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June 2012 — vol 21 #6



A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



next ISA meeting >>>

Iris Society of Austin Meeting
Tuesday June 12, 2012
6:45 pm (gates close at 7:00)

Late? call 477-8672 ext 13

Zilker Garden Center
2220 Barton Springs Rd
Austin TX 78746

- Potluck Supper
- Business Meeting
- Planning for September Sale
- Planning for August Convention
- Stuffing Convention Bags

next AAGC meeting >>>

Austin Area Garden Council Meeting

No regular meetings in June, July or August

upcoming events >>>

July 10 – Convention Prep Meeting

August 3-4 – Reg 17 Convention

September 4 – Regular Meeting

September 8 – Rhizome Sale

Silent Auction Prep

Bring your items to the June meeting

Marney Abel, Pat Byrne, Nelda Moore, and Tracey Rogers met with Jeff Lewis in the Omni Hotel Southpark Thursday, May 10, to select the room for the Silent Auction. Of the two rooms shown, the planning committee preferred the carpeted room over the former bar area. It is located near The Oaks and the Onion Grill.

The group discussed selections from the menu to serve in the Hospitality Room Friday afternoon, as well as refreshments for the Saturday breakfast and Judging School.

Items for the Silent Auction should be brought to the June 12 meeting in the auditorium of Zilker Botanical

Garden. Please be prepared to suggest a price for each of your treasures. Some items have already been contributed. Nelda Moore presented Pat Byrne a box given by Keith and Margaret Smith. The huge wreath that Jim Landers brought with the iris pitcher and glasses from the Smiths is stored in Nelda's room.

All who contribute to the convention in any way will receive recognition by being listed on the program that will be created by Ken Fuchs.

Pat Byrne also received the beautiful bag that she created filled with the goodies in a Zip-Lock that Nelda showed during the May meeting

Your Officers

Your new slate of officers who will serve from June 1, 2012, through May 31, 2013 are:

President Marney Abel marneyabel@austin.rr.com ... 512-330-9052
VP Programs Donna Little donna@littleshouse.net 512-869-0683
VP Membership Ken Fuchs kenfuchs42@hotmail.com 254-773-5017
Secretary Dara Smith desmith@austin.rr.com 512-454-1430
Treasurer Pat Byrne patb1@consolidated.net 281-391-6190
Historian/Librarian Tracey Rogers rogers89@earthlink.net 512-280-4856

Good Culture Ensures Rebloom

Tips from our Region 17 Convention speaker, Mike Lockett

Encore Reblooming Azaleas debuted with considerable fanfare. Spring flowering hybrids were cross pollinated with a rare summer blooming variety to create hybrids capable of reblooming each fall in Hardiness Zones 7-10. Mid-Atlantic gardeners piled into local nurseries to try the latest flowering shrub innovation. The Encore lineup's fall flowering intensity varied according to variety. Selection and culture drove performance.

The late Dr. Lloyd Zurbrigg helped lead early bearded iris rebloom development. Twenty years would elapse before he released his widely grown tall bearded remontant, Immortality (Zurbrigg, 1982), a novel advance for its time. Gardeners sometimes struggled to find the right spot for it to flourish. Random planting was NOT a guarantee for success.

Later reblooming bearded iris introductions have shown marked improvement in flower and reliability. If colleagues used Zurbrigg's remontants in their lines their releases seem to overcome fickle weather conditions. Like the Encore Azaleas, rebloom activation in some selections was hard to pinpoint. Fall garden results are starting to reveal common denominators for some recent releases.

One major advantage with rebloomers is continuous growth. Unlike once-only bloomers, remontants will continue to grow and increase through the summer. Mature rhizomes are therefore achieved for fall flowering.

Supplemental fertilization and periodic watering after spring bloom help trigger rebloom.

The best fall rebloom in Central Virginia seems to occur after a few summer nights with temperatures shy of 60°F. After brutal heat in July and early August, cold relief fronts from Canada provide daily lows to help initiate eventual bloomstalk formation. Some past and recent introductions have exhibited the ability to rebloom without the above factor being present. The confusion can be very frustrating for novice gardeners trying reblooming iris for the first time.

One valuable piece of advice is to select the best varieties to try. As AIS Region 4 (West Virginia, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland) Reblooming Iris Chairman, I tabulate and report results each fall. AIS members can also take out a membership in the Reblooming Iris Society. Their newsletter, "The Rebloom Recorder", features yearly reporting from RIS Directors around the US and Canada. Common threads in the tallies do appear to guide selection. Findings have unearthed a number of exciting possibilities.

Eastern cool season remontants seem to do a good job growing in varied microclimates. The Mid-Atlantic's climate features extreme heat, suffocating humidity and freak freezes. Cultivars surviving these wretched growing conditions will likely adapt anywhere. Here are a few additional culture tips to aide success.

Modern bearded irises prefer well-drained soils. Heavy clay horizons should be modified with coarse grade builder's sand. Wet areas should always be avoided. Hard rock phosphate and green sand are dynamite organic fertilizer amendments for use at planting time. Unlike commercial fertilizers these organic formulations can persist in soils for years. Soil pH should range between 6.5-7.0. Mid-Atlantic soils tend to be acidic, so calcitic lime works well to correct this problem. Acceptable pH readings can also prevent bacterial soft rot outbreaks.

Texas has experienced a gut-wrenching drought over the past year. I, unfortunately, faced similar circumstances in my native New Jersey and now in Virginia. Poor civic planning has lead to mandatory water restrictions in some locales during each emergency. Lack of moisture can severely delay rebloom. I recommend once to twice a week waterings on reblooming iris plantings to aid fall flowering. Rhizomes can therefore mature to support bloom. Varieties with a mix of cool and warm season remontant parents may require sunlight change to fall flower. Results do vary by variety.

Rebloom breeding has now progressed to the point of obtaining performance despite any summer growing condition. Choices will be severely limited in the interim. If more AIS members try the best bearded iris rebloomers currently available and report results, there is still a good chance remontancy will continue to grow in popularity.

Cali-Zona Gold

Ken's thoughts continued from last month

Saturday offered the really special bus tour for us. The world famous Huntington Botanical Gardens at San Marino, CA, contain a variety of beautiful gardens and an exceptional conservatory, but beyond the flora, the other primary attraction is the art museums. We enjoyed a light continental breakfast before exploring the Guest Iris Garden just outside the dining hall. Beside the iris beds were several orange trees just loaded with ripe fruit. I had seen plenty of irises at that point, but those oranges needed closer inspection. It required great will power not to pick some of that liquid sunshine. The iris beds were very appealing, but after seeing the Buchheim gardens, this garden lost some of its attraction for me.

After viewing the Guest Garden, Jim and I walked through the Chinese Garden. There was a lovely pond graced by several pavilions and an arching bridge. In the distance we could see a group of people moving slowly in unison as they followed a Chinese instructor guiding them through some type of Chinese exercises. David and Susan Kraemer enjoyed the peacefulness of the scene as they lingered on the bridge. Large koi could be seen swirling around under the bridge.

Next we visited the Museum of American Art where I was blown away when I turned a corner and stood facing three portraits of George Washington, including the full-length portrait of him standing in

uniform, and the Gilbert Stuart portrait that we see every day on our dollar bills. A sign said it was one of three that Stuart painted. After a memorable lunch of Greek cuisine, we headed for the Huntington Mansion itself, which contains European art. Over the mantel in one of the rooms hangs another portrait of Washington by Gilbert Stuart. Entering the long portrait hall with subdued lighting, we saw on the far wall facing us and waiting for our admiration, "The Blue Boy" by Thomas Gainsborough. Facing "The Blue Boy" on the opposite wall, near the doorway where we entered, there was "Pinkie" by Thomas Lawrence. I've seen those magnificent faces all my life, but to see them in person was breathtaking.

CALI·ZONA GOLD was a very memorable National Convention, and Jill Bonino (California), Kathy Chilton (Arizona), and all the members of Region 15 are to be commended for organizing and putting on such a splendid event. At the Awards Banquet Saturday night, Bonnie Nichols entertained everyone with her PowerPoint presentation inviting everyone to attend the 2013 AND 2014 Conventions in Dallas.



Pat Byrne in Stanton Gardens

last meeting's minutes >>

Iris Society of Austin Meeting

Tuesday May 8, 2012

Minutes of the March meeting were approved with the amendment adding the word "judging techniques".

Marney Abel presented the treasurer's report in Pat Byrne's absence.

Debora Boyle presented the AAGC report. Due to shortfalls in income from the Zilker Garden Festival and other sources, the city has decided to put out a Request for Proposal to the public for a Master Plan for Zilker Gardens, starting May 21. Check the Zilker Garden website for details on many upcoming garden events. The request for temperature for next year's Iris Show will be submitted for 68°F.

The list of meeting dates for next year was announced and will be included in the next yearbook.

Don Freeman's presented horticulture tips quoted elsewhere in this edition.

New officers were installed.

Certificates and Medals for the Austin and Belton shows were announced and handed out.

Marney Abel shared rhizomes from her garden with everyone.

The membership voted to spend \$1,500.00 to purchase rhizomes for the fall sale.

Ken Fuchs delivered a slide show of the Austin and Belton Iris Shows.

submitted by Dara Smith

Clean Beds & Fertilize

Don Freeman suggests that it is time to remove this year's spent bloom stalks and feed plants after the Spring bloom. The yearly fertilizing schedule recommendation was for May 1st, October, and early February. The Nitrogen number should be low as this nutrient can promote conditions that lead to summer rot in iris rhizomes (perhaps a 6-10-6 or 6-10-4 where the first number represents Nitrogen content). The product mentioned at the May meeting was Liquid Bone Meal Concentrate available at Geo Growers off of Hwy 290 heading towards Dripping Springs. Follow the recommended dilution and apply about a 1/2 gallon per clump. In February, Don feeds with Medina

Hasta Grow. Louisiana irises can be fed azalea food, plant spikes or Peter's 20-20-20.

Nelda Moore suggests removing any dried foliage that is covering the rhizomes right along with the spent bloom stalks. Weeding seems to be an on-going process with Spring rains soaking the gardens.

When Nelda weeded and trimmed the irises in the front garden at Zilker one of the Burseen's irises was blooming. As of May 12th another iris had started blooming. It has been an unusual year after the scorching summer, the cool winter, and the rains following 90 degree days that produced the storms.



above>>>

2012-2013 officers are sworn in at the May meeting

prayer request >>>

Please continue to keep Pauline Guerrero and her family in your thoughts and prayers

Show Tags

Be sure to double check for accuracy

The Entry Tags for the Iris Show are extremely important for making sure our Show Chair can accurately complete an official Show Report, which is sent immediately after the show each year to the American Iris Society Exhibition Chairman, Lois Rose. It is only by submitting this report that we receive the medals and certificates to present to winners in May.

Each year before the show, each member should closely study the Show Schedule. The blank Entry Tags are usually presented along with the Show Schedule a week or two before the show.

With a pen, write your name and

address on each tag two times. Look for the lines that say "Exhibitor" and "Address". If you use address labels instead, they must be tiny enough to fit in the space allotted, especially on the lower half of the tag, which is torn off by the clerks at the end of judging, and which are used to determine the results of the show. The Show Schedule will show the following Divisions:

- I - Horticulture
- II - Seedlings
- III - Youth Horticulture
- IV - Artistic Design
- V - Educational Exhibits
- VI - Commercial Exhibits

Again, consult the Show Schedule

for the proper codes for Section, Group and Class. For example, in Division I Horticulture, Section F, Group 4 is a Spuria Iris, which should also have a name for Variety.

In Division IV, the Artistic Design, Class 4 is "Dancing in the Rain" or Designer's Choice.

For Entry No, write in the exhibitor number next to your name on the Exhibitor Sign-Up Sheet. If an exhibitor signs the master list next to number 1, then the entry number on the tag is also 1.

Accurate tags make the Show Chair's work easier and makes sure you will receive all your certificates and medals!