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August/September 2018 — Vol. 27 #08/09



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



Next Meeting:

Tuesday, September 4, 2018
Greene Room
Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Road
Austin, TX 78746

Pot Luck

Prep and price rhizomes for Sale

September 8 **RHIZOME SALE**

9 A.M. – 3 P.M.
Norris Conference Center
2525 West Anderson Lane
Austin, TX 78757

September 11

Austin Area Garden Center Conservancy
10 A.M.

JUDGES TRAINING IN AUSTIN JANUARY 19

Debra Strauss will bring her expert knowledge about growing and showing Space Age Irises to Austin as she returns to the Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church January 19 for Judges Training, which she calls “Out of This World Irises.”



This training for iris lovers will begin at 9 A.M. with breakfast and registration in Ross Hall. The cost is \$10. This special training is for anyone who needs hours to become a judge or for anyone interested in learning about these unusual irises that have appendages on the beards such as spoons, flounces, horns, or a ruffled clump reminding one of carnations. These bearded varieties are now included in the Novelty Section of the American Iris Society.

Marney Abel has made arrangements to have this Region 17 Training in Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, 7127 Bee Caves Road, Austin, TX 78746—4102. Contact her at telephone 512-330-9052 if you have any questions.

RHIZOME



IRISES ALONG THE CHISHOLM TRAIL
The 2018 Region 17 Meeting in Cleburne
by Tracey Rogers

Sixty-five iris lovers from all over Texas and beyond gathered in Cleburne August 3–5 for the 2018 AIS-Region 17 Meeting, hosted by the Johnson County Iris & Daylily Society.

As Ellen and I drove into the parking lot of the Hampton Inn, we were surprised to see David Kramer walking into the hotel. He was one of the nine members of the Iris Society of Austin who attended the annual Region 17 meeting. Austin was represented by Jaime Hadley, Dara Smith, Ellen Singleton, Jim Landers, Ken Fuchs, Tracey Rogers, Don and Pat Freeman, and David Kramer.

At registration, each attendee was given a unique goodie bag, a large brown paper sack with a wanted poster sticker where their name was written. Everyone also received the spuria 'Belise' provided by Dell Perry. Each bag came with a red or blue bandana, a sheriff's badge, snacks, a notebook, pen, pencil, a pin and an iris rhizome. Past the registration desk, was Mecca — a row of tables covered with rhizomes for sale at very reasonable prices: \$5 for irises hybridized after 2000 and \$3 for prior to 2000 plus a few rare recent introductions for \$10.



Photo by Tracey Rogers

Inside the main meeting room, the walls were lined with tables full of raffle and silent auction items. The coolest raffle items were birdhouses made by youth of various clubs in the region. The youth with the most tickets for their birdhouse would win a prize. The styles varied from the winning birdhouse with detailed pictures of irises designed by Debbie Strauss' grandson Aiden to the stone house with moss on the side. The designers were very talented. The winning birdhouse was won by Dara Smith.

Friday evening Region 17 RVP Peggy Cathey welcomed everyone to Cleburne and to the Meeting. She then turned the floor over to Jaime Hadley, who maintains the Region 17 Web Page. Jaime went online

and demonstrated how the web site works and how members can upload pictures and news articles to the web pages.

Friday night was pizza night followed by several rousing games of Bingo and you guessed it, prizes of irises. Each game was played until everyone had a bingo. With four games played, everyone got at least four free irises which host members of the Johnson County Iris & Daylily Society had dug at the 2013 Guest Garden in Cleburne.

Saturday morning judge's training was presented by



Anna Cadd, who hybridized spurias, Louisianas and tall bearded irises with her late husband David. It was a delightful presentation on spurias and the judging process. According to Anna people enjoy having judges come to see/judge their gardens as judges know so much. She apologized in advance to any hybridizers in the room if their flowers were shown as examples of a bad clump in her presentation.

She went over what to look for in spurias based on the point system listed in the judge's handbook while including personal stories of her own attempts at "fixing" plants to present on the show bench. While touching irises is discouraged when judging and viewing in gardens, Anna believes that sometimes it is necessary to touch to in order to judge the durability of an iris. If you feel you must touch, always ask the permission of the garden's owner.

At the afternoon Region 17 Business Meeting, RVP Peggy Cathey recognized several Region 22 members from Oklahoma, as well as incoming A.I.S. President Jody Nolin from Ohio. Then followed the usual reports including activity reports from all clubs present at the meeting. For the first time since I starting attending this meeting, the Piney Woods Chapter was represented. They do exist! The club reports are a great way to get ideas for programs and ways to increase membership. Using Instagram was brought up as a way to get millennials involved.

Attendees at the 2017 meeting in Dallas voted to form a committee to give a Distinguished Service Award for outstanding service to AIS and Region 17. Peggy

Cathey announced that Bonnie Nichols was the first recipient and Bonnie very emotionally thanked everyone for honoring her with this well-deserved award. Region 17 Membership Chair Bill Pittman from Amarillo presented Region 17 AIS membership awards as part of the Region 17 AIS Membership Recognition Program. Clubs are recognized for having 50% or more of their membership as member of AIS. Our club won a 2018 Bronze Medal Club Award for 60 percent membership. The afternoon ended with the live auction for



Photo by Brinda Mandell

rhizomes. This year's auction didn't get too heated. The majority of the rhizomes offered were from 2016-2018. Along with TB, LA, and SDB, there were a few Arilbreds and Spec-X.

For the evening banquet, a Mexican feast was provided. Anna Cadd was the speaker and gave a talk about how she came to America and her corner of the world in California. She showed over 1000 pictures but kept us entertained with stories of hybridizing and showing irises as well as the attractions in her town of Healdsburg, California including huge metal sculptures of pigs that move. Her warped sense of humor kept everyone entertained.

Special thanks to JCI&DS President Vickie Howard and her hard-working society members for organizing and putting on an outstanding, fun, and truly memorable Meeting.

PREPARING IRIS RHIZOMES TO SELL

During the spring bloom season those members interested in donating rhizomes for the September 8th sale in the Norris Conference Center tagged certain iris clumps that were too thick. At the end of August they will dig the irises, label each, and trim the foliage so that about 6 inches of leaves are left above the fleshy root that can also be trimmed, but never shaved of its roots. Then these irises are dipped in a mild Clorox-water solution to remove the soil and kill any virus on the plants. When these are completely dried in the sunshine, place them in a bag with the name and picture of the iris.

Bring the bag of irises to the meeting so that the

rhizomes can be priced to sell.

If the irises are not named, please bring them to the meeting. If you know them by color simply label the bag with "Unknown Blues" or whatever the color they were when they bloomed.

To prepare your new garden dig deeply, turning the soil, add some compost and bone meal, and then plant newly purchased rhizomes that are labeled. Be sure that the bearded irises receive at least 6 hours of direct sun. Plant the irises so that the rhizomes are slightly below the soil surface. Keep them 12 to 24 inches from each other. If planted too deeply, bearded irises will grow leaves, but may not produce flowers. Never use manure as fertilizer because the same thing can happen. Phosphorus is the main ingredient used to promote blooms and good root growth; but do not use triple phosphate as it is too strong and will cause rot problems. Then fertilize again on February 14th and again on Mother's Day.

Water deeply no more than once a week unless it rains after you plant the rhizomes. These irises are drought-tolerant, but sometimes during drought the plants need some watering or soaking. Avoid overhead watering so that leaf disease will not spread from plant to plant. If these irises are overwatered, they are susceptible to bacteria soft rot and fungal leaf spot infections. For soft rot if you paid more than \$15 for a rhizome, you may want to remove the rhizome, cut out the rot, and add Ajax or antibacterial cleanser or powder. We have used antibacterial dishwashing soap, but some ingredient now is found in our water supply.

HORTICULTURE At Home by Nelda

It was 100+ degrees for days and the iris rhizomes were covered with dried leaves and debris while the tips of the foliage turned brown. I had to improve this landscape before the rains set in; therefore, in the cool of the morning and in the shade of the evening I worked to stuff bags with dead foliage and cut brown tips. In September when I finish, I will sprinkle fertilizer around each plant without getting it on the plant itself. Then I will water this bone meal or fertilizer in deeply.

The Louisiana Irises still have mulch over their rhizomes, but they were groomed and trimmed, watered, and re-labeled. These will have acid soil in September as they are heavy feeders. After this dry period the rain brought a welcome 1.7 inches and on July 9 rain came slowly all day. The landscape looks alive and well. Even the peony recovered. Its foliage is pretty like the beautiful iris sword-like leaves.

Reblooming irises have been fertilized 2 weeks after they bloomed. These have been watered more often. If

you purchase rebloomers, plant them together in a separate bed.

Spurias also need to be in a separate area and fertilized at least 3 times per year with rose food. Most of the dead or dried foliage has been cut since these plants are dormant. They will return when cool weather returns in the fall. Spurias also need to be in a separate area and fertilized at least 3 times per year with rose food. Most of the dead or dried foliage has been cut since these plants are dormant. They will return when cool weather returns in the fall.

MINUTES OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN May 8, 2018 by Dara E. Smith

The meeting was called to order and presided by Donna Little. The minutes from the March and May 2018 meetings will be published in the newsletter for future approval.

Treasurer's Report:

The ending monthly balance for April 2018 was \$14,280.94. There was a recent order of \$800.00 to purchase rhizomes for our sale in the

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. There will be a fundraising event "Starlight Social" Thursday April 12, 2018 6p - 9p.

Austin Iris Club business:

1. Nelda Moore presented a very nice letter from the Hondo Garden Club recognizing our society and especially the dedication and contributions to their beautification project by our member Shelia Shengas. Thank you Shelia for all the hard work to bring irises to the public.
2. The installation of officers took place at the meeting:
President: Jaime Hadley
VP Programs: Marney Abel and Donna Little
Membership: Nelda Moore
Secretary: Dara E. Smith
Treasurer: Tracey Rogers
3. A motion to approve the proposed changes to the By-Laws was made by Tracey Rogers and seconded by Shelia Senghas. The motion was passed

unanimously. The proposed changes were regarding officer term limits and the details were passed out to all the meeting attendees.

4. Peggy Cathey has asked that everyone vote on the AIS ballot for your favorite top 25 irises. She will collect the ballots from everyone in our region and would like to have them by the time of the Region meeting. The list/ballot is available on the region website.

Important Dates:

- The Region 17 meeting will be August 3 and 4, 2018 in Cleburne, TX
- Next ISA Meeting - Tuesday September 4th, 2018
- ISA Fall Iris Sale - Saturday September 8th, 2018
- *Tentative ISA Spring Show - Saturday April 13, 2019
- AIS Convention April 23 - 27, 2019

The meeting program was on the Tall Bearded Iris Symposium and the 2018 AIS/SLI Convention Highlights.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dara E. Smith, Secretary

Submitted for Approval on: September 4, 2018.



Caring Thoughts

For Imre Eifert, who has been hospitalized since June with heart problems and now is trying to walk again.



Youth Bird Houses, photo by Brinda Mandella

IRISES ALONG THE CHISHOLM TRAIL

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