

# IRIS AUSTIN

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

An Affiliated Society of the American Iris Society in Region 17

AUGUST, 2011

NELDA MOORE, EDITOR

VOL. XX, NO. 7

## MEETING: SEPTEMBER 6

Greene Room  
Zilker Botanical Garden  
Auditorium  
2220 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, TX 78746

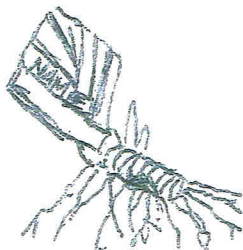
Hospitality—7 P.M.  
Business —7:30 P.M.  
Pricing Rhizomes for Sale



TB

RHIZOME SALE:  
SEPTEMBER 10  
Norris Conference Center  
Northcross Mall  
2525 W. Anderson Lane  
Austin, TX 78757

9 A.M.—2 P.M.

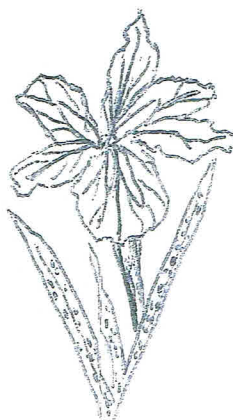


LA

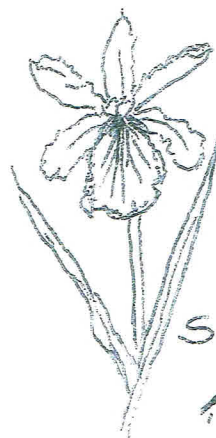
AUSTIN AREA GARDEN  
COUNCIL MEETING  
10 A.M. —Noon  
2220 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, TX 78746

SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

Debora Boyle, Council  
Representative for the  
Iris Society of Austin



LA



SPU

## MEMBERS TO SELL IRIS RHIZOMES SEPTEMBER 10

Members of the Iris Society of Austin enjoy growing, showing, and selling irises.

On September 10 they will open the doors to the public at 9 A.M. in the Norris Conference Center of the Northcross Mall in Building 3 located at 2525 W. Anderson Lane in Austin.

Tracey Rogers, Sales Chairman, has encouraged members to prepare the rhizomes for the Saturday sale and bring them to the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting for pricing. If members know what they will be bringing to the sale, please let Tracey know prior to the meeting, if possible, so pictures may be located. The sale includes bearded varieties, Louisiana irises, and spurias although the members have not brought any spurias to the last two sales.

Tracey has also purchased from the Norris Conference Center coffee, bagels, and assorted rolls for members to eat during their mid-morning break. No food can be brought into the center from other food vendors. A schedule will be set up for lunch breaks.

The sale will end by 2 P.M. if the society sells all of the rhizomes.



## **PREPARING IRIS RHIZOMES FOR THE SATURDAY SALE**

To prepare the iris rhizomes for sale, dig a huge clump and separate the individual plants. Wash them in a solution of water and a small amount of bleach. Then cut the foliage in an upside down "V," leaving about 5 inches of the foliage. Then staple a tag with the name of the iris or write the name on the center leaf near the tip. When these bearded irises are dry, store them in a flat box or in a paper bag.

Louisiana irises and Spurias, on the other hand, are kept moist. After digging the rhizomes, cut the foliage and trim the roots before wrapping the rhizomes in wet paper. Then insert the rhizome in a plastic bag held closed at the top with a rubber band. Clip the name tag to the iris or the bag. Keep these irises in a cool place or in the refrigerator, not the freezer, until time for the sale or for planting. Never place irises next to fruit in the refrigerator because the gases can affect the bud growth.

## **PLANTING BEARDED VARIETIES**

Bearded irises prefer a good garden soil in a sunny, well-drained raised area since they tend to rot if their rhizomes remain wet for a long period of time. The best way to prepare the soil is to dig 10 to 12 inches in the dirt before adding organic compost or aged manure or low nitrogen fertilizer such as bone meal. The pH should be 6.1 to 7.2. If the soil tests below pH 7 it is acid; soil testing above pH 7 is alkaline. Use aluminum sulfate or agricultural sulfur to change the alkaline soil or hydrated lime if the soil tests too acidic. (A cedar or juniper causes the soil to be acidic.)

When planting the rhizome, place the

plant on a ridge with space for the roots on each side. Then cover the rhizome with sandy loam. In heavier soil the top of the rhizome should be just above the soil level. Rhizomes should be at least 12 to 18 inches apart. Water thoroughly especially for the first week.

## **CARING FOR LOUISIANAS**

Louisiana irises are usually grown in full sun, but here in Austin in the summer these plants can thrive in some afternoon shade. If they are planted along the banks of a pond, they will not dry out. If they are grown in a container, the only holes should be at the very top, not in the bottom. These holes would allow rain water to spill out so that the rhizome will not have to stand in water that will attract mosquitoes. Always have enough soil in the container so that rainwater will not cover the very tops of the foliage or the plants will not survive for long.

The soil should have pH 6.0-7.5. Use finished compost, brown Canadian peat moss, alfalfa pellets, shredded leaves, sand, and soil. Avoid fresh grass clippings, fresh manures, sawdust or wood chips such as pine nuggets.

Louisiana irises are dug about every 2 or 3 years to avoid over-crowding. Never allow these rhizomes to dry out.

## **SPURIAS ARE THE TALL IRISES**

Spurias have a different rhizome that has some "wirey" features. These plants should have rose fertilizer mixed into the soil. Water them when they begin to grow in September, but do not water them when they are dormant. These irises, like Louisianas, are heavy feeders; therefore, fertilize them at least 3 times per year. These irises resemble exotic Dutch irises, but leave them in the same area year after year.



## **RHIZOME SALE MAKETH AN IRISARIAN**

Irisarians are those individuals who pay \$50 or more for an iris at an auction during a convention that they could have purchased from a catalog for \$25 plus shipping. These gardeners sometimes refrain from dining out for a year just to be able to purchase the irises that they had dreamed about during the winter when they perused iris catalogs.

If you are an irisarian who has dreamed about adding irises to your landscape, then buy locally-grown rhizomes from the Iris Society of Austin. After all, these irises are tried and true whether you like red or blue. They are ready for planting, and members will happily provide instructions for successfully caring for the different varieties. Members provide pictures and answer all of your questions as you select these bundles of joy. A person at a check-out table will sort your rhizomes by price—5 at \$10, 2 at \$1, and 1 at \$25–\$77 worth of irises without the cost of shipping and handling. Then to your surprise, the person will cheerfully offer a free iris for paying cash or, better yet, kindly provide a discount for your large purchase. Even if the free rhizome does not have a name, it may surprise you with a first-year bloom and be the very iris that you had dreamed about that had captured your attention during the winter.

The Iris Society also accepts Master Card or Visa if you do not bring enough cash.

Then someone near the exit will assist you in carrying your purchases to your vehicle.

Irisarians help future irisarians.

**THE IRIS SOCIETY OF AUSTIN  
NEEDS NEW MEMBERS,  
ESPECIALLY YOUTH MEMBERS!**

## **JULYE EVANS RELEASES CLUB MEETING DATES FOR 2012**

The Iris Society of Austin completed the form indicating the dates of each meeting and the times they wished to meet in the Austin Area Garden Center beginning in January 2012. According to Julye Evans the date of April 3 through 8 selected for the annual show is pending.

The following dates are reserved for the regular meetings:

January 10 Time in building 6:15-9:30

February 14

March 13

May 8

June 12

July 10

August 14

September 4

October 9

November 13

**NO DECEMBER  
MEETING**

Time of Meeting 6:30-9 P.M

## **AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY REGION 17 CONVENTION CELEBRATED IN CLEBURNE AUGUST 12 AND 13**

Austinites who attended the Johnson County Iris and Daylily Society's 25<sup>th</sup> year with its huge celebration during the AIS Region 17 Convention in Cleburne August 12 and 13 delighted not only in the activities but also in the slow rain that started Friday evening and lasted until Saturday about noon with a wonderful rainfall that left water standing in the streets.

Don and Pat Freeman, Joe and Nelda Moore, Danny and Sheila Senghas, Jim Landers, who serves as historian for the region, and Tracey Rogers all wandered out of the Cleburne Conference Center in a fine mist after a barbecue banquet with all of the homemade fixings by the wonderful cooks.

Saturday morning about 40 joined the Judges Training with Bonnie Nichols.

The afternoon fun included the business meeting, birthday celebrations with a beautiful cake for RVP Gordon Carver and his granddaughter Miss Harding, an exciting auction of Bearded and Louisiana Irises, and an evening catered dinner followed by a grand tour of the AIS Convention in Canada.

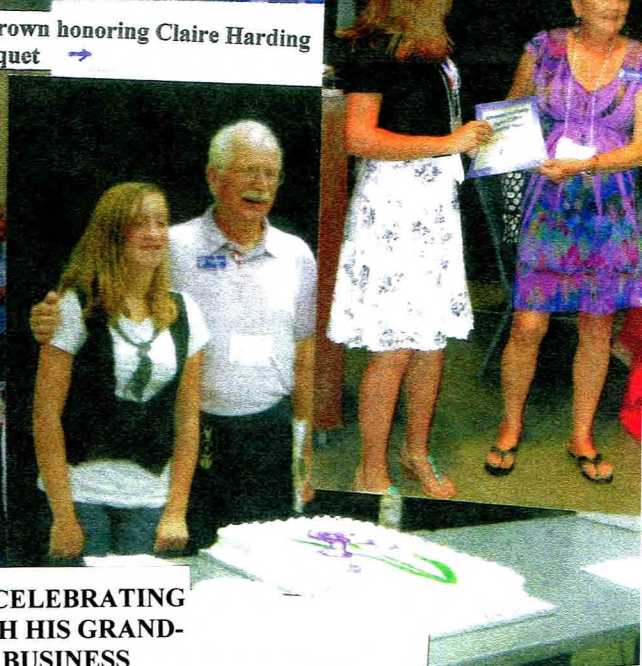




**JUDGES TRAINING**—tall bearded, broken color, and space age iris—presented by Bonnie Nichols in Liberty Hotel Meeting Room at the west end of the lobby. Don and Pat Freeman, Jim Landers, and Gordon Green. Mr. Lamb, Hooker Nichols, and Dell Perry.



Annette Brown honoring Claire Harding at the banquet →



**RVP GORDON CARVER CELEBRATING HIS 70<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY WITH HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER AFTER THE BUSINESS MEETING**

**TOM BURSEEN**, always the friendly hybridizer waiting to be honored for all of his great creations.



Shelia Senghas at the banquet. The beautiful centerpieces went home with the winners; therefore, every table was cleaned before 9 P.M.

