

October 2025

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Golden Panther'
(Tasco, 2000)

(Dykes Medal 2009)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2025

President's Message

Congratulations and many thanks to all for another impressive TAIS iris rhizome sale. I heard several comments on how well run this year's sale was. Many people and many hours contribute to this one-morning event. To top it off, we brought in almost \$7K for the day.

Next up, dust off your favorite iris photos and submit them during the first week of October to our annual photo contest. The photos remind me why we grow these beauties.

Finally some rain and cooler days, so don't miss our October meeting. We'll be hearing from well-known hybridizer and Dykes-winner, Lynda Miller. I enjoy her creations in my garden and want to see what is next in the pipeline. - Kevin Kartchner

"The trees are in their autumn beauty, The woodland paths are dry, Under the October twilight the water Mirrors a still sky." - William Butler Yeats, Irish poet

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Upcoming Events

October 1-8: TAIS Photo Contest [submissions](#). [Voting](#) October 12-20. See p. 6 for details. Winners revealed at November Potluck

Next meeting: October 11, 1 PM, Columbus-Eckstrom Library, 4350 E. 22nd Street at Columbus. Presentation via Zoom by Lynda Miller, 2022 Dykes Medal-winning hybridizer

October 18: Region 15 Fall Meeting: [registration link](#)

October 18: [Master Gardeners' Plant Sale](#), 8-11 AM, 4210 N. Campbell

November 8: noon. Annual Potluck with Seed- and Plant Exchange, Pat's house in Vail. RSVP [here](#) so she knows how many to expect

Birthday Wishes to:

Leeann Shoaf	Linda Briggs	Faith Holland
Taffy Holvenstot	Melania Kutz	Glenn Summers
John Scire	Terry Swartz	Pam McConnaughey
Barbara Barnes	Sally Vega	Mary Ann Albano

Condolences to Pam Court upon the loss of her husband



Report from the Sale



13 Sept 2025 - Another successful rhizome sale! We did not run out of irises this year, but we didn't have many left over. Thank you to our members who volunteered on Friday and/or Saturday and to Harlow's who not only hosted us, but featured our Sale in their weekly e-newsletters. Some of the volunteers were new members or ones that we have not met before. Thank You again to all of the helpers, many of whom worked both days: Joyce (our Sale Chair), Bonnie, Kevin, Cathy, George, Melody, Dave, me, Jim, Sam, Pat, Barbara, Linda, Sally, Mary Ann, Martin, Jody, John, Leigh, Brian, Shiela, Harriett, Dan, Elaine, Tom, Cheryl, and Cindy. I am sorry if I missed anybody.

We ordered rhizomes from Mid-America Gardens and Stout Gardens at Dancing Tree this year.

Several members donated rhizomes from their own gardens, including Pat, Kevin, Madeleine, Linda, and Melania via Terry and Diane. Special Thank You to Pat for donating 500 rhizomes, and to Joyce and Bonnie for helping her to dig and prepare them. Kevin calculated we had 1292 rhizomes for sale.

We tried some new things this year. Dave and Bonnie filled out Tally Sheets for individuals in the check-out line, counting the rhizomes and totaling the sheet to speed up check-out. We had separate lines for cash and credit payments, with Melody, Sam, and Jim as cashiers. Pat held two educational sessions in which guests could plant a rhizome to take home and learn many tips about planting and growing irises while doing so. The guests seemed to

enjoy this activity and the finished product. NoID irises were bundled into bags and these sold out in under 2 hours. We set up the membership table near the entrance to the sale area this year. Barbara and I signed up fourteen individuals or households. Newly-signed-up members were offered the discounted rate for rhizomes immediately. Helpers and other members had the opportunity to choose and purchase rhizomes at a discount after set-up on Friday and from 8-9 AM on Saturday before the sale opened to the public at 9. Regular prices this year were \$8 per rhizome - buy 6 and get one free. Members paid \$1 less per rhizome.

Our sister club in Mesilla Valley kindly sent 31 rhizomes which were left over from their sale last weekend, and these were delivered with a smile by Lois and Leeann, who are members of both clubs. These will serve as door prizes for our meetings over the next year. Thank you!

At the end of the Sale, TAIS provided pizzas and beverages as a Thank You to Harlow's employees. And a shout out to [Acme Sand and Gravel](#) for donating soil mix for the demonstration table. - SC



**Submit your best
iris photos to our
contest**



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

TAIS Rhizome Sale - photos by Dave Smith



TAIS Rhizome Sale - photos by Dave Smith & Sally Vega



Treasurer's Report for September

- submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

Income

sale of rhizomes	6888.97
dues	<u>-180.00</u>
	6708.97

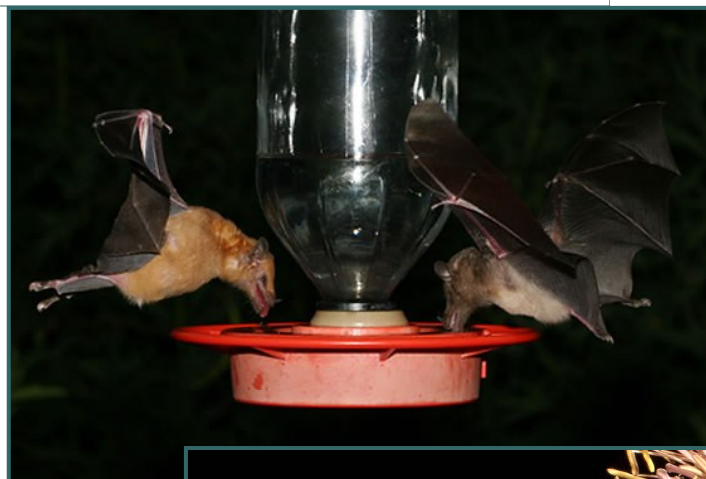
Expenses

rhizomes	1600.00
sale expenses	<u>145.81</u>
	1745.81

6708.97

-1745.81

4963.16 PROFIT from sale



From top: lesser long-nosed (left) and Mexican long-tongued bat at feeder (by Beth Kinsey, "[The Firefly Forest](#)"), Mexican long-tongued bat feeding (by Steve Buchman), lesser long-nosed bat and saguaro flower (by Merlin Tuttle) (all from Source 2), and close-up of the lesser long-nosed bat showing leaf-like appendage on nose and pollen on fur (by [Juan Cruzado Cortés](#)). The nose-leaf is believed to aid in echolocation

Garden Helpers: Bats

During October, you may see bats in all sorts of illustrations depicting Halloween scenes both cute and scary. Let's see what we can do to remove the scary connotation from these helpful, flying mammals. There are 29 species of bats in Arizona, with 18 of these found in the Tucson area. Garden pests such as mosquitos, moths, midges, hoppers, and ants become food for little brown bats, one of which can eat 4,000 to 8,000 insects in a single night. Northern long-eared bats are another species that thrives on garden pests. Bats also devour agricultural pests, saving farmers over \$3 billion per year, and sparing the surrounding ecosystem and wildlife from the effects of pesticide use.

A 2023 study revealed that 53% of bat species are at risk of extinction. The biggest problem is habitat loss. Most species cannot adapt if their roosting place is destroyed. A fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome has killed 90% of northern long-eared bats.

What can we do to help bats? Bonnie told me that she leaves one hummingbird feeder out overnight for her "sugar bat" visitors, who frequent these feeders from mid-August until around late-October. Bonnie is on her second 25-lb bag of sugar this season, and said that personnel at the Wild Bird Store told her that the agave bloom is fairly sparse this year, so the bats are more dependent on other sources of food. Since most bats in North America are insectivores and are nocturnal, you can attract nocturnal insects by growing flowers that open or stay open during the night. These tend to be fragrant and to feature white or pale petals so that they stand out in the dark. Some options are datura, honeysuckle, and evening primrose. Other bat species are nectivores, and feed on nectar from saguaros and agaves. Two types visit southern Arizona from Mexico: the Mexican long-tongued bat and lesser long-nosed bat. New Mexico, Texas, and California also get these sugar-eaters. Their behavior of eating from hummingbird feeders was first described 20 years ago in Portal, Arizona and was noted (continued on next page...)

News about the 2026 Fall Trek, to be hosted by TAIS

A Desert Oasis of Iris - by Pat Olsen

The TAIS Trek committee met after the August rhizome auction to choose a theme for the 2026 Fall Trek. After lighthearted discussion, "A Desert Oasis of Iris" was selected. Hybridizer Paul Black introduced an arilbred by the name of "[Desert Oasis](#)" in 2025. The committee will be seeking to purchase several rhizomes of this beautiful iris. These rhizomes will be used as door prizes, offering the winners a unique remembrance of our event.



Above: Logo for the Trek and 'Desert Oasis' iris by Paul Black

Notices:

Newsletter: The costs of printing and mailing hard copies of the newsletter have increased to the point that this service will no longer be offered after the December 2025 issue. Digital copies will be emailed monthly as usual. Articles or ideas for articles are welcome, as are photos and poetry.

Membership: Dues are \$15 per household and are payable in January of each year. [Membership applications](#) are available on our website.

60th Anniversary ornaments will be available at the October meeting if you have not received yours yet. See Bonnie.

Please return the Club's **label maker** if you borrowed it.

If you have **excess plants or seeds of any type to share**, please bring them to the November Potluck.

Bats, continued...

in Tucson by 2007. Volunteers from 525 households in Marana and Tucson monitored bat behavior at feeders from 2008-2018.

The Mexican long-tongued bat, also known as the hog-nosed bat, is 3" long and weighs in at 5/8 oz. It is gray or grayish-brown, and has a noticeable tail, which the lesser long-nosed bat does not. The latter is about the same weight, but with somewhat smaller wings, yellow-brown fur above, and rusty brown below. Both species have a leaf-shaped piece of skin on their nose, and they spread pollen as they travel from flower to flower slurping nectar.

Summer is prime time for watching a different type of bat emerge at dusk from beneath some of Tucson's bridges. Mexican free-tailed bats exit from below the North Campbell bridge over the Rillito River and from the East Broadway bridge over Pantano Wash. They return to Mexico for the winter months.

Other ways to help bats include a minimally-lit or dark garden with trees, stumps, or piles of wood, which provide places to forage and roost. A 7-8'-long pond or trough without any overhanging branches provides a place for bats to swoop down and scoop water onto their wings, which they then sip in mid-flight. A [bat house](#) offers shelter. And one of the best ways of helping is not using insecticides. - SC

Sources: [Bat Facts article](#), [USDS Pollinator of the Month article I and II](#), Wikipedia article: "[Lesser long-nosed bat](#)" and "[Nose-leaf](#)," "[Summer is Bat-Watching Season in Tucson](#)," "[Volunteers Needed for Bat and Hummingbird Feeder Study](#)," Bonnie Else, personal interview, *Journal of Mammalogy*: "[Free Food At Hummingbird Feeders...](#)," [AZ Game and Fish](#) article

8th Annual TAIS Photo Contest

Our contest will be online again this year. Our webmaster, Tim Valenzuela, has graciously agreed to handle submissions. Start searching for your best iris photos now!

Categories

1. Single iris flower or stalk of irises
2. Macro (very close-up view of an iris)
3. Miscellaneous iris photos: garden, Photoshopped image, etc.



GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

- Current TAIS members may submit up to 15 pictures in groups of 1-3 to submissions@tucsoniris.org. Note: emailing more than three photos at a time may result in the message not going through.
 - Please include three pieces of information for each picture: your name, the category, and the name of the variety pictured. If you do not know the name, label it as a NOID, meaning no ID (no identification)
 - The photos must be in **final form**
 - All photos must be your own, although they are *not restricted to your own garden*
 - Please be sure that each photo fits the category that you select for it
 - Winning entries from previous years are ineligible
 - Submissions will be accepted between **October 1 and October 8**
 - Help make this a fun and successful event by participating!

VOTING

- TAIS members may vote for **three photos per category** (for a total of nine votes) by submitting to taisnewsletter@yahoo.com. See all photos at www.tucsoniris.org. Please consider the *quality* of the photos (focus, composition, lighting, etc.), rather than the beauty of the iris(es) featured
- Votes will be accepted from **October 12 to October 20**

Winning photos in each category will be revealed during our November Potluck meeting



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 - Hospitality

Bonnie Else & Susan Schaefer - Door Prizes

Taffy Holvenstot - Membership

Dave Smith - Photographer

Sue Clark - Newsletter

What to do in the Iris Garden during October:

Maintenance: [Divide](#) and plant iris rhizomes early this month, if you have not already done so. This will allow roots to establish before it gets cold. Trim leaves of transplants to 6". See more instructions in last month's newsletter.

Be sure that the plants get enough water, since they will be growing and increasing until next bloom time. Soil should be damp, but not moist. Use a moisture meter or finger to determine if soil is dry 2" below surface. Water if so. Do not water from overhead if it is above 85° though, or the rhizomes may rot. **Give soil around each rhizome a dose of fertilizer - [Schreiner's](#), [Comanche Acres](#), or balanced.** Water it in.

Keep area free of weeds, leaves, and pests. - SC



Tip Exchange

8 Reasons to Keep Outdoor Lights off at Night:

1. Wastes energy.
2. Offers false sense of security.
3. Ruins curb appeal.
4. Irritates neighbors.
5. Sends wrong signal - that no one is home.
6. Creates a maintenance mess - bugs, dirt, burned-out bulbs.
7. Attracts bugs.
8. Harms wildlife and reduces star visibility - lights disrupt migratory patterns for birds, 'light clutter' disrupts other wildlife, and disrupts viewing of stars - remember the Milky Way? - SC

Source: [Martha Stewart email newsletter of 20 Aug 2025](#)

Iris Limerick

Every year there's an iris sale
That I go to without fail.

I buy a bunch

Then go out to lunch.

A fun day at the iris sale. - Sue Clark

Did You Know?

In Japan, irises are considered to represent success. Their flowers sit up higher than their leaves, meaning that one will be more successful than one's parents. Because of this, people used to take a bath with a bundle of iris leaves floating in the water for luck on Children's Day (May 5). The iris leaves look like swords, and suggest that boys will have good fortune in battles. When using iris in an ikebana arrangement, align leaves so that their tips curve inwards toward the flowers. Source: [ikebana video by Rijo Miyamoto](#), Wikipedia [article](#)



'Prairie Velvet'

Source: Iris Wiki

"Autumn glows upon us like a splendid evening; it is the very sunset of the year." – Mary Russell Mitford



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

We'll wrap up our report on 20th-century hybridizers of Japanese irises with Arthur Hazzard of Kalamazoo, Michigan, who began growing irises in the early 1920s. He started a breeding program in 1957 using seven varieties of Japanese irises, all dating to 1926 or before. Arthur visited Arlie Payne the following year and an idea was born to improve this type of iris. Arthur increased his breeding stock with some of Arlie's varieties as well as some Marhigos and went on to introduce eighty-seven Japanese irises from 1963 through 1982.

According to an ad preserved on the Iris Wiki, Arthur Hazzard offered over 300 varieties of Japanese irises for sale from his garden (year unspecified). He won the Payne Award for his introductions three times - for '[Numazu](#)' (1964), '[Prairie Love Song](#)' (1970), and '[Prairie Velvet](#)' (1972). See photo above.

In 1963, Arthur persuaded the Southwestern Michigan Iris Society to hold the first-ever show in the United States to feature all Japanese irises. He chaired this show, which was in Kalamazoo, assisted with a similar show in 1964 in Davenport, Iowa, and later helped with one in Terra Haute, Indiana. Besides this, he was a judge emeritus and he helped to found the Society for Japanese Irises. Arthur Hazzard lived to be 97 and was breeding irises and keeping meticulous notes until then.

Some modern-day sources for Japanese irises include [Mt. Pleasant Iris Farm](#) and [Cascadia Iris Gardens](#), both in Washington. The owners of Ensata Gardens in Galesburg, Michigan retired in 2024 after 40 years in the business, as did the owners of Aitkens Salmon Creek Garden in Vancouver, Washington after 50 years. - 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