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Dec 2016/Jan 2017 — Vol. 26 #01



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday January 10, 2017
6:30 P.M. Pot Luck
Program – Presby Iris Gardens

Judges Training – Saturday, January 14

Iris Show – April 8

Zilker Garden Festival – March 25-27

Society for Louisiana Irises – April 20-22
Dallas, TX www.louisianas.org

Spuria Iris Convention – May 5-6
San Fernando Valley Iris Society
Los Angeles, California
www.spuriairissociety.com

Median Iris Society Mini Convention
May 18-20 Lafayette, Indiana
whozher@mintel.net

AIS CONVENTION – MAY 23-27
Des Moines Marriott Hotel
700 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
desmoinesmarriott.com 515 245-5500

Society for Japanese Irises June 23-25
Seattle, Washington www.socji.org

IRIS AUSTIN TO HOST JUDGES TRAINING JAN. 14



Debra Strauss, a Master Judge for American Iris Society Region 17 and former editor of the Region 17 Newsletter, will be the instructor for Judges Training hosted by the Iris Society of Austin from 9 until 11 A.M. on January 14 in the Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, 7127 Bee Cave Road, Austin, 78746-4102. This

will be a classroom training on Iris Collections and Boxes for two hours of credit toward becoming a judge. The cost is \$5 per person and breakfast at 8:30 A.M. will be included. Registration ends at 9 A.M. Please contact Nelda Moore at joenell6947@gmail.com for reservations.

Other classes that will provide training include Fort Worth Iris Society with Dell Perry teaching a 3-hour course for \$5 on Arilbred Iris on January 21 in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd. in Ft Worth 76107-3420. RSVP to Happy Carver 448 Azle Hwy., Weatherford, TX 76085, telephone 817-946-8473, or e-mail at gcarver@flash.com

On January 22 Hooker Nichols will provide instruction about Louisiana Irises for \$10 per person with a 3-hour credit from 2:30-5:30 P.M. at Grandy's 3201 Texoma Pkwy., Sherman, TX. This is hosted by Texoma Rainbow Iris Society with Judy Schneider as the contact person. Her address is 1778 CR 107, Whitesboro, TX 76273, telephone 940-594-5557, or e-mail gilkapps@hotmail.com



ISA Website: http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa_index.html

AIS CONVENTION TO BE HELD
MAY 25-27 IN IOWA

Rhythm of the Prairie, the 2017 American Iris Society Convention, will be held in the Des Moines, Iowa with registration beginning on or before January 31, 2017 for \$250, February 1–March 15 for \$275, and after March 15 for \$325.



Partial Convention Registration includes the following:

Welcome Reception \$45
Non member \$55

2 Day Garden Tour to 5 gardens \$150 for AIS members and \$200 for non members
Awards Banquet \$45
Non Member \$55

Mail your check for registration to Kristin Jurik, 5658 195th Street, Ames, IA 50010 E-mail k.jurik@yahoo.com

For the Geek Dinner contact Joanne Pries Jones (joanne@usjoneses.com). The cost is \$35.

Kelly Norris is the 2017 Convention Chair. His e-mail is kellydn@frontiernet.net while his telephone number is (515) 777-2356. Co-Chair is Gary White

Information for the Convention Headquarters is Des Moines Marriott Hotel, 700 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309 Phone: (515) 245-5500 E-mail desmoinesmarriott.com

Garden tours will be Thursday and Friday. The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden will be featured as well as the Iowa Arboretum and 3 high-quality private gardens with over 2200 guest plants of 605 varieties.

LET THERE BE BLOOM!



'My Friend Jonathan' – 11-18-2016
Ellen Singleton



'Sky Hooks' – 11-27-2016
Donna Little



'Above the Rim' – 12-07-2016
Ellen Singleton

HONEY BEES AS POLLINATORS

Did you know that most of your food has been pollinated by honey bees? Hundreds of crops valued at billions of dollars can be harvested because bees have had an integral part of pollination necessary for production of fruits, nuts, berries, vegetables, and grains. These insects also produce the only natural food that humans use on biscuits and in cooking and baking. Honey bees also produce propolis, the material they use to seal honeycomb cells, that has antifungal and antimicrobial properties that has been used by humans in natural medicine since biblical times. Even now, researchers have extended its use in treating cancer and burns. Beeswax, another product, is used in candles and cosmetics.

Bees have a queen that serves as the epicenter of the hive. After being bred by male drones, the queen can lay up to 2000 eggs a day. Female worker bees living in this complex society make honey and contribute to the health and survival of the colony. When a worker bee finds a plant or tree covered with clusters of tiny flowers, she performs a dance that communicates precisely where others will find the food. These workers live for about 6 weeks — sometimes longer if their duty is to cool or heat the hive to 94 degrees, a temperature that enables bees to thrive as they produce 74 pounds of honey from each hive each year. According to local beekeeper John Swan of Wicked Bee Removal Service the bees must have a hive of honey or sugar water left for them in times of drought or even when the weather brings rain and dreary days to Central Texas for weeks or the bees will starve.

Over the past years bee populations have declined due to a number of things, but even research is not conclusive about any one of the following: viruses, fungi, parasites (varroa mites), lack of pollen sources due to tampering with nature or even climate change.



Travis County Beekeeper John Swan

But the main culprit seems to be a group of pesticides referred to as neonicotinoids. One of the first introductions named imidacloprid was so highly toxic to the nervous system that bees forgot to return to the hive. This ingredient invaded the whole plant, tree, or flower — even nectar — affecting the well being of all creatures, great and small. See "Iris Borers, Bees, and Pesticides" by Tim Moore from Minnesota in *Tall Talk* Fall Issue 2016 on page 13.

Some plants that provide pollen and nectar for bees include Mexican Buckeye, Mexican Plum, Mountain Laurel, Texas Redbud, Anacua, Kidneywood, Buttonbush, Bee-brush, groundcover such as frogfruit and horseherb (see *Iris Austin Newsletter* for November 2016) Also salvias, mallows, rockrose, coneflower, mistflower, aster, frostweed. Keep some of these blooming even during drought for bees, and water very early in the morning once a week so that the plants can make more nectar. Do not purchase flowering plants that have been treated for insects. You will be killing aphids, but you will be killing all insects including pollinators that provide good tasting food for your enjoyment.



MINUTES OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

November 8, 2016

The meeting was called to order and presided by Donna Little. Minutes from last month's meeting were approved as presented in the ISA Newsletter. Welcome to our returning member Debbie Hood and her friend Katherine Gifford and Shelia Senghas' friend Kim Gass! We hope to see you all in the future.

Announcements:

David Kramer has some older issues of LA IRIS magazines. Let him know if you are interested in some of these.

Ellen Singleton attended the AAGC meeting for ISA – check the website for future dates of Zilker activities. Ellen also requests that any plastic 1 gallon pots you may have go to replenish her supply since she has been graciously potting up iris for our sales. Shelia Senghas also reminded everyone to put in and record your volunteer hours.

Treasurer's Report:

There was no Treasurer's report this month.

Austin Iris Club business:

- ▶ Donna Little announced that this year's ISA Show Chair is Shelia Senghas. This year Shelia is asking for any new ideas for our show to make it a success for all ISA members.
- ▶ ISA will host a judge's training January 14,

HORTICULTURE TIP

Since the rain, weeds are a major problem in some gardens. After removing the new growth of weeds and any debris from the irises, feed them for bigger blossoms that you can bring to the show. On February 18 at Zilker Botanical Garden a Rose Workshop will be held for those who have roses among the irises. The Orchid Society Show and Sale will be held February 11 and 12 from 10 until 4 in the Austin Area Garden Center.

2017 (8am – breakfast, 9am class) on English Boxes and Collections. This will count towards 2 hours of training and will be led by Debbie Strauss. Location: Ross Hall at the Westlake Presbyterian Church.

- ▶ Membership dues for 2017 are due. Membership fees \$12 Individual and \$18 Joint are being collected by Jaime Hadley.

Important Dates:

- ISA Meeting – Tuesday January 10, 2017 at Zilker
- January 14, 2017 – ISA Judges Training (English Boxes and Collections)
- 2017 AIS Show – April 8th, 2017 at Zilker
- 2017 Louisiana Iris Convention – April 20–22 Dallas, TX
- 2017 American Iris Society Convention – May 23 – 27 Des Moines, Iowa

The meeting program was presented Austin Bee Keepers' John Swan. What a great presentation about our good friend the honey bee! Find your closest local source of honey from RealTexasHoney.com.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dara E. Smith, Secretary

Submitted for Approval on: January 10, 2017.

ELIZABETH IRENE MCVEETY HONORED WITH RETIREMENT PARTY

Liz McVeety, who was hired by the City of Austin on February 15, 1984, was honored with a retirement party December 14 at 2:30 P.M. She was a dedicated coordinator for the Garden Center and with her staff worked diligently to make Zilker Botanical Garden a glittering colorful gem in the heart of Austin. The Iris Society of Austin worked with her for many years in the development of the iris gardens. We will truly miss her.

REMINDER: It's time to renew our memberships. Please pay your 2017 dues at the January meeting — \$12 for an Individual membership; \$18 for a Joint membership.