

TAIS Newsletter

Our 53rd year

Tucson Area Iris Society—established 1965

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Lady Friend'

Tucson Botanical Gardens

Photo by Sue Clark, 2018

President's Message

Thanks everybody for a great show. What we were short on quantity we made up for in quality. I heard a number of good comments. As always, thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers who make it all happen.

- Kevin Kartchner

*"The world's favorite season is the spring.
All things seem possible in May."
- Edwin Way Teale*

Upcoming Events

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Next meeting: May 19 - Sue Clark will present a slide show of four gardens from the recent AIS Region 15 Spring Iris Trek. Murphy-Wilmot Library, large room, 1 PM. Doors open at noon. This will be our last meeting until August.

NOTE: If you are growing any club irises, please bring photos of their blooms and a report on how the plants are doing. Or send these to TAISnewsletter@yahoo.com. Thank you!



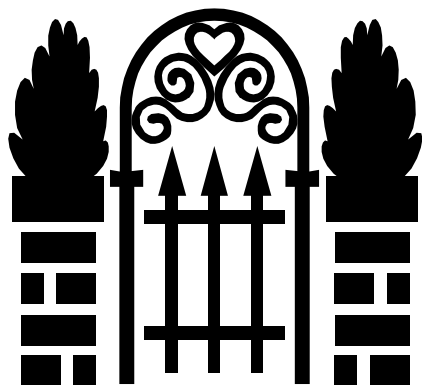
Birthday Wishes to:

Kevin Kartchner Fred Thorpe
Margie Valenzuela Deborah Schneider



Graphics Fairy

Our “Spring into Iris” Show



We ♥ Irises

Members of our club exhibited 25 irises at the Murphy-Wilmot Library on April 14. Over 60 individuals stopped by to enjoy the lovely blooms.

Although the show was not judged, each visitor was offered the opportunity to vote for three favorites. Several of the guests traversed the display tables many times while attempting to narrow their selections down to three. Two or three individuals mentioned that they are interested in joining our club and they took membership forms away with them.

Several members lent assistance to ensure that the show was a success. Melania reserved the room and handled publicity, with Tony as her support. Kathy, her husband, Bonnie, and Sue collected the vases, posters, and grooming essentials from our storage locker at the Tucson Botanical Gardens. While there, they marveled at our iris beds. The new fish bone

meal fertilizer, coupled with two doses of Super Bloom in early Spring (before the gardens went organic) have done amazing things! Many, many large blooms this year.

Additional help setting up at the library came from Cathy, Angela, Melania, and Tony. They were joined the following morning by Lucille, Susan, Shirley, Sue, Diane, and Kevin. Others who worked throughout the day include Kristee, Janet, and Carol. Special thanks to Shirley, Angela (who brought us a delicious lunch and snacks), and Sue who were on duty all day, and to Tony and Melania who worked most of the day.

The take-down committee members and ballot-talliers included Kevin, Lucille, Kathy, Diane, Bonnie, Angela, Tony, and Melania.

The Viewers' Top Choices? 'Scoonchee,' 'Midnight Velvet,' and 'Mesmerizer' (all Kevin's). - SC

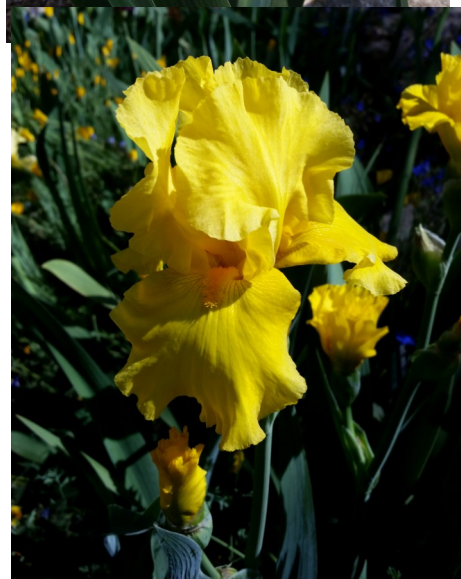
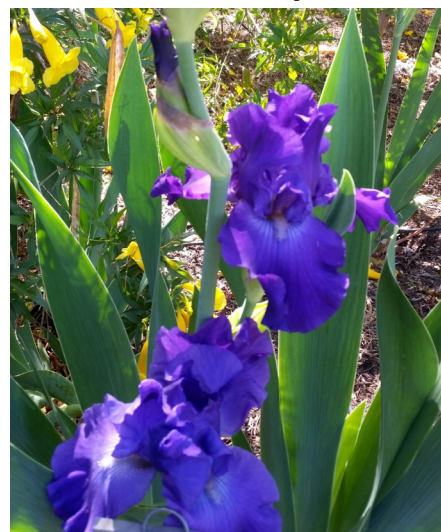
Please plan to show
some of your irises
next year!



We're on the web!

Tucsoniris.org

Our Beds - TBG, April 2018



From top: 'Marty Richards,' 'Coral Point,' and 'Strike It Out.' - SC

Our “Spring into Iris” show



**Photos by
Tony Kutz**



A Closer Look at Our “Spring into Iris” show - photos by Sue Clark



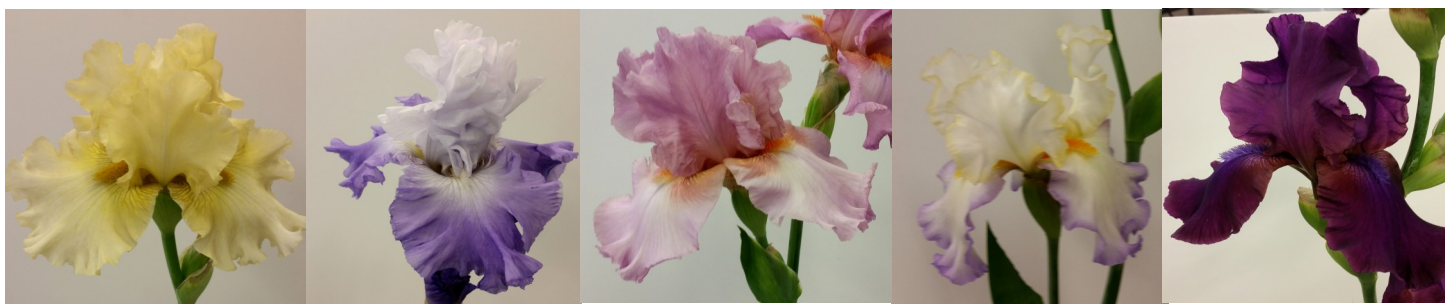
'Abby & Me,' 'Alpine Castle,' 'Bahama Blues,' 'Barbara My Love,' 'Be Mine'



'Buckwheat,' 'Concertina,' 'Fit for Royalty,' 'Like a Rainbow,' 'Making Time'



#3 'Mesmerizer,' #2 'Midnight Velvet,' 'Night Moves,' NOID - may be 'Immortality,' NOID - may be 'Lace Artistry'



'Not a Clue,' 'October Sky,' 'Persian Berry,' 'Revere,' #1 'Scoonchee'



'Sisters of Loretto,' 'Sweetwater Pie' 'Trivial Pursuit,' 'Winesap,' 'Wired'

Treasurer's Report for April - submitted by Kristee West, Treasurer

Date	Debits/Checks	Deposits	Balance	Details
	#1776 \$300.00			Napa Iris Gardens Club Iris Order
	#1777 \$90.58			Tweedy - Postage, AIS Cards, March Refreshments
	#1778 \$48.94			Powers - Refreshments
	#1779 \$10.27			Kutz - Show Posters
	\$449.79 Pending Uncashed Expenses Total			
16-Apr	#1768 \$30.00			AIS 2018 Registration
17-Apr	# 1775 \$300.00			Lauer's Club Iris Order
29-Apr		\$63.00		Iris purchased by Madeleine Glaser
30-Apr			\$4,585.03	Bank Balance
			-\$449.79	Pending Uncashed Checks
14-Apr	CASH ON HAND		\$21.00	Donations and sale of handouts
30-Apr			\$4,156.24	TAIS Balance

Green Irises

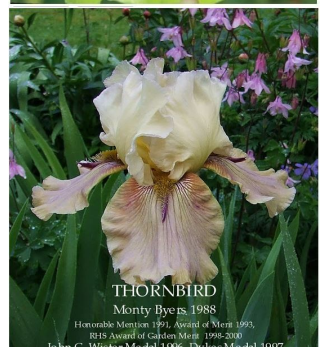
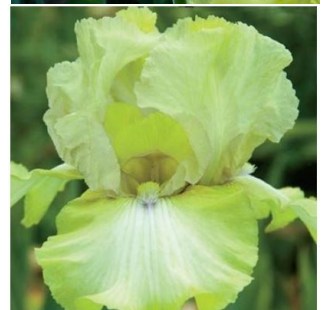
I am both excited and apprehensive to write about green irises - excited because green is my favorite color and apprehensive because green irises are part frame of mind, part stretch of the imagination, and definitely not the bright green of a leprechaun (or anything else, for that matter!). Apparently, it's not easy to get chlorophyll into flower cells as a pigment and then to make it play nicely with whatever other pigments are there already. And perhaps hybridizers don't expect much of a market for green irises. In an article titled "Green? It ain't easy!" on the AIS "World of Irises" blog entry of 31 Dec 2012, Griff Crump surveyed his iris-loving Facebook friends and requested that they submit pictures of their greenest irises, which he then categorized into the following groups: veins, chartreuse, olive, plicata, green ground, and blue/green gone wild. Many of the ones shown are seedlings, and thus not available. Most of the others are smaller irises, in which greens are more common, especially in Standard Dwarf Bearded. Paul Cook's Intermediate Bearded Iris 'Green Spot' is one that really caught my eye with its green on white falls - it is *definitely* green! Tall Bearded 'Green and Gifted' (P. Blyth 1989), 'Green-Eyed Lady' (Plough 1972), 'County Cork' (Schreiner 2007), and 'Easy Being Green' (Richards 2007) - not so much. 'Maid of Orleans' (Crump 2006), the last of the tall bearded listed is perhaps the best of the lot - my eye detects a greenish tinge to the yellow on the falls.

Greenish tall bearded suggested (albeit somewhat reluctantly) by Kelly Norris in [A Guide to Bearded Irises](#) include 'Pride of Ireland' (Noyd 1971), which is mostly yellow with green midribs on the falls and green on the undersides of the falls; Christmas (Getty 1991), white with faint greenish cast on the falls and more so on their undersides, and 'County Cork' (Schreiner 2007), which is pale yellow with willow green - perhaps the closest thing to green of the three. In some catalogs, though (*not* Schreiner's), 'County Cork' looks so green that you might expect some of the wee folk to be dancing a jig upon it. From how it looks in pictures in other places, I think that someone got a bit carried away with Photoshop in that particular instance.

Our own Kristee West recommends 'Celtic Dancer' (Van Liere 2013), a variety which has done well in her garden. Its bronzy-greenish falls are rimmed in white to match the standards.

In "What is the Greenest Iris?" on 26 June 2005 at www.Houzz.com, I bypassed 'Al Fresco,' 'Kiwi Cheesecake,' 'Envious,' and 'Green Prophecy,' among others, and settled on 'Thornbird' (Byers 1988). Although I only see green in the veins of the falls, its excellent growth, violet space-age horns and/or spoons, and the possibility of a rhizome sending up *two* stalks of blooms instead of one, more than compensates for that! I might need that one. It would certainly attract attention in the garden! And make others green - with envy (or perhaps something else...).

Perhaps Kermit the Frog has been right all along - "It ain't easy being green." - SC



From top: 'Maid of Orleans,' 'County Cork,' and 'Thornbird.'

Sources of images, from top: AIS Wiki, Stout Gardens at Dancing-tree, and Heritage Irises.

Kristee West gives a talk at the Tucson Botanical Gardens



Photos by
Tony Kutz



TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2018

Kevin Kartchner – President

Vice President—open

Janet Gardner – Secretary

Kristee West – Treasurer

Carol Peterson—Membership Chairperson

Melania Kutz—Program Chairperson

Madeleine Glaser - Asst. Program Chairperson

Angela Powers - Hospitality

Tony Kutz - Photographer

Sue Clark – Newsletter Editor

What to do in the Iris Garden for May:

Trim any remaining flower stalks at their base. Using scissors helps to protect the rhizome from injury.

Fertilize with **Super Bloom** or **Ferti-Lome Blooming and Rooting** for a month or two following bloom time.

Keep rebloomers watered and fed through the Summer or they will not bloom in the Fall.

Keep area free of leaves, weeds and pests.



Tip Exchange

Plant rhizomes parallel with ground, with top third above the surface.

Use fertilizer with low nitrogen (5 or 10 for the first number) or the rhizomes can rot suddenly in summer. Best times to feed are November, February, and May. Mix a complete granular food (such as rose food) with equal quantity cottonseed meal (to acidify alkaline soil). Sprinkle around the clump. The cottonseed breaks down more slowly, thus feeding each time you water.

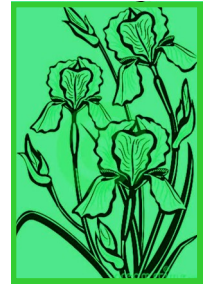
Water deeply once a week, or more shallowly twice a week. If the daytime temperatures are over 85°, water just before dark to reduce the possibility of rot.

Source: 'Southwestern Report' by Bill Molnar in "The Reblooming Iris Recorder," Fall/Winter 2017, p. 16-19. (He's in San Diego).

Iris Limerick:

There once was a young man named Bean
Who wanted an iris in green
He puttered and fussed
And applied pollen dust,
Creating the greenest iris he'd seen!

- Sue Clark



Did You Know?

There are 260 to 300 species of irises. Those which grow from rhizomes have fans of 3-10 sword-shaped leaves. Those which grow from bulbs have cylindrical, basal leaves. Source: Wikipedia.org, "Iris."

Eight species of rare endangered irises are disrupting building and development plans in Israel. Several of the flowers have become national symbols for nature preservation. Read more [here](#). "Caution, Iris Ahead!" 11 Sept 2006 edition., accessed 9 Apr 2018.

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." - Lao Tzu



'Eldorado'

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

This month, we pick up the legacy of Vilmorin-Andrieux et Cie where we left off. Louis de Vilmorin, son of André, was one of the most important plant breeders of the 19th century, more than doubling the sugar content of beets, as well as improving strains of many grains, vegetables, and flowers. His scientific methods were based on those of his father and of Duchene, and he selected the parent plants with great care. Even before Gregor Mendel, Louis researched "the laws of hereditary transmission." Louis' son Henry did extensive work to hybridize wheat and improve its yields, as well as to describe which varieties grew best where. He also expanded the company's iris collection to over 200 different cultivars including the tetraploids from Asia, and began hybridizing irises in 1895. Using the scientific principles he had refined, Henry wished to "transform garden irises by planned hybridization." His assistant, Seraphin Mottet, contributed to the iris breeding, and was fiercely proud of the Vilmorin irises. Mottet, under the direction of Henry, and later Henry's cousin Jacques, organized the first international conference on irises in 1922, 100 years after the first iris seedlings were hybridized by de Bure. The 1914 proposal for such a conference had been shelved by World War I. The May 1922 event was a great success, with 60 delegates from France, Britain, Switzerland, and America in attendance. Several Vilmorins financed the conference, as did Claude Monet and others. Countless irises were on display, and participants toured the nurseries at the Vilmorin headquarters and other gardens. At the Vilmorin iris garden at Verrieres-le-Buisson, vast fields of the flowers stretched in all directions and contained almost all of the irises in existence at that time - both ancient and modern (likely even 'Eldorado', a 1910 Vilmorin introduction which I have growing in my own garden! See photo, above - SC) Three sensational 1920 Vilmorin irises, 'Ballerine,' 'Ambassadeur,' and 'Magnifica' - some of their finest introductions - caused quite a stir. John Wister's favorite was 'Allies,' "the first truly outstanding reblooming iris."

"Vilmorin-Andrieux et Cie was like a great shooting star illuminating the world of irises during the first three decades of the 20th century. The firm appeared on the iris scene suddenly. It enchanted the horticultural world with its splendid large-flowered irises for three decades. It changed the world of irises forever, and then it was gone." Thank you, Henry de Vilmorin and family! - SC

Source: [Classic Irises and the Men and Women Who Created Them](#) by Clarence E. Mahan