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January 2013 — vol 22 #1



A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN

next ISA meeting >>>

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 January 8, 2013
10:00 am

Zilker Garden Center

Nelda Moore – 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 Judges Training

Several Opportunities Around Texas

Judges Training is a unique way of learning about irises from experienced dedicated judges, growers, and hybridizers who have studied constantly, have visited gardens throughout the country, and have grown a representative collection of irises. These accredited judges are the backbone of the American Iris Society judging program that select award winning irises each year. It is their voting that determines which irises receive awards, and therefore, which irises will be recommended to the public.

Because of the judges training we hosted at the Region 17 Convention in August and since there will be several opportunities for judges training at the AIS National

Convention in Nearby Dallas this spring, the Iris Society of Austin has decided not to host our usual January judges training here in Austin. However there are many other opportunities for you to attend sessions hosted by our neighboring societies.

Of special interest to any Judge candidates or Apprentice Judges is a combination class in February in Waco titled “Ethics, and Awards and Ballots.” This combination class fulfills two of the requirements for Apprentice judges, and Candidates can bank the classes until needed.

See page 4 of this newsletter for a full list of Judges Training opportunities.

English Box?

Consider entering an English Box in the 2013 Iris Show. This is a great option if you have several nice blooms that are on not-so-nice stalks.

An English Box consists of five individual flowers of the same classification. Each blossom must be correctly named, positioned, and labeled using a 3”x 5” card mounted outside the 18”x 24”x 4” neutral-colored box.

More Common Iris Pests

SCALE – Scale insects are either soft or armored. Female soft scale insects move around as immature crawlers. When they settle in a feeding spot, they are covered by cottony or smooth covers and, like aphids, often excrete honeydew.

Female armored scale insects lose their legs soon after hatching. In their permanent feeding spots they develop a hard shell, which provides a place for eggs to be protected from the environment and from any spray. The male scale insects are like small wasps that live only to mate. Some scale species reproduce by parthenogenesis. There is no need for a male insect, and all offspring are female.

Predators that attack scale insects are ladybugs and parasitic wasps. Insecticide should not be used since it also kills scale predators, resulting in an explosion in the scale population. It is better to destroy the plant or rub the scale off the leaves. Sometimes a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol will kill scales.



THRIPS – *Bregmatothrips iridis* will attack irises, especially Japanese irises. These thrips have a four stage life cycle. They are tiny, around 1/20 of an inch long, and have a fringe on the margins of both sets of wings. Some thrips feed on insects and mites. Others, however, eat plants and flowers by scraping the plants outer layer, creating scar tissue that can look like windburn.

Most often these critters can be knocked off with a hard fine spray of water. Insecticidal soap and ultrafine horticultural oil are also effective. Predatory mites also control thrips.

VERBENA BUD MOTH – *Endothenia hebesana* destroys iris seeds while they are in a ripening pod. They can be found on any iris, as well as verbenas, goldenrods, snapdragons, penstemons, and physostegias. They can be identified by looking for the silken coatings they make on their tunnels between seed capsules.

The adult is about a half-inch long triangular moth with buff-colored head, dark eyes and short antennae. It has a grey abdomen with purple metallic markings on the grey and brown forewings. To control this pest, remove and destroy the seedpods and keeping flowers dead-headed also helps.

NEMATODES – or roundworms, also called eelworms, live in the dry



Above: Thrips on *Sabatia campestris*, Brazos Bend State Park
Below: Adult Verbena Bud Moth (*Endothenia hebesana*)

sandy soil where winter temperatures are mild. Growing smelly marigolds in a plot and then cultivating them into the soil will get rid of these harmful pests. Other biological controls include fungi, bacteria, other nematodes and some soil-dwelling insects. Some of the stunted iris with pale, yellow-green leaves and brown tips are indication of these microscopic organisms. Dig the plant and study the roots. Look for swollen nodules near the root tips.

SLUGS AND SNAILS – These mollusks eat foliage at night. Often they lay masses of eggs in debris, soil cracks, and in moist shady places under plants. They are not active during daylight hours or if the temperature is under 50°F. For control, handpick them by using a flashlight at night and throwing them in a container with a weak solution of alcohol. Copper foil is also an excellent barrier around raised beds. The use of diatomaceous earth, wood ashes, and boric acid crystals around plants is also effective. Snail bait, poison, may be hazardous to children and pets.

Volunteer Hours

The Iris Society of Austin has two gardens to weed or maintain through the Adopt-A-Garden Program. One is the newer area near Barton Springs Road. Daylilies are near the long raised bed full of bearded irises. The other huge bed is in the Rose Garden. The gardens are divided by the Walk of Friends. This older bed has border bearded, intermediate bearded, tall bearded irises, and some spurias. Louisiana irises are growing in white tubs just behind the raised beds. Eventually the irises will be moved to the front area.

If you wish to work in any of these areas, please sign the paper inserted in the clipboard in the library when you arrive. After you have worked in the gardens, please return to the library to sign out, noting the time.

In this way the Austin Iris Society gets credit for the hours you worked.

Other volunteer hours that can be reported to the council include the following:

- cooking or baking for the council meetings;
- trimming the Zilker Christmas trees;
- educating the public by speaking to garden clubs;
- writing iris articles for publications;
- preparing the Iris Austin newsletter;
- volunteering during Zilker Garden Festival;
- growing plants to give to Kid's Corner;
- attending the AAGC council meetings.

last meeting's minutes >>

There was no December meeting of the Austin Iris Society. Minutes from the November 2012 meeting were printed in the December 2012 newsletter.

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

Iris Show Prep

Preparing for the Artistic Division

It is a good time to use any creative skills while arranging fresh flowers for the holidays. Practice now and during Valentine's Day to enjoy live blossoms, perhaps even an iris or two.

Add some sea shells, weathered wood, or dried plant material to see how some of these items will enhance the design. The background might need muted colors to suggest an outdoor scene.

With all this in your imagination, then examine the scene with a critical eye. Does the scene enhance the design or is it so overpowering that your eye is drawn to the

background, and not the flower design?

On a 3"x5" card explain briefly your interpretation of this design. Can you give the name of the iris included in the arrangement? This is important. Did you include a Louisiana with a bud before you created the line with bearded irises? Is this a triangle or Japanese creation representing Heaven, Man, and Earth? Have you consulted the Show Schedule to check the points for conformance to schedule, design, color use, creativity, and distinction?

Below: 2012 winner of best Artistic Design, by Pat Freeman



Judges Training

Each club is encouraged to conduct Judges Training each year, and many of the Region 17 clubs do it in Winter and Spring. Dell Perry, our Region 17 Judges Training Chair, says, "These classes are an excellent way for club members to broaden their knowledge about irises: different varieties, what makes a 'good' iris, what judges look for in a show, etc., as well as help our AIS judges obtain and/or maintain their judgeships. Quite a few of our current judges got interested in becoming a judge after attending a class."

The **Waco Iris Society** presents a combination class on "**Ethics**" and "**Awards & Ballots**" led by Peggy Cathey

February 16, 2013 10:15am – 1:15pm \$15

West Waco Library - Meeting Room, 5301 Bosque Blvd, Waco, TX

Contact: Peggy Cathey, 254-854-2558, natvtxn1@windstream.net

The **Iris Society of Dallas** presents a class on **Median Iris** led by Ginny Spoon.

February 17, 2013 12:30pm – 2:30pm \$5

North Haven Gardens – Meeting Room, 7700 Northaven Road, Dallas, TX

Contact: Gordon Carver, 817-304-3841, gcarver@flash.net

The **South Plains Iris Society** presents a class on **Tall Bearded Iris** led by Bob Van Liere

February 23, 2013 Noon – 2pm \$10

Home Plate Diner, 7615 University, Lubbock, TX

Contact: Dana Brown, 806-746-6002, ddbrow@sbcglobal.net

April Show Prep

Preparing for the Horticultural Division

A container with some water will be provided for each entry in the horticulture division. We will also supply some pieces of black foam pipe insulation to help wedge the stem securely in the mouth of the vase.

It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to place the iris with its best view forward and the bottom branch exhibited above the container's opening. Be sure to groom the stalk properly - no fingerprints, no insects, no spider webs (or spiders)!

Feel free to use a green leaf wrapped around the stalk to position the iris above the lip of the container if this holds the cultivar better than the black foam provided. The stalk should not be shoved too far down into the container.

Display the completed entry tag directly under the perfect face of the iris, which is proudly standing straight. The judges will look at the tag side first before checking all sides of the blooms and stalk for shape, substance and any imperfections.

AAGC minutes >>

Austin Area Garden Council
Tuesday December 11, 2012

The Austin Area Garden Council met December 11, 2012, in the auditorium of the Zilker Garden Center.

The Nominating Committee who will contact members about serving on the Austin Area Garden Council include Steve Blackson, Wilda Campbell, Harriet Houston, and Roberta Showerman.

Margaret Russell, Director of Zilker Botanical Gardens, stated that by January the sidewalk around the Rose Garden Pond should be completed and the log cabin will be raised so that waters will not cause the foundation to rot. Anjoli Fry, an Education Specialist, has been designing programs for the children and adults to participate in by dropping in on Sundays. Ed Parken has been working with surveys for the ADA sidewalk around the pond in the Rose Garden. The surveys costing \$9000 also include the one for the log cabin.

Nelda Moore reminded clubs to remove Christmas ornaments the morning of January 5. She also explained that some of the card tables need to be replaced. Dolores Rumpf will have Zilker Garden Festival Tickets February 12 for clubs to pay and pick up to distribute to their members. Cost of each ticket is \$3. No raffle will be held, and planning for the festival will begin in January.

The next council meeting will begin at 10 A.M. January 8, 2013.

submitted by Nelda Moore