



IRIS AUSTIN

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin



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

WHEN WILL WE MEET AGAIN?

When the time was approaching to come together and work on the iris rhizome sale in September, Governor Abbot called for staying at home until December.

Have a safe Halloween — See the scarecrows at Zilker.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Merry Christmas!

Dues are due unless you paid for a dinner during the Iris Show and did not ask for your return of cash. Pay in January if the meeting happens.

Have you fed your irises for a great show next year?

Stay safe in these uncertain times!



The next century of the AIS begins

**Las Cruces
New Mexico
April 12-17**

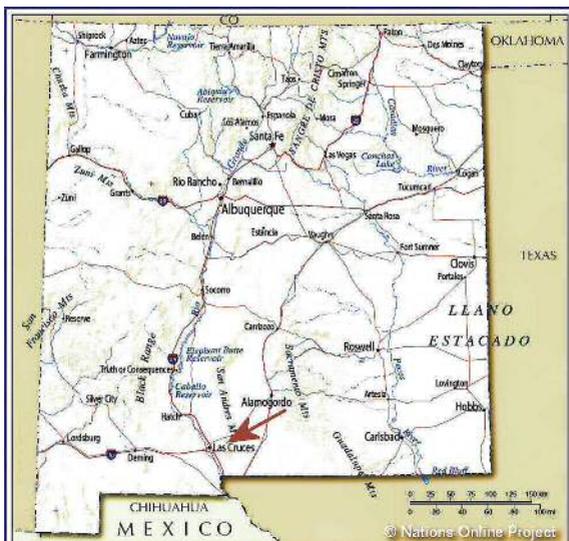
Las Cruces is the second largest city in New Mexico with over 100,000 inhabitants. It lies in the Chihuahua Desert and encompasses part of the agricultural floodplain of the Rio Grande. It extends eastwards towards the Organ Mountains which is the largest geological feature visible. This area is known for excellent Mexican food. The state question is “red or green?”.

Old Mesilla which will be the location of the dine-around was well known in the “Wild West” era. The area attracted such figures as Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett and Pancho Villa. The village was also the crossroads of Butterfield stagecoach, mail, and trade routes. La Posta restaurant occupies the stables and hotel for the Butterfield Stagecoach.

Learn more about Las Cruces, the crossroads of Hispanic, Indian and American cultures at:

<https://www.newmexico.org/places-to-visit/regions/southwest/las-cruces/>

Source: Region 23 website



IN SYMPATHY: IMRE JANOS EIFERT



Imre Janos Eifert, a long time member of the Iris Society of Austin, served as an officer and attended meetings often while working as a librarian at the University of Texas as well as in the community garden. It was not until recently that he was admitted to a nursing home. There he still wanted to read about botany and irises.

Imre, who was born April 15, 1934, in Soltvadkert, Hungary, died in Lakeway August 14, 2020. As a young boy he was deeply interested in plants as he worked alongside his father. He had the same respect for rare wild flowers and animals that his father had. Imre was especially interested in the gentian family, but he also could identify all plants and grasses when the time came to weed the iris garden. When he was 13, he showed his father Aconitum, when he found a small colony of them. Then he began to collect cacti, some of which still grow in Hungary, where his two surviving sisters live.

His interest in botany lead him to Austria and then Germany, where he studied under Wilhelm Troll. On April 19, 1965, Imre arrived in Austin to work on a doctorate at the University of Texas. There he studied the Hoffmannseggio species and contributed to the Manual of the Vascular Plants of Texas 1970.

In 1978 Imre began working for the Texas libraries, cataloging foreign language materials since he spoke Hungarian, German, English, and Russian and could also file material in Japanese and Arabic.

His detailed obituary was written by Tom Wendt, Fernando Chang, and Jim Henrickson — all botany friends.

SEED POD LAMENT

'Jean Cayeux' had the biggest seed pods in May, when all of us would probably meet. It would be a time to show that every flower that bloomed on the heavy stalks had been pollinated by a bee. The saved seed pods began to get smaller and when the branches were taken in the car port, a squirrel decided to check out the pods. He examined them and found seeds. As he investigated these branches, he was like Ihabod Crane visiting a farmer's bounty with visions of animals and fowl on a dinner platter. It was truly a good year for iris blossoms. Irisarians now have visions of another wonderful bloom time with a great show at Zilker Botanical Garden. The rain and cooler weather give all of us renewed energy to feed and clean the garden.

It brings back memories of being at meetings and listening to background music while all of us enjoyed seeing irises dancing in the gentle breeze in far away gardens.

BECOMING A HYBRIDIZER

A Study of Irises in the Garden:

Since long ago irisarians wanted to hybridize an iris that they could name and introduce, some have tried, but their success was never published. What important groundwork should be taken so that the grass-like seedling would become an important introduction and not be taken to the compost heap?

Let's look at some successful Hybridizers:

David F. Hall knew that fine breeding stock rarely produced outstanding offspring in the first generation. The second generation usually showed marked improvement when these were bred back to their parents. He applied this line of reasoning to his breeding program of irises.

He noticed that pink irises carried orchid/lavender tones or were blends He selected 4 of the pinkest irises such as 'Aphrodite' and line-bred them selecting the best of each generation for further breeding.

The results were unacceptable so he started with a new group that had larger size, substance, and stems, but not as pink. Five irises for the second attempt to produce a pure pink were 'Rameses,' a pink and yellow blend, 'Dauntless' best red, 'W.R. Dykes' first large yellow and 'Morocco Rose' pink blend, 'Dolly Madison' pink and yellow blend.



In 1942 seventeen years later and 2000 seedlings later he had six pink irises with tangerine beards in his seedling patch. Four of these were named and introduced.



'Pink Sensation' 1947

He also gave a recipe for choosing a name for the irises. The name should be easily understood, easily spelled, easily pronounced, and euphonious. Look at its characteristics and choose a word whose connotation is fitting and suggestive of some characteristic of the flower. Use the Check List.

Joe Ghio received a catalog from Schreiner's –his mantra of hybridizing being in it. "Cross the best available to you." In 1954 twenty-eight named irises bloomed. If you want green irises, cross yellow 'Ola Kala' from Jacob Sass and 'Blue Rhythm' by Whiting.



Joe Ghio in the garden

George Sutton walked through a mall in Ukiah, California in the 1970's and admired the iris show. When he finally left, he had free rhizomes, culture instructions, and all the advice he needed to become a successful grower. Since he lived near Monty Byers, he was also influenced by his friend. George concentrated on reblooming irises and space agers. He and his wife Margaret were instrumental in creating the Porterville Iris Festival. From Porterville, California his son Michael moved to Star, Idaho, where he works 20 acres of stock. He is also surpassing his father with cultivars and awards.



In 2004 George Sutton was the guest speaker at the Region 17 Meeting in Austin hosted by the ISA.

HOW TO POLLINATE AN IRIS

1. Check the garden for blooms. In the early morning force the female parent or flower to open by unfurling the bud. Break off the falls with the beard so that the bees can not get inside the flower, where you will remove the anthers with a tweezers.
2. Take the anthers indoors and place them pollen side up on a piece of paper. Dry for at least 6 hours. During this time the stigmatic lips are allowed to loosen while the stigmas become receptive.
3. Then each lip is pollinated by applying pollen on a brush or paper and placing it under the lip and style.
4. The pollen grains germinate on the stigma and start to grow tubes into the tissue of the styles. These tubes grow into the ovary where they contact the egg cells. Two male germ cells present in each pollen grain are borne downward inside the germ tube and into the egg cell. One male cell

fertilizes the egg cell. The second male germ cell unites with endosperm forming nucleus within the egg cell. The embryo forms the seedling.

5. Label the pod parent X the pollen parent and date on the tag of the iris. Enter this match in a journal and watch the progress for about 3 months.
6. When the pod is still green, the seeds can be planted immediately in a plastic pot that contains decomposed manure and sand or sterile mixture of soil. Keep the soil moist and shaded.

PREPARING A POLLEN BANK

Always store pollen by placing the dried pollen off the anther into a small dry 1 ounce bottle. Label with name of iris and date and close the bottle with a wad of cotton. Do this with several anthers from other irises until you can insert these bottles in a screw cap larger container with some silica gel desiccant. Place this jar in the refrigerator. The pollen should be viable for a full hybridizing season.

BEAUTIES IN NELDA'S YARD LAST SPRING

