

January 2025

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60<sup>th</sup> year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Bold Statement'**  
(Tasco, 2001)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2024

## President's Message

I believe TAIS is moving forward every year: from our shows, to sales, and our various programs. We had a great year for 2024, and 2025 will be even better thanks to everyone's contributions, especially Pat Olsen for our programs, Sally Vega for our places, and Terry Swartz for the big show. As the show is only 3.5 months away, maintain whatever fertilizing, watering, magic, or anything else that ensures your best blooming. 2025 will also be TAIS' 60th anniversary and we have some special things being planned to celebrate. So make sure you keep up with our packed [calendar of events](#) and we'll see you in 2025.

- Kevin Kartchner

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**"You'd be so lean, that blast of January Would blow you through and through. Now, my fair'st friend, I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might Become your time of day."**

**- William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV Scene 4**

## Upcoming Events

Next meeting: January 11, 1 PM. Chuck Chapman via Zoom: Broken Colors & Variations. Eckstrom-Columbus Library, 22nd St & Columbus

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)

April 25-26: Region 15 Spring Trek - "Spring Day in a Secret Garden," Redlands, California. Details TBA

### Birthday Wishes to:

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Maxine Fifer</b>   | <b>Kathy Windischman</b>  |
| <b>Bonnie Else</b>    | <b>Nancy Hook</b>         |
| <b>Marilyn Jensen</b> | <b>Michael Willing</b>    |
| <b>Kim Larsen</b>     | <b>Carol Gawrychowski</b> |



*Iris alata*

Source: *Galeariflora* 1891, E. von Regel



## TAIS 60th Anniversary Year

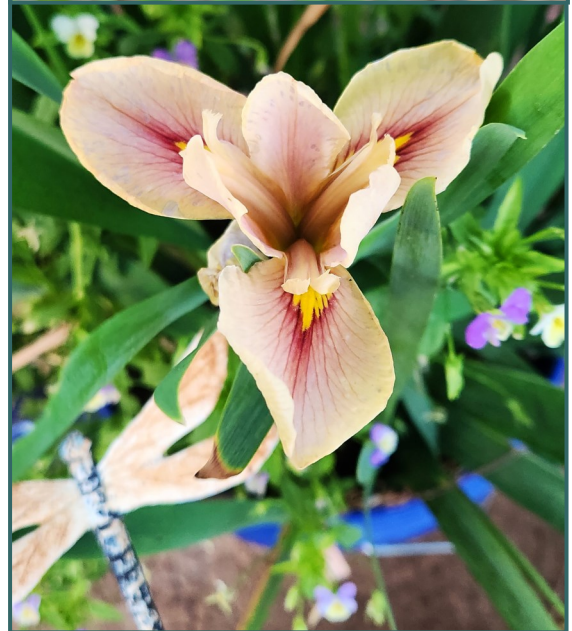
The Tucson Area Iris Society celebrates 60 years in 2025! Ideas that have been suggested to celebrate this commemorative year include the following:

1. **Day trip to [Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm](#)** near Prescott. They have over 400 varieties of iris in fields (which we could walk), farm animals, & a picnic area. This garden in Wilhoit would be about 4 hours of travel each way
2. **Touring an iris garden** created by students and a teacher of Rio Rico High School. They have 30 varieties growing in a field and 40 others in a greenhouse for evaluation at bloom time. One hour each way
3. **Planting irises** in a new community garden at Kristee's church in Tucson
4. **Catered lunch or brunch** in Kevin's iris garden (or TBG)
5. **Purchasing rhizomes** for active club members
6. **Re-doing iris beds at Boyce Thompson Arboretum.** A small flood uprooted a section of this garden and some of the rest of the plants need to be divided. This would be a community service project

Please bring your other ideas and thoughts to our January meeting or send them to [taisnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:taisnewsletter@yahoo.com). - SC

## Some Types of Irises You Can Grow in Tucson & Surrounding Areas

Members of our club are growing the following types of irises: tall bearded, intermediate bearded, standard dwarf bearded, arilbred, spuria, Louisiana, Dutch, Japanese, *Iris albicans*, *Iris unguicularis* (Winter iris), *Moraea* iris (an iris cousin), walking iris (also a cousin). Any others?



Two Louisiana irises that Joyce shared with me: '[Great White Hope](#)' (Haymon 1999) and '[When Pigs Fly](#)' (O'Connor 2012); 2024 bloom season. I have several other Louisianas, as well. - SC

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

**14,962.25----Beginning Balance 1 Dec 2024**

**INCOME**

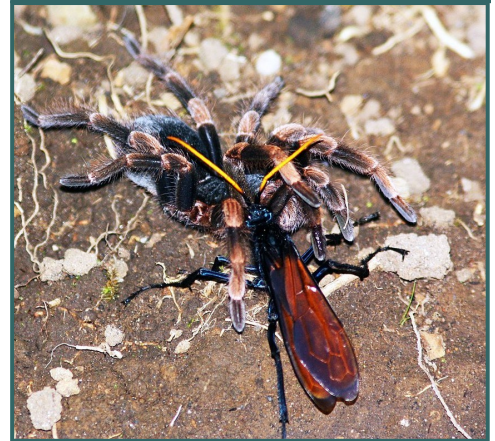
**Dues + 40.00**  
**15,002.25**

**EXPENSES**

**-1.73 Square Fee**  
**15,000.52 Ending Balance 31 Dec 2024**



Close-up of a braconid wasp



From top: Yellow ichneumon wasp (by [Vengolis](#)), braconid wasp - note the long ovipositor (egg-laying device) (by [R. Bartz](#)), female chalcid wasp (by [Beatriz Moisset](#)) - note the metallic color typical of chalcids, female tarantula hawk dragging paralyzed orange-kneed tarantula (by [Charles J. Sharp](#)) (all photos found on Wikimedia)

**TAIS 2024 Calendar**

- Jan 11 - Chuck Chapman, hybridizer
- Feb 8 - Cindy Grimm, floral arrangements
- Mar 8 - Panel, show tips
- Apr 19 - Iris and Rose Show
- May 10 - Dykes Bingo with prizes
- June & July - no meetings
- Aug 9 - TAIS Rhizome Auction
- Sept - Sale, TBA
- Oct 11 - Lynda Miller, hybridizer
- Nov - Potluck, TBA

## Beneficial Garden Insects Part VIII: Parasitoid Wasps

Not only are wasps pollinators, but many also help in the garden by controlling pests. Most parasitoid or paralyzing wasps range in size from very small to about an inch long. They lay their eggs on or in the bodies of insects and arachnids. The origins of this huge group of over 650,000 species lie in the Permian (about 300 to 250 million years ago).

Some types of parasitoid wasps are used for commercial pest control. **Ichneumonid wasps**, for example, prey mostly on caterpillars of butterflies and moths, as well as spiders. They are cosmopolitan, in that they are found on all continents except Antarctica. Their larvae consume their caterpillar or spider host from the inside out. Some **Braconid wasps** lay their eggs on the backs of tomato hornworms. They are also effective against other caterpillars, aphids, fruit fly larvae, leafminers, and beetles. Types that parasitize from the inside out use immunosuppression of the host to ensure that their own larvae will survive life inside. **Chalcid wasps** range in length from 1.5 to 3 mm. They parasitize insects, spiders, ticks, mites, and pseudoscorpions. Other victims include greenflies, whiteflies (especially in greenhouses), cabbage caterpillars, and scale insects. One species only pollinates figs. Others are herbivorous and are used to control certain weeds.

**Tarantula hawks** are a parasitoid wasp you may have seen. They are 2.5" long and paralyze tarantulas, which they drag back to their nest so their larvae can feed on the still-living spider. The adult wasps are nectarivorous. - SC

Sources: [Beneficial Insects: Meet the Beneficial Bugs in Your Garden \(with Pictures\) | The Old Farmer's Almanac](#); Wikipedia articles on: [Parasitoid wasps](#), [Ichneumonidae](#), [Braconidae](#), [Chalcid wasp](#), and [Tarantula hawk](#)



## Index to 2024 TAIS Newsletters

**January 2024** – Photo: ‘Silver Skates;’ **Moths as Pollinators** - article and photos; photos of Susan Schaefer in her garden and Sam Wyman and the 2150 Club doing neighborhood clean-up; blurb on **The Locator page in the HIPS Journal**; **Tips: consider doing some experiments** on your irises; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Sydney Mitchell**; Limerick; Quotes: “January is the quietest month in the garden. But just because it looks quiet doesn’t mean that nothing is happening...” by Rosalie Muller Wright and “Time spent tending to your garden is never time wasted.” by Katrina Mayer

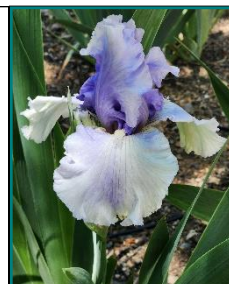
**February 2024** – Photo: ‘Rameses;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Honeybees** - article and photos; **Notes from ‘Growing Irises in the Tucson Area’ Panel Discussion**; blurb on **feather meal as fertilizer**; **Tips: Merino Nourishing Lanolin Skin Cream** and an **advantage to potted irises is being able to move them indoors during a freeze** by Sue; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Hans Peter and Jacob Sass**; Limerick; Quotes: "Don't wait for someone to bring you flowers. Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul." by Luther Burbank and "Always maintain a kind of summer even in the middle of winter." by Henry David Thoreau

**March 2024** – Photo: *Iris pseudacorus*; Meeting Minutes and photos; **Tips on Artistic Arrangements per Terry**; **Incidental Pollinators: Ants, Beetles, Wasps, Flies, and Mosquitos** - article and photos; **Photos of irises and tulips blooming at TBG**; blurb on **Gothic Gardens**; **Tips: dig a trench along wet iris beds** and **treat small amounts of rot with Comet cleanser per Jim Hedgecock**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Schreiners Iris Gardens**; Limerick; Quotes: “The little white clouds are racing over the sky, And the fields are strewn with the gold of the flower of March, The daffodil breaks under foot...” by Oscar Wilde, *Magdalen Walks* and “It is spring again. The Earth is like a child that knows poems by heart.” by Rainer Maria Rilke

**April 2024** – Photo: ‘You’re So Veined;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Other Pollinators: Snails, Honeyeater birds, Sunbirds, Lemurs, and Humans** - article and photos; **Pat Olsen’s Best Tips for Prepping Irises for the Show**; **“Irises, Irises” by Adam Ferrell-Wortman**, TBG Director of Horticulture – copied from the Spring 2024 edition of the TBG newsletter; blurb on **alfalfa meal or pellets as fertilizer**; **Tips: Read about iris-growing problems in Fall 2023 issue of Irises, the AIS Journal, v. 104, #4, Add 2-4 T alfalfa pellets per pot when planting iris, Plant rhizomes with tops just below soil surface to protect from crickets and grasshoppers per Jim Hedgecock**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Isabella Preston and Siberian irises**; Limerick; Quotes: “A gush of bird song, a patter of dew...An April day in the morning.” by Harriet Prescott Spofford and “It doesn't have to be the blue iris, it could be weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones; Just pay attention...” by Mary Oliver, *Praying* and "When one flower blooms, spring awakens everywhere." by John O'Donohue

**May 2024** – Photo: ‘Edith Wolford;’ **Report and Photos from Our Show**; **Tips from the Show Bench**; **Plant Adaptations for Pollinators** - article and photos; blurb on **AIS needs more Iris Judges**; **Tips: Relocate iris that blooms too late to show, First Nature 16 oz Hummingbird feeder**, and **divide any purchased rhizomes with over two fans**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Long’s Gardens** in Boulder, Colorado; Limerick; Quotes: “Now the bright morning-star, Day’s harbinger, Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her The flowery May...” by John Milton, *Song on May Morning*, and “May come up with fiddle-bows, May come up with blossom, May come up the same again, The same again but different.” by Louis MacNeice

**June 2024** – Photo: AB ‘Vivid Dream;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Artistic Arrangement Photos from the Show**; **Ladybugs** article and photos; **Hybridizing Irises and Growing Their Seeds, à la Kevin**; **What I Learned by Doing Artistic Arrangements** by Sue; blurb on **commercially-important flowers**; **Tips: Homemade flower food for bouquets**; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Cooley’s Gardens**; Limerick; Quotes: “And what is so rare as a day in June? Then, if ever, come perfect days...” by James Russell Lowell and “A dripping June Brings all things in tune.” – Weather Proverb



**July 2024** – Photo; SPU ‘Line Dancing;’ **More Photos from the Show; Photos from Kevin’s Garden Tour** by Sally; **Green Lacewings** article and photos; blurb on **two shops associated with TBG; Tips: How to certify your garden as a wildlife habitat;** What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Standardization of plant names in the 1920’s;** Limerick; Quotes: “When the heat like a mist veil floats, And poppies flame in the rye...It is July.” by Susan Hartley Swett and “Hark, the honeybee’s low hum Tells us that the summer’s come!” by Frank Dempster Sherman

**August 2024** – Photo: NoID; **Gary Carruthers tributes; Table of Irises that Did Well in Tucson This Year; Dragonflies** article and photos; blurb on **Five Irisarian Laws; Tips: use a table fork to remove weeds in pots and My Summer Iris Strategies for This Year** by Sue; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: AIS Checklist Lead-up and Iris Happenings in the 1920’s;** Limerick; Quotes: “Pomona was the uniquely Roman goddess of fruit trees, gardens, and orchards...” - historyfilia: WordPress and “A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms.” by Zen Shin

**September 2024** – Photo: ‘Jurassic Park;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Damselflies** article and photos; **Photos from Iris Dig at Marie Valenzuela’s** by Lois and Terry; **Rhizome Preparation Pre-Sale; Photo Contest rules and how-to’s;** blurb on **rhizomes are underground stems and not roots; Tips: Plant new irises right away and how and why to divide irises;** What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: AIS Checklists and Iris Registration;** Haiku; Quotes: “O month of fairer, rarer days Than Summer’s best have been; When skies at noon are burnished blue...” by Hellen L. Smith, *September Days* and “Plant so your own heart will grow.” by Hafiz

**October 2024** – Photo: ‘Bryce Canyon;’ **Report and Photos from the Sale; Ground Beetles** article and photos; blurbs on **Marcusen Sculpture Garden Damaged, Extra Plant Labels for Sale, and ‘Tobacco Road;’ Tips: the Bti (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) in Mosquito Dunks and Mosquito Bits may prevent soft rot in rhizomes;** What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Dr. Rudolph Kleinsorg and his Brown Irises;** Limerick; Quotes: “There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October...” by Nathaniel Hawthorne and “Every leaf speaks bliss to me, Fluttering from the autumn tree.” by Emily Brontë, *Fall, Leaves, Fall*

**November 2024** – Photo: ‘Clown Around;’ Meeting Minutes; **Region 15 Fall Conference (Trek) - article and photos** by Lois; **Some Tips from Dr. Walworth’s Fertilizing Presentation; Praying Mantis - article and photos; Winning Entries in our 7<sup>th</sup>-Annual Photo Contest;** blurb on **Ornamental Grasses for the Garden; Tips: My attempts at over-summering my irises were not successful** by Sue; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Dr. Phillip Loomis, hybridizer of pink irises and other colors;** Haiku; Quotes: "The wind that makes music in November corn is in a hurry. The stalks hum, the loose husks whisk skyward in half-playing swirls, and the wind hurries on...A tree tries to argue, bare limbs waving, but there is no detaining the wind." by Aldo Leopold and “The soft November days are here, The aftermath of blossom’s year.” by Sara Louisa Oberholtzer

**December 2024** – Photo: ‘Solar Fire;’ Meeting Minutes and photos from the Potluck; **Fertilizer Information from Dr. Walworth’s Presentation; Soldier Beetles, Assassin Bugs, and Robber Flies** - article and photos; blurb on **AIS’ two lists from 1925: Irises Worthy of Planting and Irises Unworthy of Planting; Tips: reference to a scientific paper that has photos showing irises grown without specific key nutrients;** What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; **History: Japanese Irises;** Limerick; Quotes: "That’s no December sky! Surely 'tis June Holds now her state on high, Queen of the noon. Only the tree-tops bare Crowning the hill, Clear-cut in perfect air, Warn us that still Winter, the aged chief, Mighty in power, Exiles the tender leaf, Exiles the flower..." by Robert Fuller Murray, *A December Day* and “In seed-time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.” by William Blake



**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 January:**

**Maintenance:** Monitor for aphids. Spray with water to remove. If you have not done so, create or update a map of your iris beds or containers, just in case labels fade or go missing. Replace faded labels. Names are required when showing irises!

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

**Non-organic care:** Buy some [Scott's Super Bloom](#) (12-55-6), [Miracle-Gro Bloom Booster](#) (10-52-10), [Schultz Bloom Plus](#) (10-54-10), or [Ferti-lome Blooming & Rooting](#) (9-58-8) to get ready for feeding from New Year's through May. These are available at Harlow's, Mesquite Valley Growers, Ace Hardware, Amazon, and other places. TAIS member Susan starts applying this in early January; Kristee on Valentine's Day. - SC



**Tip Exchange**

Water, feed, and water again. One of Terry Swartz's tips for growing Japanese irises (and indeed all irises) is that one cannot depend solely on drip lines to supply all of their water needs. After applying fertilizer, he recommends using a hose to push enough water through the root zone to flush salts. Terry suggests a good soak with the hose once a week. See all of Terry's tips for Japanese irises [here](#). - SC

**Haiku**

**Enormous golden moon  
Rises quickly, turns bright white;  
All on a winter's eve.**  
- Sue Clark



'Immaculate Glitter'

Source: AIS Wiki

**Did You Know?**

TAIS member Terry Swartz has been growing Japanese irises in Tucson for many years. He has gifted several to the Yumi Japanese Garden on Alvernon. Terry details his process for growing them in our [October 2020](#) newsletter, p. 5. Some of the things they need are a bit of cold in the winter, shade in the summer, a fair amount of water, and fertilizer. Terry said that his garden is in a lower and colder part of the city. The owners of [Ensata Gardens](#) told him that he should not be able to grow them in Tucson, but he does! - SC

**"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle." - Barbara Winkler**

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

William Arlie Payne is famous for decades of hybridizing Japanese irises. Arlie was born in 1881 on a farm near Terre Haute, Indiana. After college, he spent time as a pattern maker, lumberjack, photographer, and realtor before settling into a career in landscaping. He bought 16 acres south of Terre Haute where he raised peonies. He became interested in Japanese art and ceramics during the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and this led him to Japanese irises by the late 1920's. By 1932, he was breeding them and he did not stop. During the next 34 years, he raised 100,000 seedlings, of which he registered 170. His goal was to produce plants for American gardens. Arlie's criteria were: a beautiful flower on a hardy and vigorous plant with good form that was compatible with the flower. Although he used 32 varieties of Japanese irises in his hybridizing efforts, it was six Edo varieties that he depended on most. Some of his greatest accomplishments were '[Immaculate Glitter](#)' (1963) (photo above) and '[The Great Mogal](#)' (1957) (photo below). The former with its white wire edge was a breakthrough in Japanese irises.

In 1967, the Japanese Iris Society invited Arlie to spend seven weeks in Japan following the iris bloom from south to north. All of his meticulous records are preserved by the American Iris Society, who named the medal for Japanese irises after him.

Arlie Payne died in 1971 at age 90. - SC

Source: [William Arlie Payne, Hybridizer](#): AIS Wiki

