

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 59th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Edith Wolford'
(Hager, 1984)
Dykes Medal 1993

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2023

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President's Message

April and another spectacular Iris show and garden tours. We filled the show tables with flowers and arrangements, and garnered plenty of ribbons. We surprised ourselves and sold out of our 130+ potted plants in less than an hour. Thank you so much for all the hard work from so many that goes into the planning, show schedule creation, judge acquisition, setup, meals, flower growing, transportation, arrangements, refreshments, clerking, potted-plant growing, cashiering, and tear-down. We also enjoyed Master-Gardeners-caliber garden tours including the Tucson Botanical Garden. I love April.

Where do these amazing flowers come from? At May's meeting, I'll show you how to hybridize and grow your own unique iris. See you soon.

- Kevin Kartchner

"Now the bright morning-star, Day's harbinger, Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her The flowery May, who from her green lap throws The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose. Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire Mirth, and youth, and warm desire! Woods and groves are of thy dressing; Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing. Thus we salute thee with our early song, And welcome thee, and wish thee long." - John Milton, Song on May Morning, 1645

Upcoming Events

Next meeting: May 11, 1 PM. TBG's Porter Hall. Kevin Kartchner on how to hybridize irises and plant and grow their seeds

Reminder: Take lots of pictures of irises for our annual Photo Contest in September-October

June and July: no meetings. Newsletters will continue through the summer

Birthday Wishes to:

Kevin Kartchner Wendy O'Rourke
Cheryl Modaff Margie Valenzuela
Rand Craft Tim Krone



Iris tingitana



Report from our Show



20 April 2024 - Many visitors came to marvel at irises and roses at our combined show at Trinity Presbyterian Church near the UA campus. All 140 pots of irises sold in an hour, keeping Sam and Jim busy in their role as cashiers.

Over 50 varieties of tall bearded irises were displayed by eight of our members. Susan's 'Belle Fille' won Queen of the Show. Kevin brought the most stalks and won 15 blue ribbons! Other blue ribbon winners included Susan with three, and Sally, Dan, and Diane with one each. Cathy received a blue ribbon for a container-grown TB, Diane for a collection of three TB stalks in a vase, Kevin for an English box display, and I won a blue ribbon for one of my artistic design entries (photos next month), as well as a Design Sweepstakes rosette ribbon. Diane's roses and rose arrangements won big, too. So much beauty in that room!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the show. Terry chaired both shows simultaneously. Set-up team was Terry, Joyce, Linda, Cindy, and Kevin. Cathy and Sally clerked. Sue tallied. Linda, Cindy, and Evelyn provided coffee and pastries. Lunch was arranged by members of the Rose Society this year. Dave snapped pictures all day. Dan enjoyed advising customers how to grow irises. Joyce and her husband Bob, Cathy, Cindy, Dan, and Kevin were the clean-up team. I apologize if I missed acknowledging anyone.

Ideas for next time:

- Arrange for a special area to display the Queen of Show and the runners-up
- Membership forms available
- Coffee and muffins available longer for participants
- Count the visitors?

- Sue Clark, secretary

**Congratulations to
Susan for winning
Queen of the Show!**



**We're on the web:
Tucsonirris.org**

Tips from the Show Bench

Judges Favored:

- Candelabra stalks because these display each flower perfectly
- Thick flower stalks all the way up
- A fall placed front and center. If stalk is bent, orient the whole thing for best possible effect
- That our wedge- and flower placement were so improved over last year!

Judges Deducted Points:

- If flowers or buds touched one another or looked crowded - train the branches apart in the garden using wedges
- If a fall was raised up by a bud underneath it
- If a leaf was below the rim of the vase. They want to see stalk below the leaf
- For faded, torn, or spent blooms
- For incompletely-removed flowers. The ovary must also be removed
- Spathes must be pristine even if a spent flower has been removed
- For fingerprints, water spots

Miscellaneous:

- Exhibit historic varieties (30+ years old) in the Historic category for best results
- Do not enter more than one of any variety, or you may get disqualified
- There must be five judges present in order to grant a certificate to a seedling so that it may be registered
- Judges asked the clerk to turn most of the vases so that they could see the back or sides
- Judges often compared colors of similarly-colored irises

- SC, via a confidential source

“Iris Enchantment” Show - photos by Dave Smith



“Iris Enchantment” Show - photos by Dave Smith (more next month)



Treasurer's Report for April - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

DUES			
INC	95,000	+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	-333.01 ACT BALANCE
SHOW			
INC			
	539.27 Square sales	539.27 Square sales	
	795.00 cash sales	795.00 cash sales	
	1334.27	1334.27	
EXP			
	XXX show expenses	XXX show expenses	
		-154.44 TOTAL SHOW expenses	+1179.83 ACT BALANCE
SALE			
INC		+339.48 rhizome	
EXP		-2483.73 rhizomes	
		-2144.25 TOTAL SALE EXPENSES	-2144.25 ACT BALANCE
AUCTION			
INC	0.00 and	EXP 0.00	
CHECKBOOK BALANCE 30 APRIL 2024 10,098.33			

Amounts are for the Year to Date



Above: Sunflower under UV light. Source: [The secret ultraviolet colours of sunflowers attract pollinators and preserve water | Britannica](#)

Hummingbirds' eyes contain four types of cones for detecting blue, green, red, and ultraviolet light. Densely-concentrated cones heighten warm colors and mute cool colors, explaining why hummingbirds are especially drawn to red and orange. They can see many more colors than humans, whose eyes have only three kinds of cones. Flowers likely look quite different to hummingbirds than they do to us - full of ultraviolet markings to lure in pollinators. See photo.

Sources: [Hummingbird Eyes Can See More Colors Than Humans - Birds and Blooms](#), [Wild hummingbirds see a broad range of colors humans can only imagine \(princeton.edu\)](#)

Pollinators, Part XIII: Plant Modifications

Flowering plants and insects appeared relatively close together in the passage of time and many have evolved together in specialized pairs. Certain plants are only pollinated by certain animals because of the structure of the flowers.

Right: "FIGURE 13.1. Flower modifications associated with specific pollination mechanisms.

A. *Penstemon eximus*, bee-pollinated. Note nectar guide and landing platform.

B. *Linaria canadensis*, toad-flax, butterfly pollinated, with corolla-spur.

C. *Calonyction aculeatum*, moon flower, moth-pollinated, white with long corolla tube.

D. *Stapelia gigantea*, star flower, fly-pollinated.

E. *Selenicereus* sp., night-blooming cereus, bat-pollinated.

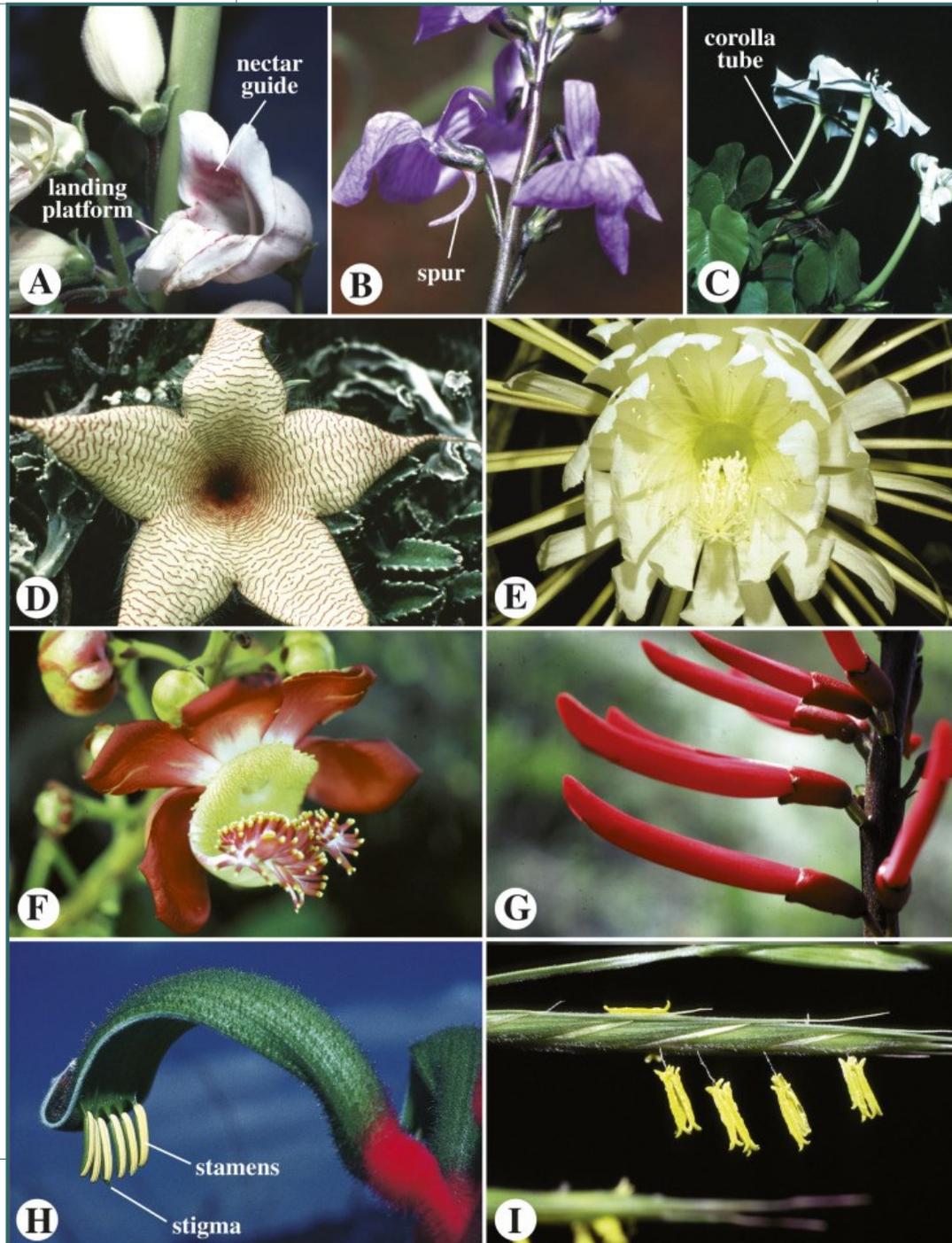
F. *Couroupida guianensis*, cannonball tree, bat-pollinated.

G. *Erythrina caffra*, coral bean tree, bird-pollinated.

H. *Anigozanthos manglesii*, kangaroo-paw, bird-pollinated.

I. *Bromus* sp., brome grass, wind-pollinated."

Source: [Myrmecophily - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics](#), from [Plant Systematics](#), by Michael G. Simpson, 2nd edition, 2010



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 May:

Maintenance: 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. Update or create a map of your iris beds and containers in case labels fade or disappear. Replace faded labels. Remove spent stems near base using scissors.

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

Non-organic care: Feed with a send-off dose of SuperBloom or equivalent, as the rhizomes set buds by six weeks post-bloom. - SC



Tip Exchange

If an iris bloomed too late to be entered in our show, consider moving it to a new and sunnier location in the garden. - Pat Olsen

Carol Turek of [Hummingbird Spot](#) recommends the [First Nature 16 oz Hummingbird feeder](#). To inhibit mold, she sprays her feeders with white vinegar inside and out before each refill, and is sure to rinse them well. These feeders do not attract bees or drip in my own garden. - SC

Divide any purchased irises if they have more than 3-4 fans. - [Long's Gardens website](#)

Iris Limerick:

There once was a man named Joe
Who brought irises to the show.
He had a surprise:
He won a big prize!
That award-winning man named Joe.
- Sue Clark



Source: Long's Garden website: Mid-season, 34"

Did You Know?

The iris world needs more judges! If you love irises and love seeing lots of them in different places, you may want to consider becoming an iris judge. The flowers may be judged in gardens and at Shows. Artistic Designs at Shows also require judges. Forms and schedules of training are available on the [Region 15 website](#). Mary E. Hanson is the new Judges Training Chair and you can contact [her](#) with questions. Some trainings are held online. On the home front, TAIS member Kathy Chilton is a Master Judge, and members Terry Swartz and Pat Olsen are apprentice judges. - SC

'Touch the Rainbow' (Olson 2021) - Long's Garden

"May come up with fiddle-bows, May come up with blossom, May come up the same again, The same again but different." – Louis MacNeice (1907–1963)



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, we are featuring another longtime iris garden - Long's Gardens in Boulder, Colorado. Now in its third generation, this family nursery was started by J. D. Long, who moved west to find relief from tuberculosis in 1898. After two years in Idaho, he moved to Boulder and purchased a variety store called Noah's Ark in 1905. J. D. chose to expand the store's seed department and put out a mail order seed catalog in 1908. A few years later, the business became J. D. Long Seed Company. He purchased a farm north of Boulder to propagate seeds and bulbs for the store. In 1940, the business was consolidated to the farm, which by then was within Boulder proper. J. D. and his wife Cora grew iris, gladiolus, dahlias, peonies, and other flowers along with fruits and vegetables, including a large patch of strawberries. Their son Everett gradually assumed leadership from his father. One of Ev's goals was a reliable water supply for the plants in their semi-arid location, so he and his wife Anne spent their honeymoon hiking and scouting for a site for an irrigation dam. As Ev began focusing on irises since they are more drought-tolerant than gladiolus, the need for the irrigation was much reduced and the reservoir he had created was sold to the city of Boulder. His daughter Catherine and her husband Dennis Gates now run the business. They specialize in irises, which are sold [online](#), by [mail order](#), and [as dig-it-yourself](#) right from the fields (tools, marking pens, and bags provided). They are open to the public during iris bloom from late April through early June. A Spring U-dig event is popular, and the dig-your-own fields are replanted in late summer for the following year. In March 2021, they purchased a conservation easement for their land, which ensures that it will remain agricultural and never be subdivided or developed. This was a result of something new that Boulder voters had approved called an Open Space Sales Tax. Irrigation is accomplished with movable overhead sprinkler pipes which draw water from a nearby irrigation ditch. Rye, vetch, and buckwheat are planted as cover crops to restore the soil's fertility. Long's Gardens is accepting orders for this season's irises. Iris [T-shirts](#), [sweatshirts](#), [hats](#), and [totes](#) are available year-round on their website. - SC

Source: [Long's Gardens website](#)