



# IRIS AUSTIN

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin



Nelda Moore, Ken Fuchs, Editors

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ISA Website: [http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa\\_index.html](http://www.kenfuchs42.net/isa_index.html)

Next Meeting: ? ? ? ? ? ? ?



On Sunday, June 27, 2021, Patty Reeh sent the following message:

I am bearing some sad news.... Leonard, Pauline's son called me this morning to let me know she passed away on Friday, June 25.

He said they will be having a memorial service/mass at a later date and will keep



## IRIS AUSTIN RHIZOME SALE SEPTEMBER 11



The Iris Society of Austin invites you to its rhizome sale Saturday, September 11, from 9 A.M. until 3 P.M. in the Norris Conference Center, 2525 West Anderson Lane in Austin, 78757. Located next to WalMart and Burnet Road off MoPac, the building is near restaurants. Each person will want to be safe and follow guidelines concerning the pandemic that closed Austin for over a year. Ellen Singleton, president and co-chair of the Rhizome Sale, encourages you to come early for shopping for the irises since the rhizomes usually sell out by the early afternoon. Tracey Rogers, treasurer and co-chair, will arrange the irises by color to make shopping an enjoyable event.

ISA members will be on the floor to assist first-time buyers by answering questions about tall bearded iris, Louisiana iris or water iris, and spurias — the three types of irises that grow well in Central Texas.



Most of the rhizomes are grown locally as tried and true cultivars. Some have come from Sutton's Iris Garden located in Idaho and other hybridizers including those in Texas.

## PROCEDURE TO DONATE IRISES

The Iris Society of Austin will not meet in September to groom and price iris rhizomes; therefore, please do the following:

Send a list of the iris that you as a member will donate to the sale to Ellen Singleton by e-mail [iriswede51@yahoo.com](mailto:iriswede51@yahoo.com) or telephone her – 512-496-9602.

Write the name on the taller leaf so that the new owner of the plant can read its name to make a plot plan of the garden where they plant the rhizomes.

Bring the bags of rhizomes Friday evening or by 9 A.M. to the Norris Center.

Mark the price on the rhizome near the name of the iris. Rhizomes will be \$8 or if you have a large rhizome and you think that it can sell for \$10, then mark that price on it.

Ellen will have a picture of the iris, the hybridizer, the date of introduction, and a description of the iris to pin on the bag.

## DIVIDING AND PLANTING



Clumps of irises need dividing to keep them healthy and blooming in the amended soil. Note the cultivar that you are removing and place the name on the iris or on the bag of these irises to work on them later. These rhizomes should be placed in a bleach water solution to remove every piece of dirt that still clings to the roots. Then trim the foliage so that you form an upside down “V.” Allow the rhizomes to dry before placing them in a grocery bag. You may trim off some of the roots, but do not shave them off or you will set the rhizome back so that more time will be used to grow the iris to bloom again. The rhizome holds the food while the foliage eventually nourishes the food supply before the iris goes dormant.

Plant the rhizome by digging two holes side by side. Place the roots by spreading them with some in each hole and the rhizome over the mound of soil in

the middle. Then cover lightly with soil. Water the iris deeply. Never sprinkle the garden. Instead water thoroughly and allow the garden to dry before watering again. These rhizomes of bearded iris are fed bone meal at Labor Day or September and in February.

For Louisiana irises unwrap the rhizome and discard the wet newspaper and the plastic baggy that has the name attached with rubber band. Plant the rhizome in the wettest part of the garden, placing it below the soil about 2 inches. Never let the soil dry completely. Feed these water irises with azalea food or acid soil. These can grow near a pond.

Plant spurias in a separate garden or behind bearded irises since these plants are the tallest irises. These irises go dormant after they bloom. They can be cut down in July. Rain during the summer is all they need until cool weather brings them back to life. These are fed rose food and then watered when needed while they grow.

Remember that these irises, like fruit trees, need a certain amount of freezing days to produce bloom. They love the cold weather and they, like roses, need a certain amount of sunshine each day. Louisiana irises can grow in some shade and do quite well.



snow & ice



The Polar Express from the north in February '21 lasted a week with temperatures as low as 6 degrees. Irises in pots froze to death along with tropicals that were covered. This was unusual weather for us! It was a new experience! The nurseries are happily trying to keep up with supplies for new landscapes.

## THANK YOU'S

Thank you to Don and Pat Freeman for the many iris rhizomes that were planted in Zilker Botanical Garden that came from their gardens in Sunshine Garden. Don Freeman worked on planning the iris gardens in Zilker as well as getting down on his hands and knees and weeding them. He is truly missed since his untimely death.



Thank you to Sunshine Gardener Mary Gifford for watering those cultivars in the rented garden in north Austin.

Thank you to David Kraemer, Susan Kraemer, Jaime Hadley, and Dara Smith, who have spent many hours digging, cleaning, grooming, planting, and identifying these cultivars. According to David help was also provided by Kathy Petheram, Walter Kuhl, Polly Porter, Jimmy Schnider, James Willman, John Brazil, and other friends and gardeners. David especially wishes to thank Ida Falvey, a Master Gardener, and Terry Garcia for their diligent work in Zilker Iris Garden, where they weeded the beds and kept the irises blooming for all to enjoy. David emphasized that other members of The Iris Society of Austin are needed for the job of keeping the gardens as Don Freeman did.

To everyone who has worked like Don the Iris Society expresses its heartfelt THANK YOU and we look forward to meeting and working together as we once did a long time ago. Thank you, David, for writing those beautiful letters and then sending the card and information.

## BAD NEWS FROM DRY CREEK GARDEN



Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park Garden, Union City, CA, 2019  
AIS National Convention – Photo by Dara Smith.

Kathy Petheram shared this disturbing message from her daughter Bonnie in California on July 10, 2021:



Jeff Bennett – Photo by Jim Landers

From Jean Richter –

I am very sorry to deliver this bad news. I met with Jeff Bennett last evening and he informed me of what happened at Dry Creek Garden last weekend. A person (or persons) somehow entered the bearded iris area (no fences, chains, or locks were disturbed). They stole most of the recent iris plantings, including the 2022 regional guest iris, Mt. Diablo Iris Society door prize iris, and numerous personal iris of Jeff's. Jeff estimates that 500 varieties were taken (without their name tags). A police report has been filed, but as you can imagine it will be difficult if not impossible to identify a culprit.

We are still in the process of deciding what to do going forward, and as soon as any decisions and plans are made I will inform you. Next year's spring regional will still be held, though unfortunately not with two-year clumps of newer iris for participants to enjoy.

I am devastated by this news, and I can only imagine what it must be like for Jeff, who has worked so hard for so many years to make the iris garden at Dry Creek such a special place.

Onward,  
Jean