



Waco Iris Society News



Website: http://www.kenfuchs42.net/waco_index.html E-mail: wacoiriss@gmail.com

Volume 13, Issue 1

An affiliate of the American Iris Society

September, 2020



President's Message by Dan Cathey

Waco Iris Society will kick off our new Club year on September 19, 10:00 a.m. We will once again be meeting at the Crestview Church of Christ Community Center, 7129 Delhi (Sanger becomes Delhi shortly after crossing Hwy. 6)

Welcome to a new Club year in which we will welcome Mitchell Whitley as our new President! As you know, this meeting is one of the highlights for our Club with the annual iris giveaway / auction. This event gives all of us a chance to add to our iris gardens with access to many of the latest and best iris available and you will certainly not want to miss out. Mitchell has acquired lots of excellent iris from Mid-

America Gardens, which by the way are all **2020 introductions**, and Superstition Gardens sent many of his newest introductions, so there will be many to pick from and to bid on! If you cannot attend please designate a member to pick up your gift plant for you. Our host venue requires that all attending wear masks so be sure and have yours with you. **Remember, our annual dues (\$10) are due at this meeting and your dues must be current (paid) to participate in the giveaway.** Also, please be thinking about iris you can dig for our upcoming sale on September 26th which is only one week after this meeting, and be sure to send your sale lists to Peggy not later than Wednesday, Sept. 23rd, so

she can have photos ready for the sale. Remember, this is the main fundraiser for our Club and is what helps make things such as this free iris giveaway and our Spring Show possible so your help in making it a great success will be gratefully appreciated. As always, the sale will be held at GreenLife Nursery from 9 a.m. to Noon with set-up starting at 8 a.m. If anyone has tables you can bring, please do so; I think we are going to need them. Instructions for preparing your rhizomes for the sale and what to do if you wish to get money back from the sale are in your yearbook. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting!

Help with Refreshments

Preston Floyd had to quit serving as our refreshment chair, so we need everyone's help filling this gap. With the current situation and restrictions, we will need to go to prepackaged individual snack items and individual sodas and bottled

water. Please help by bringing items for the refreshment table.





Never Give Up by Ken Anderson

It is that time of year again when we get ready to kick off a new iris season. For those of you who have been growing irises for a long time, I don't have to explain all the aspects of growing irises. But there is an ebb and flow that seems to occur with an iris garden more than any other plant in our yards.

Beginning with our first meeting there is the excitement of a free iris and the auction, which provides a wonderful way to get new introductions at a very good price. And we get the opportunity to see our gardening friends and catch up on news. So this is how the story goes.

We all return home carrying new rhizomes in our bags, visions of wonderful blooms in our minds, and excitement in our hearts. Once we get those rhizomes in the ground we begin the wait. First we wait to see signs of growth from the newly planted rhizomes. Then colder weather sets in and the days grow shorter and not much else happens. And so we wait some more.

As we stroll through our garden in January we begin to wonder if there is anything left of some of our plants. But usually by February it is becoming quite evident that many clumps thought to have disappeared are really doing pretty well. The new ones we have added to our garden are also beginning to really takeoff. The excitement builds until one day in March or April we are finally rewarded for our work.

The spring show is always an exciting time. Most of us will see many varieties blooming well after the show has passed. I am sure that almost all of us have said "I wish that had been blooming when we

had the show. Surely it would it would have been Queen of Show."

Then summer comes and we wonder if anything will survive the heat. Fortunately, many of the irises do make it through the summer and come back to full glory the following year. However, all of us have experienced loss of plants due to excessive heat, rot, or disease of some kind.

I will end this article with a paragraph or two which gets to the real point of composing this message in the first place. There are many people in our club that are getting to that point in life where digging and planting have become more difficult because of our age and ability to maneuver the garden. Try not to be discouraged. Even though I am not a long-time iris gardener I have learned a few things about growing them in containers. For one thing, you have to pay very close attention to the soil mixture. In fact, there should be very little soil in your potting mixture. This observation could be an entire separate article. Through trial and error I have found a good mixture for growing irises in pots. It includes mostly finally shifted cedar mulch and perlite. Also it includes a small amount of course sand and a small amount of good garden soil or compost. A generous amount of time release fertilizer is added to the mix.

I am sharing this information because I know there are members who become discouraged with the difficulty they have if their soil is not conducive to growing irises. Don't give up. They can be grown in containers and they will do very well. I brought home 11 varieties from last year's auction. All varie-



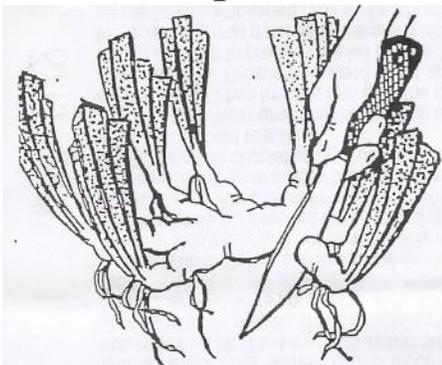
ties have survived even through this hot summer and they have all been grown in containers. Most of the varieties had beautiful blooms the first year. I have kept all of these potted plants beneath a bald cypress tree that lost most of its leaves during the hail storm back in June. They have received filtered sunlight but just enough shade to keep them from scorching. All of the irises in my yard that look really good right now have received a fair amount of shade from the intense noonday and mid afternoon sun.



With the upcoming auction and the upcoming sale of rhizomes on the 26th of September, don't let the idea of backbreaking work discourage you from taking home some new varieties. You can be successful with throwing them in pots. Get growing!

Prepare Irises Carefully For the Sale by Peggy Cathey

As you dig your irises for the sale, be careful to dig one variety at a time and label them with the correct name. I like to put each different variety in a plastic sack and put the name on at least one fan in the bag. Once they are all dug, I take one bag at a time, separate the different fans, trim the leaves to about



6 inches and trim the roots. I grab the roots below the rhizome and trim off anything that is left hanging. Be sure to label and price each fan with a permanent marker. Write on a CENTER leaf, then toss into a tub of water that has 10% bleach (1

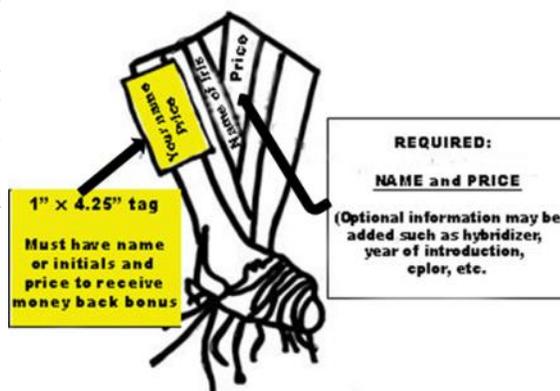
cup bleach per gallon of water). Adding bleach to the water will help with any fungus and disease that might be clinging to the soil left on the rhizome. After they have soaked for awhile, I take a brush (like a vegetable brush) and scrub the rhizomes to remove all the dirt. After their bath, they are laid out in a clean area (out of the sun) and allowed to thoroughly dry. Be sure to make a list of each variety you are bringing and call or e-mail me so I will have photos of all your irises available on sale day. Photos sell plants! So it is very important that we know ahead of time what will be at the sale. I also like to list each variety with a photo and e-mail them to everyone on our online mail list. They will also be posted on our club Facebook page:

[https://
www.facebook.com/
WacoIrisSociety](https://www.facebook.com/WacoIrisSociety)

Before loading up for the sale, sort your irises into separate bags to make it easy to find where they belong on the sale tables.

Please arrive at the sale by 8:00 to help with set-up. There is always a lot to do and we need all hands to do it.

For more information on how to label and price your irises for the sale can be found in your Waco Iris Society Yearbook.



Choosing the Best Irises by Peggy Cathey

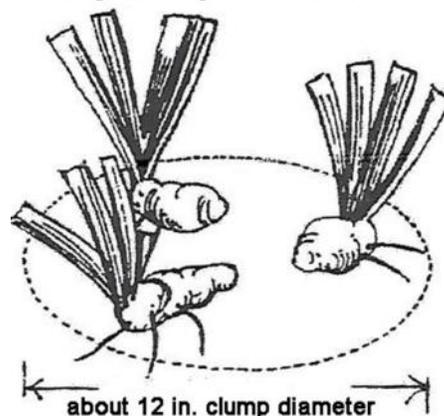
When you are purchasing new irises for your garden, there are a few things you want to look for. First, the bigger the rhizome, the better the chance it will give you nice, big blooms the next spring. It should feel dense and heavy for its size, and should not have any soft spots. Look for discolorations on the rhizomes. Healthy rhizomes are light tan to yellowish white and have no visible dark areas. You also want to look for rhizomes that have increases developing. Similar to a potato, look for small buds on the sides of the rhizome or new increases developing close to the fan or leaves. The roots should look white and fleshy, but don't worry too much if they are starting to shrivel. New roots will develop fast



once the rhizome is planted. The old roots will help anchor it in the ground.

If you are looking for faster color and the WOW factor in your garden, plant three of the same variety together.

Position rhizomes in a clump so they will grow away from each other



If you need help choosing the perfect rhizomes, ask a club member for help. Don't forget to label your new irises so you can enter them in the Iris Show in the Spring.



An affiliate of the American Iris Society
And the Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.

**Meetings held 3rd Saturday of January,
March, May,
September and November at 10 a.m.
Crestview Church of Christ
Community Center, 7129 Delhi, Waco**

**Mitchell Whitley, President
Peggy Cathey, Newsletter Editor
wacoiriss@gmail.com
254-854-2558**

Join WIS today!

Only \$10 per year. You may join at a meeting, download membership form from our website, or send a check with your name, address, phone number and e-mail address to:
Mitchell Whitley, Treasurer
812 Dayton, Waco, TX 76706



September 19, 2020
Crestview Church of Christ, Waco, TX



September 26, 2020
Iris Rhizome Sale, GreenLife Nursery, Waco, TX



November 21, 2020
Crestview Church of Christ, Waco, TX

Check out our website:

www.kenfuchs42.net/waco_index.html



<https://www.facebook.com/search/wacoirissociety>

Time to Plant by Peggy Cathey

The weatherman finally got it right. What a nice change in the weather. Cooler temperatures and RAIN!



With the changes in weather that come in September and October, you know it is time to start dividing your irises, bringing your extras to our annual sale and planting all your increases and new purchases.

Start by loosening the soil where you intend to plant your irises. You should add compost and soil amendments, like alfalfa pellets,

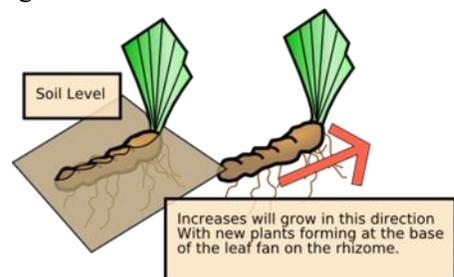
and dig them in. Give the bed a good drink and let it set a week or two so all the good organisms that live in the soil have a chance to start breaking down the amendments so they will be available to your plants. Once your new bed has had some time to get to work, it is time to plant.

When you are ready to plant, dig a wide, shallow hole and put a ridge



of soil in the center. Spread the roots of the iris apart (think-parting hair) and straddle the ridge with the

rhizome sitting on top and the roots going down each side. Be sure to position the plants in the direction you want them to grow. They will grow toward the end with the leaves.



Cover the roots with soil and leave the topmost part of the rhizome above the soil. Water well to settle the soil. Keep the soil moist the first couple of weeks, but never soggy. Once you see new growth, they are well on their way to providing you with a spectacular color show next spring.



Save
the
Date

Waco Iris Society

Annual Iris Sale

September 26, 2020

9 a.m. until NOON

GreenLife Nursery

1312 N. New Rd., Waco, TX

For more information call 817-666-9002