

IRIS AUSTIN
NEWSLETTER OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN
An Affiliated Society of the American Iris Society in Region 17

FEBRUARY, 2007

VOL. XVI, NO. 1

NELDA MOORE, EDITOR

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MEETING: FEBRUARY 13
7:30 P.M.
ZILKER AUDITORIUM
2220 Barton Springs Road

**IRIS SHOW TITLED "FUN IN
BLOOM" FOR APRIL 7**

HOSPITALITY

Pat Byrne: assortment of
luncheon meat, lettuce,
tomatoes, bread, pickles

Ken Fuchs: something

Charlie and Sonja Hensley:
veggies and dip

Helen and John Kinnamon:
cake

Ashley and Lila Lewis:
drinks and ice

Patty Reeh: something else

**F. W. MC VICKER CHAIRS
NATIONAL CONVENTION
IN OKLAHOMA CITY
APRIL 30 - MAY 5
MARRIOTT 3233 NORTHWEST
EXPRESSWAY, OKLAHOMA
CITY 73112 (405) 842-6633**

REGISTRATION: ONE PERSON BY
MARCH 1--\$180; BY APRIL 1--\$205;
AFTER APRIL 1--\$230.

REGISTRAR: Betty Lou Mc Martin,
8904 NW 80TH ST., OKLAHOMA
CITY, OKLAHOMA
73132-4013
TELEPHONE: (405) 728-9839.
E-MAIL: LULU245@SBCGLOBAL.NET

WWW.OKIRIS.ORG

Pat Byrne and Marney Abel have begun preparations for the accredited show sponsored by the Iris Society of Austin in co-operation with the American Iris Society. This annual event will be held in the Zilker Botanical Garden Auditorium from 1-4 P.M. April 7.

A show schedule has been submitted to the A.I.S. Exhibitions Chairman for approval with rules for the following divisions: horticulture including seedlings; artistic design; educational exhibits; commercial exhibits; and youth awards.

No admission is charged; therefore, the iris enthusiast can study the blossoms and make a wish list of favorites which might be available for purchase at the Iris Sale on September 8.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

___Al and Sieglinde Aufforth have recently joined the Iris Society of Austin from Sun City in Georgetown, where they have planted many irises in the community garden. These plants had belonged to former member Rita Snyder. They would like for visitors to enjoy their labor of love.

Marney Abel—President

Opening remarks and welcomed everyone back after the holidays. Thanked all those who attended the judge's school in the morning.

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted as written.

Pat Byrne—Treasurer No activity since the last meeting.

New Business—Zilker Garden Festival of March 31 and April 1

- Members in good standing get 2 tickets. The Iris Society will have to pay for the tickets that were allocated to them so it is better that the tickets are sold. Advance tickets are \$3; admission at the gate will be \$5. Please take some tickets and try to sell them to your friends and neighbors. If you do take tickets, please bring the money as soon as possible.
- To have or not to have a booth at the Festival—that is the question
 1. Nelda has reserved an educational booth for the Iris Society. This booth will not have a rental charge. At this booth we can have printed materials about the society and about the 2008 convention. If we sell any items at this booth the profits are split 80% for AAGC and 20% Iris Society.
 2. The other option is to rent a booth. It will cost \$140 if we reserve it before February 1 or \$160 after.

The group decided there were enough volunteers to man a booth. The decision was to keep the educational booth and use this as an opportunity to recruit new members and pass out information about the 2008 National Convention hosted by the Iris Society of Austin.

Nominating Committee—Pat Freeman and Helen Kinnamon will be looking for folks to fill the following positions: Program Chair, Newsletter Duties, Sale Chairman—Nelda Moore volunteered for Sales

2007 Iris Show—April 7, 2007

- Pat Byrnes is the Chairman and Marney Abel is the Co-Chairman
 - Don Freeman and Mike Renfro will do Staging
 - Pat Freeman will have the Artistic Division
 - Sonja Hensley will find and train Clerks
- A discussion was held that this is a good opportunity for new members to learn about irises.
- Hospitality for the Show—Lila Lewis volunteered to line up catering for the lunch.
 - PR—Nelda Moore

MEETING PROGRAM—QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1. How do you keep deer from digging up the rhizomes? The group offered several creative suggestions.
2. What causes an iris to have a short stalk and large bloom? A lively discussion followed and the question morphed into pineapppling, a virus that can be somewhat controlled by removing the affected iris or watering it with compost tea.
3. How do you get rid of weeds? Mulch
4. How do you amend or neutralize alkaline soil? Sulfur (agrasul), pine needles
5. Planning to move in February—should we dig up the iris now and put in pots or should they wait and dig when ready to move? If you want bloom this year, dig them now and put them in pots.
6. Newly planted irises do well the first couple of years then fade away. What can be done? Dig them up and amend the soil. Or it could be that it is a variety that does not like the area.
7. Can you still grow irises in a bed that is in the shade Dec./Jan.? Might be advantageous. Try and see. Experiment.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Reeh, Secretary

RENEWAL

BY CAROLYN GIFFORD

The hot, stifling days of summer took their toll on our garden this year. The survivors are ones left from the hail that wiped out the bloom in March just before the show in 2005. As I pulled away the brown leaves that gathered in the beds from the neglect, I spotted a bud, a yellow bud. I watched it slowly open due to cool fall nights until two blooms burst forth. It's Thanksgiving Day. Yellow is the color of health and should always be given to those who are ill. We are thankful to be given a sign of encouragement on this fitting day for blessings remembered. Thank you "Corn Harvest" for the moment of happiness.



HOLIDAY BAZAAR IN PICTURES
(Photos by CAROLE MECKES)



Santa visits the bazaar

Below---

Council President Dr. Laura Joseph
with Garden Club of Austin plants



LORETTO
HEIGHTS

FEED IRISES IN FEBRUARY

Do clean the iris garden and fertilize around the iris rhizomes. Since the ice storm of January 15, 16, and 17, the garden may have fallen twigs, ball moss, and leaves. Gently pull away the dead foliage from the iris plants and clean the center of the iris clump.

To fertilize use super phosphate or bone meal for bearded irises. Use azalea or acid fertilizer on Louisianas. Since these water irises are heavy feeders, try some super phosphate at intervals. Spurias need a well-balanced commercial mix or rose food.



Glamour Pants

WEB-SITES TO VISIT: www.irisarian.com www.zilker garden.org
aislibrary@molalla.net or mail to TRACY PLOTNER, P.O. BOX 250,
MOLALLA, OR 97038-0250

JAPANESE WATER IRIS CULTIVATION

By David Lewis Steed, Ph.D.

The Japanese water iris is believed to have developed solely from a single species, *Iris ensata* (syn. *I. kaempferi*), (Section *Limniris*, Series *Laevigatae*). Wild *I. ensata* occurs on all the larger islands of Japan in bogs, mountain meadows, marshes, the banks of lakes and streams, and among rice paddies. *I. ensata* has been cultured in Japan for over five centuries but may have originated in China. A Japanese garden manual from 1694 described eight varieties of *I. ensata* but by 1799 there were hundreds of cultivars, including many double-flowered varieties. The traditional Japanese classification system was loosely based on the geographic origin of the progenitor plants (varieties), each being assigned to an original group such as Edo (Tokyo, in central Honshu), Ise (Kobe, or southern Honshu), Higo (the southern island, Kyushu), or the oldest group Nagai (northern Honshu). Local hybridizers closely guarded their seed stock and their wild-collected variants. Traditional means of display for both potted cultivars and gardens were fostered during the nineteenth century. *I. ensata* cultivars were first imported to the U.S. during the first quarter of the 20th Century.

Being from the beardless group, the rhizomes of *I. ensata* and its cultivars require continuous moisture and should be maintained beneath the surface of the soil. The roots are fibrous—not fleshy. The leaves are a dark, rich green with a strong midrib and longitudinal veining evident to the eye. Leaves attain a height of over three feet and the flower stalk may be as tall as 4 feet. In our area blooms appear from late spring into early summer, always later than iris from the bearded group (except for the rebloomers). There are one to several blooms per stalk—plants bearing a single bloom were specifically selected for among certain culture traditions (Higo group) in Japan.

Modern cultivars of *I. ensata* may bear little resemblance to the species, some with blooms measuring six to ten inches across. The 3 falls may be arching, upward, pendant, flat (circular), or claw form (curved upward). There may be 6 or more

Continued on next page-----



I. ensata "Azuma-Kagami"



(Japanese Iris Continued)

falls in some varieties (suggesting polyploidy). Standards are quite variable but are very reduced (sometimes to a mere spike) and may be erect, depressed, or drooping. In some varieties the standards may be horizontal supplementing the falls as apparent petals and contributing to a flat, circular appearance when viewed from above. The large to nearly absent signal may be almost green grading to pale-or deep-yellow and is surrounded by a halo grading into the lighter color of the falls. The tepals may be a great diversity of colors and shades including blue, violet, purple, pink and white. There is no yellow in the falls except at the signal. Descriptors often used for patterns of coloration include:

- washed—one or more colors on top of another,
- marbled—several colors mixed and swirled,
- sanded or brushed—a scattering of small dots or broken lines,
- splashed—one color overlaid by another or a combination of colors,
- mosaic—one color overlaid by another or more than one color in a coarse pattern,
- mottled—blotches of different colors as if stained.

Plant *I. ensata* rhizomes from October through February (USDA ZONES 4 TO 9) three inches deep and 1.5 feet apart in a rich, moisture-retentive soil with a high per cent organic content. Plant in full sun except in our area where late afternoon shade should be provided during the hottest months. Continuous soil moisture can be maintained by planting on the bank of a pond or other water feature. If planting in pots (3 rhizomes per 12-inch

pot) these may be plunged in water to one-half the pot depth during growing season. Rhizomes need not be placed in flooded beds as often appear in photographs—this being a traditional mode of presentation during flowering. Pots should not be submerged and beds should not be flooded during fall and winter months. Pull pots from any water feature and pack fresh peat moss around the plant stems and bury the entire pot in a moist but not soggy soil until all danger of freeze has passed. Feed generously using a fertilizer formulated for azaleas or rhododendrons about a month in advance of flowering and again prior to fall root growth. The soil should be acid with a $\text{pH} \leq 6.5$ and $\text{pH} = 5.5$ as ideal. Given the limy soils and hard water in central Texas it may be difficult to reduce soil acidity to $\text{pH} \leq 6.5$ without using chemical additives. Begin with the incorporation of humus and peat and the application of one to 3 pounds agricultural sulfur per 100 sq. ft. then till to about one foot depth. Water in well and check the pH again in about three weeks (use a soil pH test kit!) and repeat the treatment if needed. Aluminum or iron sulfates are helpful in reducing soil or water pH: apply a mixture of one ounce per 2 gallons. Chelated iron products contained in fertilizers formulated for ericaceous plants are also helpful to reduce soil pH. Water generously during growing and flower seasons using only rain water or water from the faucet treated with about one tablespoon cider vinegar per gallon. Never apply lime, limestone or bonemeal and never grow in mortared beds or near concrete. If planted near a pond or in pots plunged in a water feature never incorporate limestone rocks or cement and always use the soil pH test kit.

ISA Members

XG C O D X Q H L T X U X H J N P C V I K K E W S G U L W U
 I T M J Q P M I I U S I W E L Y E L H S A I R R B M X V X O
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AshleyLewis	FlorenceFoster	KarenWeiblat	PaulineGuerrero
AudreyBaker	GuyGifford	KenFuchs	RachelHagen
CarolCanfield	HarveyWilson	LeeSchroeder	RogerIgo
CarolynGifford	HelenKinnamon	LilaLewis	SandySchroeder
CharlieHensley	ImreEifert	MarneyAbel	SonjaHensley
ClariceJames	JackCampbell	MaryAnnHolman	
DavidKraemer	JanetMurphy	MikeRenfro	
DebbieAnderson	JimLanders	NeldaMoore	
DebbieHood	JoannaVarner	PatByrne	
DonFreeman	JoeMelomo	PatFreeman	
DorothyCarroll	JohnKinnamon	PatriciaColacino	
EleanorHarris	KarelDanford	PattyReeh	