

September 2025

TAIS Newsletter

Tucson Area Iris Society - established 1965

Our 60th year

An Affiliate of the American Iris Society



'Private Treasure'
(Shoop, 1993)

Marcusen Sculpture Gardens,
Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Sue Clark, 2025

President's Message

Time to sell, sell, sell! It's our annual rhizome sale at Harlow Gardens on September 13th. This is our big fundraiser for the year and we always need (and get) everybody's help. As usual, we'll have a great selection of quality rhizomes at low prices. This year we'll be featuring rhizomes from Mid-America, Stout Gardens, and of course our locally-grown, acclimatized iris.

Our TAIS 60th anniversary celebration rhizomes from Sutton's will arrive soon. I'll send an email with payment details and bring the rhizomes to the sale for your pickup and payment.

- Kevin Kartchner

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"O sweet September rain! I hear it fall upon the garden beds, Freshening the blossoms which begin to wane." - Mortimer Collins (1827-1876)

Upcoming Events

September 13: 9 AM to Noon. TAIS Rhizome Sale at Harlow's Gardens nursery, 5620 E. Pima St. Set up 3 PM on September 12. Members early-bird discount hour 8 to 9 AM on Saturday

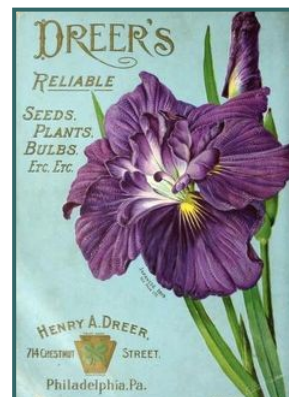
October: TAIS Annual Photo Contest. See p. 7 for submission- and voting dates and other details. Winners revealed at Nov. Potluck

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

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

October 18: Master Gardeners' Plant Sale, 8-11 AM, 4210 N. Campbell Avenue

Birthday Wishes to:
Dorra Bost Jane Parks
Carolyn Hatounian



Source: getarchive.net

Japanese iris

August Meeting & Auction



TAIS held its August 9, 2025 meeting at Tucson Botanical Garden. Kevin, our President, called the meeting to order, with 19 people attending, braving the 110° heat.

Pat and Sue S. received an award and medal for the second-most number of blue ribbons dating back to the iris show in April. Congratulations!

Bonnie has the 60th Anniversary gifts for any active member who missed the celebration in May. She will be available at the September sale, so please track her down.

We understand that Tony Paniagua of "Arizona Illustrated" fame will be airing the Iris Show interviews sometime in August on KUAT. He will also note our upcoming sale.

Looking forward to the April 2026 Iris Show, Terry has requested we present named potted iris or a picture of the potted NOID iris flower. The NOID iris are very difficult to sell at any price if the color is unknown. At this time, the price of these potted irises will be

\$10, and donors will earn Iris Bucks.

Brief guidelines were presented for the rhizome sale to be held on Saturday, September 13. There were several changes from previous years:

A limit of 300 NOIDs will be accepted. 50 will be used for our planting demonstrations. Potted iris will be \$7 as well as brown bags stuffed with the NOIDs.

Pricing was discussed and rhizomes will remain at \$8 each or buy 6 and get 1 free.

Members may shop from 8:00-9:00 AM on Saturday and may pay \$7 each, buy 6 get 1 free. If you volunteered to work on Friday, you may shop and pay after set up. We will be using a Tally list, just as the Master Gardeners use for their sales. This should speed up the check-out process.

Please bring any donations of cleaned and marked iris rhizomes (at least golf-ball size) at 3:00 Friday to Harlow's. Kevin will be accepting them and writing Iris Bucks on the spot.

**Do you have any
rhizomes that you
can contribute to
our Sale?**



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

Everyone is asked to email Joyce at joycelvan60@gmail.com with the names of iris you plan to donate. She will compile the list of all iris available for sale, and Sue Clark will send out an email on Friday before the sale. A volunteer sign-up sheet was passed around for working on Saturday.

The auction of 90 rhizomes was great fun! The bidding on the many \$75-rhizomes was fast and resulted in much laughter, with some of us attempting to bid up our own first offer. Orange was a very popular color as was the lavender/indigo blue coloring (Butterfly Eye, won by Terry for \$45). Top-winning iris was a stunning neon yellow/burgundy banded iris ('Oh Far Out') by John for \$49. As the auction continued, the bidding became intense but in a friendly manner. After the last iris from Region 15 was sold, many positive remarks were made. It was a smaller group, but a friendly, appreciative group. Door prize winners were Dan and Jim. And Sue and Dave made the PowerPoint presentations.

Kevin hasn't received the Anniversary iris we ordered. An email will be sent when they arrive, and we can either pick them up at his house and pay the balance due (if any) or wait until the Sept. sale and pick them up then.

We did have 1 non-member attend the meeting portion, and stayed about 5 minutes into the auction and then left. I didn't learn her name. She is included in the 19 people.

- Joyce Knill, substitute secretary

TAIS Auction - photos by Joyce Knill



Treasurer's Report for August submitted by Jim Wilcoxon

<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
BEGINNING BALANCE	BEGINNING BALANCE
10,226.24	10,025.99

INCOME (SALES)	
CASH-----	84.00
CHARGES-----	729.00
CHECKS-----	590.00
TOTAL SALES-----	1403.00

EXPENSES	
SALE SUPPLIES -----	58.94
REFRESHMENTS-----	9.58
AIS MEMBERSHIP-----	30.00
AZ CORP COM-----	10.00
TRAVEL-----	84.87
TRAVEL-----	84.80
RHIZOMES-----	800.00
TOTAL EXP-----	1078.19

TOTAL INCOME	1403.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	-1078.19
	+ 324.81

ENDING BALANCE 10,025.99



2026 Region 15 Fall Trek

The mission of The American Iris Society (AIS) is to organize and disseminate knowledge of the genus Iris, while fostering its preservation, enjoyment, and continued development. The Trek aligns with the AIS Mission by facilitating the sharing of information and appreciation for irises. As an affiliate, the Tucson Area Iris Society (TAIS) is part of AIS Region 15, which holds two regional meetings ("treks") annually. These events are typically hosted on a rotating basis by all societies within the region; TAIS last hosted a trek in the spring of 2010.

TAIS is pleased to announce it will host the 2026 Fall Trek at Tohono Chul on Saturday, October 17, 2026. The day will commence with business meetings for both the Executive Board and General Membership. Upon completion of Region 15 business, the agenda will transition into educational sessions.

TAIS will invite an iris expert to conduct continuing education (judges training) for all attendees. The programs will feature one hour dedicated to judges training and an additional hour highlighting the guest speaker's expertise, which may also include judges training. Both presentations will be designed to be engaging and informative for all participants. You do not need to be a judge to enjoy and participate in the programs. A lunch break will separate the two sessions. The event will conclude with door prizes, a raffle, and a silent auction.

The Trek Committee is committed to maintaining affordability for participants, mindful of out-of-pocket expenses. Volunteering is a great way to contribute to a successful trek. Volunteers will be appreciated for a variety of roles such as event setup, hospitality, tech/AV and many other aspects of the trek. A sign-up sheet will be circulated as the event approaches.

TAIS Trek Committee members are Pat Olsen, Cindy Long, Bonnie Else, Lois Shoaf and Kevin Kartchner. Special email address for the Trek: TAIS.Trek.Committee@gmail.com.

- by Pat Olsen



Above: A group of rove beetles consuming a fly larva (by Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska, (Source 1)

Beneficial Insects, Part X: Rove Beetles

Rove beetles help out in the garden by eating mites and insects found in soil. This includes fly larvae (maggots) and fly pupae, especially in and around compost piles. One introduced species is an important predator of root maggots and other species eat cutworms and the larvae of armyworms. One species is known as the spider mite destroyer and another type, the greenhouse rove beetle, is commonly sold as a fungus gnat destroyer. Too bad they are only recommended for use in greenhouses and gardens with moist hiding places, because they sure would come in handy for fungus gnat infestations in my houseplants from time to time!

The oldest fossils of rove beetles are from the mid-Jurassic (approximately 174-161 million years ago). These quickly diversified and there are currently over 66,000 species of them. They are thought to be in the largest family of any animal or plant on Earth.

Rove beetles are built more like an earwig than a beetle. Their long, slender bodies have short wing covers which do not cover their abdomen. Most rove beetles are quite small, 2-8 mm (less than 0.3"), but some species are up to 1.4" in length. When threatened, they curl their abdomen forward over their back, looking something like a scorpion. Their wings fold up origami-style and they are good fliers. - SC

Source: Garden Insects of North America: the ultimate guide to backyard bugs, 2nd edition, 2018, by Whitney Cranshaw and David Shetlar, Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford, p. 616-617; Wikipedia article: [Rove Beetle](#)

Dividing Tall Bearded Irises

When irises become crowded, several things may happen. Blooms will decrease, rhizomes may pile up on one another so that they are not in soil any more, and plants may become diseased due to lack of air circulation around the leaves. East of the Mississippi River, densely-packed rhizomes are also more likely to become infected with iris borers.

Fall is our time to divide the clump and thus rejuvenate it. In milder climates, gardeners can divide about six weeks after bloom time. The plants are fairly dormant in these areas at these times.

Irises typically need to be divided about every three to five years. Besides contributing to the overall health of the plant, dividing allows us to share the generous bounty of irises - we can donate some to the club's rhizome sale, give some to friends, and plant some in other areas of our garden. Dig cautiously, using a pitchfork if possible, to raise the clump out of the ground. Carefully break or cut the rhizomes apart and shake off the dirt. Discard any with rot or extensive damage, as well as any with a stalk, as they will not flower again. Label immediately using a Sharpie so you don't lose the name. Writing on a middle leaf is best, as the outer ones die off. Watch a [video on division](#). - SC

Sources: [Old Farmer's Almanac](#), [Gardening Know-How](#), [Historic Iris Preservation Society](#), PAIS sale guide

Planting Tall Bearded Irises

Plant rhizomes starting this month through October, although Kevin has had success transplanting in July. Just don't keep rhizomes out of the ground for more than about a week or so, as they are not bulbs; they are underground stems. Aim for at least six weeks before frost so that they can develop new roots before winter. Soak rhizomes for 30 minutes in water to rehydrate them. Then sterilize new rhizomes for 10-30 minutes in a solution of 2 1/4 c water and 1/4 c bleach (9:1 ratio). Trim leaves to about 6" so that the rhizome does not have to support long leaves while it is re-establishing. Fresh roots may be trimmed to about 4". There are two strategies for dried roots - keep them to stabilize the rhizome or remove them to allow the rhizome to contact the soil. More Tips, p. 8.

For planting in the garden: Choose a spot that will receive afternoon shade during the summer. Good drainage is essential, as is good air circulation.

Add compost to the soil and mix well.

Joyce recommends this ratio for planting irises in pots: fill pot 1/4 full of compost, 1/3 full of [horticultural pumice](#), and fill the rest with a high-quality garden mix such as Kellogg's Patio Mix. With a lesser-quality planting mix, use 1/3 of each. Stir thoroughly. Add in 1 T fertilizer (see below).

Consider that block walls radiate lots of heat, which can be harmful to plants. Dig a hole with enough depth so that the surface of the rhizome will be buried about 1/2" to prevent rot caused by sun damage. Alternatively, some people prefer to leave the surface of the rhizome exposed. I like to stir a tablespoonful of fertilizer (from [Schreiner's](#) or [Comanche Acres](#)) into the bottom of the hole. Create a mound of soil in the center of the hole and fan any remaining roots over it. Press soil firmly over rhizome to remove any air pockets. Space rhizomes 12" apart.

Drip lines appear to be the best way to water irises in the desert. Emitters with adjustable flow will give you the most control. I use Raindrip Adjustable Full Circle Stream Bubblers and adjust them to their lowest setting. Try 1 minute every day to start. Some members have their drippers on for two minutes. You can turn the irrigation timer off for a few days after a storm so that the irises do not get overwatered. - SC

Source: Collected wisdom of TAIS members via various panels and handouts

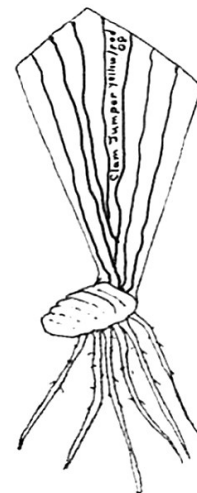




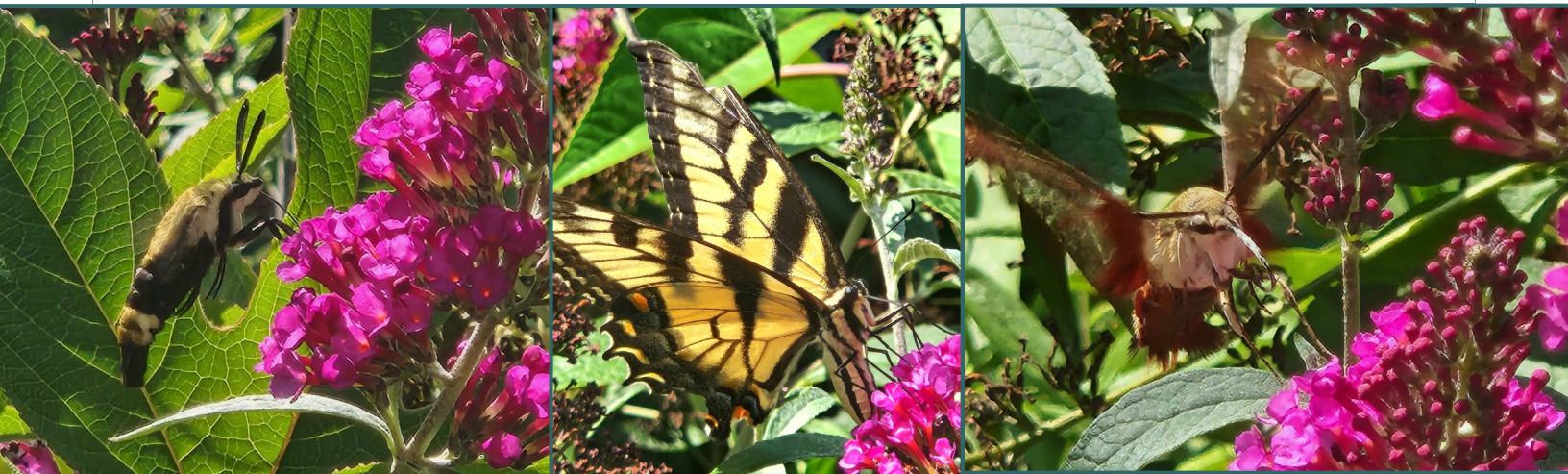
Rhizome Preparation - Pre-sale

If you are contributing rhizomes for our sale on September 13, please read the following instructions, which we are borrowing with permission from the Prescott Area Iris Society.

- Dig and divide the clump within 7 days of Sept. 13. With our extreme heat, you might dig your iris early in the morning or in the evening. Using a garden fork will make it easier to pop the clump out of the ground. The rhizomes should be healthy, with no signs of insect damage or disease.
- When dividing the rhizomes, cut or break off the rhizome (with its leaves) from the mother rhizome. The rhizomes you bring to the sale should be golf ball size, at least.
- Trim the leaves into a fan shape about 6-8 inches long. On the ***middle*** leaf, please use a black Sharpie or any black permanent marker and write the AIS registered name of the iris.
- Wash your iris to remove soil and allow the rhizome to dry in dappled shade. Trim the roots to about 4 inches.
- When the rhizome is dry, store in a cool, dry place. Please send an email to joycelvan60@gmail.com advising the names of the iris you are donating. She will compile the available iris list from members and growers, and forward to Sue Clark, who will send the list to all club members on Thursday or Friday of the sale week.
- On Friday, September 12, please bring the rhizomes to Kevin, who will be at Harlow Gardens between 3:00 and 4:00 PM. He will then issue \$2 Iris Bucks per rhizome.



See you at Harlow Gardens on Friday! - modified by Joyce Knill (photos below by SC)



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 September:**

Maintenance: Be sure irises receive afternoon shade. Monitor soil with moisture meter and water irises when it reads close to dry. Continue checking for aphids and other pests. Remove pests, weeds, and debris. Replace faded labels ASAP so you don't lose the names of your irises. If grass has invaded your beds, try spraying it with [Grass-B-Gon](#), which should not harm the irises, but apply it with caution. Saturating the grass in full sun works best, and it may take a few applications before the grass is destroyed.

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

Non-Organic care: Plan to fertilize next month. Continue watering reblooming irises. - SC

**Tip Exchange**

If buying iris from Oregon, lay rhizomes on newspaper a few days before planting. This dries them out and helps prevent rot. - Joyce Knill, tip from 2025 AIS conference

Dust rhizomes before planting with rooting powder or a [mycorrhizal inoculant](#). This will help speed up root development. - JK, ditto

Divide irises this month. Bloom will suffer if rhizomes are overcrowded. See p. 5. - SC

Haiku

Orange glow on full moon
Mirrors a blazing fire
Far, far beneath

- Sue Clark

Did You Know?

Several well-loved food items originated in the Americas: corn, beans, and squash (the "Three Sisters"), chiles, tomatoes, potatoes, vanilla, and cacao. Potatoes were first cultivated high in the Andes Mountains. Vanilla comes from an orchid native to the Veracruz area of Mexico. Cacao, the basis of chocolate, was valued so much in Mesoamerica that it was used as currency. And archeologists have unearthed evidence that it was traded as far north as Chaco Canyon, Arizona over 1,000 years ago. Source: Road Scholar Alumni Magazine, Spring 2025



JI 'Oriental Tracery'

"Fair on September first, Fair for the month."

- Weather folklore

A Little Bit of Botany and Iris History

American hybridizers of Japanese irises continued to improve the strain. Clarence A. Swearengen became friends with Arlie Payne upon moving to Terra Haute in 1946. Swearengen began his own hybridizing program after falling under the spell of Arlie's Japanese irises. He started with 20 of Arlie's seedlings and added in some Marhigos from Walter Marx. Swearengen introduced twenty-one varieties, including 'Blue Honey' and 'Oriental Tracery.' The latter is referred to as one of the most outstanding of the American-bred Japanese iris. Clarence became the first president of the Japanese Iris Society.

A similar story involves Fred Maddocks of Fair Oaks, California, who ordered a starter set of irises from Japan in about 1940 and then added in some early Marhigos. Fred won two Payne awards for his irises: one for the lilac pink 'Leave Me Sighing' in 1967 and the other for 'Hue and Cry' in 1973. He introduced these and 11 other Japanese iris. 'Leave Me Sighing' has one of the largest flowers of all the Japanese irises. [I could find no dimensions listed anywhere].

Two bee pods on irises she had purchased from Walter Marx led to the hybridizing program of Jonnye Rich of Roseville, California in about 1956. Mentored by Fred Maddocks, she introduced 16 varieties. Jonnye won the Payne award in 1969 for 'Star at Midnight' and in 1978 for 'Tuptim.' Her irises, as well as those of Maddocks and others, were introduced by Ben Hagar's Melrose Gardens of Stockton, California, a business which was instrumental in popularizing not just Japanese irises, but irises in general during this interval and until its closure in 1999. - SC

Source: *The Japanese Iris*, 1990, by Currier McEwen, published by University Press of New England for the Brandeis University Press, © by the Japanese Iris Society; and the AIS Wiki

The Tucson Area Iris Society Presents
2025 Rhizome Sale



Saturday, September 13, 2025
9 a.m. to noon

at Harlow's Garden Center
5620 E. Pima St.

Come early for best selection.

Whether you're new to iris planting or need a refresher, join TAIS at the demonstration table for interactive sessions at 9:30 & 10. Participation is limited to the first 50 guests who will take home their planted complimentary iris.