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February 2014 — vol 23 #2



Nelda Moore, Editor

A Monthly Newsletter of the Iris Society of Austin

IRIS AUSTIN



next ISA meeting >>>

Iris Society of Austin Meeting
Tuesday February 11, 2014
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
- Trip Down Memory Lane

next AAGC meeting >>>

Austin Area Garden Council Meeting
Tuesday February 11, 2014
10:00 am
Zilker Garden Center

Marney Abel – ISA representative

upcoming events >>>

Mar 11, 2014 – Regular Meeting

Apr 5-10, 2014 – AIS Nat'l Conv,
Dallas

Apr 12, 2014 – Annual Iris Show

April meeting date to be determined

May 13, 2014 – Regular Meeting

Clarice Mathis James

remembering a local irisarian

Clarice James, a long-time member of the Austin Area Garden Council, a charter member of the Iris Society of Austin, and a founding member of the Austin Area Begonia Society died at the age of 93 January 10 in Bastrop. Several members attended her funeral service on Tuesday, January 14, after being at the council meeting at Zilker Botanical Garden.

Clarice was born January 28, 1920 to parents Noah Brittain and Stella Treacy Mathis in Temple, Texas. She grew up in Temple and Waco. She moved to Corsicana after high school graduation. The same day she moved to Corsicana, Walter Anderson James moved in next door. She attended Texas State College for Women in Denton. She married Walter Anderson James on August 11, 1941 in Ennis and they moved to Austin. She retired from the Internal Revenue Service after 19 years. And after 51 years together, Walter died August 29, 1992.

Clarice worked in the Zilker Garden Center Gift Shop after she retired

from the Lower Colorado Lakes Girl Scout Council as Director. She was also president of the Austin Kennel Club and showed dogs in Westminster Dog Shows. She was instrumental in reviving Columbus Fancy Canaries in coordination with breeders in England. She was a volunteer who had time to serve as the first president of the Austin Area Begonia Society and was a member of several other clubs including Porcelain Arts.

As an honorary member of the Iris Society of Austin she kept up with irises through the newsletter. Kathey Hatcher, her daughter, explained how she loved receiving the beautiful newsletter. She also encouraged the Austin Area Begonia Society to write a newsletter, which started as a one-page letter giving directions to the meetings until she told Nelda Moore that we needed to include horticulture in every edition and introduce these shade loving begonias to the public because there was a need for growing and keeping species.

Training Well Attended

On a cold winter morning after most of the snow and ice from the Artic blast had melted, fifteen enthusiastic irisarians listened intently to Emeritus Judge Hooker Nichols as he described the exquisite color and diversity in form of Louisiana irises. These 'Apogon' or beardless irises consist of five recognized species within the series *Hexagonae* of the genus *Iris*.

These irises appeared after the Ice Age from Canada to the Gulf Coast via the Mississippi Valley and the Missouri River. Most of them were indigenous to a limited area of south central Louisiana and the Gulf Coast marsh areas from Texas to Florida. *I. brevicaulis* and *I. fulva* ranged northward up the Mississippi Valley while *I. hexagona* inhabited the southeastern Atlantic and Gulf Coasts.

The Louisiana iris was first described by Walter in 1788, but John James Audubon was the first to use the term when he painted one with a Parula Warbler and the name stuck. *I. fulva* was described by John Ker Gawler in 1812 as a red iris limited "to the area around New Orleans." *I. brevicaulis* was described by Rafinesque in 1817 as a cold-hardy species while *I. giganteaerulea*, a giant blue iris, was described in 1929 by John K Small, a friend of Thomas Edison.

These hardy Louisiana beauties can grow everywhere in a pot, in a tub, or in the ground planted about one inch deep and mulched during the summer and winter with leaves or mulch, but not pine bark or cypress.

Each attendee received a culture

sheet describing the rhizome, planting them in the landscape, and the seasonal care of the plants. They should not be planted next to corn since the borer may attack the plants. The plants do not need to be growing in water, but they need one good watering per week if it does not rain. When the Louisiana iris bloom disappears, clip the seed pods so they will not ripen, allowing the seeds to fall to the ground and germinate, thus mixing unnamed cultivars amongst your named varieties.

If the iris is prone to rust, simply cut the affected foliage. New growth will not have rust. A long Louisiana rhizome can be split in half and chopped into portions to yield many plants. For fertilizing, Hooker



Instructor Hooker Nichols leads Training Session on Judging Louisiana Iris

suggests you purchase some cheap yellow crocus bulbs and plant them in the fall. When they bloom, use a spray of Miracle Gro on the Louisianas and everything growing with them whether the companion plants be roses, bearded irises, or annuals.

Thanks to all those who set up and brought food, and all who braved the weather to attend, especially Vera Townsend from the Belton Iris Society

mourning a loss>>>

Raymond Leon Schroeder

Former ISA member Raymond Leon "Lee" Schroeder, succumbed to cancer Thursday, December 5, 2013, at the age of 75.

Born in Albion, Illinois, Lee attended the University of Illinois and upon his graduation, he joined the Army. After his many years of service, including a tour in Viet Nam, Lee retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

After his first retirement in the 1980s, Lee moved with his wife Sandy and their family to San Marcos where he was a stockbroker until he retired again last year from

Raymond James. This past summer Lee and Sandy celebrated fifty years of marriage.

He was dedicated to the beautification of San Marcos, where he planted and maintained trees and an iris bed at the Visitor's Center.

Fort Sam Houston will accept Lee's ashes for burial with full military honors in February. Memorial contributions can be made to Gary Job Corps in San Marcos.

A celebration of his life was held Saturday, December 14, at the family home for family and friends.

Another Youth Award

In addition to the two youth coloring winners announced in last month's newsletter, youth Tiffany Sheridan, daughter of members Tony Sheridan & Hien Duong, and granddaughter of member Stephanie Sheridan, recently received cash and a letter of acknowledgement from the American Iris Society.

Her entry in the coloring contest won her this honor, and she hopes to also enter the new contests mentioned in

the January newsletter for a T-shirt design and possibly an iris essay.

This is a great opportunity for our youth to seize the day by drawing, creating, and competing in contests, then rejoicing with gladness in the accomplishment.

Congratulations again to all our winners. We look forward to hearing of more awards in future AIS contests.

news from the Hensleys >>>

Thank You

Dear ISA Friends,

What a wonderful surprise to pick up our mail from the post office and find this beautiful card from you! And then to read that you have voted us as honorary members of the Iris Society of Austin brought big smiles to both our faces. Over the past 15 years - I think it was around 1998 when we joined ISA - we have enjoyed many happy hours with you - gleaned lots of IMPORTANT IRIS information - loved the challenge of growing, showing, and sharing the best possible irises AND consumed way too much delicious food at the potluck suppers.

We are learning our way around the Tyler area. It is a beautiful part of the state and we are excited about finding that special place to plant more irises and, of course, a few other things. Hazel loves going

house "hunting". The house in Austin sold the day of the Open House and the family who purchased it look forward to maintaining the iris beds. We told them about you guys and encouraged them to join ISA.

We thank you so much for the renewal of our AIS membership and look forward to receiving their magazine. We are grateful that God made it possible for our paths to cross. Our lives have been enriched by your friendship and we miss the fun of being with you on the second Tuesdays.

Blessings and best regards,

Charlie and Sonja Hensley

PO Box 6576
Tyler TX 75711-6576
mesohpapah@gmail.com

last meeting's minutes >>

Iris Society of Austin Meeting
Tuesday January 14, 2013

Pat Byrne presided over the meeting and welcomed everyone back. Marney Abel gave the treasurer's report with an end-of-year balance on December 31, 2013 of \$17,852.08.

There was a call from Jaime Hadley, Membership Chair for everyone to get their dues in for the year. A member in good standing for 1 year attending 5 events makes the member eligible to have the club pay their \$25.00 annual dues to the AIS.

Thanks and gratitude for our long-time Iris Society of Austin members Sonja and Charles Hensley. The Hensleys have recently moved away from Austin but provided many plants for our sales over the years and were always welcoming members to their home and gardens. We miss them as active members of our club. A motion was made by Jaime Hadley and seconded by Don Freeman for the Club to make them Honorary Members of our club and purchase them a one-time Triennial AIS Membership for \$75.00. The motion passed unanimously.

Marney Abel gave an AAGC update. This year the ISA will again sponsor a Fairy House for \$25.00. The motion was made by Donna Little and David Kramer seconded. This passed unanimously.

There are many Children's programs and Docent training going on right now. Don Freeman announced a Rose Society Workshop on February 15, 9a - 3p for \$25.00. *cont'd next page*

Regional Shows

Be sure to bring your cut flowers to our show and any of these others in the area:

- April 5 Waco Iris Society
- April 7 Dallas Iris Society at the National Convention
- April 12 IS of Austin, West Texas IS, Johnson County I&DS
- April 13 Lone Star Iris Society
- April 19 Permian Basin IS, Texoma IS, Belton IS
- April 26 Benson Iris Society, South Plains Iris Society
- Apr 26/27 Fort Worth Iris Society
- May 11 North Plains Iris Society

horticulture tips >>>

Clean and Feed

The two Iris Society Adopt-a-Garden Areas in Zilker Botanical Garden have been weeded and cleaned of limbs, leaves, grass seeds, weeds, and dead foliage. D Boyle, Donna Little, and Nelda Moore have recently spent 16 hours in the irises. Many tiny hen-bit and chickweed were growing in the middle of the clump of iris.

What should you do in your own garden? Weeds and dead foliage should be removed, but do not worry about the cold, because irises need a certain amount of cold in order to produce bud and bloom. New increases are visible so be very careful when working around the plants. If the soil is too dry and it does not rain, be sure to water the plants before adding fertilizer.

Bearded irises use bone meal around the clump and there is a liquid bone meal that can also be used. Miracle Gro can be sprayed on the irises, but be careful as the plants can become dependent on it. The foliage should be green unless the hybridizer strives to have purple showing from the rhizome upward a few inches. As with any annual or

perennial in bud and bloom, stop pouring on fertilizer of any kind when the iris produces a bud. Reblooming irises, in contrast, can use a bit more fertilizer. Most tall bearded varieties need very little water. Too much watering and feeding of bearded iris produce rhizome rot.

Spurias and Louisiana irises are heavy feeders. Louisiana foliage can be yellow-green or blue-green and these irises thrive in acid soil while the spurias are fertilized with rose soil or food. Hooker Nichols uses 8-8-8 on Louisianas as well as daylilies.

If you had any rebloom, e-mail Jim Landers to report it!



Members of ISA and visitor Vera Townsend from Belton IS listen intently at the recent Judges Training

meeting minutes cont'd >>

Attendees will receive a one-year membership to the Rose Society, lunch, a book, and lots of really good information on rose care.

Marney reminded us to enter all the hours individuals spend working for our club, attending meetings, baking for events, cleaning the gardens, participation in speaking to other clubs or groups. Be sure to enter your hours so we get credit for the Club.

Nelda Moore reported that Ken Fuchs has turned in our Show Schedule for 2014. Ours was the first one turned in for the year!! The title of our show is "Iris Under the Big Top". Jim Landers (who is also our Region 17 Historian) mentioned that there is a historical show schedule from Lubbock with a similar name from around 1983.

Marney Abel reported that 3 of our youth members submitted entries to the coloring contest and at least 2 received an award. There is a T-shirt coloring contest deadline of January 31st. There is also an essay contest.

Ken Fuchs presented a beautiful show on Spuria Iris. The meeting was adjourned.

submitted by Dara E Smith

joys & concerns >>>

Our thoughts are with Shelia Senghas as she is being treated for pulmonary embolism and spent a week in Methodist Stone Oak Hospital in San Antonio. We will miss Shelia at the next few meetings as she expects improvements in her breathing to take a while.

Also with Lori Anderson recovering from a stroke.