNA get cut and put into a different part of the genetic sequence.

Chuck often uses '[Die Laughing](#)' (Black, 2013) as a parent. He breeds irises for cold climates and reports that the non-plicata irises (carotenoid background) grow better in colder climates. These also have a higher frequency of broken colors in their seedlings, and tend to exhibit more colors in a single flower.

See [chapmanirises.com](http://chapmanirises.com) for Chuck's introductions. He has generously agreed to share his PowerPoint on our [website](#). - SC

**Below: 'Ragtime Singer' (Chapman, 2020) showing different manifestations of broken color**



Right: Photo of the Patio Garden Club meeting where Kevin presented a program about growing irises on January 21. He invited their club members to join our club, as well as attend our show and sale. He expects some of the 30 attendees to attend and perhaps even participate in these. Photo taken at Sabino Vista Hills Recreation Center.



Two arrangements by Carol Brecker of the Phoenix Sogetsu Ikebana group. Carol created these arrangements during a demonstration at the "Ikebana Now!" exhibit at the Japanese Friendship Garden on 25 January 2025. The one on the left is built upon a structure created from interlocking loops made of two colors and sizes of zip ties - black and white. All kinds of materials, both natural and manmade, are used by Sogetsu artists. The irises are Dutch. - SC

**TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2025**

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

**What to do in the Iris Garden during February:**

**Maintenance:** Check for aphids. Blast them off with a jet of water. Keep plants hydrated during this interval of rapid growth. Use a moisture meter to monitor them. Replace faded labels. Names are required when showing irises!

**Organic care:** Continue feeding with fish emulsion every other week, and alfalfa meal and feather meal monthly. Apply humic acid as desired.

**Non-organic care:** Apply weekly or every two weeks: Scott's [SuperBloom](#) (12-55-6), Miracle-Gro [Bloom Booster](#) (10-52-10), [Schultz Bloom Plus](#) 10-54-10), **or** Ferti-lome [Blooming & Rooting](#) (9-58-8) through May. TAIS' Susan starts this on New Year's Day; Kristee on Valentine's Day. - SC



**Tip Exchange**

Granite Dells Iris Gardens in Prescott is owned by David and Trish Spence. Their hybridizing interests include plicata, lace, space-age, and reblooming tall bearded irises. Several of their introductions are available for purchase via their website, [GraniteDellsGardens.com](http://GraniteDellsGardens.com). If you wish to visit, their address is 2500 E Boulder Creek Lane, Prescott. 928-237-0243. - SC

**Iris Limerick**

I ordered an iris called 'Orange Juice.'  
I'll plant it beside my blue spruce.  
With color so bright  
It will catch all the light,  
That juicy-juice iris called 'Orange Juice.'  
- Sue Clark



Source: Takashi Muramatsu

*Iris ensata*, wild form

**Did You Know?**

A mandala garden combines a place to grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers with a spot for contemplation and reflection. Picture a circular garden divided into quadrants. Perhaps there is a piece of garden art at the center. Arcs of plants within each quadrant are spaced between arcs without plants. These empty areas offer spaces to wander, maintain plants, and offer temporary storage as you weed or harvest vegetables. - Source: [Old Farmers Almanac](#) (see a sample plan for a mandala garden at the link)

**"FEBRUARY MAKES A BRIDGE AND MARCH BREAKS IT."**  
- GEORGE HERBERT

**A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History**

I have mentioned the three categories of Japanese irises several times in this column. Here are photos to help you visualize them.



**Ise type.** Ise is not far from Kyoto. These were bred from wild Japanese irises (photo above) starting in about 1800. Their parent plants likely came from a different area than did those of the other two types. They are bred to grow in pots and be viewed from the side. Note the pendant (hanging) falls. A single perfect flower is the goal - no branching welcome.



**Higo type.** These were bred from Edo types starting in about 1860. They were developed for pot culture. Their flowers are held on stalks which are taller than the leaves. Rainfall is usually heavy when Higo irises bloom, and by growing them in pots, they can be brought indoors when ready to bloom. Like the Ise type, a single magnificent flower is the goal, so branches are removed, as is the second bud from the terminal socket. Blooms are large and are viewed from the side.



**Edo type.** These were bred in the region around Tokyo, Edo being the old name for Tokyo. Their parent stock was collected from the wild in the Asaka marshes in Honshu and breeding has been going on since at least the late 1600's. Edos are designed for growing in gardens and are viewed from above. They may be single or multi-petaled. - SC

Sources: [The Japanese Iris](#) by Currier McEwen, [Best Landscape Ideas - Japanese Iris](#), [Flower Forms of Japanese Iris - Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm](#). Learn about naturalizing Higos in meadows: [Tikorangi - The Jury Garden](#)