



July 2026



TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 61th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Over Heated'
(L. Miller, 2017)

Sharon Petterson's Garden,
Gilbert, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2026

President's Message

Have you registered? It's only a few short months until our Trek in October at Tohono Chul gardens. At a recent Trek planning meeting, I was again impressed by the whole day (and bonus evening) of iris activities that we'll have. There will be speakers, auctions, raffles, and more. The trek is also a great place to interact with your fellow iris lovers from our region. Register now using the form on our website: <https://www.tucsoniris.org/>

- Kevin Kartchner

Inside this issue:

- Photos of Artistic Arrangements from our Show in April: irises, roses 2-3
- Treasurer's Report, Map of Iris Origins 4
- The Language of Iris 5
- Trek Update, Patriotic Planters 6
- What to do in the Iris Garden during July 7
- Iris Limerick, Did You Know? Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History 7
- Rhizome Sale poster to post and share 8

"The great thing is not to be timid in your gardening, whether it's colors, shapes, juxtapositions, or the contents themselves. Splash around and enjoy yourself." - Christopher Floyd



Upcoming Events

July: No meeting.

August 8: 1 PM, Tucson Botanical Gardens. TAIS Rhizome Auction, one of our few members-only events & one of our fundraisers

September 19: TAIS Rhizome Sale, 9-noon, Harlow's Gardens

October: TAIS Annual Photo Contest - start choosing and editing your best photos! Limit = 15 photos per member. Details TBA

October 17: Region 15 Trek hosted by TAIS, 9 AM - 4 PM, Tohono Chul. No regular meeting this month

Birthday Wishes to:

**Pam Court Nancy McKean Randy Bixby
Brian & Leigh Moon · Julie Pacquing · Karen Evans
Allison & Peter Megaw Jessamyn Stinchfield**



Oncocyclus irises



Source: illuminated manuscript, 1535, Rome

Source: The Garden, p. 130, 18 Feb 1893

Artistic Arrangements: TAIS Show - photos by Dave & Sue



Top row: pre-show, two by Sue

Middle row: by Sue, Diane, and two by Terry

Bottom two rows: by Sue, ribbons, by Dave

Artistic Arrangements, Rose Show - photos by Sue & Dave



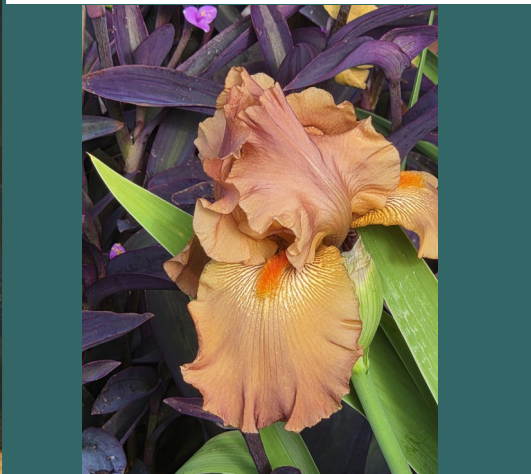
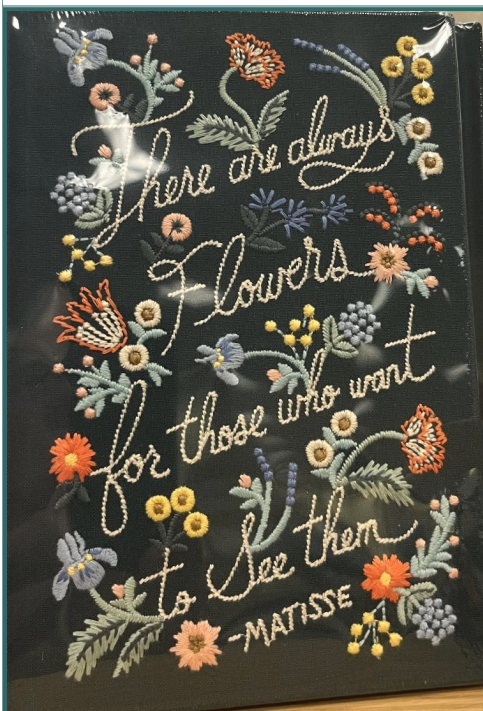
Top row and left: five arrangements by Terry
Bottom left: by Sue
Bottom center: by Helen Baird
Bottom right and right: two by Diane



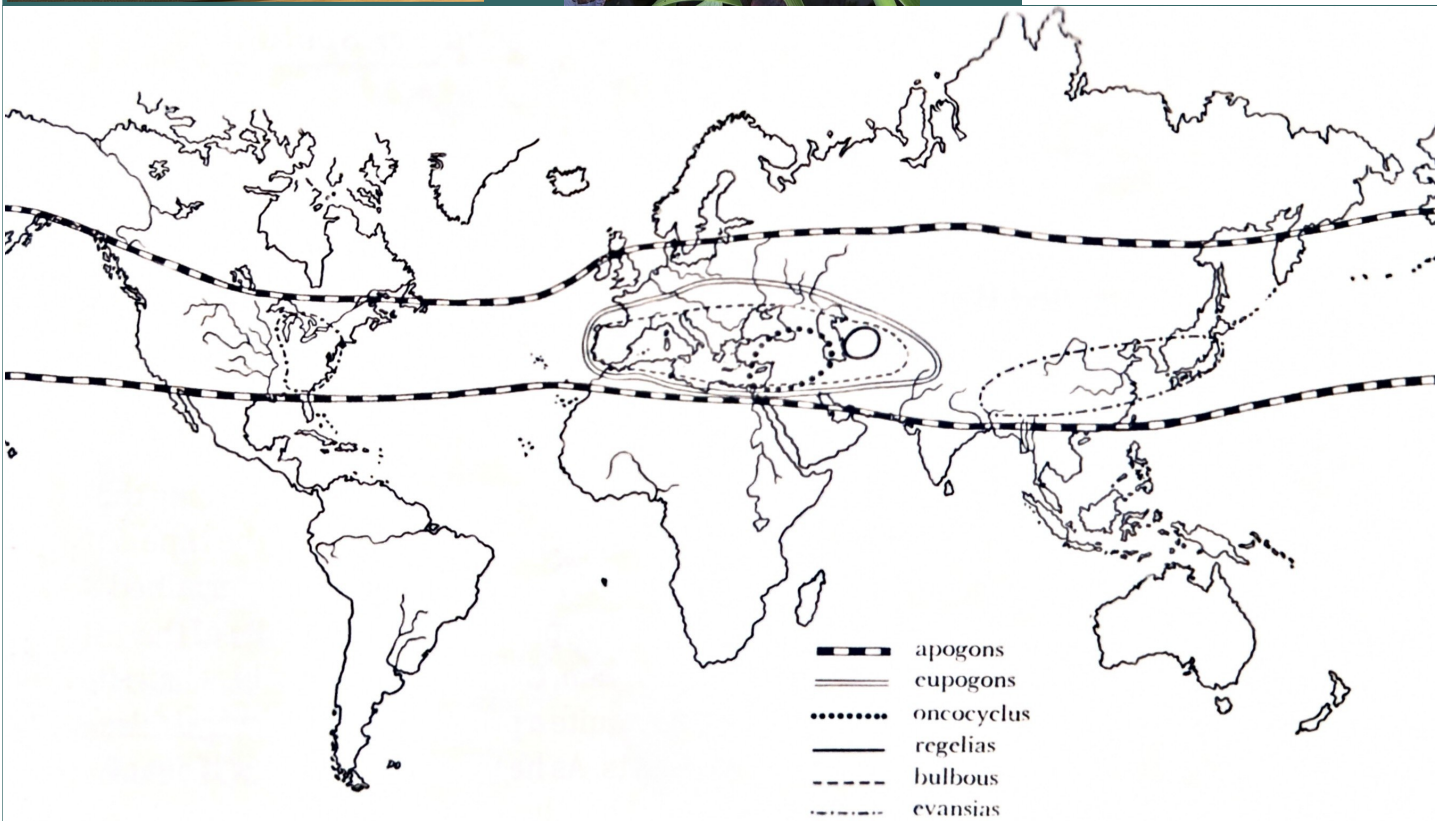
Treasurer's Report for June

- submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

No report received



Close-up view of Sue's line-mass arrangement



Where various types of irises originated. Below are details of the terminology.

Apogons - beardless irises: spurias, Siberian, Japanese, Louisianas, Pacific Coast Natives, and species irises. Modern classification - Subgenus *Limniris*

Eupogons - bearded irises

Oncocyclus - a section of the genus *Iris* whose seeds have an aril (small hook); 32 species (see illustration, p. 1)

Regalias - a section of the genus *Iris* whose seeds have an aril (small hook); 8 species

Bulbous - irises that grow from bulbs

Evansias - irises whose flowers have crests on their falls, part of the subgenus *Limniris*

Source: Map - in *AIS 100 Years Bold*, Supplement 2 of 4 to *IRISES: the Bulletin of AIS*, 2020; AIS Wiki for details

The Language of Iris #6 by Pat Olsen

Median Iris

The American Iris Society groups three classes together under the name **Median Irises**. These are the **Intermediate Bearded (IB)**, **Border Bearded (BB)**, and **Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB)** iris.

The Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB) iris will be featured next month. This month we'll explore the similarities and differences between the **Intermediate Bearded (IB)** and **Border Bearded (BB)** iris.

Intermediate Bearded (IB) irises generally bloom after the Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) irises and before the Tall Bearded (TB) irises. They range in height from **16 to 27½ inches** and typically have blooms **3½ to 5 inches wide**. IBs should display good branching with flowers held well above the foliage.

Border Bearded (BB) irises generally bloom with the Tall Bearded (TB) irises. They share the same height range as IBs (**16 to 27½ inches**) but produce larger flowers, approaching the size and form of Tall Bearded blooms while remaining in proportion to their shorter stalks. BBs are essentially Tall Bearded irises in a more compact package.

Although IBs and BBs have similar heights, they differ primarily in **overall proportion and flower size rather than height alone**. An IB is a medium-sized plant with medium-sized flowers. A BB is a medium-sized plant with larger flowers resembling those of a Tall Bearded iris. Bloom seasons often overlap, but IBs generally flower slightly earlier than BBs.

Only two median irises have earned the prestigious **Dykes Medal**, the highest award in the iris world. **'Brown Lasso,'** a Border Bearded iris hybridized by **Buckles and Niswonger**, won the medal in **1981**. **'Starwoman,'** an Intermediate Bearded iris hybridized by **Marky Smith**, received the honor in **2008**.



Banded Rose



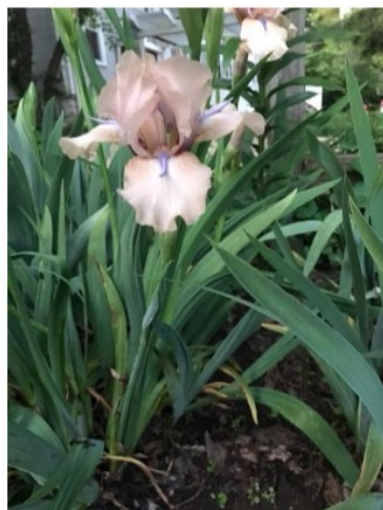
Carol Ellen Ramsey



Batik



Man's Best Friend



Concertina



Fire Down Under

Above:
Border
Bearded irises

Left:
Intermediate
Bearded irises

Trek Update by Pat Olsen

The Trek committee discussed at length host identification for our event. There will be guests from Southern California, Arizona and New Mexico. Our goal is to make it easy to recognize host volunteers who can answer questions, hand out information, process registrations and welcome guests to Tucson. Name tags work well when someone is standing in front of you, but shirts make it easy to identify TAIS members from across the room and across the garden. The goal is consistent host visibility. These shirts can be worn at this year's rhizome sale, making it easy for buyers to get help. They may also be worn at next year's Iris Show and Exhibition, increasing public and volunteer participation. As a result, the shirts support multiple events and our board generously approved the purchase of shirts. Complimentary volunteer shirts will be available at our August Rhizome Auction for active members who sign up to volunteer for the Trek and/or the rhizome sale, while supplies last. While the Trek Committee would like all volunteers to wear a TAIS shirt, I greatly appreciate all TAIS volunteers whether they wear a shirt or not.

Name tags and welcome bags are near completion. Our guests will be well prepared for all the activities of the day. Additionally, the raffle and silent auction items have been organized. At this time we do not need additional items. Thank you all for your generosity.

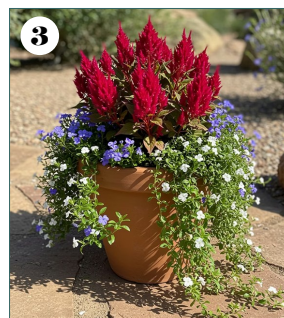
Our next Trek Committee meeting will be on Saturday, July 11th 1:00pm – 3:00pm in the Murphy-Wilmot Library Large meeting room. Topics for discussion will be food and beverages, volunteer assignments, speaker hospitality, open items from June, and trek budget review. All TAIS Members are invited to attend and participate in the planning process. Whether you'll like to help with logistics, share ideas, or simply stay informed, your input and enthusiasm are always welcome as we work together to host Region 15.



Patriotic Planters

There's still time to create some Patriotic planters for America's 250th! Three red, white, and blue combinations that can withstand the Arizona heat include:

1. Red portulaca as filler, white angelonia in center as thriller, and blue scaevola (fan flower) as spiller
2. Red pentas in front as filler, white cosmos in center as an airy thriller, & blue salvia in back as filler
3. Red celosia as thriller in back, white trailing vinca as spiller, and blue nierembergia (trailing cup flower) as filler



Care tips for flowers in containers:

Use large containers with drainage holes on bottom.

Water deeply in early morning or evening.

Mulch upper surface to reduce evaporation.

Select locations that receive afternoon shade.

Feed regularly with a fertilizer for flowering plants. - SC

Source: [SummerWinds Nursery](https://www.summerwindsnursery.com/blog/post/25-june-2026) blog post of 25 June 2026

TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2026

- Kevin Kartchner - President
- Cindy Long - Vice President
- Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account
- Jim Wilcoxon – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary
- Pat Olsen & Brian Moon - Programs & Places
- Diane Pavlovich - Publicity
- Cindy Long and Linda Briggs - Hospitality
- Bonnie Else & Susan Schaefer - Door Prizes
- Linda Briggs and Cindy Long - 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 soil reads **Dry 6"** deep. 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 per Jim Hedgecock - since they remain green, they take nutrients from the plant, per [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

"If you have iris beds on flat ground, mulch can be a big problem, as it naturally holds water when wet. If moisture cannot drain away from the rhizomes, rot will be a problem. At the same time, companion plants that crowd your irises can also cause problems. The old saying is 'rhizomes need to breathe.' This means not letting companion plants crowd the irises to the point where air cannot circulate around them."

Source: Jim Hedgecock, e-newsletter of 27 June 2026

Iris Limerick

There was an iris so blue -
 It was such an incredible hue;
 The same as the sea,
 Would you go there with me
 To view that iris of blue?
 - Sue Clark



'Overture' (Hall, 1944)

Did You Know?

The popularity of heirloom varieties, kitchen gardens, and geometrical layouts are some of the ways that Colonial gardens have influenced the way we garden today. Gardens in Colonial America were beautiful and practical, blending European influences with locally-available plants. Some of their features included organized beds for flowers, vegetables, and herbs. Companion planting is another trait that has passed the test of time. Happy 250th, USA! - SC

Source: [How Colonial-Era Gardens Shaped Gardening in America Today](#) - Plantisima

"White flowers are anathema to all but the oldest and most sophisticated of gardeners." - Vita Sackville-West

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

Once upon a time, there were no pink irises. Developing pure pink irises became the goal of David F. Hall of Illinois, who learned his gardening skills from his grandmother early in life. In 1918, David and his wife visited Quality Iris Gardens in Freeport, Illinois and bought a selection of irises to replace the old-fashioned ones they had been growing. The new ones thrived after the Halls cut down 21 trees in their shady yard to allow the sunshine in. During a visit to the Sass brothers' gardens in Omaha, David caught the iris bug and received a crash course in iris hybridizing from the brothers.

Although his first seedlings bloomed in 1928, David's best work was done after his retirement from law in 1940. He had bred cattle, so knew that outstanding offspring were unlikely in the first generation, but after being crossed with their parents, the second generation was much improved. He applied these same techniques to his irises. Pink irises of the day were suffused with lavender undertones or were blends. After a false start that lasted 8 years, David began again with five irises, including '[Rameses](#)' (H P Sass, 1929) and '[W. R. Dykes](#)' (Dykes/Orpington, 1926). Finally, after 20,000 seedlings and 17 years, six pink seedlings with tangerine-colored beards appeared in David's garden in 1942. Four of these were introduced to the trade, and after consulting with two artists about what to call the color, they were described as "Flamingo Pink." See photo of one of them, above. More on David Hall next month, including even better pinks ... - SC

Source: "David F. Hall - The Flamingo Pinks" by Anne Lowe in *AIS 100 Years Bold*, Supplement 3 of 4 to *IRISES: the Bulletin of AIS*, 2020; AIS Wiki



2026 Annual Iris Rhizome Sale

Saturday, September 19

9 a.m. to noon

Harlow Gardens

5620 E. Pima St.

Fundraiser for the Tucson Area Iris Society
(Come early for best selection. Supply limited!)



Potting Demonstration

9:30 & 10:15 am

Join us, for a fun, hands-on potting presentation. Plant one of your newly purchased rhizomes with guidance from our experienced members.