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February 2018 — Vol. 27 #02



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



NEXT MEETING: FEBRUARY 13, 2018

6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Hospitality: Pot Luck

Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium

2220 Barton Springs Road

Austin, TX 78746

Program: Don Freeman – Preparing Garden
Soil for Irises

Specific Plans for Iris Garden

Nominating Committee Report

Spring Fest Cancellation: Discuss Iris Sale
and Display Show

Fleur-De-Gras – AIS - SLI Convention

April 8-14

Hilton New Orleans Airport Hotel

Kenner, Louisiana 70062

<http://group.hilton.com/American-Iris-Society>

1-800-872-5914 Extension 1

Registration:

Ken Fuchs

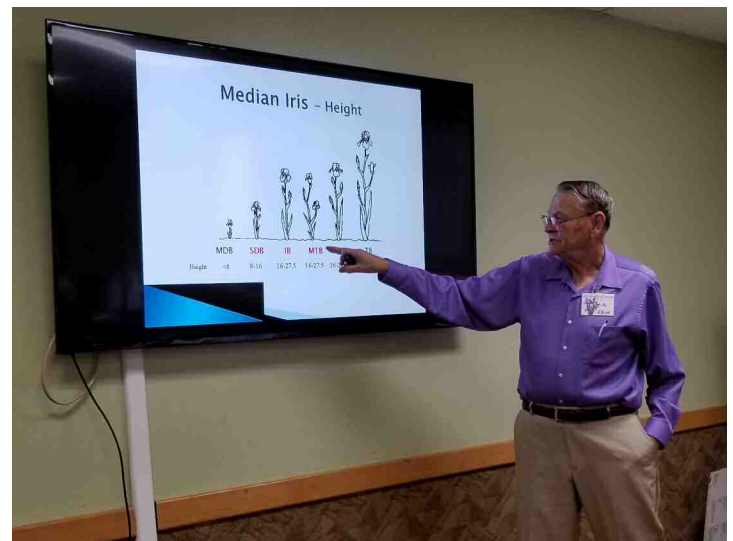
710 N 11th Street

Temple, TX 76501-3016

(254) 721-6217

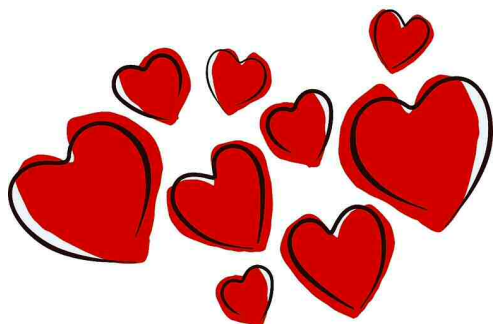
kenfuchs42@gmail.com

JUDGES TRAINING ON MEDIAN IRISES



Al Elliott from Georgetown presented an excellent program about Median Irises in Ross Hall of the Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church at 10 A.M. until Noon January 20 to excited members of the Iris Society of Austin. Al issued a handout listing Standard Dwarf Bearded, Miniature Tall Bearded, Intermediate Bearded, Border Bearded, Aril Medians, and Arilbred Medians and where they could be found in the Judges Handbook. With this on one side of the page, the sequence of Median Iris listed on the other side gave the height of each stalk and bloom width and how to measure the blossom from point to point. Underneath this information was their bloom sequence. This chart was very helpful at our fingertips.

The PowerPoint program was presented on a large-screen television that displayed the beautiful pictures of the median irises that Al had chosen that sometimes do well here. Members also told of their success in growing them in their yard and how they used them in their landscapes. Al also told about using the border bearded irises with pansies and



daffodils. He mentioned that these irises could withstand the strong winds of north Texas. The lance-like dark green foliage is useful in the mixed beds and in rock gardens.

Breakfast was served at 9 A.M. with staff arriving at the same time to serve coffee on this rather cool morning with sunshine at 11 for a few hours.



SDB Cook–Douglas Medal Winners



Open Your Eyes, Paul Black, 2010
2016



Bright Blue Eyes, Sutton, R. 2008
2017

Dara E. Smith was the member who registered the group.

Thank you to Ken Fuchs, who helped set up the television and also took pictures. Especially did we appreciate the good food. Marney Abel provided deviled eggs that were all consumed. Pigs in a blanket disappeared as did most of the fruit — pineapple, strawberries, grapes. Danish, cinnamon rolls, muffins, donut holes, and cookies were left over for taking home.

PUZZLED ABOUT THE IRIS GARDEN

Irises rejoice in any type of soil in the northern hemisphere, but they are distressed by pollution, weather, and climate change. Sometimes their number of chromosomes determines their success in blooming in today's world.

Nevertheless, the Iris Society of Austin is conducting a study of the soil in the new garden near Barton Springs Road in Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy. President Donna Little will bring the result of a soil test to the next meeting when members will decide what they will do to enhance the beauty of the area. Some of the irises have completely disappeared as a result of rot and mushroom growth by the rhizomes. A wet season and then the hot sun on the drip irrigation system probably cooked a few clumps.

When Nelda Moore dug rhizomes for the Iris Sale in her own garden, she discovered that this was not the year of the rhizome in Central Texas. While the foliage was great, many of the rhizomes were small and some of the clumps seemed to succumb to a natural death — old making room for the new increases. This was happening in other gardens.

Chuck Bunnell wrote in *The Medianite* (Spring 2017) that the number of gardens reporting on bloom had gone down again with only 14, while there were 19 in 2015. These gardens are in 11 states from coast to coast and 2 Canadian Providences. "For Standard Dwarf Bearded only 6 cultivars repeated in the top 15 with the top 3 spots occupied by 2016 newcomers. Arilbred Medians were the smallest group that people grew. All but 4 cultivars repeated in the top 15. The top 7 spots were cultivars from last year's top 15."

Washington had good snow cover during the winter of 2015-16 and the weather warmed up earlier than ever before. Bloom season came 18 days earlier than it had ever been in 37 years of the Karr's being in Newport. Zone 6 Their Iris Club cancelled its annual show due to the early bloom. 'Matador's Cape' SDB (Paul Black 2013) bloomed early. Then came astonishing increases. 'Soleil' IB (M. Smith 2011) bloomed for 4 weeks, 'Speckled Spring' MTB (S. Markham 2011) was a second-year plant that bloomed for 3 weeks, 'Flying Solo' BB (R. Tasco 2005) had great increase and was a great cut flower, 'Return to Aga' ABM AB (OGB) by R. Annand 2002 – Honorable Mention, 2004 Award of Merit 2006 bloomed earliest even before MDBs, then bloomed as long as the weather stayed cool. It also maintained its

leaves all summer.

Dell Perry from Plano, Texas Zone 8 said that the weird winter played havoc on all bloom but probably affected the medians the most. She had non-blooming TBs bloom in February. Something was blooming every month starting in September thru May. She also noted that only the aril and arilbreds seemed to know best what time it was. The MTBs were as confused as the SDBs with the diploids doing better than the tetraploids. 'Speckled Spring' (S. Markham 2011) was on time with heavy bloom but for a shorter time. Increase was above normal. The IBs were the best median performers. Her top choice is 'Coral Chimes' (J. G. Crump 2007). Summer was mild, no horrid 30+ days of blast furnace heat; plants look really good; above normal summer; rainfall brought on some abnormal rot — not smelly and takes out the mother rhizome, but not the pups.

Stephanie Markham of Norfolk, MA Zone 6 explained that weeds were blooming in February, but the cold and snow came in late March with April bringing a hard freeze that damaged the peach crop, every bloom, young leaves that were out, and affected irises so that some never bloomed at all. Other irises did not bloom normally. IBs bloomed very well. 'Star in the Night' (Paul Black 2009), 'Limonada' (K. Keppel 2007)

MTBs and BBs were affected by the freeze, but ABMs bloomed well.

HORTICULTURE

By February 14, a Candy Date, use Bone Meal or your favorite fertilizer without nitrogen to feed your irises in your own garden if you did not do this in September. If you have sent a soil sample to check what is needed in your soil, then follow the advice of the agriculture source. The irises have had some unusual weather since December 7th, the day it snowed. We have had freezing weather followed by near 70 degrees, giving all of us a day to weed the garden and clean the leaves and whatever came with the gusty winds.

On Weeding Wednesday all volunteers who worked December 13 dug the many irises in the Rose Garden in Zilker Botanical Garden. Ellen Singleton needs pots so please bring any that you have for the February 13th Meeting.

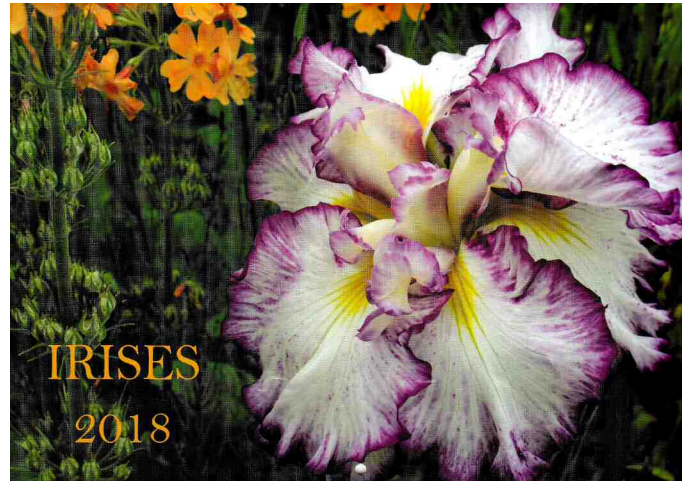
Donna Little and Ellen have planted several of these beautiful irises already, and they need help in planting and selling them. Some discussion about

places that we can explore include Farmer's Markets, Herb Society's Sale in Zilker Auditorium, and gardening activities here in Austin or the surrounding cities.

The next Weeding Wednesday will be February 14. Always bring gloves, garden shoes, sunblock, hat, and pruners. Times vary, but arrive by 10 A.M. and work until Noon.

Happy Gardening!

CALENDARS



Tracey Rogers still has several AIS Irises 2018 calendars for sale. The cost is \$5. The year is still young. Get your calendar at our next meeting on February 13.

SYMPATHY

The Iris Society of Austin extends deepest sympathy to Debra Strauss and her family on the death of her father Oma Ogle, 89, of Llano Friday night, January 19th. Debra did not want to miss being the instructor for Judges Training, but she stayed by her father's bedside in the hospital and he is now dancing with her mother, who died about 12 years ago.

PLANT SALE ON MARCH 10

The Iris Society of Austin, along with the Travis County Master Gardeners, the Austin Herb Society, and the Texas Bamboo Society, will have a plant sale in the Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium. The ISA will have a single booth (10' x 10') for selling potted irises.

MINUTES OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

January 9, 2018

The meeting was called to order and presided by Donna Little. The minutes from the November 2017 meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report:

The ending monthly balance for December 2017 was \$15,028.17.

AAGC Council Report:

There are many Spring 2018 events planned, check the Zilker calendar for event dates and times. There will not be a Garden Festival this year and instead, there will be a "Spring Fest" event on March 24th, 2018. The AIS will have a table and plans to sell the 300 pots of unknown irises that were dug out of the back bed of the rose garden.

2018 Show:

After a long discussion with the members that were present at the meeting we have decided not hold an officially sanctioned Iris Show this year. Carolyn Wylie made the Motion to Cancel this year's show. The voting was: No show = 16, Yes show = 1, Abstaining = 1.

Austin Iris Club business:

1. ISA will host a Judges Training with Al Elliot Saturday January 20th, 2018 at 9:00am at the Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church.
2. A Nominating Committee for new officers was appointed: Marney Abel, Neldo Moore, Ellen Singleton, Don Freeman. If you are interested in holding an office for the Society then please let the committee know.
3. In February, we will present a slate of officers and vote on this in March.
4. The next meeting is February 13th, 2018.
5. ISA membership dues were collected at the January meeting. Please get your dues in to Jaime Hadley.
6. Donna Little brought in pots of the "mystery irises" from the back bed that were given away.
7. Jim Landers presented the Silver Medal to Don and Pat Freeman for their achievement in last year's Belton Iris Society Show.

8. There was some confusion about whether the Austin Iris Society has agreed to any hosting duties for the Region 17 Convention. At this time, we were not officially committed to this event. Donna Little will contact Peggy Cathey and find out what the plans are. A motion was made by Ellen Singleton to not host a 2018 Region 17 meeting. This was seconded by Don Freeman and then the motion was tabled by Audrey Baker.

9. Next month there should be an agenda to discuss the current state of the front iris beds. And we will plan how to re-plant. Many of the plants have not survived the year and there are now lots of gaps.

Important Dates:

Iris Society of Austin – Next Meeting – Tuesday February 13, 2018.

AIS - SLI Convention in New Orleans, LA - April 8 - 14, 2018.

The meeting program was the discussions for whether or not to have a show and various other business for the society regarding board elections, Region 17 meetings, and the front garden bed iris plantings.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dara E. Smith, Secretary

[NOTE: The "Spring Fest" event on March 24th, 2018 has been canceled.]

The Johnson County Iris and Daylily Society has volunteered to host 2018 Region 17 Meeting in Cleburne. It will take place in August, but the specific dates have not yet been determined.]

'Fiery Echo' -
Sutton 2013,
blooming in
Ellen's garden
Dec. 1, 2017

