

January 2026

# TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 61<sup>st</sup> year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



**'Symphony of Light'**  
(Meininger, 2003)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,  
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2025

## President's Message

Happy New Iris Year! After a fun-filled and productive 2025, we're going into 2026 with a full TAIS calendar. Because of our big club order from Sutton's, and the auction and sale rhizomes from Mid-America, Stout's, and other sources in 2025, there are a lot of new and different iris varieties out there to grow and then show in April. New for us will be hosting the Region 15 Fall Trek in October, and we'll need everyone's support. We'll begin the year learning all about the genus *Iris* on January 10th. Be there and don't be elsewhere.

- Kevin Kartchner

**"...January. in ermine cloak. With crystal spangles dight. He gave the queen an Ivy crown. And her fair shoulders white He happ'd with tender ferny Moss from many a cosy nook. Or from the rounded boulders warm Beside the frozen brook..."**

- James Rigg. "The Progress of Queen Flora. Adorned by a Hundred Wild flowers." Wild flower lyrics and Other Poems. 1897

### Inside this issue:

New Year's Resolutions for Gardeners, Vote for Favorite Irises, Photos of Late-Blooming Irises in PA 2

Treasurer's Report, Trek Update, Aphid-eaters - article and photos 3

Index to 2025 TAIS Newsletters 4-5

What to do in the Iris Garden during January 6

Haiku, Did You Know? Tips, Bit of Botany and Iris History 6



## Upcoming Events

Dues are due - \$15 per household per calendar year. [Form](#) on TAIS website

Next meeting: January 10, 1 PM, Murphy-Wilmot Library: small room, 530 N Wilmot Rd. "Diversity of Iris" presented by Eugene Zielinski

February 14 meeting: 1 PM, location TBA. Dykes Bingo, led by Kevin

### Birthday Wishes to:

**Maxine Fifer**

**Bonnie Else**

**Marilyn Jensen**

**Kim Larsen**

**Kathy Windischman**

**Nancy Hook**

**Michael Willing**

**Carol Gawrychowski**

**Condolences to Kevin upon the loss of his father on Nov 29**



German Iris

Pierre Bulliard 1780-1791 L'Iris Germanique from Herbar de la France, ou, Collection complete des plantes

# This & That



## New Year's Resolutions for Gardeners

1. Clean out the shed and go through old materials.
2. Take a risk, plant something new.
3. Add a new native species to your garden.
4. Plant something with a child.
5. Do some garden volunteering.
6. Learn something, teach something.
7. Plant a food crop you haven't tried before.
8. Go on a gardening excursion.
9. Treat yourself to a good gardening book. [Idea 1](#); [Idea 2](#)
10. Start something from seed.
11. Invite people over to spend time in your garden.
12. Document your garden.
13. If possible, ask your parents or grandparents what they grew in their garden. Or write down what you remember about that.
14. Build or buy a compost bin and begin composting.

Sources - [www.hortmag.com/blogs/](http://www.hortmag.com/blogs/) and [www.chicagobotanic.org/](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/)

## Please Vote for Your Favorite Irises in the AIS Iris Popularity Poll

The AIS Iris Popularity Poll is open! Vote for your 25 all-time favorite irises in any class of iris. Voting is open to everyone. Make your list, then click this link to vote. <https://wiki.irises.org/Main/InfoPopularityPolls>

**Last chance to vote is noon on January 31, 2026**

## TAIS Calendar for 2026

Jan 10: "Diversity of Iris" - Eugene Zielinski

Feb 14: Dykes Bingo - Kevin Kartchner

Mar 14: "Historic Irises and the Historic Iris Preservation Society" - Cathy Egerer

Apr 18: Iris & Rose Show

May 9: "The Fragrant Iris" - Pat Olsen

June and July: no meetings

Aug 8: Auction

Sept 12: Rhizome Sale

Oct 17: Region 15 Trek at Tohono Chul

Nov 8: Potluck and meeting

Dec: no meeting

**Happy New Year!**  
**What will you grow?**



**We're on the web:**  
**[Tucsoniris.org](http://Tucsoniris.org)**



TB iris blooming in early November 2025 near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.  
Photos by Jane Lemon



## Trek Update by Pat Olsen

With the New Year underway, our countdown to the TAIS-hosted Trek has officially begun! As of January 1, we are 9½ months away from October 17—nine months to plan, followed by two weeks of final touches before the big event. The Trek promises to be a full, rewarding day supported by our TAIS members. TAIS is proud to be an affiliate of AIS Region 15, which includes nine clubs throughout Southern California and Arizona. We are especially excited to host past AIS President Jody Nolin as our guest speaker. Jody will share her extensive knowledge and enthusiasm for irises. All AIS Region 15 members interested in learning more about irises are encouraged to attend. Treks also serve as important annual training opportunities for AIS Judges. **A brief Trek Committee meeting will take place immediately following the January TAIS meeting.**

## Treasurer's Report for December - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

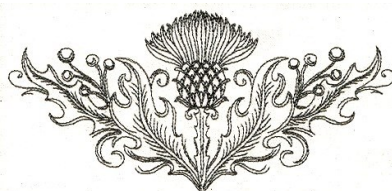
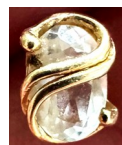
Beginning Balance \$17,255.50

No activity this month

**Ending Balance \$17,255.50**

## Lost and Found

Whomever lost this earring at the Potluck, please see Pat during the January meeting.



From top: soldier beetle ([BugGuide.net](http://BugGuide.net)), assassin bug eating an aphid ([Dave's Garden website](http://Dave's Garden website)), minute pirate bug feeding on whitefly nymphs ([by Jack Dykinga for USDA](http://by Jack Dykinga for USDA)); one of the 500 species of damsel bugs (by [Michael Becker](http://Michael Becker)), ground beetle ([Gardenia.net](http://Gardenia.net))

## Beneficial Garden Insects, Part XIb: Aphid-Eaters

Last month we looked at four insects that eat aphids and help us out in the garden. This month, we'll feature five more. **Soldier beetle** adults devour aphids. The first species to be described had coloring similar to the coats of British military of the time, thus their name, soldier beetles. They are often called leatherwings because their *elytra* (wing coverings) are not hard like those of most beetles. Attract them with goldenrod, hydrangea, and catnip plants. **Assassin bug** adults liquify their aphid meals and then suck them up like soup. Beware their formidable proboscis, which can deliver a painful bite. These sturdy bugs tend to have an elongated head, narrow "neck," and long legs. **Minute pirate bugs** are tiny - about 1/5" long - and their backs are colored black and white like a pirate's flag. Each bug can eat 30 aphids every day. Some species are sold as biological controls - one eats thrips and mites in greenhouses. **Damsel bugs** agilely climb through plants to hunt aphids. Other pests on their menu include caterpillars, thrips, and leafhoppers. Damsel bugs are attracted by herbs such as cilantro, fennel, and dill. During their nightly patrols, **ground beetles** snack on aphids that fall from plants. Attract these beetles by offering places for them to hide during the day, including rocks, mulch, or logs. More bugs next month... - SC

Sources: [BH&G: How to Get Rid of Aphids and Protect Plants](#); [17 Beneficial Insects that Eat Aphids](#); Wikipedia articles: [Soldier beetle](#), [Reduviidae](#), [Anthicoridae](#), [Orius](#), [Nabidae](#), [Ground beetle](#)

## Index to 2025 TAIS Newsletters

**January 2025** – Photo: ‘Bold Statement;’ Ideas for TAIS’ 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration; **Irises that Can Be Grown in Tucson** - article and photos; 2024 Meeting Schedule; **Parasitoid Wasps** - article and photos; Index to 2024 issues; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month**; blurb on Terry growing **Japanese Irises in Tucson**; **Tips: water, feed, and water again** by Terry; **History: William Arlie Payne and Japanese Irises**; Haiku; Quotes: "You'd be so lean, that blast of January Would blow you through and through. Now, my fair'st friend, I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might Become your time of day." by William Shakespeare and "Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle." - Barbara Winkler

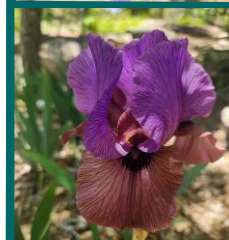
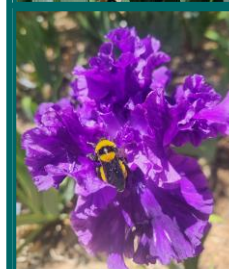
**February 2025** – Photo: ‘Vance George;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Beneficial Spiders, Part I: Orb Weavers** - article and photos; **Broken Colors in Irises** - Notes from Chuck Chapman's presentation; **Photos: Patio Garden Club meeting and Sogetsu Ikebana arrangements**; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month**; blurb on **Mandala Gardens**; **Tips: Granite Dells Iris Garden open in Prescott**; **History: Japanese Irises – photos and descriptions of the three types – Ise, Higo, and Edo**; Limerick; Quotes: "When February sun shines cold, There comes a day when in the air The wings of winter Slow unfold, And show the golden summer there." by Philip Savage and "February makes a bridge and March breaks it." By George Hebert

**March 2025** – Photo: ‘Sneezy;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Beneficial Spiders, Part II: Tarantulas** - article and photos; **Notes from Cindy Grimm's Floral Arranging Presentation**; **Tips from Diane Pavlovich for Anyone Planning to Enter Artistic Arrangements in the Show: Supplies - Where & How to's**; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month**; blurb on **Seed Saver's Exchange**; **Tips: TAIS embroidered shirts at RC Stitch & Sew on Craycroft**; **History: how the opening up of Japan in 1853 led to eventual export of Japanese irises**; Limerick; Quotes: "The brown buds thicken on the trees, Unbound, the free streams sing, As March leads forth across the leas The wild and windy spring." by Elizabeth Akers Allen and "March in the garden - my hostess shows me brown sticks and speaks of flowers." - Sister Benedicta

**April 2025** – Photo: ‘Babbling Brook;’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Artistic Arrangement Tips**; **Beneficial Spiders, Part III – Stalking Spiders** (wolf spiders and jumping spiders) - article and photos; **Pat's Best Tips for Preparing Irises for the Show**; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month**; blurb on the **Philadelphia Flower Show**; **Tips: how to identify snail and slug damage, and prevent it using crushed eggshells or Sluggo** by Sue; **History: Early Importers of Japanese Irises: Bertrand Farr and J F Lovett**; Limerick; Quotes: "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." by Sara Teasdale and "Flowers...are a proud assertion that a ray of beauty outvalues all the utilities of the world." by R. W. Emerson

**May 2025** – Photo: ‘Spring Elegance;’ **Notes and Photos from the Iris Show**; **A Few Things I Learned at the Show and A Few Ideas for Next Time** by Sue; **Photos from Dan's Garden**; **Photos of Irises and Roses in Terry's Garden**; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month**; blurb on **two iris locations in Denver**; **Tips: aphids and three ways to remove them**; **History: George Reed, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Farmingdale Iris Garden, and the beardless irises there**; Limerick; Quotes: "Oh! fragrant is the breath of May In tranquil garden closes, And soft yet regal is her sway Among the springtide roses." by William Hamilton Hayne and "Happiness? The color of it must be spring green." by Frances Mayes

**June 2025** – Photo: AB ‘Eye of Excellence;’ **Report and Photos from the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon**; **Our Logos Were Designed by Shane Smith**; **Marcusen Sculpture Garden in Prescott** - article and photos; **More Photos from the Iris Show**; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month**; blurb on **Creating a Chocolate Garden**; **Tips: visors with logos? And drippers for irises in summer**; **History: Swan Lake Iris Garden in SC**; Limerick; Quotes: "It is the month of June, The month of leaves and roses, When pleasant sights salute the eyes and pleasant scents the noses." by Nathaniel P. Willis and "I wonder what it would be like to live in a world where it was always June." - L. M. Montgomery





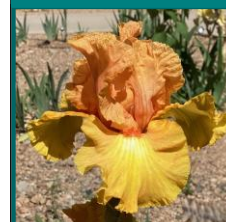
**July 2025** – Photo: ‘My Little Wagon,’ **Photos from the Artistic Division of the Iris Show; A Visit to Bloomer-Rang Iris Farm** - article and photos by Diane Pavlovich; **AIS 2025 National Convention** – article and photos by Joyce Knill; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; blurb on irises with chocolately names; Tips: Using paper towel rolls and toilet paper rolls in compost or burying in garden for worms** by Sue; **History: Arlie Payne and 40 years of Japanese Irises;** Limerick; Quotes: “A babble of brooks that deliver Their flower-purpled waves to the river; A moan in the marshes; in thickets A dolorous droning of crickets, Attuned to a whip-poor-will's cry - And that is July!” by James Newton Matthews and "Summer has set in with its usual severity." by Samuel Taylor Coleridge



**August 2025** – Photo: ‘Artistic Web,’ **Photos of TAIS Member Gardens - Joyce’s and Kevin’s; Wheel Bugs** - article and photos; **Seedling Photos and More Highlights from the AIS Convention** by Joyce; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; blurb on Arizona hummingbirds and that hummingbirds have exceptional special memory; Tips: try growing something new – a list of iris types grown in Tucson; History: Walter and Louise Marx and his Marhigo Japanese irises;** Limerick; Quotes: “Buttercup nodded and said good-bye, Clover and daisy went off together, But the fragrant water lilies lie Yet moored in the golden August weather.” by Celia Thaxter and “The English winter, ending in July To recommence in August.” by Lord Byron



**September 2025** – Photo: ‘Private Treasure,’ Meeting Minutes and Auction Report and photos; 2026 Trek Information; **Rove Beetles** - article and photos; **Dividing and Planting Tall Bearded Irises; Rhizome Preparation Pre-Sale;** Guidelines for Photo Contest; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; blurb on food items native to the Americas; Tips: Dry rhizomes for a few days if from Oregon and dust rhizomes with mycorrhizae** by Joyce and **divide crowded irises** by Sue; **History: Japanese iris hybridizers: Swaengen, Maddocks, and Rich;** Haiku; Quotes: “O sweet September rain! I hear it fall upon the garden beds, Freshening the blossoms which begin to wane.” by Mortimer Collins and “Fair on September first, Fair for the month.” – weather folklore



**October 2025** – Photo: ‘Golden Panther,’ Report and Photos from the Sale; **Garden Helpers: Bats**-article and photos; News about the 2026 Fall Trek; Guidelines for the Photo Contest; **What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; blurb on irises representing success in Japan; Tips: Reasons to Keep Outdoor Lights off at Night; History: Arthur Hazzard, Japanese Iris hybridizer;** Limerick; Quotes: The trees are in their autumn beauty, The woodland paths are dry, Under the October twilight the water Mirrors a still sky.” by William Butler Yeats and “Autumn glows upon us like a splendid evening; it is the very sunset of the year.” by Mary Russell Mitford



**November 2025** – Photo: ‘Magic Show,’ Meeting Minutes and photos; **Notes from Lynda Miller’s Presentation with photos;** Trek Update; **Harmful Garden Insects, Part I: Aphids** – article and photos; **2025 AIS Convention Tablescapes** - photos by Joyce and Pat; **blurb on beginnings of Space-Age irises; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; Tips: How to have irises blooming year round; History: Four Types of Median Irises with diagram;** Haiku; Quotes: “Flowers speak to us if we listen. Appreciating the blossom in hand or pausing in the garden to admire the beauty quiets our outer selves till we hear something new, something we did not hear before - the still, small voice of Nature herself.” by Jean Hersey and “There is a calmness to a life lived in gratitude, a quiet joy.” Ralph H. Blum



**December 2025** – Photo: ‘Babbling Brook,’ Potluck Meeting Minutes and photos; Trek Update; **Iris Photos from New Hampshire and Beaver, PA; Aphid-eating Insects, Part I** - article and photos; **Winning Photos from the TAIS Photo Contest; blurb on Coeligena iris, the Rainbow Starfrontlet hummingbird; What to do in the Iris Garden this Month; Tips: fill bottoms of large pots with plastic water bottles to save on potting soil and weight, and large pots insulate roots; History: Beginnings of Median Irises, including information about Iris pumila;** Haiku; Quotes: “Frost upon a windowpane and softly falling snow, warmth beside a crackling fire while biting north winds blow. Books and blankets, steaming tea, The soft glow of an ember. Candlelight and cozy nights – the magic of December.” By Laura Jaworski and "Shivering - grey clouds darken mountain snow." by Michael P. Garofalo, Cuttings

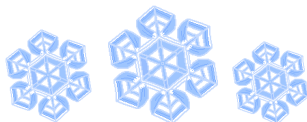


**TAIS OFFICERS, ETC. FOR 2026****Kevin Kartchner - President****Cindy Long - Vice President****Sue Clark – Secretary, Signatory on Account****Jim Wilcoxon – Treasurer, Asst. Secretary****Pat Olsen & Brian Moon - Programs & Places****Diane Pavlovich - Publicity****Cindy Long & Linda Briggs - Hospitality****Bonnie Else & Susan Schaefer - Door Prizes****Cindy Long & Linda Briggs - Membership****Dave Smith - Photographer****Sue Clark - Newsletter****What to do in the Iris Garden during January:**

**Maintenance:** Water well during this active growth period. Monitor for aphids, especially at the base of leaves. Spray with water to remove. If you have not done so, create or update a map of your iris beds or containers, just in case labels fade or go missing. Replace any faded labels.

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

**Non-organic care:** Buy some [Scott's Super Bloom](#) (12-55-6), [Miracle-Gro Bloom Booster](#) (10-52-10), [Schultz Bloom Plus](#) 10-54-10), or [Ferti-lome Blooming & Rooting](#) (9-58-8) to get ready for feeding from New Year's through May. These are available at Harlow's, Mesquite Valley Growers, Ace Hardware, Amazon, and other places. TAIS member Susan starts applying this in early January; Kristee on Valentine's Day. - SC

**Tip Exchange**

Pine needles make excellent mulch! Their pH is neutral. Only when they are on the tree are they acidic. Keep weeds at bay with a 2-3" layer of this light and fluffy mulch. The needles interlock and therefore are unlikely to blow or wash away. Pine needles last long and are natural-looking. They can also be added to compost. And they are a renewable resource since trees lose about 1/4 to 1/3 of their needles each year. - SC Source: [Old Farmers Almanac](#)

**Haiku**

**Dawn of a new year -  
Anything is possible...  
Hope springs eternal.**

**- Sue Clark****Did You Know?**

Irises symbolize many things, depending on their color. Purple symbolizes royalty, as well as wisdom, strength, and courage. Pink represents love, understanding, and deep friendships. Yellow implies passion, joy, and happiness. Blue represents hope and faith, while orange symbolizes bravery, courage, and passion, as well as excitement and energy. Red irises symbolize romantic passion and love. Brown ones represent stability, security, and warmth, and black ones imply elegance, mystery, and rebellion. - SC Source: [floraly.com.au](http://floraly.com.au)

**'Barbi' (Randolph, 1961)**

Source: photo by Nancy McDonald, Iris Wiki

**"Don't think the garden loses its ecstasy in winter. It's quiet, but the roots are down there riotous." – Rumi**

**A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History**

Development of the median irises began when Robert Schreiner imported seeds of the true *Iris pumila* species from Austria in the 1930s, and it moved along when Paul Cook obtained some of Schreiner's plants to cross and select in order to establish a race of stable and hardy *I. pumila* seedlings. Next up in the creation process was an exchange of pollen between Paul Cook and Geddes Douglas. Douglas mailed pollen from his tall bearded to Cook in Indiana, who used it to fertilize those seedlings that he'd developed. Cook sent *I. pumila* pollen south to Douglas in Nashville, Tennessee, where the latter applied it to irises to engineer a series of hybrids he called "Lilliputs." Because all of the hybrids they created were fertile between each other and with their parent plants, the major hurdle of combining dwarf irises and tall bearded was finally overcome. Previous attempts had failed or had not been fertile. The fourth step in the creation of medians was by another Cook, Dr. Franklin Cook, who appointed and gave carte blanche to Walter Welch, as chairman of the Dwarf Iris Committee. Welch's enthusiasm and charisma drew together a group of people interested in growing and breeding dwarf irises. In this way, others began to recognize the value of both the dwarfs and the smaller bearded irises. Dr. L. Fitz Randolph and his iris chromosome counts at Cornell University in the 1940s were instrumental in the fifth step of median development, although his work was done in a lab rather than in the field. Breeders could now use Randolph's chromosome counts to plan their crosses scientifically and to evaluate their results in a much shorter time than before, when they had to gather their data from experimentation. Dr. Randolph and his wife Fannie traveled to Europe several times to collect irises and he utilized these to breed and introduce numerous Miniature Dwarf, Standard Dwarf, and Miniature Tall Bearded, among others. He published many scientific papers on iris culture and served in several positions within The American Iris Society, including its president. More on medians next month... - SC

Sources: "The Median Iris Movement," by Geddes Douglas in AIS 100 Years Bold, Supplement 2 of 4 to IRISES: the Bulletin of AIS, 2020; AIS Wiki articles: [Geddes Douglas](#), [Paul Cook](#), and [Dr. L. Fitz Randolph](#)