

April 2025



TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Babbling Brook'
(Keppel, 1965)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2024

President's Message

It's showtime! After months of planning, preparation, planting, tending, and education, we will have our show on April 19th. This is your opportunity to share your hard work, creativity, and iris beauty with your fellow iris lovers and the public. Bring everything you have as some might be winners and the less-than-perfect stalks can be used by the arrangers. Last year, Susan Schaefer won blue ribbons and best of show with just a few entries. I will see you there bright and early on the show's Saturday morning with a room full of iris color and fragrance.

- Kevin Kartchner

"I went out on an April morning All alone for my heart was high, I was a child of the shining meadow, I was a sister of the sky." - Sara Teasdale

Inside this issue:

- Minutes from the March Meeting, Artistic Design Tips 2
- Photos from the March Meeting 3
- Treasurer's Report, Stalking Spiders - article and photos 4
- Pat's Tips for Preparing Iris for the Show 5-6
- What to do in the Iris Garden during April 7
- Iris Limerick, Did You Know? Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History 7
- Poster for TAIS Rhizome Show - please post & share 8



Upcoming Events

April 6: 10 AM to Noon. Tour [Terry's garden](#) and watch demonstrations of selecting, cutting, and grooming iris stalks for the Show. See p. 2

TAIS Iris Show: April 19 in combination with the Rose Society Show, Trinity Presbyterian Church, 400 E. University Blvd. Set-up 6-9:30 AM. Open to the Public 1-4 PM. [Schedule available](#) on TAIS website. Show something & make us proud! No regular meeting in April

April 25-26: AIS Region 15 Spring Trek, Redlands, CA. Information [link](#)

May 10: Noon. TAIS meeting and 60th Anniversary Luncheon, 6940 E. Loma del Bribon (Sunrise Mtn. Ridge subdivision)

Birthday Wishes to:

Jim Wilcoxon	Nancy Rummel
Dorrell-Jo MacWhinnie	Shane Smith
Kathy Chilton	Joe Fernandes



Photo by Rose Clark

March Meeting Minutes



March 8, 2025 - Nineteen members gathered at the Eckstrom-Columbus Library for a presentation by Pat Olsen on preparing irises for the show, getting them there, etc. I showed slides of arrangements from our 2023 and 2024 shows and made a quick and simple arrangement. See my notes on p. 2, 5-6.

Upcoming local floral events:

April 5: Master Gardeners tours

April 6: Meet at Terry's garden from 10 AM to noon for a tour and demonstration of how to cut and groom an iris for the Show. Lemonade, tea, and cookies provided, as well as tags for the show.

945 N. Perry Avenue

April 19: Our show!

April 25: TAIS Open Gardens

May 10: Our 60th Anniversary Luncheon at Bonnie's HOA Clubhouse. Food by Baggins. Noon. An email RSVP coming soon

Linda reported that the

Orchid Society's show last weekend at Mesquite Valley Growers was fabulous.

Show Business: Terry passed out show schedules. Members volunteered for the following jobs:

Set-up on Thursday, April 17 from 10 AM to 2 PM: Joyce, Bonnie, & Linda. Bonnie will purchase an 8' round plastic tablecloth for the Queen's Table (new feature)

Clerks: Cathy P-S, Joyce, and Sally

Sales of potted irises: Joyce (has photos), Sam, Barbara, and possibly Jim. Terry has 99 potted irises, Joyce 90, Sally 10, Susan 10, Kristee 5, and Kathy 5 or 6.

Table with membership forms and handout with culture tips: Who? (new)

Tally girl: Me

Board Meeting: We approved upping the website maintenance fee from \$500 to \$595. New and lapsed (1+ year) individuals

Consider entering something in our show!



We're on the web:
Tucsoniris.org

may [join AIS for \\$10](#) through November 1, 2025.

- SC, secretary

Artistic Arrangement Tips

You can order flowers from Trader Joe's three days in advance

Choose a simple container. Can spray paint or decoupage to coordinate with flowers

Can use instead of Oasis foam for an environmentally-friendly option: grid made of [floral tape](#), small bottles filled with water, chicken wire or [wire netting](#), a compact and dense "cushion" created of either a dried hydrangea, a cluster from a bougainvillea, just the small branchy-branches where bougainvillea "flowers" were, or branchy sticks from palo verde. Add foliage next to make the cushion more interlocking - rosemary, arborvitae, snake plant leaves, etc. Give each piece of plant material a fresh cut at base. Add flowers. If they won't stay where you want them, add more greenery near their base

Flora can be collected from your garden or neighborhood (ask first!): examples - palo verde branches, Hesperaloe leaves and flowers, aloe flowers, rosemary, dill, asparagus fern, fountain grass, geranium leaves

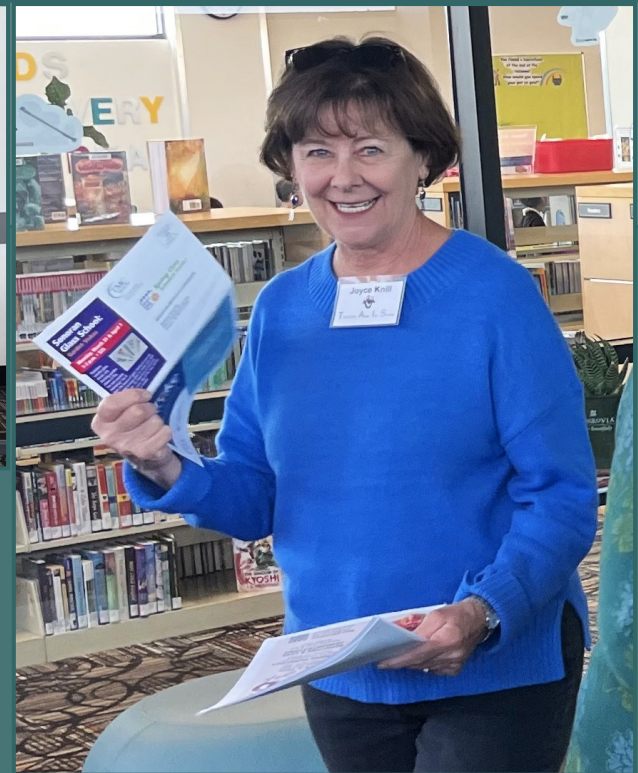
Irises must predominate and be the focal point

Place the largest flowers lower down and toward the center. This will create the focal point

I used Dutch iris (\$5), goldenrod-like aster (\$4), globe mallow, dill, & rosemary during the meeting

Top up the water and add FloraLife Flower Food - SC

March Meeting - photos by Dave Smith



Treasurer's Report for March - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

BANK BALANCE 1 MAR 2025 13,392.38

TOTAL INCOME : 30.00 DUES

EXPENSES

WEB	595.00
CHECKS	101.68
FLOWERS FOR MEETING	15.13
RHIZOMES FOR SALE	800.00
RHIZOMES FOR AUCTION	450.00
POSTAGE	29.20
SHOW SUPPLIES	41.00
REGION 15 RHIZOMES	677.00
REGION 15 CONVENTION	<u>25.00</u>
TOTAL EXP	2032.01

BANK BALANCE 31 MAR 2025 11,680.37



Above: Jumping spider grasping prey. These spiders can be kept as pets. Source: [Purcor Pest Solutions](#)



Image: Judy Gallagher, flickr.com/photos/52450054@N04/24330084773/



Image: Marshal Hedin, flickr.com/photos/23660854@N07/50171445592/



From top: Wolf spider found in Arizona. Note how well its colors camouflage it on the dried grass (Source 5). Female wolf spider with egg sac attached to her spinnerets (by [Geo Lightspeed7](#)). Note how she has to walk with her abdomen in the air. Jumping spider found in Arizona (Source 5), and a close-up of the face of a jumping spider (by [Opterser](#)). He's kinda cute, don't you think? The flashy, iridescent blue parts are *chelicerae*, his jaws

Beneficial Garden Arachnids, Part III: Stalkers

We'll round up our study of spiders with ones that stalk and hunt their prey. Both wolf spiders and jumping spiders have excellent eyesight, giving them a big advantage when hunting. They date back to roughly 50 million years ago in the Paleogene Period.

The 2,400 species of wolf spiders are found throughout the world. They range from 0.4 - 1.4", not including their legs. Wolf spiders are found in many habits, from coastal areas to arid ones, and are common in suburban gardens. I have seen them in our backyard and have caught and released several from inside our house over the years. They are generally solitary spiders and do not spin webs. Mother wolf spiders carry their egg sac on their spinnerets. Even though they must raise their abdomen so that the sac doesn't drag on the ground, they remain formidable hunters. The baby spiders (spiderlings) crawl onto their mother's abdomen after they hatch and remain there for several weeks before dispersing aerially by releasing a strand of silk which gets caught in the wind. Wolf spiders eat crickets, other spiders, ants, and cockroaches, all of which makes them great assistants in the garden.

Jumping spiders, with their stereoptic color vision and nearly 360° visual field, have even better eyesight than the wolf spiders. Their eight eyes are arranged in a distinctive pattern on their fairly rectangular, front-facing head. The two middle eyes are larger than the others. (See photo). These are small spiders, ranging from 0.04-1" in length, excluding the legs. They do not build webs, but use their silk as a dragline when jumping or to build a shelter that resembles a pup tent. Most can jump 2-3X their body length, but one type can leap 38X its body length. Jumping spiders study their prey and very accurately pounce upon it. Their diet consists of ants, flies, grasshoppers, and other insects. Some steal prey from spider's webs (an act known as *kleptoparasitism*) or may even eat the spider itself. A few of the 6,000 species eat nectar, especially from acacias. - SC

Sources: [8 Beneficial Insects You Want to See in Your Garden](#), Wikipedia articles: [Wolf Spider](#), [Jumping Spider](#), and [Chelicerae](#); [Types of Arizona Spiders \(With Pictures\)](#); [Wolf spiders: Behavior, bites and other facts | Live Science](#)

Queen of the Show - Blue Ribbon Iris:

Pat's Best Tips for Preparing Irises for the Show

The advantages of holding an AIS-sanctioned iris show like ours are: there are set guidelines and rules, and we can offer awards including rosettes, ribbons, and medals. During 2024, there were 103 AIS-sanctioned shows with 9,409 blooms displayed. Although tall bearded irises typically won Best in Show, Louisianas and spurias occasionally took the top prize. There must be at least three exhibitors and five varieties in a section for a Best-in-Section rosette to be awarded. Silver and Bronze medals may be awarded in sections for which there are at least five exhibitors and 20 varieties.



Tips:

Search catalogs for iris descriptions that say, "Shows well on the bench," "candelabra branching," or similar. Consider growing some of these to show.

February and March - Debris around irises can contribute to formation of soft rot, so eliminate it. Remove dead leaves and pests. Fertilize. Pat is currently using fertilizer from Comanche Acres.

Be careful not to get water on flowers or leaves.

Leaves can be trimmed - just follow the natural contour. No foreign matter can be on a bloom - this includes a ladybug.

Part of our goal is to educate the public, so bring different types and colors of irises. Consider bringing a potted iris - perhaps growing one in a pot just for the show. NoIDs may be shown, but are not eligible for awards.

A week or so before the show, start gauging which irises might be selected for the event. Look for straight undiseased stems with lots of buds.

A day or so before the show, see which of those preselected (or other) stalks have fresh, clean blooms (one day old maximum).

Most entries will be tall bearded, so other types have a better chance of winning their section.

Cut stalks as long as possible in the garden. You can trim later - stem must reach nearly to the bottom of the vase. Hold cut stem by the base or by the papery spathe under the top flower to avoid fingerprint marks on the stem.

A cool, dark room or closet may delay a bud's opening, and a warm, humid room may encourage opening. Small strips of tissue paper gently wrapped around buds can delay opening.

Verify the name of the iris to be sure it matches the flower. It may be disqualified if displayed with the wrong name in the show.

You can start grooming at home. Practice with some stalks before the show. Use soft, clean brushes, such as make-up brushes. *Softly blend* any blemishes from the stalk, but do not remove all of the "bloom" (the powdery coating). Other items in Pat's grooming kit include an eyedropper to refill water in vase or transport tubes, small scissors to trim leaves.

Leaves and stems must not touch the vase. Leaves may not be inside the vase.

Remove any aging, wilted, or faded blossoms, as these are heavily penalized.

A spent terminal flower can be groomed off *if* there is another bud in that socket. Otherwise, the whole top must be removed. Carefully pull back the spathe, and then use your fingers to snap off the decaying bloom *with its ovary*. Spathes must stay intact and be undamaged.

Wedges must be below the rim of the vase. Stem must be straight in the vase.

Tags: the Division, Class, and Group come from the Show Schedule, p. 9-12. The portion with your name on it gets folded over for anonymity. It contains the →

