

in this issue >>>

- 2013 Iris Show Theme Selected
- Iris Pests
- November Meeting Minutes
- Local Garden Visit

December 2012 — vol 21 #12



Nelda Moore, Editor

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



next ISA meeting >>>

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER!

Iris Society of Austin Meeting
Tuesday January 8, 2013
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
- Program to be announced
- Bring your 2013 ISA dues!

next AAGC meeting >>>

Austin Area Garden Council Meeting
Tuesday December 11, 2012
10:00 am

Zilker Garden Center

Nelda Moore will attend as ISA representative

upcoming events >>>

Feb 12, 2013 – ISA Meeting

Mar 12, 2013 – ISA Meeting

Mar 30, 2013 – Annual Iris Show

Apr 9, 2013 – ISA Meeting

Apr 15-20, 2013 – AIS Nat'l Conv

2013 Iris Show

Send your thoughts and ideas now

Ken Fuchs will soon be publishing the Show Schedule for the Iris Society of Austin's 2013 Iris Show, which will be held on a Saturday this year - March 30, 2013. Note that this is the day before Easter Sunday. At the show Ken will also manage the entry and classification process, as the Show Secretary and Awards Chairman.

Show set-up will be Fri., March 29, from 3-4:30pm. Entries will be accepted from 7:30-9:45am Saturday morning; and judging for this accredited show will begin at 10:15am. The show will be open to the public from 1-4pm Saturday, with no admission charged.

The Show Committee is still discussing the ideas that were proposed at the November meeting. If you have additional thoughts about a theme or a new category for the Artistic Division, please contact Jaime Hadley, show chair, as soon as possible (512-731-4621).

Also give him a call if you would like to work at the show. New

members are especially encouraged to serve as clerks to get a close up view of the judging process and learn exactly what makes a Queen of Show winner!

welcome new members >>

Please make sure to look for these folks at an upcoming meeting and welcome them to our club:

- Cindy Frazier

time to renew dues >>>

Ken Fuchs will be collecting dues for the ISA 2013 membership year at our next regular meeting, January 8. Membership dues are \$12 for an individual and \$18 for a joint membership. If you wish to renew your membership early, you can send a check made out to Iris Society of Austin directly to one of these folks:

Ken Fuchs
710 N 11th St, Temple, TX, 76501-3016

Pat Byrne
1102 Aster, Katy, TX, 77493-1825

Common Iris Pests

APHIDS – The world around irises is full of about 4,000 aphid species, and a few feed on closely related plants. Adults are pear-shaped about 1/8 inch long with long antennae. They come in green, yellow, brown, gray, black and red depending upon different stages of their life. The females can grow wings to fly away to other food sources and better conditions.

Some of the aphids, also called plant lice, can cause iris foliage to curl since these pests suck the plant juices and excrete a sugary substance or honeydew that attracts ants, which tend them. The honeydew makes the plants sticky and supports the growth of black sooty mold that cuts back the plant's ability to manufacture carbohydrates essential for keeping plants healthy. The big problem is that some aphids are carriers of iris mosaic virus, which they inject into the plant.

The easiest way to get rid of aphids is to spray them in the morning with a hard fine spray of water, making

sure that the under-parts of plants are also treated. For a heavy problem, spray with ultrafine horticultural oil or insecticidal soap. Predators such as ladybugs, green lacewings, and aphid-eating gall midges provide biological control.

IRIS BORER – The Iris Borer, or *Macronoctua onusta*, are common in the Midwest as far as Iowa above the Mason-Dixon line, but a few may exist here due to changing weather conditions. If spring is cold and wet, borers will hatch later than they would in a warm spring. The larva has white shading toward pale pink to light red on the dorsal side. The head is brown. The moth is less than an inch long with a wingspan of 1.6 to 2.25 inches. The plump and furry body is dark with a lighter brown abdomen. The front pair of wings have fine black lines on a dull brown background. The hind wings are tan at the outer edges, fading to off-white near the body. They are not attracted to light.

Signs of Iris Borer come in late spring -- May and June. Tiny pinholes are made in the leaves near the base of the leaves or wherever

the eggs were laid after the parents mate in the leaves and ground debris. Young leaves will be notched and have ragged edges. Borer larvae may also leave a silver trail that is visible in the right light.

The larvae, at 1 to 1.5 inches, work their way into the rhizome and eat until they pupate. "Sawdust" can be seen around the base of the plant. The leaves are watery and slimy.

Borers will eat their way into bloom stalks and even into Louisiana iris flowers--their first choice of irises with tall bearded irises second and Siberian irises third because their foliage is tough. Only a genetic intervention with a special gene inserted in a chromosome such as that used to repel potato beetles can eradicate iris borers. A study is being done, but this is one good reason to soak new plants in a dilute solution of household chlorine bleach using one part bleach to nine parts of water. Then let the plants dry thoroughly before planting them in the garden.

IRIS WEEVILS – Iris Weevils, or *Mononychus vulpeculus*, breed in beardless irises such as Siberian and Iris versicolor, the large blue flag native to the northeastern United States from Maine and Wisconsin south to Georgia. The eggs hatch into a short, legless larva that is slightly curved. It pupates within the seedpods and emerges when the pod ripens.



left – adult Iris Borer Moth

below – Iris Borer larvae



The Hensleys' Garden

Charlie and Sonja Hensley kindly opened their garden to irisarians one Sunday afternoon in October, and Don Freeman reported that he had walked in their Garden of Eden. Sonja once said that they had begun to garden after they retired. Their home is surrounded by their selection of favorite trees and shrubs among the existing oaks and cedars or junipers.

They very carefully choose the right irises for their horticultural specimens. There are beds specifically for spurias and others just for tall bearded varieties. Then there are gardens with a few irises added among seasonal flowers in bud and bloom. The couple starts with wonderful soil.

How does one achieve this structure of soil that has a texture of sand, silt, and clay? The irregularities of these crumbs allow air and water circulation. Organic matter and its microbial life enable the soil to

conserve moisture, moderate the temperature extremes, drain well, and conserve oxygen to produce plants with healthy metabolism. Water from their well is used early in the morning and this moisture is necessary for plant growth since the nutrients are in solution going through the roots to the circulatory system of the plant. A pH that is high (alkaline) or too low (acid) as produced by junipers will cause plant nutrients to be locked up into chemical salts that are not soluble.

Earthworms and mite-sized microscopic creatures live in air spaces between soil crumbs thus aerating and enriching the soil.

Environmental problems can cause puny discolored or spotted leaves and blighted blossoms--all caused by low light intensity or lack of water. Limp foliage and stems are caused by a calcium deficiency. Scorched leaves can be caused by frost or dry hot winds and too little rain.

Remember that hand-weeding is better than herbicide damage. Mulch to keep some weeds from growing, but do not mulch over bearded iris rhizomes. Always use the donut circle around plants and trees. If mulch and dirt are pushed against the tree trunk, the tree will eventually die due in part to nitrogen depletion. Usually shredded bark mulches last longer and deplete soil nitrogen more slowly than mulches of sawdust or wood chips.

left - Sheila Senghas admiring the Hensleys' Confederate Rose



Iris Society of Austin Meeting Tuesday November 13, 2012

The meeting was called to order by President, Marney Abel. The minutes from the October meeting were approved. We welcomed our new member Cindy Frazier and our visitor from Oklahoma, Hybridizer and Master Judge Mona French.

A detailed report of all accounts was given by the Treasurer and a recent copy of the account transactions was put on file with the monthly minutes.

Nelda reported from AAGC that the Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the AAGC. December 8 & 9 there will be an Open House and 20% off Gift Shop Sale. Mr. Broussard and Mr. Taniguchi are working on a Master Plan this includes new building and garden designs. Preparations are underway for the Spring 2013 Zilker Garden Festival. This year there will be a raffle and everyone is encouraged to buy and sell tickets to raise money. ISA will be decorating a tree for the garden center Nov 16, 1-4:30p and Nov 17, 10a - 12:30p

Don Freeman reported on the enjoyable visit to the Hensley's garden. "Thank you" for hosting! "Green Sand" which helps the soil release iron was reported being used by members that are seeing increases on their rhizomes. Several methods of deer repellent were discussed. Aside from the more lethal remedies, some of the treatments mentioned were: Companion plantings of Society

continued on next page

Your Officers

Officers are elected each March and serve a one-year term from June 1 through May 31. The nomination process begins in January, so if you are interested in serving as an officer of the Iris Society of Austin, please let the nominating committee know at the January meeting.

You current slate of officers who are serving through May 2013 are:

President Marney Abel marneyabel@austin.rr.com ...512-330-9052
VP Programs Donna Little donne@littleshouse.net512-869-0683
VP Membership Ken Fuchs kenfuchs42@hotmail.com254-773-5017
Secretary Dara Smith desmith@austin.rr.com512-454-1430
Treasurer Pat Byrne patb1@consolidated.net281-391-6190
Historian/Librarian Tracey Rogers rogers89@earthlink.net512-280-4856

Report Your Rebloomers!

Irises that bloom in the fall are special treats to everyone who loves irises. They double the pleasure we find in our favorite flowers. Many people want to know which irises do bloom in the fall, so the Reblooming Iris Society keeps records of those that bloom in the fall. The only way the Reblooming Iris Society knows which ones bloom in the fall is for the growers of those irises to notify someone about the fall blooms. In our Southern area of the United States that person to notify about the reblooming irises is our own Jim Landers. Jim makes a report of the information he receives and sends it to the Reblooming Iris Society (RIS) for their newsletter, which comes out twice a year and is full of the names, pictures and information of the irises that rebloom in all parts of the country. If you have had any irises bloom in the fall, please send that information to Jim so it may be shared.

minutes continued >>>

Garlic, ultrasonic noise devices, sprinklings of grated Irish Spring bar soap. Mechanical controls with strategically placed chicken wire to fence off protected plantings. Don also reminded us not to forget to water with all the dry days and high winds.

Thanks to Stephanie Sheridan for providing this month's hospitality potluck setup. January's host is Sheila Shengas.

Since the AIS National Convention will be in Dallas in April 2013 with several judges training sessions, the Austin club will not hold a Judge's training class in January as we have in the past couple of years.

Preparation for the 2013 Austin Iris Society Show began with a brainstorming session for show theme and designer categories. Jaime Hadley would like to encourage everyone to present their ideas and efforts to make our show preparations a success. We had many suggestions from the members present regarding ideas for themes. We need to have all of the information to Ken Fuchs to send our Show Schedule off for approval. There are only 3 meetings between now and the Show date on Saturday March 30th, 2013. The March meeting will be dedicated to reviewing how to prepare for a show. This is an especially important meeting for anyone hoping to show their award winning irises for the first time on Easter weekend.

The remainder of the meeting was taken with our holiday gift exchange.

submitted by Dara Smith

Photos from the November Meeting

left – Jim Landers, Marney Abel and Ellen Singleton browse the white elephant Christmas gifts brought by members

below left – D Boyle poses with 2 fall blooms that were brought to the meeting

below right - The holiday potluck is always a feast!

