

November 2025



TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Magic Show'
(Keppel, 1994)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2025

President's Message

It cooled off AND rained. I imagine your iris are enjoying the season as much as I am. My rhizomes from the 60th anniversary order, the auction, and the sale have plenty of new growth and are settled in for the winter growing season. I even have a few rebloomers putting up stalks that I hope bloom before it freezes.

Ready to share and eat? Our November potluck closes out a very full year of TAIS activities. We had one of our biggest flower shows, have been on radio and TV, and had interesting programs between events. Many thanks to so much work by you, a TAIS member. In addition to great food and company, I really enjoy the plant sharing at the potluck. Bring your favorite plants, seeds, cuttings, or whatever, and return home with something new to try from your fellow TAIS members.

- Kevin Kartchner

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"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."
- Jean Hersey

Upcoming Events

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

No meeting in December. Happy Holidays!

January 10 meeting: Details TBA

Birthday Wishes to:

Angela Powers
Susan Schaefer
George Vanovich
Andrew DeMato

Taffy Holvenstot
Ron Kelsen
Laura Brian
Candace Shelton



Happy Thanksgiving

October Meeting Minutes



11 October 2025 - Thirteen members gathered at the Columbus-Ekstrom Library, along with three remote members and two remote guests, for a Zoom presentation about what kinds of goodies iris hybridizer Lynda Miller has in the pipeline. More on those at right and on p. 3.

General Meeting: Two Board positions are open: Location Finder and Membership. Cindy and Linda volunteered to take on Membership. We still need someone who will secure spots for future meetings. The remainder of the Board will continue on for another year, as approved by motions and ayes.

Kevin reported favorable feedback from last month's rhizome sale, which netted about \$5000. The AZPM radio broadcast brought several people to the sale. Next month's potluck with seed- and plant-exchange will be at Pat's house in Vail.

Our 60th Anniversary year highlights have included a special logo, trowel and ornament gifts, commemorative

rhizome gifts (group order of \$150), and feature [radio](#) and [TV](#) stories on AZPM.

TAIS will host the 2026 Region 15 Fall Trek conference at Tohono Chul Park. Pat is the chair and volunteers are essential. Logo artwork is by ChatGPT. There will be a speaker, judge's training, educational programs, raffles, and a silent auction. Items are needed for the latter.

Kevin showed last year's photo contest winners and reminded everyone to vote for their current favorites between October 12th and 20th.

Board Meeting: Honorariums for today's presentation by Lynda Miller and for a future presentation by the Historic Iris Preservation Society (HIPS) were approved by motions and ayes. There is no set rate for honorariums. I will send the membership form to Linda and Cindy so that they can [update it for the website](#).

Thank you to Joyce for taking photos at the meeting.

- Sue Clark, secretary

**Thank you to all
who entered and/or
voted in our photo
contest!**



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

Notes from Lynda Miller's Presentation

Lynda lives in Canby, Oregon on nearly 2 acres, 1/3 to 1/2 acre of which is planted in irises, mostly her seedlings. Lynda has won several awards in the iris world, including the AIS Hybridizer Award in 2002 and a Dykes Medal in 2022 for 'Football Hero.' She will not be breeding Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) or Intermediate Bearded (IB) after this year due to space limitations. She does still have seedlings of these, though, as well as some to introduce next year.

Lynda said that she has a particular affinity for Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB), partly because they originally hailed from her hometown of Bluffton, Indiana, and partly because they are such excellent show flowers. Their delicate blossoms and stalks are striking and are easier to transport than TB. MTB were developed by Mary Williamson from seedlings that her hybridizing father called "runted plants." Mary realized the value of a smaller-flowered iris for arrangements, hence their nickname of Table irises. MTB come in diploid and tetraploid varieties. Diploids have a double set of chromosomes, have limited colors like the original colors of TB, and their falls are often striped. Their flowers tend to look more tailored than those of tetraploid MTB. They usually bloom with the TB and are frequently sterile. Tetraploids, on the other hand, are fertile, (continued on next page...)

Notes on Lynda Miller's Presentation, cont...

occur in more colors, and bloom earlier than TB. Their larger anthers are clearly visible and are covered in pollen. They have 4 sets of chromosomes.

Some of Lynda's hybridizing goals include more pink and purple bicolors, more orange and purple bicolors, a clear pink MTB, horns, flounces, and pom-poms, blue horns on a pink iris, tangerine beards on a black iris, and what she calls "belly stripes," which are stripes that come out from the end of beards and travel straight down the falls. A striking cinnamon-colored TB will likely be introduced in 2027.

Lynda offered some hybridizing tips. She typically makes crosses both ways, giving each parental variety a chance to serve as a father (pollen parent) and a mother (pod parent), but said that the genetics of the mother tend to be dominant. This is especially true for horned varieties. She usually waits until her pods start to crack open before collecting the seeds. She related a story about Schreiners planting 12-year-old iris seeds from Brad Kasperek and about 80% of them sprouted. She also told us that it was TAIS-member and iris judge Kathy Chilton who suggested the name 'Gilded Chocolate' for one of Lynda's seedlings.

A [recording of Lynda's presentation](#) can be found on our website. - SC

Some of Lynda's favorite creations:



c. Lynda Miller

MTB 'Plumb Bob Line' (2024)



NINJA WARRIOR
Miller 16

STOUT GARDENS
at Dancingtree

'Ninja Warrior' (2016)
- a good parent

'Goddess of the Rainbow' (2024)
- "gorgeous"



c. Mid-America Garden

c. Lynda Miller



'Rizz' (2025)
- "fabulous stalks"

c. Mid-America Garden

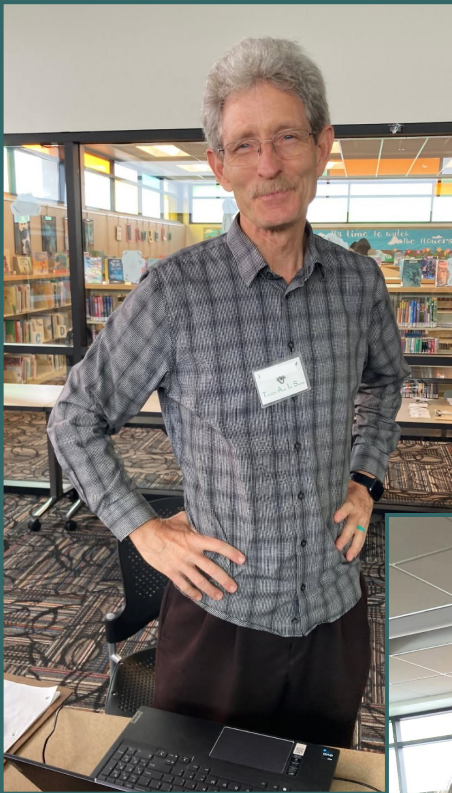
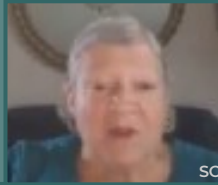
'Scattergram' (2021) -
"outstanding in the garden"
(a child of Ninja Warrior)



All photos are from the AIS Wiki

Thank you, Lynda!

October Meeting - photos by Joyce Knill (& two screenshots)



Treasurer's Report for October - submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

17,462.23 Beginning balance

EXPENSES

71.73 Sale Expenses

10.00 Refreshments

17,380.50

INCOME

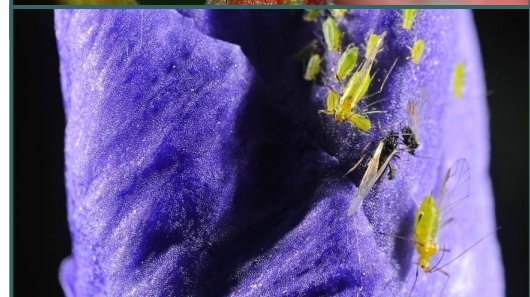
10.00 Plant stakes

15.00 Membership

17,405.50 Ending Balance



Trek Update: The TAIS Trek Committee is thrilled to announce Jody Nolin, Past President of the American Iris Society, as our guest speaker at next year's Region 15 Fall Trek. Jody's longtime dedication to irises, leadership within AIS, and enthusiasm for sharing her knowledge have inspired iris growers across the country. Whether you've met her before or will be hearing her for the first time, you're sure to enjoy her warmth, humor and deep appreciation for irises. Saturday, October 17, 2026 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Tohono Chul - The Wilson Room, 7366 N Paseo del Norte, Tucson - PO



Harmful Garden Insects, Part I: Aphids

The small soft-bodied insects called aphids come in many colors, even within the same species: green, black, brown, pink, gold, nearly colorless, or even white with a wooly appearance. They have been damaging plants since at least the Triassic (about 250-200 million years ago), which is when their oldest-known fossil dates from. Upon the development of angiosperms (flowering plants) approximately 160 million years ago, aphids quickly diversified and began to specialize in their choice of food. Currently, most of the 5,000 aphid species are found in temperate regions.

In addition to there being a species of aphid that feeds exclusively on a specific species of plant (think of almost any plant and there is an aphid for it), their populations can increase quickly due to some alternative methods of reproduction. Typically, flightless females give birth to female nymphs who are already pregnant, skipping the need for males altogether. This process is known as *telescoping of generations*, and as one can imagine, populations spike rapidly. Later in the season, winged females develop and fly off to wreak havoc on other plants. In autumn, reproduction is usually more traditional, with eggs overwintering to hatch into nymphs in the spring.

Aphids are problems for gardeners for several reasons. They suck sap from plants (including irises) and their toxic saliva causes leaves and other parts to yellow and curl, eventually causing a decline in the plant's health. They also excrete a liquid called honeydew, which encourages mold to grow on the plant, further damaging it. These tiny insects transmit viruses to many kinds of crops, including citrus, beets, and potatoes, as well as various grains.

What to do? Next month, we'll examine several types of insects that eat aphids and thus help us out in the garden. Until then, blast 'em off with a spray of water. Avoid spraying irises with water in the sun and heat, though. - SC

Sources: Wikipedia articles: [Aphids](#), [Triassic](#), [Eocene](#)

From top: close-up of an aphid preserved in Baltic amber from the Eocene epoch (about 50-34 million years ago) (by [Anders L. Damgaard](#)); close-up of a group of oleander aphids, which commonly feed on various milkweed plants (by [Alvesgasper](#)); aphids on an iris bud (image from Epic Gardening article on '[How to Plant, Grow, and Care for Iris Flowers](#)')

2025 AIS Convention Tablescapes - photos by Joyce & Pat



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 November:

Maintenance: Move potted irises to sunny spots for the cool season. Make a label for each new iris - try these [metal plant markers](#) or buy [Paw Paw](#) ones from TAIS at \$1 each. Use a label maker such as [DYMO LabelManager 160](#) or write on plant markers with a #2 pencil, china marker, or [paint marker](#). **DO NOT use Sharpie** - it will fade. Monitor for fading monthly so you don't lose iris names. Remove weeds and pests.

Organic care: Apply fish emulsion every other week. Mix as on package. Provide the fall dose of green sand (1 T) and bone meal (1 T) (the latter is **not** for Japanese irises!) Humic acid improves soil texture. Apply anytime.

Non-organic care: Feed with a fairly-balanced fertilizer. The first number should be 10 or less to reduce risk of rot. Try [Schreiners iris fertilizer](#) or [this one](#), which ships for free, from Comanche Acres Iris Garden. When planting, put 1 T into the hole. For established irises, scratch fertilizer into the soil and then water it in. - SC

Tip Exchange



In his 1961 Rainbow Iris Gardens catalog, Lloyd Austin details how one can have irises blooming year round. Dwarfs [miniature dwarfs] are the first to bloom, then intermediates and what he refers to as Lilliputs [I am guessing that these are the standard dwarf bearded], followed by oncobreds [types of arilbreds that descend from any of the Oncocylus species]. Tall bearded irises are next, and border- and table irises flower at essentially the same interval as the TBs. Rebloomers take up the rest of the slack. Mr. Austin divides these into summer-, autumn-, and winter rebloomers. How long is your iris bloom season? And can it be extended with some selective shopping? - SC

Haiku

Harvest moon transitioned
 From gold to silv'ry whiteness,
 From warmth to starkness
 - Sue Clark

Did You Know?

Lloyd Austin of Placerville, California coined the term "Space-Age iris" for those with appendages at the end of their beards. He began breeding horned irises in 1944 and introduced his first one in 1954, '[Unicorn](#).' Thirteen other horned varieties followed and then a spooned variety in 1960. Flounced flowers quickly followed in 1961. Fifteen space-age irises were offered in Austin's 1961 catalog. He noted that varieties may sport horns, spoons, or flounces at different times and even on different flowers of the same plant. - SC Source: Rainbow Gardens 1961 catalog, personal copy



IB 'Besos' (Stout 2023)

Source: AIS Iris Wiki

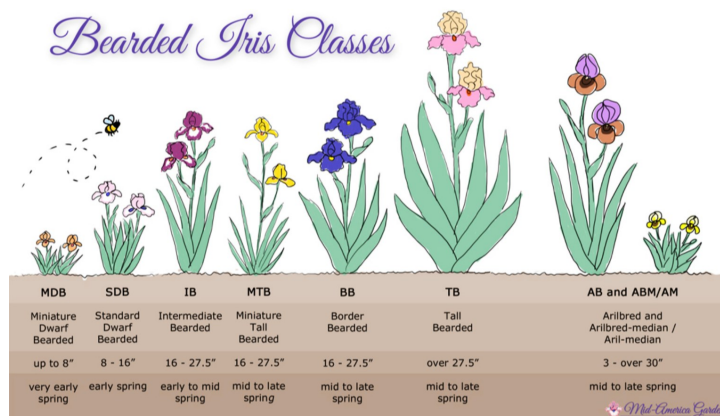
"There is a calmness to a life lived in gratitude. a quiet joy." - Ralph H. Blum



A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

The Median irises are a collection of four different types. **Standard Dwarf Bearded** range from 8-16 inches in height. They bloom early, following the flowering of the Miniature Dwarf Bearded and display best as clumps. The other three groups all share the same height range - from 16" to 27.5." **Intermediate Bearded** (IB) bloom time tucks in between that of Standard Dwarf Bearded (SDB) and Tall Bearded (TB), and overlaps each of these types. Some varieties display best in clumps, while others are nicely branched and show up best as specimen plants so that their forms may be appreciated. **Miniature Tall Bearded** (MTB) appear much daintier and more delicate than other types. In fact, a clump of MTB is thought to resemble a cloud of butterflies. They are well-suited to use in arrangements and are often referred to as Table Irises because of this trait. **Border Bearded** (BB) are the final group of Median irises. These bloom at the same time as the Tall Bearded, but their flowers are proportional to their shorter stature and more slender stems. Border Bearded are useful in smaller gardens, in the front of borders, and where strong winds could blow TBs over. Next month, we'll look at how the Median irises were developed. - SC

Bearded Iris Classes



Sources: "The Median Iris Movement" by Geddes Douglas in *AIS 100 Years Bold*, Supplement 2 of 4 to *IRISES: the Bulletin of AIS*, 2020; Iris Wiki articles: [Standard Dwarf Bearded](#), [Intermediate Bearded](#), [Miniature Tall Bearded](#), and [Border Bearded](#); diagram from Mid-America Gardens website