

July 2025

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'My Little Wagon'
(Valenzuela, 2012)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2025

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We're on the Web -
www.tucsoniris.org



President's Message

Our monsoon: it's my most and least favorite season. I'm hoping for the predicted above-average monsoon this summer. I love the intense storms and badly needed rain. It's also when I lose the most iris due to rot. Beware of over-watering. Bleach treatments (Comet, Clorox, etc.) have not worked for me. Digging, drying, and replanting after the monsoon has worked but that sets the plant back (but it's certainly better than no plant). I'm going to try digging, drying, and planting in a pot with fresh, loose, sterile potting soil. Find something that works and share your results.

- Kevin Kartchner

"A babble of brooks that deliver Their flower-purpled
waves to the river; A moan in the marshes; in thickets
A dolorous droning of crickets, Attuned to a
whip-poor-will's cry - And that is July!"

- James Newton Matthews, "July in the West - Night"

Upcoming Events

July - no meeting

August 9: 1 PM, Tucson Botanical Gardens. TAIS Rhizome Auction, one of our few members-only events

September 13: 9 AM to Noon. TAIS Rhizome Sale at Harlow's Gardens nursery, 5620 E Pima St. Set up Sept 12

Late Sept. - October: TAIS Annual Photo Contest

Birthday Wishes to:

Pam Court Nancy McKean Randy Bixby

Brian & Leigh Moon Julie Pacquing

Candice Hill Crouch Jessamyn Stinchfield

♥ to Kathy Windischmann on her recent hospitalization



Iris viridarium

Source: Newly revised Garden of the Plant Kingdom,
M. Valentini, 1719, by M. Merian

Artistic Division - photos by D. Smith & S. Clark (roses)



by Arlene Watkins



by Cindy Long



by Diane Pavlovich



by Diane Pavlovich



by Terry Swartz

Artistic Division - photos by D. Smith, P. Bausman, S. Clark



by
Dave
Smith
- above
others
by Sue



Treasurer's Report for June submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

Previous Balance \$10,130.99

No financial activity this month

Current Balance \$10,130.99

A Visit To Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm by Diane Pavlovich

Many people do not realize that there are iris farms located around northern Arizona. One is Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm, located in the Peeples Valley area north of Yarnell/south of Prescott. It's in a little town called Wilhoit.

I saw a post on Facebook from the company that they were opening the garden for touring Thursday through Saturday for the first three weeks of May so that people could see the blooms. Lou and I decided to take the drive up to see what it was all about.

The iris farm is owned by Lisa Fahey and her husband. She is originally from Ohio and grew up on an 800-acre cattle ranch. She left that life years ago, but always wanted to move back to a rural area. After retiring, she and her husband found the Bloomer-Rang property for sale and decided to take it on.

After 3 years, she is in the process of transforming the gardens from a grassy hillside to a terraced garden with crushed rock pathways. The irises will no longer have to compete with the grass and she will be able to expand the selection of irises greatly. In fact, she told me that she is adding 700 new rhizomes to the collection later this summer.

She also has created a memorial iris garden area on one side of her house which has a nice patio area and cushioned outdoor furniture for guests to sit. Throughout the iris garden are areas for people to sit in bench swings and chairs under shade trees. There also is a rose garden next to her house on the property.

The various clumps of irises have signs to tell visitors the names of the variety. Visitors can walk around and write down their favorites.

The farm also features a variety of rescued farm animals, including donkeys and a pig. Lisa does have to battle with visiting deer and rabbits that like to tear up the iris beds from time to time.

Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm accepts visitors by reservation only. Visits can be set up by emailing bloomerrangirisfarm@gmail.com. They also host special events during different holidays.

Iris rhizomes can be purchased from the online store at <https://bloomerrangirisfarm.com/>. Go to Gallery of Blooms and then click on the store area. This year there is a limited number of varieties for sale, but in the future that list will be expanding as the new iris varieties grow. She does offer some varieties that are hard to find as well as popular varieties grown in Arizona.

You can follow the adventures at the farm on Facebook and YouTube as well.



From top: Memorial Garden, windmill and swing, blooming clump, and the first phase of expansion. Photos by Diane Pavlovich

AIS 2025 National Convention Highlights by Joyce Knill

Tucson was well represented by Bonnie, LeAnn, Pat, Joyce, Lois, and Kathy Chilton from June 2-7 in Billings. The first day was an optional tour of the Bighorn County Historical Museum, Pompeys Pillar (which was the staging area for Custer's troops), and a nearby Trading Post and early frontier building. Tuesday evening we enjoyed a buffalo burger dinner and all 'first timers' were welcomed and forewarned what the following days held for them.



Wednesday consisted of meetings and more meetings. Judges' training was provided in gardens as well as in breakout sessions. The Spuria Iris Society program was presented by hybridizer Anna Cadd of [Cadd's Beehive Garden](#), Healdsburg, CA. She has introduced 33 Spuria but has rejected thousands. Spuria may be left in place for 20 years, and we learned the difference between species and hybrids, and what judges look for during a show.

The Society for Siberian Iris program was presented by

President, Gary White. He provided the history of the club, formed in 1951. We learned of the groundbreaking Siberians being developed and he had many questions from attendees from Northern climates.



Above: Anna Cadd. Below: Gary White



Tom Waters presented a program of '75 years of Dwarf Irises.' This category includes AB dwarfs, MDB, and Reticulatas, which all must be under 8" tall. As these iris enjoy cold winters, the cold climate attendees asked for his favorite iris and culture recommendations.

The Median Iris Society program (SDB, IB, MTB, and BB iris) focused on the hybridizing and the crossing of chromosomes between TBs and various *pumila* iris. We learned that

80% of SDBs can be traced back to 3, which were introduced in 1951.



Tammie Clark

The Novelty Iris Society seminar was hosted by Tammie Clark. This group includes Space Age, spoons, the variegated foliage, broken color, and flattie iris. Ms. Clark was very animated, which was good, as the packed room skipped lunch and bathroom breaks to listen to her presentation while wondering how to get more novelty iris into gardens. She presented future introductions and suggestions of good performers to add to our iris gardens. Of particular interest was a [‘Blue Tulip’](#) iris (Knocke, 1962) which was auctioned off as well as a few 2025 intros. There are many new seedlings in the pipeline by Sutton and Schreiners.

‘Arilbreds by the Bay’ (Union City, CA) was presented by Jeff Bennett. This was probably the most interesting seminar of the day. He controls 2400 iris in [Dry Creek Garden](#), which was started in 1920. The property is in Zone 9B (like us) and the native soil is compacted clay. He elevated his

beds 6”-8” high with native soil, 3” of compost (no manure) and 1” of Bio char. Planting iris 2’ apart, he waters once a week until mid to late November. In season his emitters are 1’ apart and provide 1 gallon of water an hour. Bloom period is March 15 to early June. He uses zero fertilizer. He averages 2,000 visitors a year, is only open April to June in 2025, and has had 1,000 iris stolen to date. They now have this part of the garden fenced with security cameras. He has begun to hybridize, but is in the early stages. *What is Bio char?* The city produces wood chips, which are cooked to 1200° so they are charred, but cooking is stopped before they turn to ash. Bio char loosens the soil, holds 7 times its weight in water, absorbs nutrients from existing soil, and lasts 100 to 1,000 years. They find it changes their soil structure but is sterile, and will not change the pH. One square foot bag sells for \$40 at a local nursery, but this public garden receives it at no charge.



Jeff Bennett

Daphne Sawyer presented a session on Jill Copeland's program of expanding the color spectrum of pseudata irises. Pseudatas are crosses between *Iris pseudacorus* and *I. ensata*. The pseudata iris need an above-average water supply and acidic soil. They bloom at the same time as LA iris and were grown in pots originally, as Japanese gardens were small. Copeland's iris are in Ensata Gardens where she works on developing a true yellow pseudata iris.

[Riley Probst](#)'s program on reblooming iris provided many suggestions for success. He grows about 1500 iris, which receive ½ day of full sun, even if it's 112°, deep waters every 3 weeks in the growing season, and granular 6-20-10 fertilizer twice a year. Gardens with long growing seasons should fertilize in February, late May, and early September. His last suggestion was to only grow the rebloomers known to rebloom in your area. He encouraged attendees to try hybridizing REs because so few people are in this category. He shared his favorites, but I would need a separate page to note the names!

The final seminar was on Historic Iris presented by Delane Langton of [Eagle Ridge Iris Garden](#). All historic must be 30 years or older. He doesn't like to 'chase' identifications as even a trusted source can make an error and ship the wrong iris.



Delane Langton

'Love your NOID' was his motto. He also shared some of his favorites, new and of the 700 historic he grows.

Soon after this last seminar, we attended a welcome banquet with speaker Mike Sutton. ([Sutton's Iris Gardens](#) is a major supplier of our sale rhizomes and is sold out in 2025.) His family's iris history began 32 years ago. Every seedling they have is the 'most beautiful', but then reality strikes and most seedlings are trashed. Their first 'horned' iris was '[Alabaster Unicorn](#),' followed by SDBs and IBs with horns. He related that broken color iris are the best overall sellers, but the general public like Space Age iris best, Iris Society people less so.

Thank you to the 35 members of the Big Sky Iris Club, who put together an educational, fun, and inspiring convention with 470 attendees. - JK



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 and Linda Briggs - Hospitality****Bonnie Else & Susan Schaefer - Door Prizes****Taffy Holvenstot - Membership****Dave Smith - Photographer****Sue Clark - Newsletter****What to do in the Iris Garden during July:**

Maintenance: Be sure irises receive afternoon shade. Monitor soil with moisture meter and water irises when it reads close to dry. Check for aphids and other pests. Remove pests, weeds, and debris. Replace faded labels so you don't lose the names of your irises. Cut off all spent stems near base using scissors to avoid damaging the rhizome. Stems can act as a pest and disease vector. Remove spuria stems - since they remain green, they take nutrients from the plant per Jim Hedgecock of [Comanche Acres Iris Garden](#), e-newsletter, 6/8/24.

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 except for reblooming irises - feed these in June or July and continue to water them. - SC

**Tip Exchange**

Add empty paper towel tubes and toilet paper tubes to your compost bin. The cardboard supplies some much-needed brown material. - SC

Or bury them in your garden to attract earthworms. Not only will the worms aerate the soil, break down organic material, and leave nutrient-rich castings behind, but the cardboard helps retain moisture and adds carbon to the soil. Source: [Don't Throw Out Old Toilet Paper Tubes: Reuse Them For A Lush Garden Oasis](#)

Iris Limerick

I once caught a dangerous virus
That made me want to grow iris.
I dug a big plot,
And grew quite a lot,
All due to that strange iris virus.

- Sue Clark



'The Great Mogul'

Source: AIS Wiki

Did You Know?

Last month, we looked at flowers and herbs that smell like chocolate and some dark-colored vegetables that look like chocolate. There are irises with chocolate in their names, although sadly, they do not smell like chocolate. '[Gilded Chocolate](#)' (Miller 2021) blooms early- to mid-season in a rich, cherry-brown shade. '[Double Chocolate](#)' (Painter 2013), '[Caramel N Chocolate](#)' (Painter 2014), '[Chocolate Ecstasy](#)' (Schick 2001), and '[Hot Chocolate](#)' (Ghio 1994) do not disappoint. The latter even reblooms! '[Under My Spell](#)' (Tasco, 2016) is a dark chocolatey brown. Yum! - SC Source: AIS Wiki

"SUMMER HAS SET IN WITH ITS USUAL SEVERITY."

- SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

W. Arlie Payne (1881-1971) introduced 170 varieties of Japanese Iris and was instrumental in popularizing this type. Arlie was a nurseryman and landscape architect from Terra Haute, Indiana, and in 1925, a catalog from the Hobbs Nursery sparked his interest in Japanese irises. He ordered four and then ten more three years later. Franklin Mead, a director of AIS who was also from Indiana, advised him to order some from Japan, and six Edo types joined Arlie's garden. His iris breeding program was off and running. He kept meticulous notes on all of his crosses and shared this information with anyone who requested it. At one time, Payne's garden supported over 11,000 plants and over 100,000 iris seedlings. Nearly all of his breeding focused on Edo types, but some used Higo types. Arlie only introduced varieties which he considered to be improvements over ones available at the time, such as better form, color, pattern, substance, or branching.

Arlie Payne bred Japanese irises for over 40 years and received the AIS Hybridizers Medal in 1965. He traveled to Japan at the invitation of the Japanese Iris Society for seven weeks in 1971 and followed the iris bloom from south to north.

The highest award that a Japanese Iris may win is called the Payne award, named after Arlie. He received this award twice, for '[Strut and Flourish](#)' in 1966 and for '[Dancing Waves](#)' in 1968. Some other outstanding Payne irises include '[The Great Mogul](#)' (1957) (photo above) and '[Immaculate Glitter](#)' (1963). Thank you for your dedication to beauty and sharing, Arlie Payne. - SC

Sources: [The Japanese Iris](#), 1990, by Currier McEwen, published by University Press of New England for the Brandeis University Press, © by the Japanese Iris Society; AIS Wiki for iris data, [hybridizer biography](#), and [Payne Medal article](#)